

Jobs for Bosnia and Herzegovina - Youth Essay Competition

Background

Across Europe and Central Asia (ECA) in 2012, about half of the working-age population had jobs.

The region's average unemployment rate stood at 14 percent, and most of the unemployed had been looking for a job for more than a year. Younger and older workers, women, and ethnic minorities are more likely than other segments to be jobless or employed in informal or low-wage jobs. For example, one in five young people in ECA has no job and is neither searching for work nor studying.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), 32 percent of people age 15 or above had jobs in 2012. Some 23 percent of women were working outside the home, compared to 42 percent among men in the same age range. Nearly 40 percent of BiH youth (age 15-24) have no job and are neither searching for work nor studying.

Many countries in the region are wondering, given the macroeconomic limitations and the expectation that the external environment will improve, what growth policies can be put in place to boost their economies. Countries like BiH might start by embarking on a robust structural reform agenda.

Such an agenda offers the opportunity to bring more people into the labor force, particularly young people. The region's people are rapidly aging: 17 percent of BiH's adult population is over 65; by 2030 this share will jump to 26 percent. This means that for every elderly BiH citizen today, there are six who could work to support their retirement. But in just over 15 years, each elderly person will be supported by less than four adults.

The World Bank Group (WBG)[1] is committed to supporting BiH in promoting reforms that will create more jobs. Given that young people are most affected by unemployment issues, it is essential to hear from youth on how best to meet the challenge of youth unemployment in BiH. Through an essay competition – *Jobs for Youth*[2] – the World Bank Group aims to capture the ideas of BiH youth and create more jobs for a new generation.

The Essay Question

Participants are asked to submit a 2,000 word essay on the following topic:

Tackling Youth Unemployment in Bosnia and Herzegovina: My Generation's View

Requirements

- 2,000 words, double-spaced
- Written in English and unpublished
- The author's name must appear only on the cover page.

Evaluation Criteria

- Innovation and originality
- Link to priorities: removing barriers to job creation and increasing job opportunities
- Specific, actionable recommendations

Eligibility/Participants. The competition is open only to citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina between the ages of 18 and 30 who have graduated from or are enrolled in a bachelor's degree (BA) program. Current employees of the WBG and their relatives are ineligible.

Duration. The competition will be accepting submissions from February 5, 2014 to **March 31, 2014**. The winners will be announced on **April 15, 2014**.

Prizes. Winners will receive cash awards. The author of the best essay will receive 5,000 BiH Convertible Marks (BAM). The second and third place winners will be awarded BAM 3,000 and BAM 1,000, respectively.

Appraisal. Proposals will be assessed by a committee comprised of WBG staff and internationally recognized experts from the private sector, government, and academia.

Process. The launch of the competition will be announced on the WBG website: www.worldbank.org.ba

Submissions should be sent by e-mail to: bihyouthandjobs@worldbank.org and include a cover letter with a short biography of the candidate.

Additional Guidelines: All entries become the property of the WBG, with the right to publish. Candidates may only submit one entry. Submissions will not be returned.

[1] World Bank Group members are International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), International Finance Corporation (IFC), Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), International Development Bank (IDA), and International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID).

[2] The **Jobs for Youth** contest is supported by "Let's Work," a global partnership of the private sector, international finance institutions, donors and other partners to create more and better private sector jobs. This partnership - which is coordinated by IFC, the private sector arm of the World Bank Group - aims to strengthen the areas that might create large number of jobs and improve their quality. *Let's Work* is a central action within the World Bank Group's increased focus on jobs as a way to help achieve its goals of ending of extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity.