

YOUTH AND CAREER START

*Report by CAF Russia supported by the Citi Foundation
(AO Citibank)*



Moscow, 2019

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FROM CITI

Dear colleagues,

We are happy to present a survey dedicated to one of the key questions for young people in the modern world – what's my future professional life?

Citi globally enables the growth of communities and improvement of life for low-income young people. That is why we pay special attention to long-term infrastructural projects aimed at the employment of young people who for various reasons find it difficult to find and secure good jobs.

In Russia we support NGOs which help young vulnerable people to better understand the areas for their potential professional growth and prepare themselves for employment. We will use the data from this survey in our current and future programs and we are sure that its results and conclusions can be helpful for all the stakeholders.

Anna Samokhvalova,
Head of Public Affairs Citi in Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan

FOREWORD

Today the world is changing very quickly – new technologies and opportunities emerge, while the current ones become outdated. Some people succeed in catching this super-speed train, while others remain on the platform. Nowadays it is commonplace to talk about the new generation – people of the new age who grew up with gadgets in their pockets and want to live and work in a new way: they have more opportunities, they are free to choose activity formats, they are not attached to their place of residence or to any one organization. However, not all young people manage to adapt to these conditions.

This report is not about the successful young people from prestigious universities. The focus of the study is on young people with low starting opportunities: the ones from low-income families, small cities, and vulnerable groups, studying in secondary special education institutions. They find it hard to keep pace with the progressive changes in the environment, because they do not receive appropriate support, education, career guidance which leaves them unprepared for new labor market requirements. They have nowhere to get the soft skills that are becoming increasingly important today, they have low awareness of educational opportunities on the Internet, their families do not have the resources to provide them with paid supplementary education. They look for part-time jobs while studying, but rarely seek opportunities to gain important professional experience. As a result, these young people enter the labor market with high expectations from employers and low level of their own skills. This does not result into successful professional career pathways for these young people.

The situation is even worse when it comes to young people from institutions for orphans and young people with disabilities. They have less opportunities to gain the necessary experience and skills. NGOs' programs and projects are mainly aimed at this category of youth. But for a wide range of young people who formally do not belong to vulnerable groups, in practice, there are no effective support measures.

To support young people at the inception of their career, systemic change is required, which will involve educational institutions, employers, NGOs and government services.

We hope that the study will be useful to all stakeholders dealing with employment and employment of young people at career start in particular and will help to design and develop effective support programs. But most importantly, we hope it will help youth feel more confident about the future no matter what their starting opportunities are.

**Yulia Khodorova, Olga Maksimova,
The CAF Charitable Foundation for Philanthropy Development**

INTRODUCTION

Young people aged between 16 and 24 make up 16% of the world population (1.2 bn people).¹ In ten years, young generation will make up about one-third of all workforce in Russia.² It will soon become the key driver for the country's economy development.

Young people today have to plan their lives and career in extremely uncertain and volatile conditions in economy and on the labor market. The new technologies, open data, relative mobility and digitalization result into new jobs and employment formats. There are more opportunities for remote employment, it is easier to access international labor market. Today there are many opportunities to choose your path as one can try to work in different fields, places and professions. It is predicted that up to 50% of all existing professions may disappear in the next decade due to digitalization and 19% of all jobs can be replaced by robots.³

On the one hand, new positive trends in employment provide young people with more opportunities than before. However, it is difficult to adapt to uncertainty. New opportunities are mainly used by advanced, prosperous young people with good education and starting opportunities, living in large cities.

A significant proportion of young people from the regions and/or from low-income families, including graduates of institutions for orphans, young people with health issues or disability is poorly oriented in new opportunities for their employment, and in the labor market in general.

Since 2014, youth unemployment around the world has been growing steadily, and in 2017 it exceeded 13%. The World Labor Organization predicts that this trend will be relevant for the next few years.⁴

According to the HeadHunter study, the demand for young professionals in Moscow and Moscow Region in the first quarter of 2019 was 24%, in the Volga Federal District – 18%, and in other regions it is even lower.⁵ There are fewer vacancies for young specialists than for experienced ones: in March 2019, the level of competition among young specialists amounted to almost 10 resumes for a vacancy, while for experienced ones it was seven resumes for a vacancy.⁶

¹ Pathways to progress. Global youth survey 2017 – a study by Ipsos for Citi Foundation on economic prospects and youth employment.

² Calculated by CAF CF based on Rosstat open data.

³ Russia 2025 – from human resources to talents – a study by BCG and Sberbank on employment problems in the Russian labor market, 2017.

⁴ Global Employment Trends for Youth 2017: Paths to a better working future. – a report by the International Labor Organization

⁵ Whom do employers look for?
<https://hh.ru/article/24510>

⁶ hh.index — level of competition among young specialists in Russia in Q1, 2019
<https://hh.ru/article/24511>

Young people require not only professional knowledge and experience, but also soft skills⁷ – presentation, communication, teamwork, etc. to succeed in the labor market.

The growing importance of soft and interdisciplinary skills reduces the competitiveness of young people with low starting opportunities, because they have little chance of getting these skills while in education.

Educational institutions are focused on providing students with knowledge rather than practical skills. The education system does not have time to adapt to market demands and global trends and provides outdated knowledge, so students do not receive relevant knowledge needed at work: 91% of employers note a lack of practical knowledge among graduates, and every fourth graduate goes to work for positions that do not require their level of education.⁸

This report presents the results of a study on young people's ideas about the labor market, expectations from different types of work (first, permanent, temporary and part-time jobs), barriers to youth employment related to education, relations with employers, the state of youth support infrastructure, and recommendations on potential support programs for young people with low starting opportunities.

Sources of Data

This study analyzes the employment experience of young people aged 14 to 25 years. Young people with low starting opportunities are analyzed as a separate category:

- graduates of institutions for orphans;
- young people with disabilities;
- young people from low-income families and towns with population less than 1 million people.

To identify the problems of youth in general and youth from low-income families and towns with population less than 1 million people, a quantitative survey was conducted, in which 1,000 young people from different regions took part, accompanied by a qualitative study in the online forum group format on their employment experience.⁹ Interviews with experts and a foresight session were conducted to study the problems of orphaned young people, and young people with disabilities.¹⁰

⁷ Soft skills refer to a broad set of skills, competencies, behaviors, attitudes, and personal qualities that enable people to effectively navigate their environment, work well with others, perform well, and achieve their goals. These skills are broadly applicable and complement other skills such as technical, vocational, and academic skills. // Report Workforce connections: Key soft skills that foster workforce success.

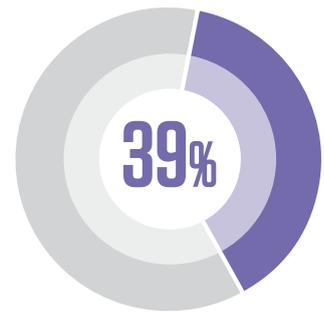
⁸ Russia 2025 – from human resources to talents – a study by BCG and Sberbank on employment problems in the Russian labor market, 2017.

⁹ The online forum was held using qualitative online community methodology in partnership with the IPSOS consulting company. The forum involves asynchronous communication. See “Methodology” chapter for more details.

¹⁰ Foresight is a method for developing long-term strategies for technology, education, economy, or other areas. See “Methodology” chapter for more details.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERCEPTION OF THE JOB MARKET

In general, young people in Russia start to look for jobs and to work relatively early: most young people aged 15-25 (87%) had a job search experience. More than half (60%) of youth had work experience. These figures are higher for the older age group (21–25 years): 78% of them are already employed. However, the jobs and working conditions do not always correspond to their expectations. Working conditions are important for them (white salary, growth prospects, social package), but the place of work where they can implement their potential is not so important: it could be a large well-known company, a government structure or their own business. Young people have roughly the same job expectations in all of the above sectors.



first job matches education

First job: expectation vs. reality

Young people have high hopes for gaining experience from their first employer, while the requirements for compensation in the first place of work are relatively low. Most young people expect that in the first place they will be given the opportunity to learn (56%) and gain their own experience (57%). Less than half of young people (40%) rely on a good salary, a social package, work in a growing sector or career prospects. Only 43% expect that the first job will match their professional education.

In reality, the first work partially meets the requirements of youth. A very small number of young people (18%) noted that they were employed in a large company or in a growing sector (17%) with the possibility of salary growth (23%), and less than a third (31%) noted that their company provided training to employees.

In general, young people manage to find a job in an organization without work experience (49%), however, only 50% of working young people said that they were officially employed in compliance with applicable legislation and received “white” salary. 39% of young people were able to find their first job according to their profession.

Young people show much higher expectations regarding their next permanent job, but they also do not correspond to reality.

“The most difficult step is to understand that nobody needs you no matter what your education is, and you have to start looking for something more basic – not on the lowest level, but still basic”.

M., 22 y.o., Krasnodar

Workplace education/training:

- expectation – 56%,
- reality – 31%.

Work for a big company:

- expectation – 42%,
- reality – 18%.



Figure 1. Distribution of responses to questions: 1) "Note which of the following characteristics best describe your IDEAL first job". (N=1000); 2) "Note which of the following characteristics best describe your ACTUAL first job". (N=110)

Good salary

- expectation – 84%,
- reality – 42%.

Big company

- expectation – 81%,
- reality – 35%.

Even at a permanent place of work, only 57% of young people receive official registration and white salary, only 45% work by profession, 42% consider their salary to be good, only 35% work in a large company.

Despite the development of digital technologies and new forms of employment, only 18% of young people indicated that they had the opportunity to choose a work schedule. Only 10% can work remotely via the Internet, while about half of young people (45%) would like to have this opportunity.

Most young people would like to start their own business (72%), but so far only 10% did so in practice.

