

ON FOCUS

At the end of 2019, the Center reports a fruitful but also a groundbreaking training year, in which the team managed to successfully transfer the experience gained over the years from its work on joint projects and initiatives with the International Labor Organization and the International Training Center of the International Labor Organization in the implementation of the project Integrated Trainings for the Administration of the Labor Market and in the Social Sphere, financed by HRD OP 2014-2020. The sustainable development of the Center found a natural continuation on a new level with the incorporation of the integrated element in the trainings as a leading starting point in all seminars. The good implementation of project activities so far, the team of well-trained experts the Center dispose and the sustainability of educational practices are the basis for working on future initiatives with national and international funding.

Over the past year, the portfolio of courses for unemployed persons registered with the employment offices at the place of residence was successfully expanded. The courses are financed by the National Employment Action Plan in force for the year. There are a number of challenges in the implementation of these courses, the most serious of which is the inhomogeneous level of prior knowledge of participants upon admission to the course. Therefore, in the course of the preparation of the courses for unemployed persons for 2020, the recommendations of the Employment Agency, the demand for labor on the labor market and the training evaluation reports are also carefully analyzed. Particular attention is paid to increasing the digital competence of students. It is planned to continue and expand the successful practice of organizing courses in key competencies to help overcome the inhomogeneous level of knowledge of the unemployed involved in training in 2020.

However, the end of the year at the Center is not only a time for balance, but also for hard work on the preparation for the next training year. In the period September - November 2019, according to a pre-prepared schedule, activities were conducted to study the training needs for 2020, a summary of the results of which you could read on page 9. Based on these results, an Operational Plan for the next training year will be prepared and the annual catalog of courses for 2020 will be developed and published.

The current work continues in December, as the schedule of the Center includes two seminars under the project Integrated Trainings for the Administration of the Labor Market and in the Social Sphere, which will be dedicated to social work with persons and families at risk, as well as care for children, youths and people with disabilities in residential services. Representatives of the various target groups of the project will be invited to participate in the seminars, which will create an opportunity to combine efforts and build contacts and interactions between institutions and organizations working on these cases.

In 2019, a number of activities were successfully carried out, organized with the joint efforts of the Living Standards, Demographic Policy and Social Investments (LSDPSI) Directorate of the MLSP and a team of CHRDMI in implementation of the Operational Plan of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy for 2019 and the Management Program of the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2017 - 2021. The last two events included in the schedule took place in early December with increased interest. The first was the National Meeting on Demographic Issues and Challenges, which took place on December 5 and brought together members of the interdepartmental group on demographic issues, which discussed extremely important issues for the country, including current demographic policy challenges, the use of statistics for purposes income inequalities, new demographic models for development in the 21st century and the performance of health, aging and retirement in Europe SHARE.

On December 9, again in cooperation with a team of the LSDPSI Directorate, a *Stock Exchange with Employers - social enterprises to facilitate the transition of young people from vulnerable groups 16 - 20 years old from social services to the labor market in Bulgaria*. The training was intended for young people accommodated in residential services / institutions and persons at risk of poverty, social exclusion and others using social services, incl. and people with disabilities, as the participants were acquainted with the prospects and opportunities for successful start-up and business in the field of social and solidarity economy. Two study visits to social enterprises were held during the event.

DEVELOPMENT OF EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND LABOR QUALITY ARE AMONG THE PRIORITIES OF THE NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT ACTION PLAN IN 2020.

A working expert meeting was organized at the CHRDR I on Current aspects of the National Employment Action Plan 2020. Priorities of the Employment Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (2021 - 2030) on 21st November. The event brought together representatives of various institutions and organizations involved in the development of strategic and planning documents in the field of employment policy. These were employees from the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, the Social Assistance Agency, the Employment Agency, the National Statistical Institute, the Agency for People with Disabilities, the Industrial Association capital in Bulgaria, CITUB and others.

The forum discussed a draft version of the National Employment Action Plan 2020, which is a mechanism for adjusting the labor market to sustainability, balance and better functioning. Particular attention was paid to the guidelines of the new National Employment Strategy 2021-2030 in the context of changes in labor market policies. By creating an opportunity to discuss two of the most important and topical issues in the design and implementation of labor market policies, the initiative aimed to support and build the interaction between institutions and organizations working in this field.

We spoke with Mrs. Elka Dimitrova, moderator of the event and Director of the Labor Market Policy and Labor Mobility Directorate at the Ministry, about the challenges for the next year and decade in the field of the labor market, as well as about the mechanisms and ways in which solutions are sought.

Mrs. Dimitrova, what are your impressions of the expert meeting, which was held at the Center for Human Resources Development and Regional Initiatives on November 21? How would you define the importance of this event in the context of national employment policies?

E. Dimitrova: In our practice, this is one of the few cases in which we organize an external joint meeting of two working groups - one to develop a National Action Plan for Employment, and the other - to develop a National Employment Strategy until 2030. I can say that this experience proved to be successful, as many specialists involved in the work on one document are also part of the team of the other. We had representatives of key ministries, social partners and agencies involved in the implementation of these policies. During the discussion of the National Action Plan for Employment we received interesting proposals that will be used.

Ms. Dimitrova, in this case we are talking about documents that are still being worked on, but could you tell us in advance what the priorities will be in the National Employment Action Plan for 2020?

E. Dimitrova: The main priorities of the Action Plan are improving the functioning of the labor market, providing a better workforce for employers for next year in the conditions of increased demand for workers and specialists, as well as development of employment services and rapid development of job seekers. The National Employment Action Plan also provides subsidized employment to a number of vulnerable groups, which are usually the long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, young people, people over the age of fifty, but mostly the low-skilled, people with low education, because they get a job hardest, due to the fact that they do not have skills and employers are looking for people with higher qualifications. The resource remains within the existing parameters, but we will increase the wages of subsidized employment in connection with the growth of the minimum wage.

Could you tell us what are the challenges in preparing the Employment Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2021 - 2030?

E. Dimitrova: The development of the Strategy until 2030 is a very important process, a very important and difficult task. This is because,

firstly, the strategy covers a long period. Secondly, by 2020, many key documents at European and national level will be completed. In developing the strategy, we rely on future forecasts, on future concepts, some of which have not yet been finalized. That is why we need to be innovators and meet the challenges we have. There are also many European documents and recommendations that we can and should include in this document. In addition, the new Strategy is expected with great interest in connection with the new period under the Operational Program Human Resources Development until 2027 - the programming of schemes will build on this strategy and this is an opportunity the significant resource we will have, to be used for the most important priorities in the development of human resources in our country. This is a resource that should be used indicatively, because now is the time to prepare the workforce for the future of labor in connection with important changes in the work environment under the influence of digital technologies. Here the quality of the workforce, its knowledge and skills come to the fore. In addition, we have a desire to improve the functioning of institutions, their connection, cooperation, the use of new technologies in their work, so that we can use this resource.

The strategy should be a specific document with clear messages, but also activities, which should then be turned into plans and programs to be implemented, so that it does not remain a wish or it is a document that paints good pictures from which it does not follow nothing. Our strategic documents are implemented with the annually adopted National Employment Action Plan, so we have a specific mechanism that is financially secured and we have all the conditions for success.

The team of the Center thanks for the assistance of Mrs. Elka Dimitrova and wishes fruitful work of the teams for the preparation of the National Employment Action Plan 2020 and the Employment Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (2021 - 2030)!

In 2019, within the support of the project Integrated Training for Administration in the Labor Market and in the Social Sphere, all electronic products of the Center were updated - external and internal websites, Lecturer's Club, Smartnet, electronic library and Distance Learning Platform. The method of preparing this e-newsletter with new sections and materials was also updated. So far, in implementation of the set goals of the project have been held 14 discussions in Smartnet and in the Lecturer's Club – 3 with an extremely good inclusion by the participants.

