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“MONITORING TRENDS IN VIETNAMESE GRADUATES’ EMPLOYMENT”

MOTIVE PROJECT

<http://motive-euproject.net/>

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METHODOLOGICAL RECOMMENDATION PAPER FOR GRADUATE TRACKING

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Premises

The present recommendation paper is subject to periodical monitoring and update considering the Ministry of Education and Training indications and Universities needs of policy implementation at national context

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1. Introduction

The global employment issue and the labour sector are transforming very rapidly, and the indicators related to the trends are expected to be accelerated after the COVID-19 pandemic. Most jobs will disappear by 2040 and will be replaced by new ones. From the demand size, highly skilled and socially engaged people are both requested in an increasing trend. The EU's New Strategic Agenda 2019-2024 seeks to step up investment in education and skills and it needs to be underpinned by a single European learning space as envisaged in the European Education Area by 2025. To reach this objective, there is a need to improve data availability to help policy makers in addressing higher education challenges, as described in the renewed EU Agenda for Higher Education (EC 2017).

The surveys regarding the employment status of graduates become more and more important for many countries and regions with the intention to lay the ground for sustainable European wide graduate research.

The employability of graduates leaving education and training is in this sense a matter of many countries. In this context, as European Union underline as well, *“skills are a pathway to employability and prosperity. With the right skills, people are equipped for good-quality jobs and can fulfil their potential as confident, active citizens. In a fast-changing global economy, skills will largely determine competitiveness and the capacity to drive innovation. They are a pull factor for investment and a catalyst in the virtuous circle of job creation and growth. They are key to social cohesion”* (EC, 2016).

The higher education institutions and sector, as main actor to provide professional training as generators of knowledge for high-level jobs as well as education necessary for the development of personality has the obligation to equip graduates with competencies required to successfully enter a labour market and to maintain their employability throughout their working lives. Each country, expect from Higher education graduates to set a positive impulse to the economy and society in terms of innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship.

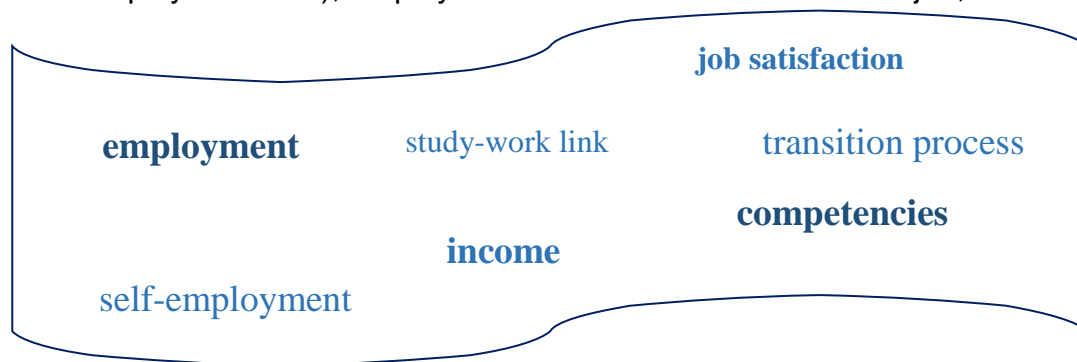
The need to invest in education and training represents a crucial requirement in maintain and improve deployable skills in the country population.

The most important step to achieve these policy goals is the availability of quality data that allows for conclusions and recommendations in a comparative perspective. Such data will help the sector to have larger view of aspects and outcomes of higher education, such as unemployment, the quality of the education-job match, career development and prospects, skills and competencies, international experiences of graduates, etc.

Vietnam faces the same problems and challenges, and MOTIVE project (Monitoring Trends in Vietnamese Graduates' Employment) will try to give its contribution to Vietnamese stakeholders: students, graduates, universities, policy makers, business community, local authorities, etc.

The aggregate pilot survey in the universities that are part for the MOTIVE project comprises surveys of graduates, within one years from graduation¹.

The MOTIVE survey try to analyse main indicators such as the employment status of graduates (employment/unemployment rate), employment characteristics of the main job, etc.