One of the key values of a permanent job is the opportunity to find a mentor. The most important need of young people building their career is to find a mentor. In their responses to the question "What would you like to achieve in your work, career as a whole?", the need for a mentor was the leading answer. The next important career goals were to achieve a leadership position and explore a new professional field.



Figure 2. Distribution of responses to questions: 1) "Note which of the following characteristics best describe your IDEAL permanent job". (N=1000); 2) "Note which of the following characteristics best describe your ACTUAL permanent job". (N=239)



Figure 3. Distribution of responses to the question: "What would you like to achieve in your job/career in general?" (N=1000)

A significant proportion of young people are ready to change their place of residence for work. On average, more than half of young people (59%) are ready to relocate for work. This is confirmed by HSE research: 67% of school graduates intend to move from their city after graduation, 12% of graduates said they would stay in their hometown.¹¹

Residents of towns with population less than 1 million are ready to move due to new work (64%) more often than others. This percentage is even higher among young people from high-income families – 67%. Young people with higher education are more likely to say that they are ready to move for work than their peers with secondary technical education: 62% and 52%, respectively.

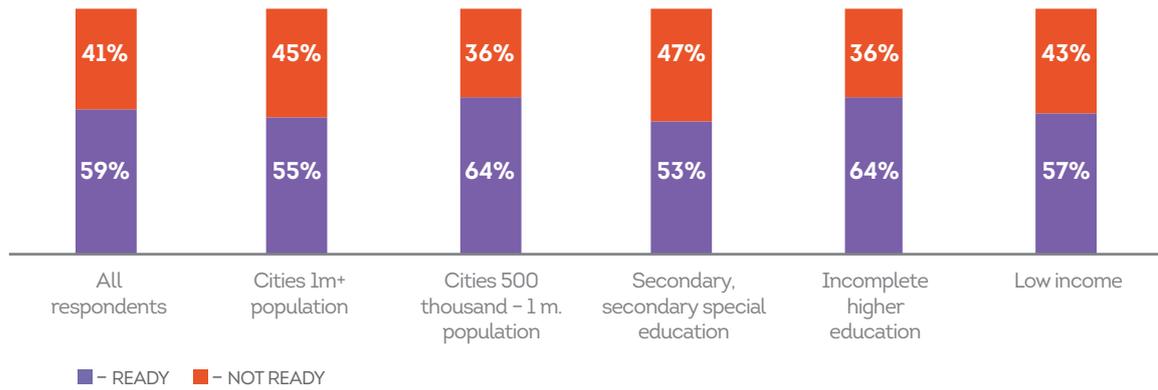


Figure 4. Distribution of responses to the question “Are you ready to change your place of residence (move to another city) for a new job?” (N=870)

¹¹ How internal migration from small cities works // HSE Research and Education Portal IQ HSE. <https://iq.hse.ru/news/263124558.html>

BARRIERS FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE

ENTERING THE JOB MARKET

For many young people, job search causes a lot of stress, because they do not have the understanding of what the employer expects from a young specialist and whether their own competencies meet these expectations. Young people feel confused and unsure of their first steps to employment.

Young people are poorly oriented in the labor market. In chaotic attempts to find work, they do not gain any understanding of it. Young people have false perceptions of how to build a professional path, how to plan it, what are the criteria for success. Many do not have the understanding of basic processes within any organization and even the process of hiring.

At the start of their career, young people do not have a clear idea of what they need to do to become true professionals in demand, what path it takes to go, where to start and what opportunities to look for at different stages of a career. In addition, some of the information on the Internet forms a false idea that success is easy. For example, bloggers, vloggers and online startups look attractive and do not give the idea of the real work that was done before people see what they see online and on social media.

“Looking for a job is torture; it is a test, something completely new you have never done before. And nobody wants you. You have zero years’ experience, no skills, nothing. This is what they keep telling you. And this is really discouraging. Why do I have no experience? Because you won’t let me get it”.

F., 20 y.o., Nizhny Novgorod

“They do not have experience of job interview preparation, no understanding of corporate structure let alone HR practices and procedures”.

Expert

“Young people do not understand that there is a long way to go to become a professional, and going this way is not always easy. They do not see the examples of true professionals, but they see a lot of overnight success stories from the bloggers. This is what the media shows they today, but the reality is different”.

Expert

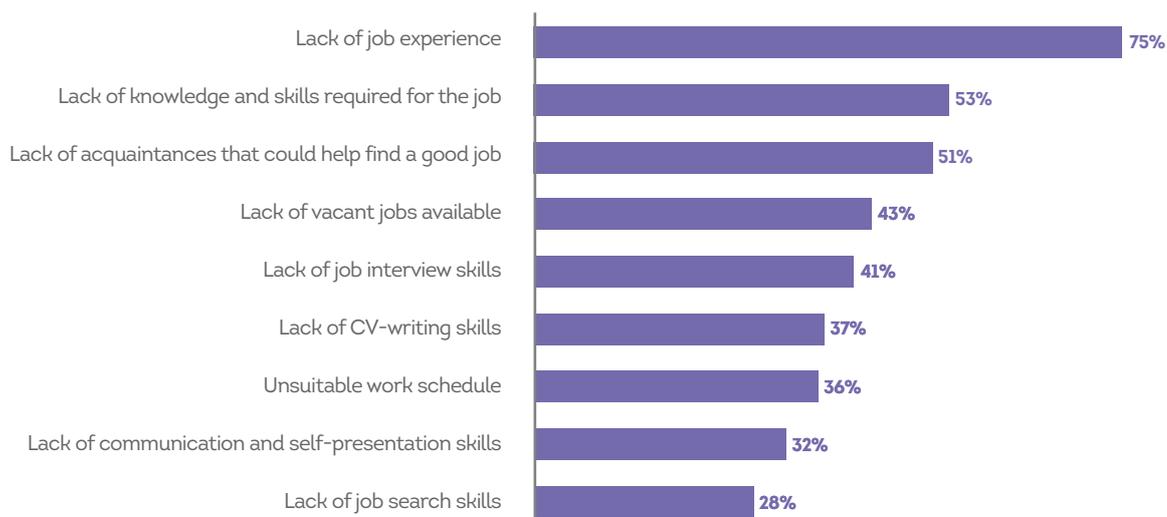


Figure 5. Distribution of responses to the question: "Please recall the difficulties you encountered when looking for your first job". (N=365)

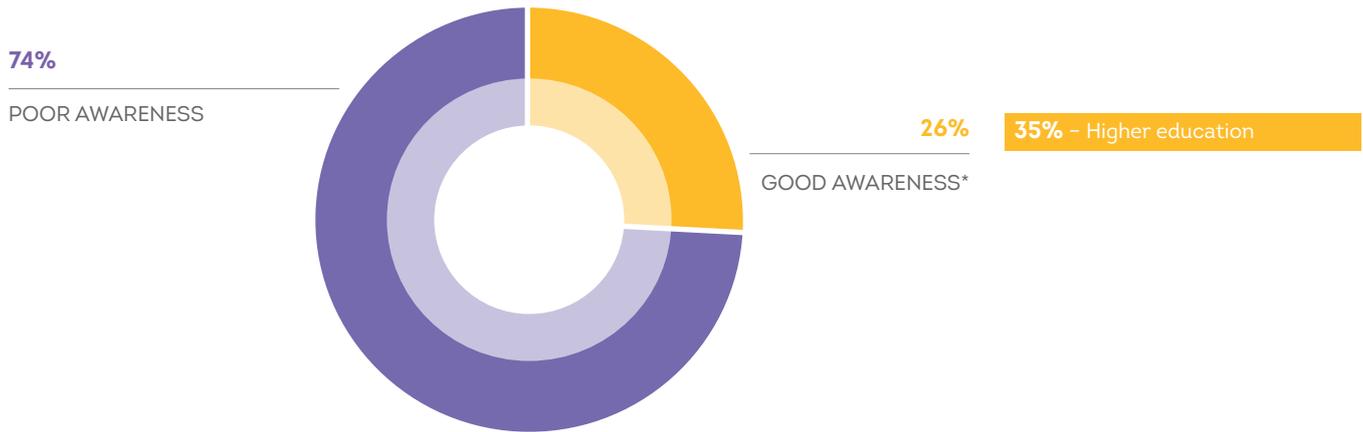
- **Lack of work experience.** The lack of work experience, according to the majority of young people surveyed (75%), is one of the main obstacles to finding the first permanent job. Also, more than half (51%) say that even when applying for temporary work, lack of experience is an obstacle.

The idea of exactly what kind of work experience employers may require in the initial arrangement, and also where to get such experience, is very blurry among young people. It is believed that work experience can only be obtained at work, and since employers do not accept candidates without experience, a vicious circle is obtained.

- **Lack of acquaintances who could help in finding a job.** Young people call the lack of appropriate acquaintances who could get them a job one of the main obstacles to employment. This obstacle is noted by half of the young people surveyed (51%). Getting a job through some kind of personal liaisons continues to be considered the dominant successful scenario.

Young people are distrustful of employers, many say that they encounter scammers, are afraid to be deceived in the process of finding a job, to be involved in "gray schemes", etc.