- **Until the end of December, the current topics in the Lecturer's Club, on which we invite our lecturers and methodologists to share their experience and suggestions, concerning the development of new teaching methods are: LEARNING THROUGH COOPERATION AND JOINT LEARNING and GAME DISCUSSION. The lecturers' opinions will be summarized, carefully analyzed and presented in the next issue of the newsletter. Your ideas and contributions, as always, are a starting point, which is extremely important for us in developing new approaches and techniques for work. We count on your activity!**
All opinions and comments are available for reading, including without registration, at: <http://www.lecturerclub.com/bg>.

Moderator of the Lecturer's Club: Galina Ivanova, galina_ivanova@chrdri.net

- **The current topics that we will discuss on Smartnet at the end of the year are again related to social issues and relate to the trainings held during the month under the project Integrated Trainings for Administration of the Labor Market and in the Social Sphere. At the moment, the questions of what the implementation of the principle of "social inclusion" means in the concrete work and how it could be better applied in practice are relevant, and in the coming days questions on the topic of care for young people and children placed in residential services will be published for discussion. We invite all participants in the trainings to give their opinion on the topics of the upcoming trainings in November: at: <http://smartnetbg.net>.
Moderator: Galina Ivanova, galina_ivanova@chrdri.net**

- For each courses' topics are published training materials at the Electronic Library. You can find them at <http://chrdri.net/bg/library/biblioteka>. CHRDR's team make constant efforts to expand the information. The electronic library has open access and is available to all with interests in the social sphere.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF TRAININGS OF EMPLOYEES FROM THE ADMINISTRATION FOR 2020 - MAIN RESULTS AND CHALLENGES IN THE WORK OF THE CENTER FOR THE NEXT TRAINING YEAR

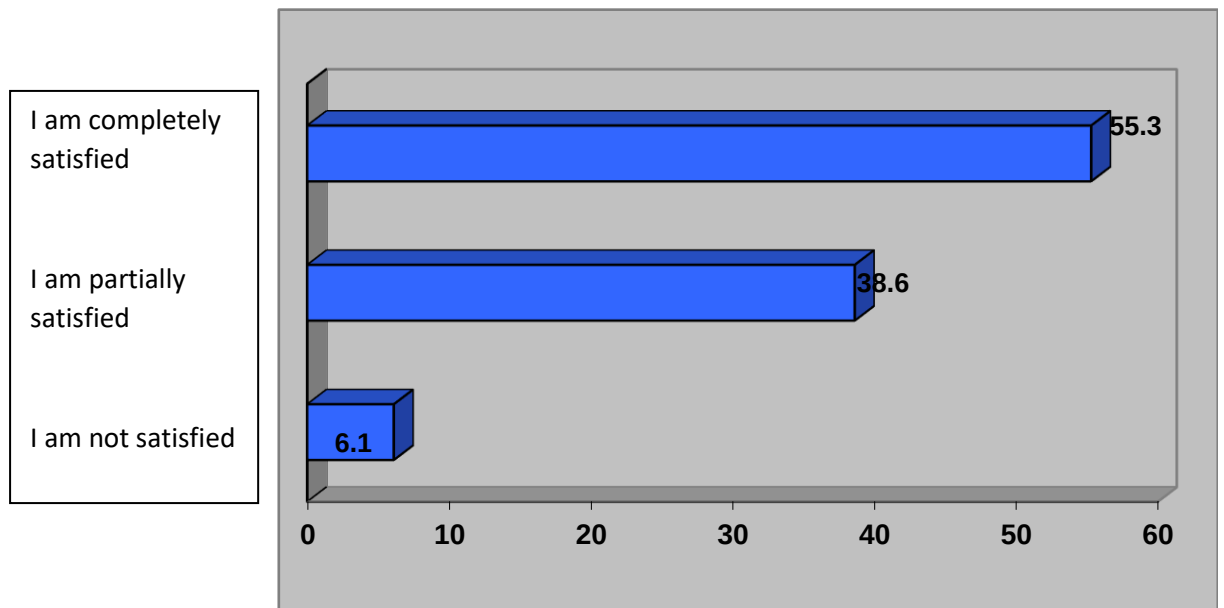
The Center for Human Resources Development and Regional Initiatives conducts annual surveys of the training needs for the administration. This is dictated by the fact that the needs for increasing competencies in certain professional fields are constantly changing and in order to meet them it is necessary to update the knowledge of current teaching topics.