¹ During the meeting held at National University of Art Education, the representative of Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) expressed the last recommendation regarding the graduates tracking survey, that should be performed by the higher education organizations within one year from graduation. MOET recommends that each university should send to MOET, every year, the report with the results of surveys regarding graduates employment status.

2. The MOTIVE pilot survey

The MOTIVE survey represent a new approach of analysing the graduates employment status in Vietnam. The pilot survey is run in the nine Vietnamese universities that are partners in 609781 Erasmus+ MOTIVE project (2020-2023) and it was launched with the intention to lay the ground for a National Centre for Graduates Tracking in Vietnam.

One of the first question for the implementation of the Vietnamese employment status survey is whether to use surveys or administrative data. A survey can hardly be based on administrative data. Careers of graduates can be tracked by combining data from universities' administrations with typically, privacy and social security data restrictions. Mostly this is due to data protection regulations and/or because variables necessary to combine the different sources are missing. Some variables such as skills and competences, employments status, income, etc. cannot be captured by each university administrative data.

Online surveys are recommended as the survey method to be used by all participating Higher Education organizations as they facilitate data collection and processing, thus presenting the most cost-efficient method. A diversity of survey methods, tools or softwares should be avoided in order to not impair the aggregation of data.

Recommendations on the design of a Vietnamese graduate study cover the following three dimensions: Institutional coverage, degree coverage and time of observation of a Vietnamese graduate study:

- ✓ Institutional coverage: the consortium unanimously agree to the coverage of graduates from the nine universities.
- ✓ Degree coverage: according to the stakeholders, graduates from Bachelor or equivalent level to be covered. in a potential Employment Graduate Study (EGS). When looking at the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) orientations, a clear majority of stakeholders recommends the inclusion of all orientations in the survey.

- ✓ Time of observation: the time of (first) observation according to the stakeholders, and especially last MOET recommendation, should be within one year from graduation.

2.1 Universities involved

Nine Vietnamese universities expressed their willingness to be part of the Erasmus+ MOTIVE Project for becoming part of a unified pilot country report on graduates employability.

The MOTIVE pilot survey involve the following universities:

- i. Thai Nguyen University,
- ii. Halong University,
- iii. Hanoi University,
- iv. Academy of Journalism and Communication,
- v. Vietnam National University of Agriculture,
- vi. Posts and Telecommunications Institute of Technology,
- vii. Hanoi Tourism College,
- viii. Hanoi University of Home Affairs,
- ix. National University of Art Education.

2.2 Definition of the target group

A clear definition of the target group (graduates) is essential, especially since MOTIVE Survey aim a national aggregate study. The target group has been defined as follows:

- Graduates from the academic year 2020. Given that the pilot survey will took place in autumn 2021, the report covers therefore graduates within one year from graduation.

The pilot survey includes all graduates on the basis of the Vietnamese Higher Education classification (bachelor and associate degree)².

² AlmaLaurea case and experience: comments on some cohorts which have not been investigated: the AlmaLaurea survey did not include those graduates who have achieved more than an academic qualification. In particular, as for first and second-level degree holders, only the second-level degree has been taken into consideration, whereas in case of students having two degrees of the same level, only the first one (i.e., in terms of graduation date) was considered for the analysis. For more information see AlmaLaurea, 2020 report.

- Graduates are not defined by place of birth or residence, but by the city in which they graduated from a higher education programme in the academic year 2020.
- In principle, all institutions involved in MOTIVE initiative offering undergraduate programmes.

2.3 Topics

The pilot study covers the following key topics: employment status, job characteristic, job activity sector, job satisfaction, skills acquired, income, etc. The indicators are decided by the Vietnamese partners, following the AlmaLaurea questionnaire model, but adapting it to the national context and the necessity and interest of each partner University.

2.4 Survey method

The pilot survey will be an online-survey. The consortium provides the suggestions and recommendation of the questionnaire based on AlmaLaurea Interuniversity Consortium experience at Italian level. The Vietnamese partners will decide how and where host the data collected, with the full respect of privacy rules, data protection law and confidentiality approach.