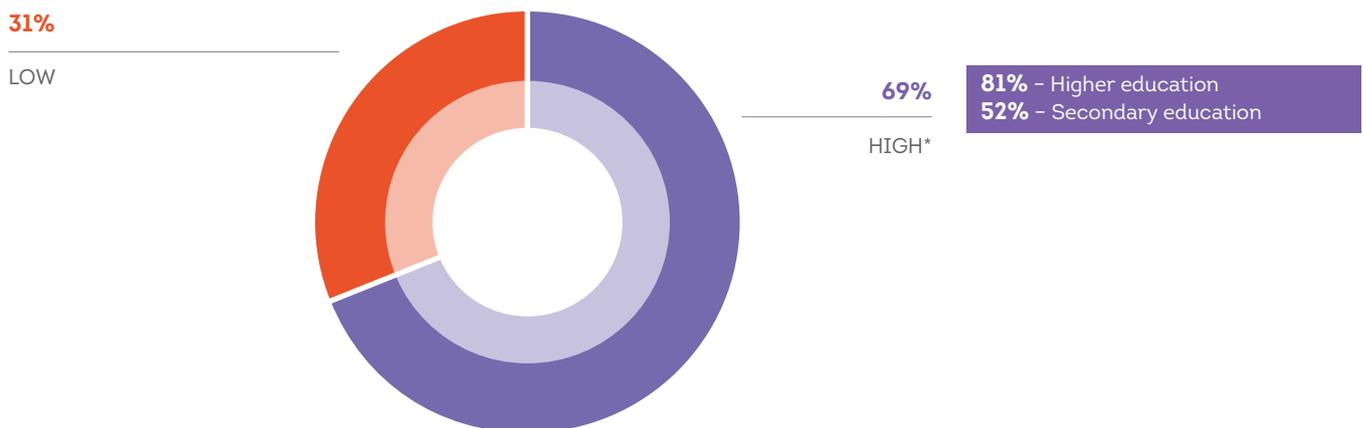
- **Lack of jobs available.** Despite the fact that almost half of young people (48%) indicate a lack of job opportunities in the market as a barrier to employment, only one in four respondents (26%) is well aware of job opportunities as such. This proportion is higher among young people with higher education (35%) and lower among young people from the low-income category (22%).
- **Inconvenient work schedule.** This problem is most relevant when looking for temporary work; it is noted by more than half of the young people surveyed (58%).



* 8-10 points on a 10-point scale

Figure 6. Distribution of responses to the question “How well are you aware of the jobs and employment opportunities available for you?” (N=1,000)

- **Inadequately high self-assessment as employees.** The majority of respondents (69%) highly assess themselves as potential employees, with the level of education directly affecting self-esteem. Young people consider basic skills including learning ability (75%), ability to work (68%), general knowledge (59%) as their strengths in the labor market. And only 34% of respondents believe that they have adequate professional knowledge and skills.



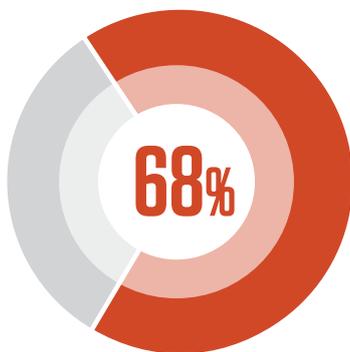
*7-10 on a 10-point scale

Figure 7. Distribution of responses to the question: “How do you assess yourself as a potential employee?” (N=1000)

YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION

“Graduates do not have the competencies: they seem to have basic skills, but when they come to the company, it turns out they need to have a lot more – time management, project management, communication skills, and critical thinking”.

Expert



would change their profession

“The main problem is that the current career guidance tools were developed 50-60 years ago: then they were good, now they just don't work.”

Expert

Education plays an important role in the employment of young people. It is expected that educational institutions should prepare graduates for the labor market: introduce them to the idea of professions, help determine their career paths, and train them to have the necessary competencies and skills. However, most often these functions in educational institutions are formal or lag behind the market. For this reason, young people suffer from a lack of soft skills, a lack of understanding of how the job market and professional paths are structured.

Young people approach career choice and career planning without due consideration, and the educational system has few opportunities for flexible planning of a professional trajectory.

According to a study by hh.ru¹², most university graduates (41%) do not work in their specialty. This share is highest in sales (70%) and among administrative staff (64%). This situation arises because school graduates are not ready to make the choice of an educational institution based on career planning goals: almost a quarter (24%) choose the university based on the opinions of their parents or relatives, and almost a third (32%) choose a university based on how prestigious it is considered. Almost half (47%) are dissatisfied or only partially satisfied with their higher education in terms of acquired knowledge and skills. Only after receiving education and the first work experience, today's young people begin to understand what they would like to do in life: more than two-thirds (68%) would change their profession if they had such opportunity.

The education of university graduates does not meet labor market requirements.

When entering the labor market, many graduates are faced with the problem of a lack of certain knowledge and skills necessary for work. More than half (53%) of young people face this problem when searching for a first job, a little less – when searching for a subsequent job (43%), and about a third (30%) when trying to find temporary work.¹³

¹² More than half of students are planning to work according to their specialty // <https://hh.ru/article/25298>

¹³ Business or creativity: what do young specialists aspire for? // <https://hh.ru/article/25298>

Less than half (39%) of the young people surveyed had any kind of career guidance. In total, 20% of youth passed tests or had trainings in vocational guidance, 13% underwent training in CV writing, 12% – in developing professional skills (communication, presentation, and interaction with other specialists), and 11% – in teamwork and project management.

Least of all young people are now learning about job search, career planning, and few receive training for job interviews.

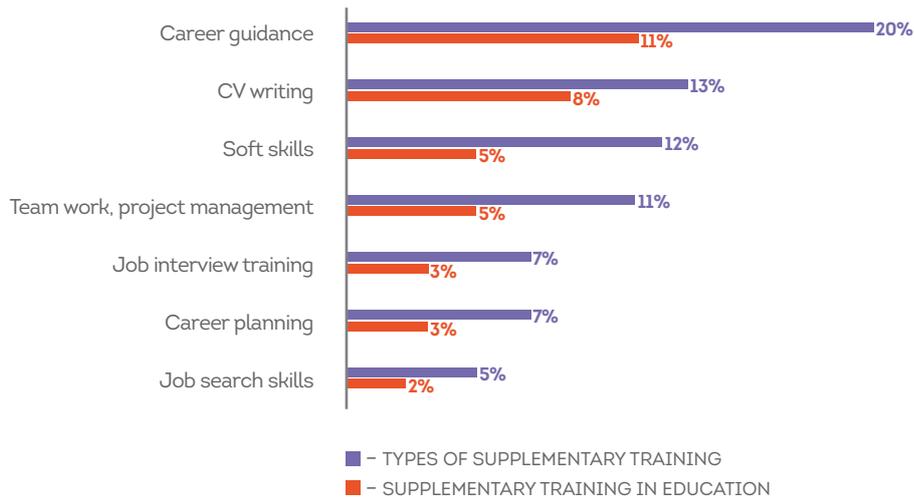


Figure 8. Distribution of responses to the question “What type of career guidance or employment-related education, training did you get?” (N=1000, N in education=218)

Career guidance in educational institutions is outdated, does not meet the needs of the modern market and is formal. Only a small number of young people (13%) underwent career guidance at their educational institution.

Students themselves do not value the existing system of additional training and career guidance giving it about six points on a 10-point scale. Experts in the field of youth employment agree with this.

Career guidance at universities is organized better compared with secondary professional institutions: university students are more likely to receive training in career planning, teamwork, and project management. Also, they are more likely to have the opportunity to learn communication skills, presentations at the place of study: almost half (49%) of university students noted that they were trained in soft skills, while among young people from secondary professional institutions this proportion is only 24%.

“I would take a training course, but you have to pay for them, and I cannot afford it; I don't have a lot of free time either”.

F., 25, Nizhny Novgorod

One in
3
of those who had
additional training
paid for it.

Young people study little outside their main place of education. Only about a quarter (24%) of all respondents received additional training outside their main place of education. They are not ready to pay for additional courses or trainings and are limited to free resources – only one in three of those who went through additional training paid for it (12% of all respondents).

Despite the availability of various online opportunities for additional education and, in particular, career guidance, only 15% of young people aged 15–25 years took distance learning courses. Very few people use the services of personal consultants or trainers.

Young people are not aware of the importance of practical skills and soft skills. Soft skills, such as teamwork, communication skills, presentation skills, are mentioned less frequently as strengths. Young people are not aware of the importance of developing such skills and are not motivated to further develop competencies: less than 30% would like to develop managerial skills, self-confidence, professional knowledge, and presentation skills.

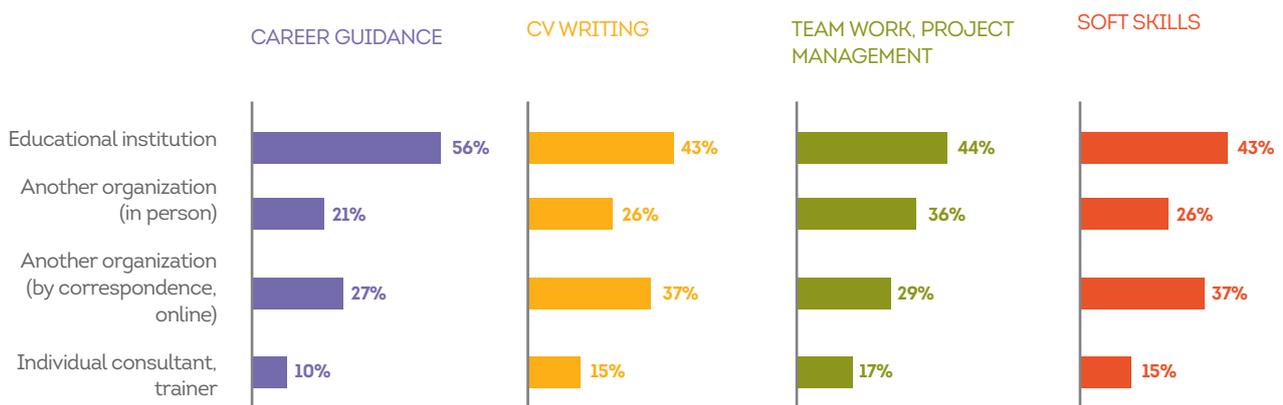


Figure 9. Distribution of responses to the question “Where did you get the career guidance, employment-related training?” (N=202)

YOUNG PEOPLE AND EMPLOYERS

Employers have to invest additional resources and efforts in the adaptation and training of young employees. The most systemic approach is demonstrated by large state or private vertically integrated companies of national or international scale.¹⁴ For large corporations, the task of forming a staff reserve is very acute, since there is a shortage of personnel in the regions. Large companies cooperate with schools and specialized universities, form a personnel reserve, engage in career guidance as part of their profile, and organize internships.

However, in many companies in Russia, the human resources management system and the adaptation of new employees in the workplace are still not working well; companies do not allocate resources for this and prefer to hire people with experience.

Young people's current perceptions of work and employers' perception of interns do not let them benefit from internships. Often trainees and interns are treated formally or, even worse, as an additional burden. They are not trusted with interesting tasks that can inspire them for professional development, they are not involved in real projects. Most often, student internship consists in performing routine technical work that does not require special skills.

However, the youth themselves are not prepared for a dialogue with employers and are not used to setting their own goals for internships.

Young people miss the opportunity to prepare for the labor market and do not gain work experience while studying.

Young people do not think about further work during their studies: only one in every five students (16% of all respondents) is looking for an opportunity to intern during their studies in their specialty. The proportion of those wishing to undergo professional internships is slightly higher among university students – 22%.

27% of young people are not looking for work or part-time jobs at all. Students in secondary schools in Moscow are even less concerned about finding a job while studying: the proportion is 40%.

“In Russia, HR management is undeveloped. You can count the companies that have a decent talent management department on the fingers of your hand.”

“There is practically no mentoring system in the workplace, and this is part of the adaptation. Companies are not trying to educate employees, there is no manual on how to progress to an employee from an apprentice.”

Expert

“They are not given normal tasks; they do some kind of boring and routine work. And after that, they may not want to work at all”.

Expert, foresight session participant

- 16% of young people aged 19-25 take part in student intern programs.
- Only 7% of graduates or students of higher and secondary educational institutions found a permanent job while studying.

* Based on responses to the question: “Did you look for employment, internship or volunteering while in education? What did you look for? What experience of employment, internships, volunteering did you get while in education?”

¹⁴ E.g. Gazprom, RZD, Rosneft, En+, RUSAL, Sberbank, etc.

“I got my first job when I was 16 years old. I wanted to save up for a new phone, and I did not care where to work, as long as I got paid. I worked as a postman for two months, as soon as I had enough money to buy that phone, I left.”

F., 21 years old, Krasnodar

Temporary work is not considered a step towards a career. Young people aged 15–21 are more often looking for part-time jobs, students are most likely to be looking for part-time jobs during their studies (61%). But young people do not aim to find temporary work that would help them in their future careers. Usually the requirements for part-time jobs are minimal – they are looking for unskilled work to earn pocket money. The ideal place to work part-time is a company with the ability to work remotely, without employment, to choose a work schedule.

One third of respondents (36%) noted that they needed a good salary for temporary work, for 24% it is important to work by profession or in a growing sector. Even fewer young people (19%) would like to get an opportunity to work part-time in a large company or with the prospect of career growth (18%). In real life, temporary work does not meet even minimal expectations. Only 14% respondents were able to find work by profession, only 9% got hired by a large company or a state organization.

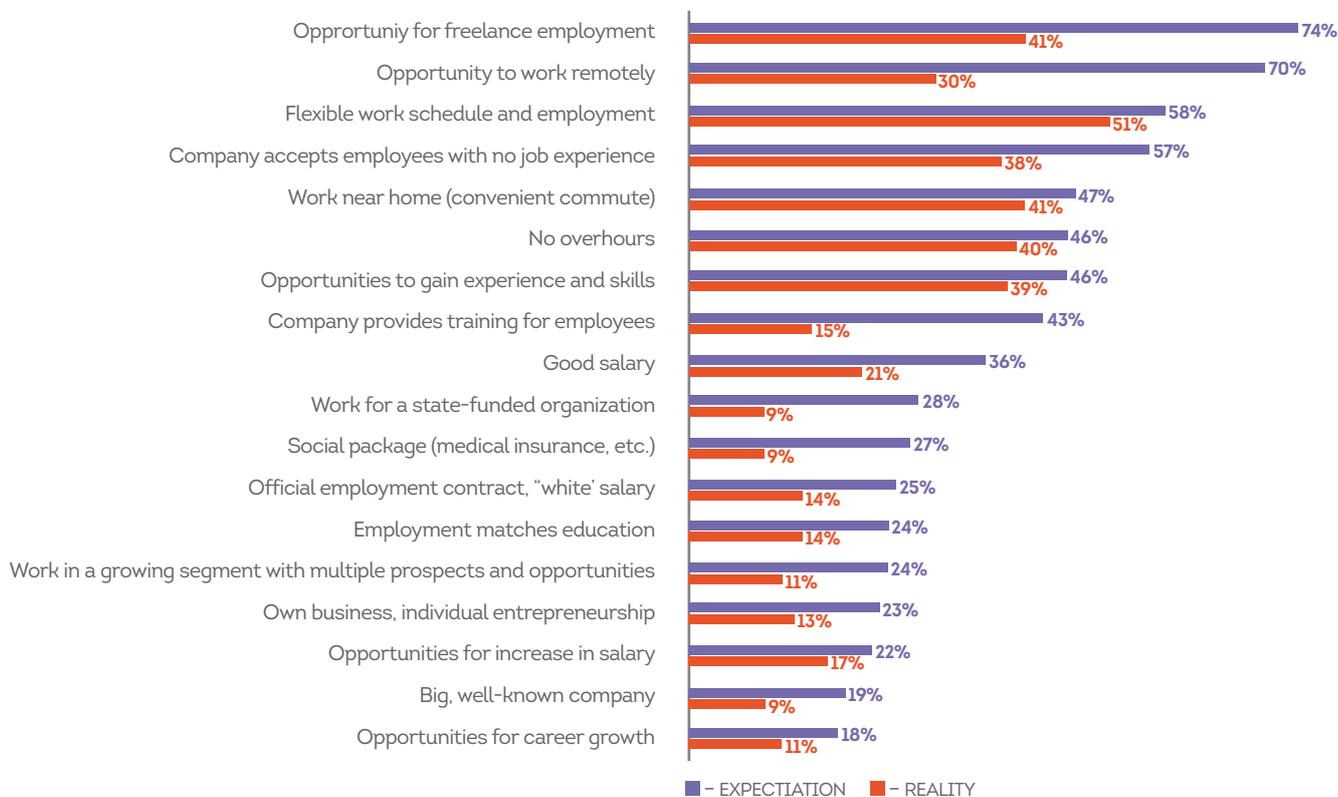


Figure 10. Distribution of responses to questions: 1) “Note which of the following characteristics best describe your IDEAL temporary job”. (N=1000); 2) “Note which of the following characteristics best describe your ACTUAL temporary job”. (N=180)



considered participating in volunteer projects

Young people do not view volunteering as an opportunity to gain practical work experience or career guidance. Only 9% of youth indicated that they considered participating in volunteer projects as an opportunity to gain experience. University students are comparatively active in this respect: the proportion of those seeking volunteering during their studies at the university is twice as large as the proportion of those who were looking for opportunities to participate in a volunteer project while studying in specialized secondary or technical institutions.

BARRIERS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH LOW STARTING OPPORTUNITIES ON THE LABOR MARKET

Young people with low starting opportunities¹⁵ generally have the same difficulties in the labor market as the general population of young people. However, some perceptions and barriers are exacerbated by the initial social and financial situation of those young people. Particularly acute problems are manifested among young people from vulnerable groups.

Young people with low starting opportunities have very limited ideas about the labor market. They don't have the opportunity to "penetrate" the profession, to truly see the work and lifestyle of people of different professions and to understand what suits them. Many live without understanding how the professional path works and what prospects they may face. They have a limited view of the world: before their eyes there are few examples of successful careers, so they do not try to find their own path, but live on the thumb, repeating, for example, the path of their parents.

Young people with low starting opportunities are even less confident in the labor market compared to their more prosperous peers. They show a lower level of employment – 56%. Expectations from a permanent job are also comparatively lower: they are less likely to expect work in a large, well-known company and the prospect of salary growth. But many expect a good salary, want to work in a promising, growing sector and be officially employed.

Young people with low starting opportunities are much less likely to work by profession (only 30%), only one in five is satisfied with their salary (22%) and every seventh is satisfied with career prospects (14%).

"They do not have a strategic vision of their life. They do not know how to manage money and time; the basic assumption is: nothing depends on us. "What kind of job are you going to do?" – "It depends on how lucky I am. I will work in the job they manage to get me in."

Expert

¹⁵ Young people from low income families, from towns with population less than 1m., leavers of institutions for orphans and young people with health issues including disability.



Figure 11. Distribution of responses to questions: 1) "Note which of the following characteristics best describe your IDEAL permanent job". (N=202); 2) "Note which of the following characteristics best describe your ACTUAL permanent job". (N=37)

"They have a fear that they will always be the ones to blame, low self-esteem and the feeling that they can't do anything."

Expert

Expectations from an ideal first job generally coincide with the rest of respondents – a company that recruits people without experience and trains employees. Moreover, among young people with low starting capabilities, the desire to find a mentor is less pronounced than among young people in general (8.5 out of 10 compared to 9.3), but this need remains in the first place.

Young people with low starting opportunities have lower self-esteem: they assess their general knowledge, ability to work, determination, creativity, and managerial skills lower.