This year the regular survey was conducted in the period September - December 2019 by a team of the Center and sociologists.

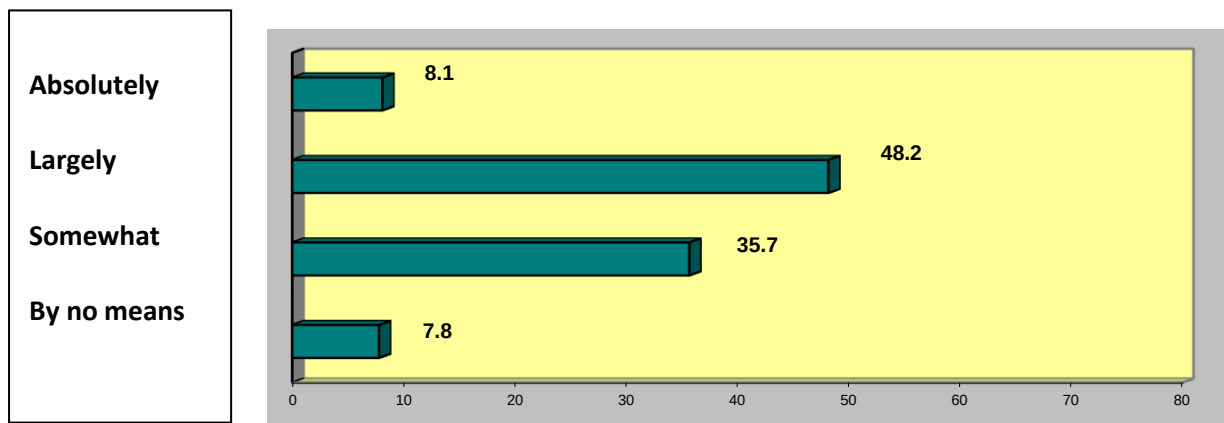
It covers the three target groups of the project, as a result of the great interest the initially planned number of respondents according to the sample was exceeded and the prepared analysis is based on 790 completed questionnaires.

The survey again supports the data on high satisfaction with the quality of work, which the Center's team gain from the evaluation questionnaires filled in at the end of each training. It is especially important that a large part of the persons already participating in the trainings answer that their inclusion in the seminars directly contributes to the better performance of their professional duties.

Quality Satisfaction of the Seminars (in %)



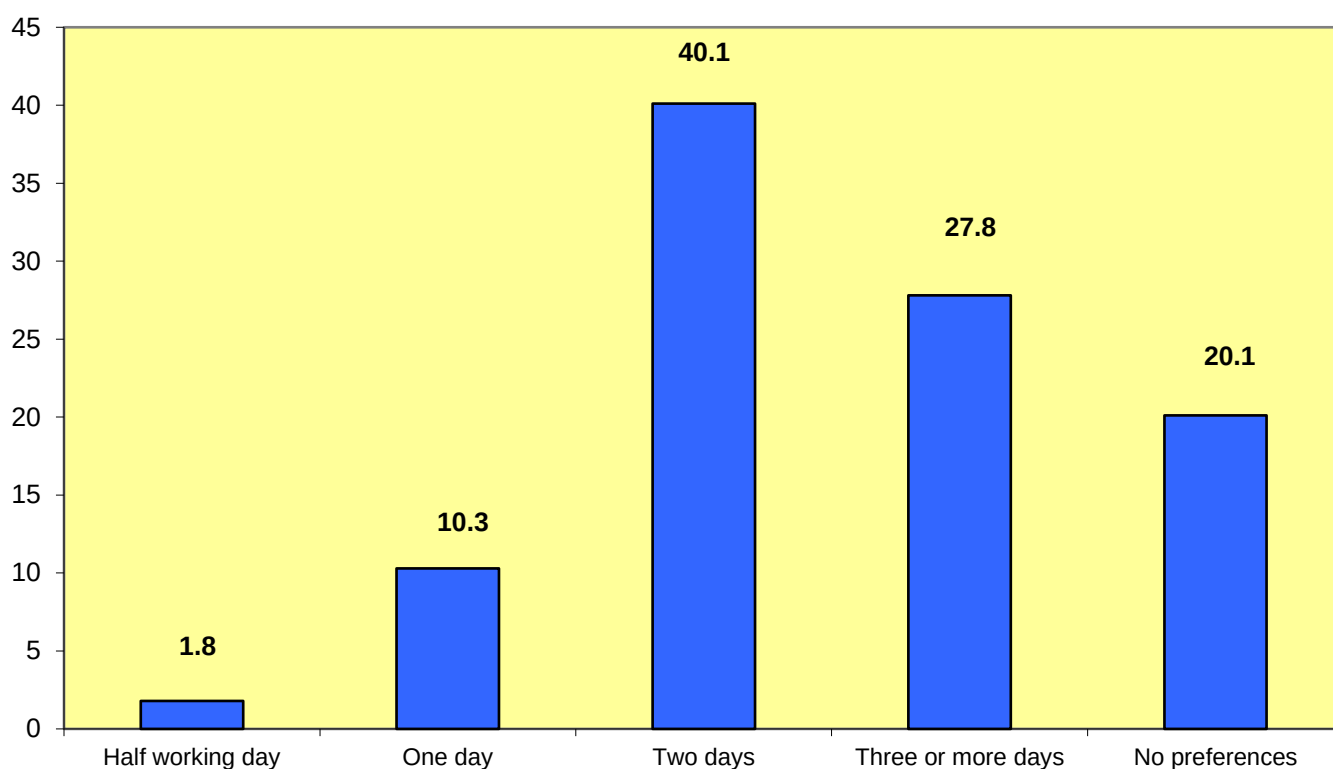
To what extent do the knowledge and skills gained from the trainings contribute to the better performance of your duties at work? (in %)



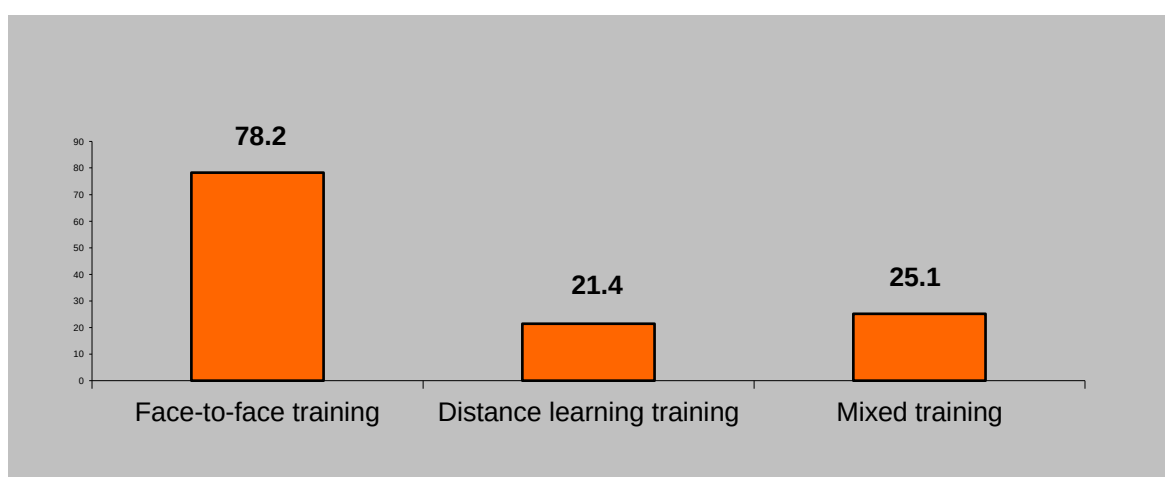
The results of this year's analysis also support the data received last year on the factors that determine the choice of trainings by the participants. These are: the importance of the topic (83.7%), the language of teaching (83.3%), lecturers (73.9%) and the form of education (72.3%). It

is especially important for the project implementation team that the present analysis confirms as the most appropriate the two-day form of attendance in which most of the trainings under the project Integrated Trainings for the Administration in the Labor Market and in the Social Sphere are organized. 78.2% of the respondents define the form of attendance as the most preferred, and 40.1% prefer the two-day period for organizing the seminars.

