

## SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF ECONOMIC INACTIVE YOUTH IN BULGARIA

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**Abstract:** In recent years, changes in socio-economic development of Bulgaria seriously affected the prospects for decent labor realization of young people in the country. In the context of the closure of many businesses and rising unemployment, young people under 29 are facing new challenges such as increased risk of dropping out of school, long-term unemployment, marginalization and social exclusion. Research data indicates that more young people are not engaged in education, employment and training, which leads to severe consequences such as exclusion from the labor market.

**Keywords:** economically inactive young people, young people, labour market

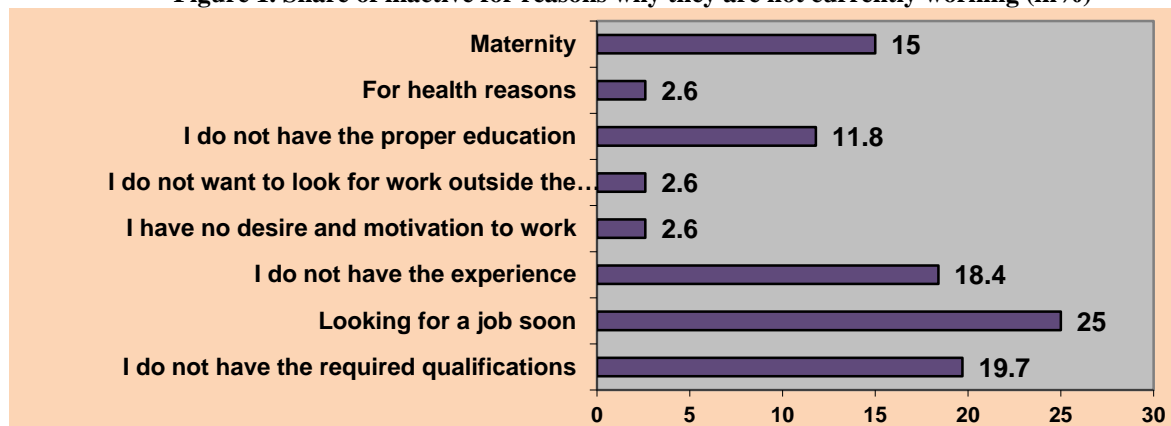
### 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the changes in Bulgaria's socio-economic development have had a serious impact on the prospects for a decent employment of young people in the country. In the context of the closure of many businesses and rising unemployment, young people under 29 face new challenges such as increasing the risk of dropping out of school, long-term unemployment, marginalization and social exclusion. Data from surveys indicate that more and more young people are not engaged in education, employment and training, leading to severe consequences for themselves and for the economy and the labor market as a whole [3]. In recent years, there have been serious negative consequences associated with an increase in the number of economically inactive people aged 15-29 [5]. NSI reports that in Bulgaria in 2015 there are 1,169,398 young people who do not work and are not included in education [5]. Similar data is also registered by the European statistics, according to which Bulgarian youths aged 15-29 who do not study are not trained, do not work and have no registration in the services of the Employment Agency are almost 25% of all young people in the country. The EU average is 15.4% [4].

At the national level, data from the Employment Agency's Administrative Statistics in 2015. show that the group of unemployed young people up to 29 years (including those up to 24 years) is 51 680 persons on average monthly. [1:28] Compared to 2014, their number decreased by 12,441 persons (by 19.4%). Their share in the total number of unemployed fell by 17.5% in 2014. reaching 15.6% in 2015. [1:28]. Against this backdrop, the question arises: What prevents the successful realization of young people in the labor market?