Young people with low starting opportunities have lower demand on development. This group is characterized by low awareness of the necessary competencies and, as a result, insufficient motivation for additional training. Young people are relatively less likely to take vocational guidance and skills development courses.

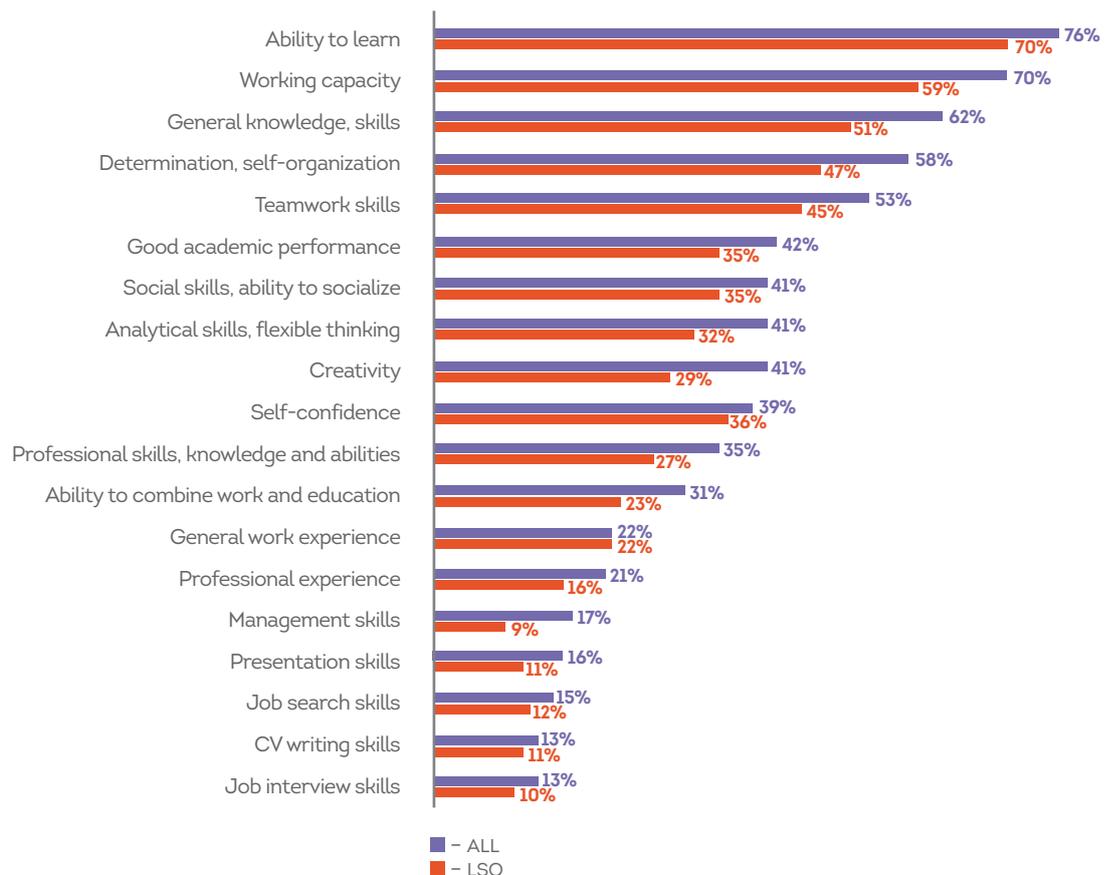


Figure 12. Distribution of responses to the question “What are the competencies, skills and abilities that you consider your strengths when seeking employment?” (N all responses =798, N low starting opportunities =202)

Low-income young people more often note a lack of experience in employment. When looking for a permanent job, they are 15% more likely to indicate this problem. Also, 25% more youth from this category believe that they lack the skills to search for jobs and 20% more indicate the problem of lack of knowledge and skills for initial employment.

Employers are reluctant to hire people from vulnerable groups. Training and adaptation in the workplace of youth from vulnerable groups require significant efforts on the part of the company. This problem is more relevant for young people with disabilities and residential care leavers who graduate from institutions for orphans. The state may oblige employers to provide quotas for the employment of people from vulnerable groups, but companies approach this formally. A workplace can be provided only on paper, wages can also be paid, but in fact a person will not be occupied at the workplace.

On the other hand, the majority of young people from vulnerable groups (care leavers, and people with disabilities) have low motivation, self-esteem, and working capacity. This creates stereotypes or actual negative experiences, as a result of which employers will avoid this category of employees. Stereotypes play the other way: such applicants think that they will not be hired anyway, so they often do not try to look for.

“There is no habit of asking questions, the cognitive sphere is often underdeveloped, children do not ask questions when visiting a company, they are afraid to ask questions, although they need this most of all, since they know the least.”

Expert

“There are prejudices, for example, that all children from orphanages steal. Employers fear theft”.

Expert

RESIDENTIAL CARE LEAVERS' PERCEPTION OF THE JOB MARKET

Graduates of institutions for orphans often lack basic trust in the world and those around them, and have difficulty turning to mentor for help. In institutions everything is decided for them by someone, and, by and large, nothing depends on their successful or unsuccessful studies and self-realization: no matter how you study and whatever abilities you demonstrate, you will most probably live in the same conditions until adulthood as your more or less successful peers in the institution.

Many graduates lack adequate self-esteem. They tend to think that they are ready for the work that they would like to get, while being completely unprepared for it. Alternatively, they might think that they are not capable of anything, and no mentor will help them. The presence of mentors is especially important for this group, not only in the workplace, but also in life in general. When they leave the institution and enter the labor market, there are many other challenges associated with starting an independent life outside the walls of the institution, for which many of them are poorly prepared.

EXPERTS' OPINION

Students in colleges (talking about graduates of residential care institutions who are often placed into colleges, with little attention paid to their actual interests) usually study very poorly, with the exception of one or two exceptional talents per class (they are taught using an advanced program). They have literally no idea about the labor market, about existing professions, with the exception of the most common, such as a driver, a locksmith, a cook, a manicurist, etc. They have no idea about competition, the need to do something proactively. They have the most primitive ideas about work, they don't understand that in any profession you can achieve a lot if you try. They expect that teachers and the state support services will continue to take care of them, support them, find jobs for them, and deal with all further issues.

Ideas about the future career path are usually very vague, the main desire is to be put into a nice job, patronized and paid a good salary. Therefore, many young people want to go to work in the civil service (especially in small towns), in law enforcement agencies – the police, the Ministry of Emergencies, etc. They want stability and expect this stability from the state. At their place of work, they expect that they will be led, helped, and somebody will deal with complex issues for them, few people think of independent entrepreneurial activity.

They usually have very low self-esteem, they are not self-confident. When they go through our program and understand that they can actually do something themselves, and they succeed, usually there is a shift in their minds, they are very inspired and ready to work on their own and achieve results.

Evgenia Alekseeva, Director of the FOCUS-MEDIA Foundation for Social Development and Health Protection
Oksana Barkalova, Deputy Director of the FOCUS-MEDIA Foundation

The main obstacles for employment of orphanage graduates:

- *Extremely narrow ideas about where they can work, where to start. The majority of orphanage graduates have no idea how the labor market is now organized, that a painter's diploma cannot prevent you from becoming a florist, if you wish, about the possibilities of informal education, including distance education, etc.*
- *A limited selection of colleges with dormitories they can enter given their General State Exam results.*
- *The stereotypes of adults (the staff of children's institutions, and officials) about where an orphan can work: a seamstress, a house painter, a cook, a car mechanic are still the most imposed professions.*
- *Lack of early employment experience. Many officials, social educators and college educators are convinced that a teenager needs to get an education and only then can proceed to gain work experience.*
- *A large gap between the knowledge given in college and the needs of employers.*
- *Dependent position: for example, in Moscow, graduates first receive RUB 90,000 benefits for six months after they leave care, and then are forced to work for a regular salary of, for example, RUB 25,000. This strongly demotivates them at the start of a career.*
- *Lack of understanding of what work means.*
- *Lack of motivation: dreams and aspirations are limited to buying a phone.*
- *Underdeveloped soft skills: communication, responsibility, critical thinking, etc.*
- *The narrow social environment of both orphans and their educators.*

When interacting with employers, it is necessary to take into account their needs and benefits for the company. If there is an intermediate link in the form of an NGO or a state institution that train graduates, motivate and train company personnel, and support the graduate and his mentor in the early stages of work in the company, then employers are willing to cooperate. Where there is an order to hire graduates of orphanages and there is no support and understanding from each side, this makes no sense. Based on our experience, "doing good" through employment of orphanage graduates without prior preparation in most cases ended up in failure for both sides.

Anna Kochineva, Director, Childhood Keepers Foundation.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE LABOR MARKET AND CAREER OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Young people with disabilities is often completely unprepared for employment in principle. The main reason for this low level of inclusion in society, which leads to the fact that employment of people with disabilities is poorly understood not only by employers, but also by people with disabilities themselves. The system of social guarantees is organized in a way when, if officially employed, a person with disability loses benefits and payments from the state. There is also excessive custody and care from parents and other relatives, who, taking care of a young person with disabilities, create conditions for her/him where employment is not mandatory at all.

If we talk about young people with disabilities who are brought up in orphanages (DDI), they are not at all prepared for employment, and even education became available to them only recently. It is expected that after the age of 18 they will be mainly transferred to a specialized residential care facility (PNI) – a closed institution where there are no opportunities for interaction with the world, and the labor activity available to residents is very limited and has nothing to do with the real labor market.