Preferred time period for organizing and conducting trainings (in %)

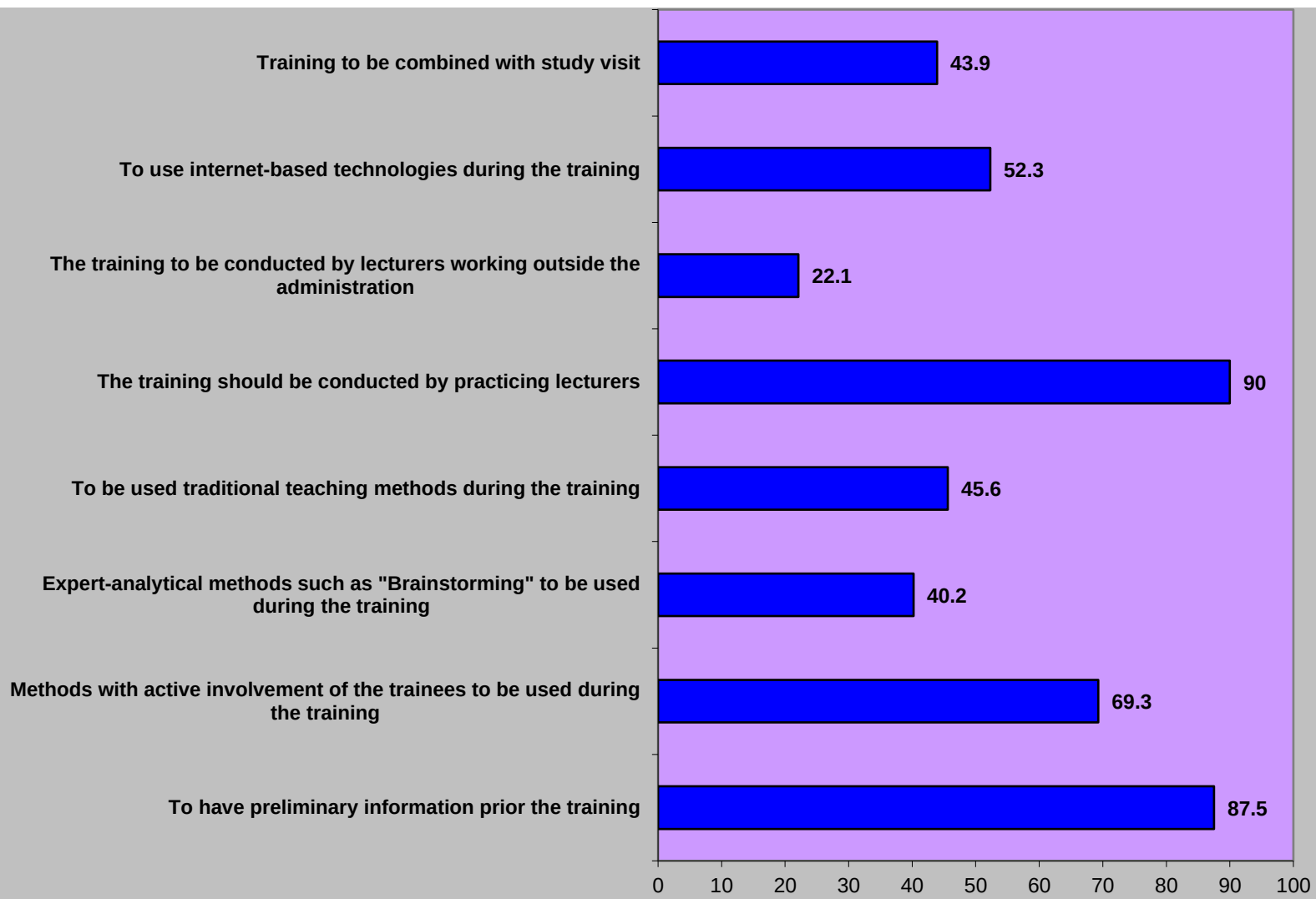


Preferred forms of education (in %)