2.5 Sample size, return rate

The precise sampling strategy will be determined by the consortium in close collaboration with the partners involved (taking the characteristics of the specific organization into account) to strive for a minimum number of respondents providing reliable outcomes for different gender, age, socioeconomic background and broad field of study groups.

2.3 Main split variables

Throughout this report, results will be presented in particularly along four main split variables with respect to the higher education programme graduated from:

- ✓ Employment rate
- ✓ Gender



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- ✓ Master (MA-Level) versus Bachelor (BA-level)
- ✓ Field of study

With respect to field of study, to guarantee reliable and between the nine pilot universities comparable results, it is suggested to distinguish different fields of study.

In our case we suggest at least 5 broad fields of study:

- ✓ Education, Arts and Humanities
- ✓ Social Sciences and Journalism
- ✓ Business, Administration, Law and Services
- ✓ Natural Sciences (including Mathematics) and Health
- ✓ Technology and Engineering

Appendix 2.1 of this chapter shows the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED-F) narrow study programmes clustered in these five broad fields of study.

Appendix 2.1: Fields of study - Clustering

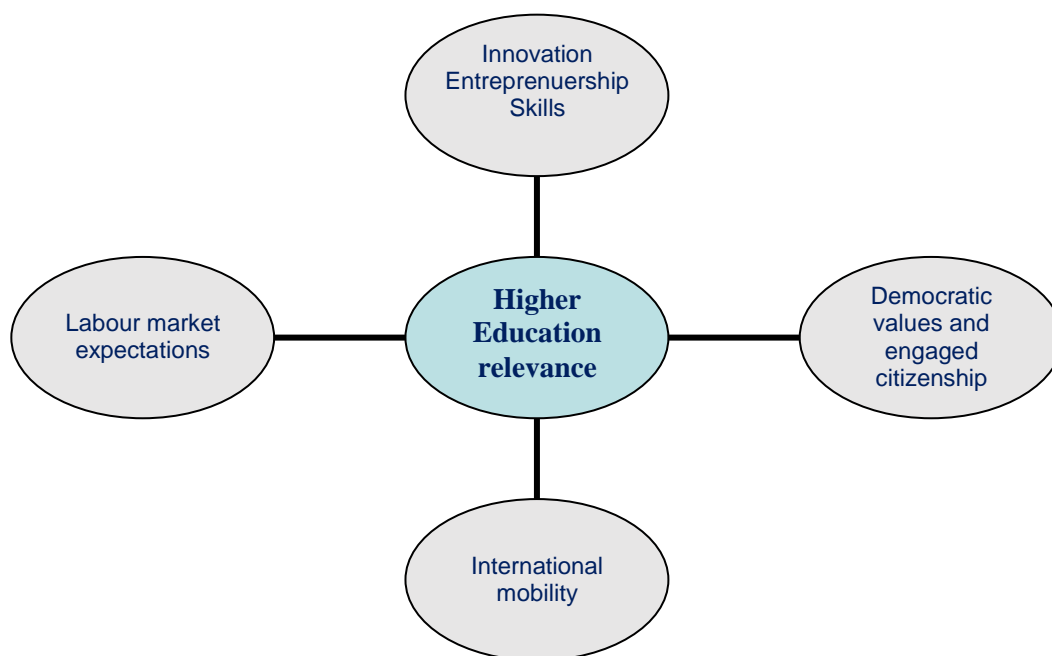
Education, arts and humanities	Social sciences and journalism	Business, administration, law and services	Natural sciences (incl. mathematics) and health	Technology and engineering
Literacy and numeracy	Social and behavioural sciences	Business and administration	Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics (not specified)	Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)
Education	Journalism and information	Law	Biological and related sciences	Interdisciplinary programmes and qualifications involving Information and Communication
Interdisciplinary programmes and qualifications involving Education	Interdisciplinary programmes and qualifications involving Social sciences, journalism	Interdisciplinary programmes and qualifications involving Business, administration	Environment	Engineering, manufacturing and construction (not specified)
Arts		Services (not specified)	Physical sciences	Engineering and engineering trades
Humanities		Personal services	Mathematics and statistics	Manufacturing and processing
Languages		Hygiene and occupational health services	Interdisciplinary programmes and qualifications involving Natural sciences, math	Architecture and construction
Interdisciplinary programmes and qualifications involving Arts and humanities		Security services	Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics (other)	Interdisciplinary programmes and qualifications involving Engineering, manufacturing
Arts and humanities (other)		Transport services	Agriculture	
		Interdisciplinary programmes and qualifications involving Services	Forestry	
			Fisheries	
			Veterinary	
			Interdisciplinary programmes and qualifications involving Agriculture, forestry,	
			Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary (other)	
			Health	
			Welfare	
			Interdisciplinary programmes and qualifications involving Health and welfare	