It is well-known to all of us that active inclusion in the labor market requires the possession of skills and abilities to address the many requirements in the workplace. Data from the group profile of 80 economically inactive youths produced under the "Compass - Activation for the Labor Market" project, prepared in 2016, funded by the Operational Program "Human Resources Development" shows that lack of qualification is one of the most serious barriers to start work. According to the summarized information, the share of inactive people who point to qualification as the main reason for the lack of employment is close to 20%. The next key prerequisite for acquiring inactive status is the lack of experience. A little over 18% of the youngsters in the study group do not work for this reason. The relatively high proportion of those who do not currently work because they are unemployed relatively recently (25%) or are on maternity leave (15%) have the impression. There is a low proportion of inactive young people who are disobedient to work, do not want to look for work outside the populated area where they live or do not work because of health problems (2.6%). [2]

**Figure 1. Share of inactive for reasons why they are not currently working (in%)**

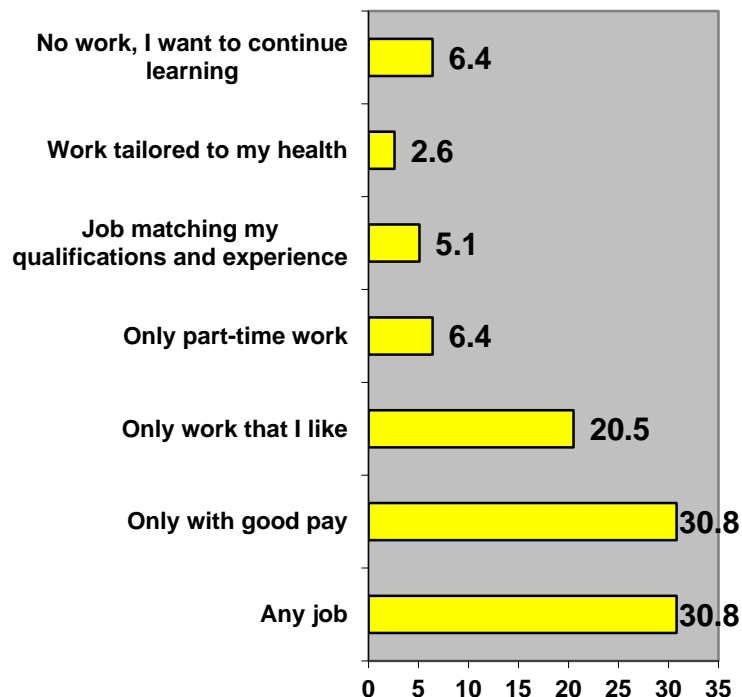


Source: [2]

## 2. READINESS TO SEARCH AND FIND A JOB

Looking at the behavior of the inactive labor market, interest is the extent to which these individuals show willingness, desire and aspiration to search and find a job. Profile data shows that generally youngsters are willing to start work. The relative share of those who want to work "at any cost" without claims is close to 31%. There is also the proportion of those who would join the labor market if their work is financially satisfying and well paid (31%). Nearly 21% want to work only if they like their work. The share of those who prefer part-time or unwilling to work is only 6.4%. As the main argument for this intention, the young people only wish and aim to continue their education, with a view to a better realization in life. [2]