The assessment also shows that it is especially important for the training to be conducted by lecturers - practitioners in order to directly apply what they have learned in work environment (90%). Another important factor that supports the team's efforts in this direction so far is sending information materials in advance and preliminary discussions on the social network Smartnet. Thus participants have preliminary information about the goals and the training program (87.5%). According to 69.3% of those who filled in the questionnaires, it is important to apply interactive methods to allow active involvement of students. Thus, the results obtained for another year indicate the importance of developing and testing such methods in the context of specialized training, which is a priority in the work of the methodological team of the Center over the years and successfully continues in this project.

How important it is for you: (in %)



The assessment also shows good awareness about the electronic products of CHRDMI, which still remain best known to the employees of the MLSP and Second Spending Units to the Minister of Labor and Social Policy, who are the main target group of the Center's trainings in recent years.

The needs assessment once again confirms the special importance of the project itself with the high percentage of those wishing to participate in integrated trainings with other administrations.

The trainings planned for the next school year will again provide an opportunity for joint training of the three target groups, and the priority topics will be organized in six major sections: labor market and labor development, social protection and social inclusion policies, labor legislation and health and safe working conditions, health and equal opportunities and non-discrimination policies. The specific titles of the trainings will be formulated on the basis of the data obtained from the sociological needs survey and used for the preparation of the Operational Plan for the trainings and the Catalogue of CHRDMI trainings for 2020.

TRAININGS SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER

SOCIAL WORK WITH PERSONS AND FAMILIES AT RISK. SPECIFICS IN WORKING WITH CLIENTS IN A MULTIETHNIC ENVIRONMENT - OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Seminar, December 10 - 11, 2019

Form of education:face-to-face

The seminar is carried out under the project Integrated Trainings for the Administration of the Labor Market and in the Social Sphere.

The seminar is intended for representatives of institutions and organizations working with persons and families at risk, including social workers from the Social Assistance Directories of the Social Assistance

Agency and from structures to municipalities, experts from the State Agency for Child Protection and NGOs.

In the course of the training, the participants will gain in-depth knowledge about the policies of social inclusion when working with persons and families at risk, as well as the current changes in the regulatory framework when working with such cases. During the seminar, special attention will be paid to modern approaches and methods, as well as to inter-institutional interaction, and participants will receive practical guidelines that will support their work. Emphasis will be placed on working with vulnerable groups from different ethnic groups for their more effective integration into society.

Successful graduates will be issued a certificate of participation according to an approved standard of CHRDRİ.

For more information:

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CARE FOR CHILDREN, YOUTHS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

Seminar, December 17-18, 2019

Form of education: face-to-face

The seminar is implemented under the project Integrated Trainings for the Administration of the Labor Market and in the Social Sphere.

The seminar aims to bring together representatives of institutions and organizations in charged of providing care for people with disabilities. For participation are invited employees on expert positions from Regional Social Assistance Directories and Social Assistance Directories of Social Assistance Agency and State Agency for Child Protection, experts from Ministry of Health and Second Spending Units to the Minister of Health, social workers from municipal structures and NGOs.

In the course of the training, the participants will be able to upgrade their knowledge about the provision of accompanying social services to support children, youths and people with disabilities, as well as the provision of residential social services for children, youth and adults. Particularly important in the context of the overall objectives of the project is building skills for intersectoral and inter-institutional interaction in the provision of residential services as a guarantee for better social inclusion of service users.

Successful graduates will be issued a certificate of participation according to an approved standard of CHRDR.

For information and registration:

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DEAR COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS,

Thank you for your cooperation and successful joint work.

We, the team of the Center, send a year of hard work, filled with new challenges and the joy of overcoming them.

May 2020 fulfill the hopes for a better world with more smiles, brings creative aspiration and courage, be filled with new ideas and profitable endeavors!

Accept our heartfelt wishes for merry and happy holidays!

Be healthy and creative!

Happy Holidays!

The team of CRCHRI