3. Expected features of Vietnamese higher education in a comparative perspective

In this paragraph, the basic expected features of Vietnamese higher education are introduced. At international level, the higher education institutions are expected to equip graduates with necessary skills and competencies to successfully enter a labour market and to maintain their employability. Higher education graduates are expected to provide a positive and fast impulse on the economies and societies by approaching creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Higher education should also promote engaged citizenship and democratic values (tolerance, openness and critical thinking). Higher education is more and more being called on to increase its transparency as well, in order to enhance young adults' ability to make effective educational choices as well as the promotion of international mobility. Vietnam higher education sector increased significantly in terms of its international mobility during the last years. Mobility aims at adding to intercultural understanding, but also to expand competencies and better jobs of graduates.

It is suggested, in order to enhance the individual as well as societal relevance of higher education, to consider four main dimensions. At European level for example, the crucial goals of the political agenda as formulated by European policy makers at national and European level are represented by:

- i. Innovation, entrepreneurship and adequate skills (creative and entrepreneurial skills, professional expertise, transversal skills, etc);
- ii. Labour market expectations (successful transition to the labour market, adequate employment, wellbeing, career development, etc.),
- iii. International mobility during and after studies;
- iv. Democratic values and engaged citizenship (critical thinking, tolerance, attitudes towards democracy, political participation, civic engagement, etc.).



These dimensions reflect crucial paths in which higher education contributes to better economies and societies. They are interconnected, in the sense that they can mutually reinforce each other and not only: can also compete with each other. For example, critical thinking contributes to innovation and creativity; could represent as well a key pillar of democratic values and engaged citizenship, as well as an important input to increase employability. During the last years, due to globalization and advancement in communication and transports, international mobility is often perceived as improving the allocation of skilled labour, increasing individual labour market opportunities, enhancing intercultural knowledge and tolerance, and promoting the spread of innovations and creativity.

Throughout the Graduates Employment status report, the different dimensions of higher education will be discussed in separate chapters in detail. In a first step, a summary of these different dimensions is provided by addressing the extent to which higher education graduates, in the nine pilot universities, report that their study programmes provided them with a good basis for labour market.



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4. Conclusions

In all countries, to the Higher education sector is given the task to prepare students for life. This task is connected to different dimensions, such as a good entrance on the labour market, long-term graduates employability, handling skills (required in an international context and dynamic labour market), as well as to promote engaged citizenship and democratic values. The higher education in the nine pilot universities probably succeeds differently with respect to these dimensions. The basis provided for further learning is crucial, as graduates throughout their employment path and experience will be confronted with challenges requiring new skills or with changes in the labour market making their previously acquired skills obsolete. An additional aspect that should be considered is represented by the basis provided by the higher education study programme to acquire managerial, entrepreneurial and/or leadership skills. Entrepreneurs are seen as the backbone of the current and future labour market. Entrepreneurial skills are not only relevant for entrepreneurs but also for those employed by companies to look beyond the traditional boundaries of their job and to provide creative solutions. In this sense, it is of crucial importance for the higher education system to look into approaches that stimulate the basis provided to students with respect to entrepreneurial skills. To what extent this is related and the assessment of academic experience, the Voyage questionnaire developed under the Erasmus+ Project (ref, n, 561656, 2015-2018) implemented in Vietnam with 3 pilot universities, can represent an important baseline for further studies.

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