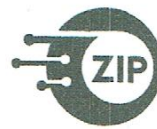




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Joanna Jasińska

Report on Career-Planning Workshops for International Students

Career-planning workshops can be one of the most efficient and cost-effective ways to help participants address their career concerns. **The Welcome Point of the University of Warsaw** had this overarching goal in mind organizing six interactive sessions addressed to international students. The workshops led by **Joanna Jasińska, Ph.D**, an experienced **job-coach** took place on **16-22nd December 2020**.

The program of the workshops included: current trends on the Polish labour market also in the pandemic, cultural differences foreigners should be familiar with while looking for a job in Poland, expectations of employers and methods of effective job search, a clarification of skills, predispositions and professional goals of participants, rules for creating successful application documents (CV and cover letter), types of employment contracts, a simulation of a job interview (self-presentations, typical questions). The workshop aimed at becoming a platform for participants to exchange their experiences related to searching and working in Poland. In addition, the workshops' aim was to create a general vocational plan for each of them.

16 participants of the workshops were mostly students of the last semesters of studies at the University of Warsaw coming to Poland from all parts of the world: Russia, Ukraine, China, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, El Salvador, Indonesia. Majority of them have been studying economics, but there were students of international sciences, American studies, modern languages, biology, philosophy, management and business as well. Some of them have been a real newcomers, but most of them have lived in Poland for more than 4-5 years having had a wide range of work experience there and a communicative command of Polish, quite obligatory while looking for a job in Poland. They did not hesitate to participate actively asking questions and sharing their reflections and experiences, which added greatly to the content of the workshops.



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One of the highlights of the workshops was a **meeting with a Polish businesswoman, Iwona Kossmann**, CEO of a fashion retail company Deni Cler Milano, who has been working in multinational environment for 30 years both in Poland and abroad. She was previously a CEO of Bonnier Business Polska, management board member of Polish Telecom and a management board member responsible for marketing and sales at PTK Centertel. The participants of the workshops were particularly interested in Iwona Kossmann's career onset and her track record of continued success. The guest openly answered questions revealing what she takes into consideration hiring new employees, why and when a good command of Polish is essential, how the times when she started her career differed from the present labour market situation.

Pre and post-test taken by participants before and after the workshops proved that they have learnt what jobs are in demand in Poland now, what employers expect from potential employees, what salaries and perks they can expect when they get employed in Poland, what three main job contracts are, what websites and job agencies are useful in looking for a job, which phrases they shouldn't use in their Cvs and cover letters if they want to get invited to a job interview, how the Career Office at the University of Warsaw can help them find a training or a job. Second part the workshops was devoted to a detailed evaluation of each participant's application documents. Some text editing took place there and assisting participants in taking more personal responsibility for their career paths, helping them become more intentional in their career behaviour so that they are more likely to identify, implement and ultimately, achieve career goals.

Much higher amount of students willing to participate in the workshops than accepted so successfully organized by **The Welcome Point of the University of Warsaw** and **led by Joanna Jasińska** showed that there is a great need to help individuals discover congruent career or educational possibilities or confirm the congruence of options already under consideration. In terms of the efficacy of career-planning workshops, it can be suggested that this treatment modality is, indeed, a useful and hopefully effective way of helping international students to find their way in their professional life in Poland.

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