**Figure 2. What kind of work are you ready to get started with? ( in %)**

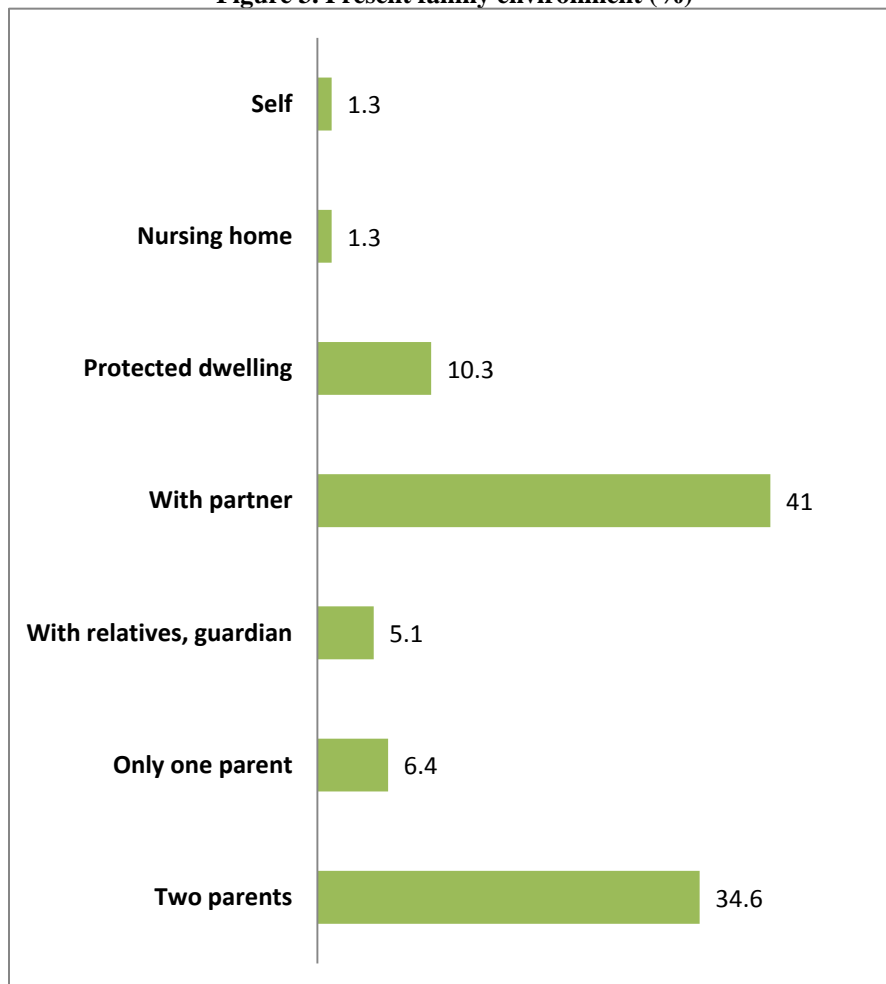


Source: [2]

### 3. MAIN REASONS FOR THE LACK OF REALIZATION IN THE LABOR MARKET

When analyzing the main reasons why inactive young people are isolated from the labor market, we should also pay attention to family as a key factor that greatly determines the development and successful realization of young people in life. The sociological information obtained from the profile of 80 inactive youths shows that often violations in the family environment make it possible to exclude them from the labor market. According to the data obtained, the majority of respondents live with their spouse (41%) or their two parents (34.6%). The share of young people in incomplete families (one parent) or without parents (raised by relatives, guardians, foster families) is 11.5%. The share of those living in a sheltered home or in a social home (11.6%) is also relatively high. The impression is that the majority of young people living in a sheltered home (75%) have a basic and lower level of education, which to a certain extent may be due to the fact that they live outside their families. This is where, as in a number of other studies, the role and importance of the family environment for the motivation and career development of young people is demonstrated. Nearly 63% of inactive people who have left their education live with their partner, which gives reason to argue that setting up an early age is a prerequisite for school drop-outs often due to maternity (female) or care for the newly created family. [2]

**Figure 3. Present family environment (%)**



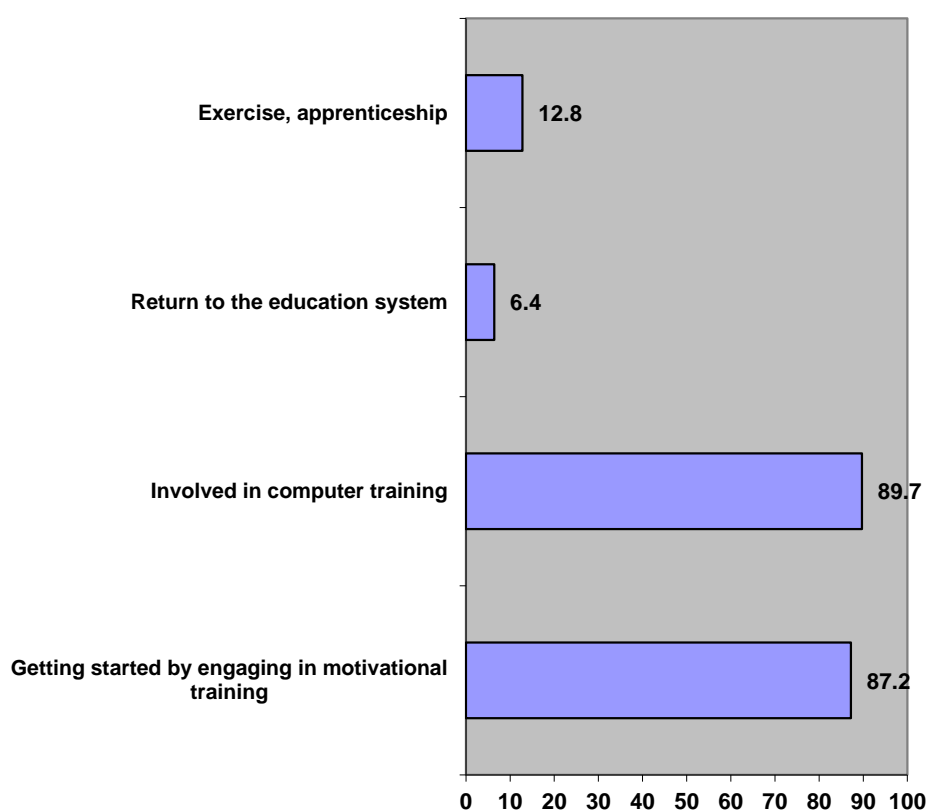
Source: [2]