EXPERTS' OPINION

We can single out two groups of young people with whom we work: stronger (with sufficiently pronounced mental difficulties, but manageable at the same time) and weaker. More or less strong young people are those about whom we can say that under favorable conditions, with adequate support for employment, they could first enter the protected labor market, and then the open labor market. And there is a group of weaker young people who will probably never work, but perhaps they will have employment. The first group, stronger young people, for several reasons do not know the labor market very well.

Firstly, because of the education they receive: we have very specialized vocational education. Children with mental disabilities are taught a very narrow bunch of professions: a booklet maker, a carpenter, a painter, a landscaper, a seamstress, and literally several other specialties. Therefore, their ideas about the labor market are limited by these specialties. They read in books that other professions exist – a doctor, for example, or others, but none of these guys see themselves in these industries, because they were not prepared for them. These young people could actually have been employed in medicine: not as doctors, but as warehouse workers, assistants, junior medical workers.

Secondly, there is no communication between the labor market and the educational system. That is, education prepares people for the century before last. The only good experience interaction of the education and labor market: the Multicenter of Social and Labor Integration near St. Petersburg. The center builds its educational process for people with mental disabilities, so that it corresponds to the market demand. They train a person for a specific request from a company. For example, the company says that they need room cleaners, and the Center teaches young people to work on specific equipment for the firm's task.

Thirdly, if a person with mental disabilities grew up within an orphanage system, he/she has even more distorted ideas about the labor market, because he/she does not know at all that most people go to work, or where the money comes from, he/she is not trained in any kind of planning. This is a double-edged sword: on the one hand, discipline is required of people in institutions, they need to obey and follow a set of rules, but on the other, they are not taught anything at all, nor prepared for anything. A person sees money at the age of 18 for the first time and often spends it on some nonsense.

And if we talk about the weaker group of young people, then, in principle, they have no idea about the labor market, and neither do their parents. Here and now, no one ever thinks that a person with developmental disabilities can be employed; there are very few opportunities for such people, even if we simply want to keep them busy in working hours.

Alena Legostaeva, head of employment program for people with disabilities, "Life Path" Charitable Foundation of Assistance to People with Disabilities

Barriers to employment of young people with disabilities

There are stereotypes, you can even call them prejudices, about the employment opportunities for people with disabilities. There is a belief that people with disabilities work worse, are more difficult to socialize with, get sick a lot, and they are also difficult to fire, etc. Stereotypes are especially strong in relation to certain forms of disability: totally blind people, people with epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, developmental difficulties, and mental disorders.

Most people with disabilities are less professional and socially prepared for competition and requirements in the modern labor market. Due to lesser opportunities and underdevelopment of inclusive education, they have worse education, no work experience, and social skills are less developed. This, of course, does not apply to all people with disabilities, but to most of them at the moment. Our experience has shown that no more than 10-15% of persons with disabilities are now ready for actual employment in the open labor market. The situation will not improve until the key employment programs are aimed at increasing the overall level of candidates with disabilities.

If we look at third-party opinions and statistical information, the situation in the field of employment of people with disabilities does not improve, but even gets worse. According to our subjective feelings (given that we work mainly with interested and motivated employers, the number of which is growing), there are more job opportunities for people with disabilities. However, when you meet with a new company, you simply get lost from the ideas of its employees about people with disabilities. For example, "we cannot employ blind people, since we do not have a room where to keep their guide dogs".

Mikhail Novikov, Head of Employment Department, ROOI "Perspektiva"

SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

The function of career guidance and support in the employment for young people is traditionally performed by educational institutions. However, in addition to the place of study, young people can receive support from state-funded services, and use the services of non-profit organizations.

NGOs' PROGRAMS

In Russia, at least 90 non-profit non-governmental organizations are involved in the training, career guidance or employment of youth. NGOs implement programs in this area, and target girls and boys from vulnerable groups to help them get education or find a job.

NGOs operate in most regions of the country (about 65). One-third of the programs are implemented in a number of regions. Most specialized NGOs operate in the capital cities. About a quarter of organizations work in Moscow and the regions. Besides, there are at least 14 NGOs working exclusively in Moscow, and at least nine working in Saint-Petersburg.

Tab 1. Top-10 regions in the number of NGOs' programs

Region	No. of NGOs working in the field
Moscow	31
Saint-Petersburg	19
Moscow Region	14
Nizhny Novgorod Region	9
Sverdlovsk Region	8
Tula Region	7
Leningrad Region	7
Novosibirsk Region	7
Voronezh Region	7
Tatarstan Republic	7

Most NGOs are involved in projects for young people from residential institutions for orphans (55); slightly fewer organizations help young people with disabilities (40). Other groups of young people with low starting opportunities (for example, young people from low-income or disadvantaged families) in the labor market are engaged in the programs of only 17 NGOs.

Most projects are implemented in the field of education and career guidance for young people. There are much less (about a quarter of all projects analyzed) projects that provide systemic assistance to young people with low starting opportunities provide employment support, seek out mentors, personally select vacancies, and develop the necessary skills for specially selected jobs.

Projects for young people from orphanages are mainly aimed at their education and career guidance. In addition, mentoring programs are currently actively developing for this group of young people. For them, this model is especially important because it allows them to form social connections outside the institution, prepare for independent life and employment, and ensure the support of a significant adult after leaving the institution. Projects for young people with disabilities are more focused on their employment and socialization (for example, creative workshops, theater, etc.).

Thus, almost all of the ongoing NGO programs in the field of youth employment are aimed directly at vulnerable groups. They are concentrated in the capitals, and mainly in Moscow. For a wider circle of young people with low starting opportunities, there are significantly fewer support programs.

EXPERT OPINION

Support infrastructure is divided into in-person (offline) and remote (online) programs. If we talk about in-person support, it can and should strongly depend on the economic opportunities of the region in which the young people live.

In capitals, the infrastructure is more developed, and the demand for it is lower, because in general the situation is quite favorable from the point of the labor market. That is, there are more offers of support from non-profit and state-funded organizations, and potential demand per capita is less, because the labor market is very favorable.

In general, with regard to supporting young people with low starting opportunities in the labor market, there are three support models.

The first model is when the applicants themselves (beneficiaries) are trained and supported.

The second model is when the work is carried out with employers: trainings for employers on how to interact with young people.

The third model is supported employment, a model in which conditions are created for young people within companies at a particular workplace. That is, there are mentors, vacancies are specialized for them, both the employer and the employee are prepared and supported. This is what we and some other NGOs are doing.

In large cities, programs of the first type aimed at young people are relatively widespread, although they can be of different quality. There are not many activities of the second type aimed at employers, but there is no solid evidence for them that they are effective. As for the most effective support measures, programs of the third type, they are developing mainly in the capitals. There are significantly less programs of the type in the regions, but, for example, there is "Loui's Quarter" in Penza.

If we take the online support infrastructure, there are different career guidance projects for young people, but these activities belong to the first model. As a rule, the companies themselves are not directly involved in this process. The only exception we know is the Everland project.

Mikhail Krivonos, President of Raul Charitable Foundation

STATE SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

At the moment, federal executive bodies have not been assigned authority to support young people in the labor market. The Federal Law “On Employment in the Russian Federation” only enshrines the state guarantees in the field of employment for certain categories of citizens:

- people with disabilities and their parents;
- graduates of educational institutions;
- people seeking first employment (who have not previously worked) and who are unqualified.

For these categories of the population there is a priority procedure for undergoing vocational training and obtaining additional professional education. Another federal law, “On Social Protection of People with Disabilities in the Russian Federation,” establishes quotas for hiring people with disabilities, special jobs for employing such people, and their working conditions.

Support work in the field of career guidance and youth employment is being carried out in some regions: they have the right to determine additional measures to support employment for different categories in regional laws on employment.

Moscow is one of the leading regions where youth employment support is developing. Here, the Department of Labor and Social Protection is engaged in employment services.

In the spring of 2019, the Department began rebranding the traditional Employment Centers and is building a new model of employment assistance.

Today there are:

- **56** territorial employment services;
- **4** My Work Centers.

My Work Centers provide a full range of employment support services. Unlike the old employment centers they use an individual approach to work with their clients .

- My Career Center.

The flagship center My Career focuses on vulnerable categories of citizens in the labor market, these are people of pre-retirement age 50+, women on maternity leave with children, young people, and people with disabilities.

However, in most regions, the support function for vulnerable groups is not yet sufficiently developed. Regional employment centers are not represented in the information field: in some regions the centers do not have websites, but the information about them can be found on the websites of regional executive bodies. Regional authorities themselves are limited in the development of employment support and training for vulnerable groups: the state of the material and technical base and the level of funding often do not allow the introduction of new forms of work in the regions.

The state contributes to the development of infrastructure to support young people through specialized expert organizations. For example, the Agency for Strategic Initiatives is developing the Quantorium network of children's technology parks across the country. There are "quantoriums" in 62 regions, and about 80 thousand children are involved in their activities. Their mission is to promote the accelerated technical development of children and the implementation of scientific and technical potential of Russian youth by introducing effective education models for replication in all regions of the country.

The Agency for Strategic Initiatives, together with the Moscow School of Management Skolkovo, created an information and analytical project Atlas of New Professions, which helps to understand which industries will actively develop, which new technologies, products, management practices will emerge in them and which new specialists will be in demand by employers in 15–20 years.

Federal projects to support youth are carried out by the autonomous non-profit organization "Russia – a country of opportunities", created in 2018 by the initiative of the President of Russia. With the support of this NGO, a number of competitions are held aimed at identifying and supporting young people in various fields. For example, the Abilimpix project is one of its projects. Its goal is to ensure effective career guidance and motivation for people with disabilities to receive vocational education, to promote their employment and socio-cultural inclusion in society.

EXPERT OPINION

Globally, changes in the problem of employment of graduates of orphanages are not yet noticeable, primarily because in remote regions, small cities, there is virtually no systemic work on career counseling and employment. Employment centers still cannot offer vacancies for young people without work experience. The results will be noticeable when the practice of early (from 14 years) work experience in the form of internships and temporary employment during the holidays for both orphans and regular teenagers will be widespread. So far, such work has been carried out locally by NGOs and some institutions, and large enterprises.

Anna Kochineva, director of Childhood Keepers Foundation

We believe that NGOs should be doing smaller-scale, but innovative things, and government structures should be engaged in large-scale and fairly standardized ones.

If we take the three models of existing support infrastructure, then government structures could effectively train children and employers. As for complex innovative things, for example, supported employment, it is more logical to slowly pilot and develop them within in NGOs, and after that they can be transferred to state structures.

However, all this is relevant for the capitals or profitable regions, such as Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Region or Tyumen Region. If we take the rest of the regions, there the three tasks are the domain of NGOs.

Mikhail Krivonos, President of Raul Charitable Foundation

SUPPORT AT THE START: YOUNG PEOPLE'S OPINION

When it comes to employment assistance, 58% of young people trust state organizations, 56% – their educational institution, 47% – commercial organizations and only 34% – non-governmental organizations. Young people hardly know about NGOs or other non-governmental resources. Assistance from NGOs whether non-profits or commercial organizations is not considered valuable.

"I would like to be given information on possible jobs at the institute. Let employers come, leave their coordinates, and we will find them ourselves."

F., 19 years old, Krasnodar

Although there is a lot of information on building a career, finding a job and preparing a CV, young people use a limited range of resources.

- Almost half of young people seek support in their own educational institution (46%). Only a third of respondents count on state organizations. Internet resources, educational institutions and government agencies are most trusted.
- According to the young people interviewed when looking for work the most useful are Internet sites (58%) or mobile applications with job search materials (41%).

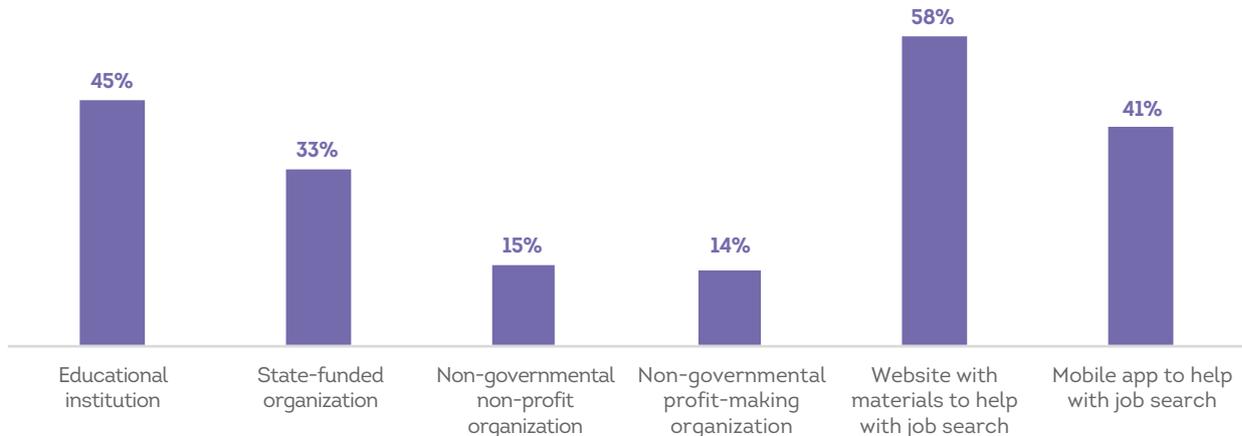


Figure 13. Distribution of responses to the question "Which support resources do you find the most useful when looking for a job?" (N=1000)

Young people pay little attention to career counseling and employment, at least during their studies. They are ready to look at materials about available vacancies, about promising professions and the expectations of employers, and they find it slightly less useful to go to job fairs. Trainings and courses are considered even less useful by young people. Most likely this is due to the fact that young people are not aware of the value of career planning.

University students are better aware of the range of support resources. They are also more willing to use these resources (information about vacancies, professions of the future, training for interview).

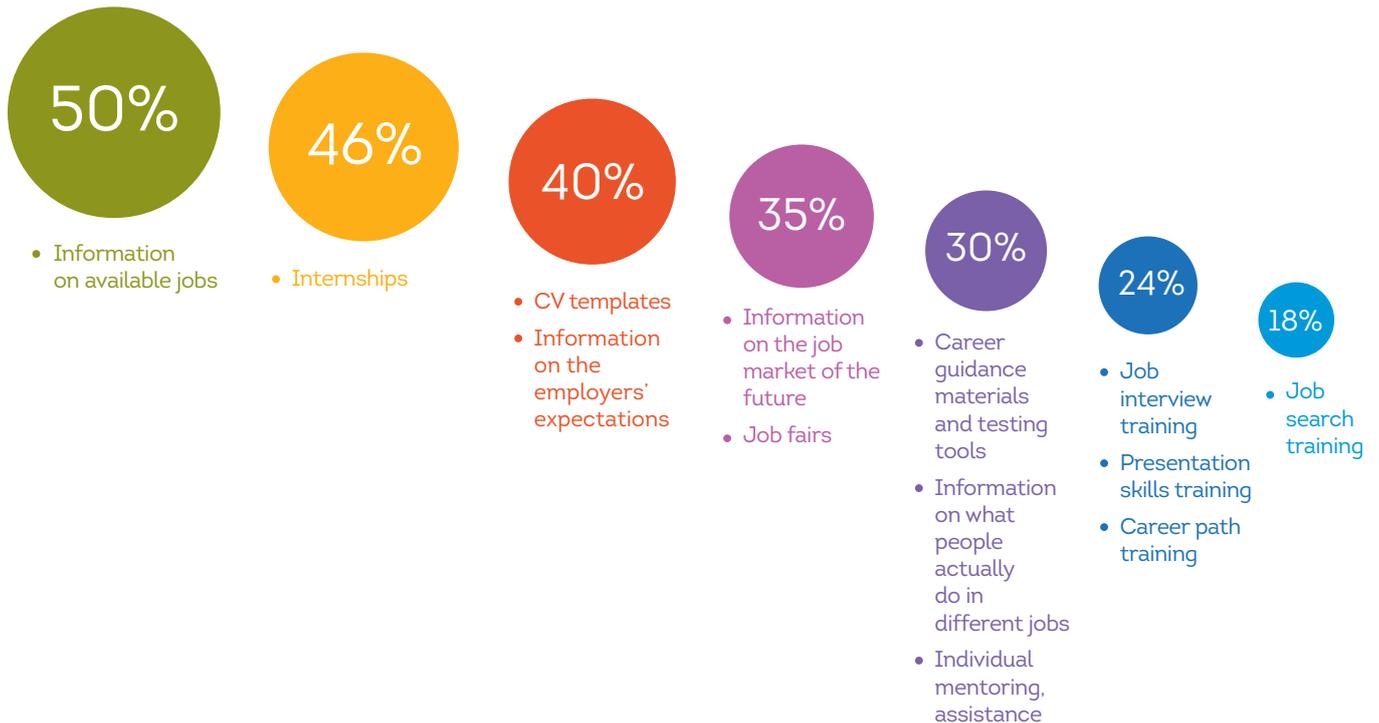


Figure 14. Distribution of answers to the question: "What materials, activities, forms of support would be most useful for you when looking for a job?" (N = 1000)

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Despite the changes and new opportunities in the field of employment and education, the majority of young people have very limited ideas about professions, labor market and career pathways and adhere to traditional attitudes. Young people do not follow the forecasts of changes in the labor market, in demand professions. At the start, young people are not aware of them and are only concerned with primary employment, mentoring and gaining work experience.

Most young people are not sufficiently motivated and confident about their own abilities, they are guided by external factors and circumstances, for example, they believe in employment through acquaintance and are less inclined to take up responsibility for their own successful career.

Young people rely almost entirely on their educational institutions, trust them in their preparation for professional life, but at the same time, the quality and efficiency of such training on the part of the educational institution are fairly low.

Only a small part of young people consider it useful to take additional courses in career counseling, planning a career, job search and interviews. Information on how people of different professions actually work also seems to be useful to a very limited extent. The most useful forms of support for young people are those that provide ready-made answers to their questions: information about available jobs, information about the expectations of employers and sample CVs. Obtaining soft skills is also not interesting for young people.

Young people miss opportunities to get different practical experience while in education – they do not consider volunteering, temporary work, or internships as stages of their professional pathway. As a result, they enter the labor market with a lack of experience and competencies that employers require, but at the same time have overstated expectations of their first job and expect that they will receive a mentor at the workplace who will teach them specifically their profession. The expectations of young people from their first and permanent job do not match reality, which leads to disappointment, dissatisfaction and even greater confusion in the labor market.

Students or people with higher education are a little better at understanding the market trends and opportunities. Higher education is still an obvious asset improving starting opportunities: university students are more willing to use support resources, develop competencies of the future and look for ways to improve their skills; they are more motivated and self-confident.

For young people with low starting opportunities, the situation is aggravated on all counts. They rate themselves lower in all respects, including the ability to perform at work, they have lower expectations from employers. They orient themselves worse in the labor market, are not able to form a request for support, do not make big plans for work in a large company.

In addition, young people from vulnerable groups experience even more difficulties. They show a global underestimation of themselves, insecurity about their future, do not have basic social skills. The situation is exacerbated by the lack of supportive environment and resources.

