The project called Job Orientation Training in Businesses and Schools (JOBS) combines two systems: the school system with that of the job market. The programme prepares students in their final year at the classical upper secondary school and those in their first year at votech middle schools to be better able to evaluate their own competences and become acquainted with the real working world. The objective is for the students to thus obtain information on the job opportunities open to them and increase their chances of embarking on the course of professional training that is best suited for them.

Even in Romania, the worldwide trend to study at university is clearly evident. Together with all of the consequences of political and economic transition, this has led to a shortage of highly skilled professionals on the job market. The JOBS project aims to counter this trend. The Romanian Ministry of Education and the International Projects in Education (IPE) Centre at the Zurich University of Teacher Education (PH Zurich) have – together with the support of the University of Bucharest – developed an educational concept meant to serve, at one and the same time, both the needs of the economy in this newly emerging EU Member State and the life prospects and professional aspirations of the younger generation. In order for the economy to further develop and keep in pace with the European market, Romania requires – other than the indispensable academic community – first and foremost well trained specialized workers and technical experts.

BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN ONE’S OWN CAPACITIES AND THE PROFESSIONAL WORLD

The innovative JOBS training project integrates the requirements of the job market as a transversal theme within the school subjects taught at primary school. This approach ensures that all pupils establish direct contact with the real job market on their own during their compulsory schooling, and thereby also forge a link between the job market and their formal training. These jointly developed teaching materials combined with an innovative learning approach serve to facilitate gaining a realistic insight into what the job market looks like within the vicinity of the participating schools.

ORGANISING JOB RESEARCH ON ONE’S OWN AND GATHERING INFORMATION

Within the frame of the JOBS course, the students autonomously search for job offers in their vicinity and establish contact with companies. Working in teams of two, they independently plan, conduct and evaluate an active and comprehensive job survey within these companies. As for the companies, they receive information about the JOBS programme in advance so that, little by little, local networks are set up between the world of employment and the school. Regional programme supervisors maintain and expand this business network, periodically extend invitations to those interested, and arrange opportunities for meetings and events.
In addition, the teachers go through a targeted specialized training programme enabling them to advise young students on how to analyse their individual strengths, while honing their own didactic skills and enhancing their knowledge of the needs of the working world.

JOBS AS A CRUCIAL CONNECTOR

Thanks to intensive cooperation with the Ministry of National Education, an expansion of the project is being carefully planned from Brasov to other regions of the country. A parallel research study will demonstrate within the coming years the impact that the programme has had. Even now, teachers have already begun to speak about a change in teaching methods and the growing self-confidence of the students.

JOBS holds forth the potential of pointing out in an exemplary manner not only the link missing throughout all of Europe between the all-too-isolated world of formal compulsory education and the real and rapidly changing world of employment, but also the way in which to reestablish this link. In this way, Switzerland’s long-standing efforts to communicate its dual professional-training system is ideally promoted and complemented. Other countries in the region have already voiced their keen interest and are attentively observing how the JOBS programme in Romania evolves.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION

Website of the Centre for International Projects in Education  
www.phzh.ch/ipe  
Website of the Ministry of National Education  
www.edu.ro/index.php  
Website of the National Centre for Technical and Vocational Education Development  
www.tvet.ro  
Website of the University of Bucharest  
www.unibuc.ro  
Website of the JOBS programme  
www.jobsproject.ro