Analyzing the data in terms of the length of time a youth is in a situation of unemployment, the data from the profile suggests that just over 50% of inactive youths say they have never worked. These are mainly persons who have

recently completed their education and are yet to be successful either in the labor market or continue their education. Over 23% of people remain stable (over 1 year) outside the labor market or outside the education system. These are predominantly primary (27.8%) and non-qualified. The share of long-term unemployed (over 2 years and over) is relatively low (6.4%), young people with primary education (60%) and no experience and education (40%). Therefore, more effort is needed in terms of activating these people and creating more opportunities for acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills. [2]

The aggregated results of the developed group profile record and distinguish the following two forms of activation to which inactive individuals are most willing to be included. These include: inclusion in computer training (89.7%) and starting work by including motivation training (87.2%). Providing support for apprenticeship and apprenticeship was identified as the next most important form of activation (12.8%). To the least extent, individuals want to be supported by a return to the education system (6.4%). [2]

**Figure 4. In which of the following forms of activation would you like to be included? (in %)**



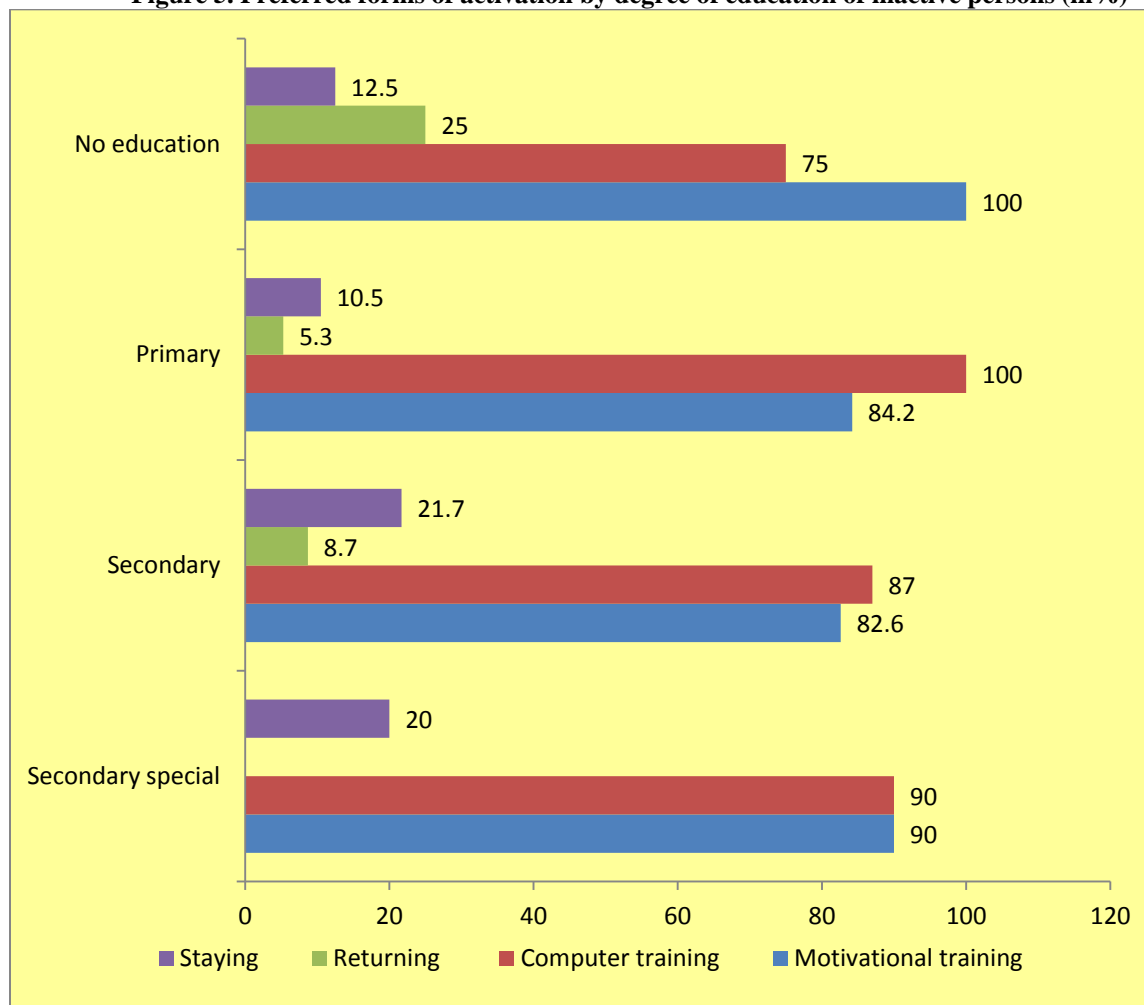
Source: [2]

#### 4. ATTITUDES TO ENGAGE IN VARIOUS FORMS OF ACTIVATION

Depending on the level of education, individuals have a different desire to be involved in various forms of activation. For example, all graduates show the greatest interest in enrolling in computer training, with 80% of them wanting to participate in motivational trainings, with a view to faster and more successful implementation of the

labor market. On the other hand, young people with no prior education want to be included in motivation training (100%), in computer (75%), some of whom want to return to the education system (25%) and get internship (12.5 %). [2]