Non-profit organizations do the main work to support young people from vulnerable groups in the labor market. They are developing new effective forms of work, such as supported employment and mentoring. Most programs are implemented in capitals and large cities, in the regions they are practically nonexistent. The state support system is still working formally, though there are progressive projects in Moscow and in a few large cities.

Large companies invest in the formation of a talent pool and provide mentoring, but these efforts are limited to their market segment, so only small groups of young people can actually benefit from them. Thus, the majority of young people in Russia do not receive the necessary support and information at the inception of their professional career pathway.

RECOMMENDED AREAS OF YOUTH SUPPORT

Supporting the employment of young people is a cross-cutting task. Barriers to youth employment lie in education, employers' practices, state support system, and in the approach of NGOs. In this regard, the market faces complex problems that can only be solved through the collaboration of participants from different sectors.

■ Development of an intersectoral approach to solving youth employment problems

To introduce innovative solutions to the problems of employment and career guidance of young people, it is necessary to create conditions for their development and collaboration of different market participants. For example, introduce formats in which social, educational institutions, government representatives and employers can communicate with each other: discussion platforms, forums, foresights. It is necessary to create more conditions for the inclusion of experts from non-profit organizations and other stakeholders in the development of programs and regulations on the implementation of state policy in the field of education and employment. Non-profit organizations can also provide services to support young people, career counseling, and employment within the state procurement system.

stakeholder engagement foresights
forums exchange of experience social services
discussion platforms state procurements

■ Development of career guidance systems and programs for young people

It is necessary to start career guidance and professional immersion programs in high school and offer students different forms of involvement that allow them to develop practical skills. For this purpose, for example, it is necessary to create conditions for gaining work experience in education, to encourage employers to provide school graduates and students with the opportunity to work during the holidays. Another area is the introduction of project activities in the school curriculum by expanding the links between business, school and industry.

It is important to ensure the exchange of relevant information between applicants, graduates of educational institutions, and employers regarding actual requirements for various professions, working conditions, etc. This idea can be implemented as an online information platform, since young people prefer remote forms of interaction and information retrieval.

Schools can also diagnose children at risk, carry out individual work with them throughout their studies, socialize, educate, and provide career guidance, so that after graduation they have an understanding of where to go to study, where to work, have motivation and are ready for career start.

project activities at school
online platforms conditions for work experience
extended links between business, school and industry

■ **Providing graduates of educational institutions with relevant knowledge and skills**

The gap between the knowledge gained in state educational institutions and market requirements is a key problem in the youth labor market. The main objective in this area is to improve the quality of student internship programs. It is necessary to involve trainees in real projects, to include them in real business processes. The solution to this problem is feasible only with close cooperation and effective communication between educational institutions and local business.

An important task is to raise the profile of secondary vocational and secondary technical educational institutions. To do this, it is necessary to revise state standards and the system for training secondary professional personnel, and adapt them for young people from vulnerable groups in cooperation with business and other stakeholders.

student intern programs better internships
increased profile of secondary vocational education
integration into education actual business processes
tutors psychological assistance at school

NGOs will have to overcome the lack of trust from young people to implement successful youth employment and placement programs. To do this, it is necessary to conduct programs in partnership with large all-Russian organizations (25% more young people trust federal resources than local ones) or with state organizations and educational institutions (which enjoy the greatest trust among the target group).

To strengthen NGOs dealing with youth employment problems, it is important to organize exchange of experience, create a collection of best practices for helping youth from vulnerable groups in the labor market, and possibly develop franchises for successful social technologies. Some experts believe that it is possible to create an NGO association, which can control the quality of the implementation of scalable best practices in the field of youth employment.

The following areas of support will be relevant for leavers of residential institutions and young people with disabilities:

- supported employment;
- mentoring;
- tracking technologies to follow the young people and provide ongoing support;
- trainings and mentoring support for development of practical skills and emotional sphere of the individual (development of self-confidence, sense of responsibility, discipline, professional ethics);
- involvement of the target group in NGO events and projects as volunteers for development of practical skills;
- development of project approach, internships for career guidance and first experience with mentoring support;
- assistance in finding vacancies, preparation for job interviews.

Additionally, for young people with disabilities the following programs are relevant:

- guides for parents, where they can get information about the possible pathways for their children's development;
- online formats for teaching practical skills and career guidance (online tutoring, mentoring, tutoring, information platforms about the professions of the future) to maximize outreach.

For young people from small towns and students of secondary professional institutions, the following programs and areas of support are recommended:

- development of the project approach in the organization of student internships, involvement of interns in solving actual business problems. Creation of additional formats and opportunities for gaining experience;
- programs aimed at developing skills and competencies for starting one's own business, grants for business development for young people, mentoring assistance and support for startups;
- development of intellectual volunteering among both young people and employers;
- scholarships for successful young people to study at prestigious universities;
- access to online education, recommendations on useful resources from those whom they trust, especially in educational institutions;
- projects developing managerial skills, self-confidence, as well as soft and communication skills;
- supervision and mentoring support for selecting a learning pathway and career development;
- information projects on available vacancies, career counseling, training for job interviews.

The following areas of support are relevant for young people from universities and large cities:

- creation of additional formats and opportunities for gaining practical experience: in large cities, competition among young people is higher, and young people often suffer from a lack of hands-on experience in finding a permanent job;
- development of programs and projects to prepare for interviews, write CVs, to develop communication and presentation skills and self-confidence (at least a quarter of the young people surveyed are motivated to undertake training in these areas);
- information projects about prospective careers, professions of the future, and the expectations of employers (required competencies and skills), along with information on how people from different professions actually work;
- courses and trainings in presentation skills and preparation for job interviews.

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology included several methods for data collection and analysis

1. Expert interviews

Interviews with experts were conducted before the main stage of a qualitative and quantitative study on the barriers for employing young people in order to gain an idea of the key trends in this area and formulate research hypotheses.

In total, 13 interviews were conducted with representatives of NGOs, HR specialists, labor market development analysts who addressed such issues as trends in employment and career guidance for youth, challenges for young people in the labor market, differences in opportunities in regional centers, small towns and capitals, limitations and barriers for young people, recommended support programs in this area.

Expert interviews were conducted in Moscow in September 2018.

2. Online focus groups with young people

The focus group was held in the format of an online forum group using the methodology of qualitative online community in partnership with IPSOS consulting company. The forum involves asynchronous communication (i.e. communication is not “instant”), the moderator asks questions, which participants answer in general during one day. Questions are published in two blocks per day (~ 2 times, 5 questions each), to answer some of the questions participants are required to complete online or offline tasks. Respondents can answer at any time convenient for them. The moderator oversees the discussion and asks clarifying questions as needed. Respondents are notified of new questions and comments.

The online forum group was attended by 20 young people from four cities: Moscow, Nizhny Novgorod, Tver and Krasnodar. In total, the study involved young people who identified themselves as low-income (“enough money for food and clothing” on the scale of income levels) aged 16 to 25 years. Half of them were employed (in the first place of work), the other half were looking for jobs.

The focus group covered issues such as the experience of finding a first job and the difficulties that young people faced in this process, values and lifestyles, preferences and ideas about work and career, as well as attitudes towards employment assistance.

The online forum was held for seven days in April 2019.

3. Youth survey on employment experience

A survey of young people about their employment experience was conducted online in partnership with the IPSOS consulting company. The online survey involved 1,000 respondents aged 15–25 years.

For the purpose of the study, young people with low starting opportunities include the following categories:

- youth from low-income families and small towns with population less than 1 million;
- graduates of residential institutions for orphans,
- young people with disabilities.

The sample was constructed based on the quota method using two criteria: family income level and geography. The study involved 30% of respondents identifying themselves as low-income (“enough money for food and clothing” on the scale of income levels) aged 16 to 25 years. The distribution of respondents by geography was as follows:

- Moscow = 25%;
- cities 1 million + = 35%;
- towns less than 1 million = 40%.

The online survey covered the following topics: experience of employment and problems, experience of career guidance and additional education, self-assessment of competencies and motivation for their development, youth ideas about an ideal job, expectations of organizations that help to find and secure a job.

An online youth survey took place in May-June 2019.

4. Foresight “The future of young people in the labor market”

Foresight is a method for developing long-term strategies in the field of technology, education, economy, or other areas. The goal of our foresight session was to involve the expert community and formulate trends, ideas, programs that will help bridge the existing gap in the labor market between the competencies and education of young people and the needs of employers in the present and future.

About 40 experts from the non-profit sector, educational institutions, government organizations and businesses attended the session. Experts discussed the difficulties, trends and the ideal image of the future from the point of the young people themselves, their parents, educational institutions, executive authorities, NGOs and business. As a result of the activity, a “map of the future labor market for the youth” was formed – a visual image of future for young people in the labor market, including eight key trends, opportunities, threats, and solutions (formats, technologies and regulatory acts) that can be implemented in the short- medium- and long-term perspective.

The foresight session was held on May 30, 2019 at ANO Blagosphere.

5. Benchmark of NGO programs in the field of support for young people in the labor market.

To analyze the existing infrastructure for support of development, career guidance and employment of young people, a database of NGOs working in this area was created. In total, more than 100 organizations were analyzed for the benchmark. The benchmark included organizations that meet the following criteria.

The presence of projects or programs in the field of:

- youth education and development (preparation for educational institutions, assistance in preparing for exams, scholarships, additional and online education, workshops on the development of professional skills and competencies, etc.);
- career guidance (meetings with experts, informing about professions, site visit programs with companies, etc.);
- employment (assistance with preparing CVs, preparation for interviews, search for vacancies and employment, employment support, employment of people with disabilities, etc.).

NGOs are involved in helping young people with low starting opportunities at the age of 15-24, including:

- young people in institutions and leavers of residential care;
- young people with disabilities;
- young people from families in difficult circumstances.

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