**Figure 5. Preferred forms of activation by degree of education of inactive persons (in%)**



Source: [2]

In the identification process, covered inactive persons were asked to evaluate their knowledge and skills to work with a computer (including work with word processing programs, tables and the Internet). The data show that overall the youngsters give a relatively low estimate of their level of computer skills and knowledge - 2.62 (from a maximum of 5.00). The proportion of those who self-assess their computer-based level as poor and satisfactory is nearly 49%, whereas those who define their computer skills as very good and excellent account for only 17.1% of all identified persons. [2]

**Figure 6. Self-assessment of computer skills and abilities (in%)**



Source: [2]

Depending on the level of education acquired, the predominant part of the lower-educated youngsters indicate that they do not work well with a computer, whereas those with a higher level of education have the answers quite positive, overwhelming the good judgment.

## 5. CONCLUSION

From what has been said so far, we can conclude that promoting internship and apprenticeship is an important prerequisite for the successful integration of inactive youth into the labor market. Joining the inactive group is largely a function of the level of education completed and the degree of learning outcomes. Lack of qualifications and experience are emerging as the most serious barriers to starting work, while the share of young people wishing to engage in apprenticeships and apprenticeships is small. This result is probably due to the lack of sufficient information and limited popularization of the benefits and benefits of participating in these forms of activation aimed at better adapting people without work experience to the work process. When examining and analyzing the group of economically inactive youth, we should also keep in mind that this group is not homogeneous but includes a variety of sub-groups with specific needs. In order to better activate the labor market, more needs to be done to study their needs in order to better target them and to be involved in training on key competences.

## REFERENCES

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