REPORT 10: EMPLOYMENT – CZECH REPUBLIC

This report is based on the results of two focus groups and nine individual interviews in the Czech Republic analyzing young people’s views on success in the workplace. What skills and qualities do they see as being vital for success? What do their employers expect of them? This report is a copy-edited version of material provided to the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre by Oxford Research International. The views expressed are the views of those who took part in these discussions. All those participating did so on a confidential basis. All names have been changed.

About the Focus Groups

The discussions took place in Brno, a city in southern Moravia. Focus Group One (FG1) was held in the lecture room of a local company, ABB-EJF Inc, on 24 November 1999. Focus Group Two (FG2) was held in the meeting room of another company, DS Holding Inc. on 17 December. Each focus group consisted of eight young people of both sexes aged between 20 and 24 employed by private companies. Success at work and relatively high incomes were the main criteria, with the final selection depending on whether the young people saw themselves as successful.

Focus Group One (FG1)

| Location: | Conference Room, ABB EJF Inc., Brno |
| Date of focus group: | 24 November 1999 |
| Details on selection of participants: | On recommendation of managers of several private companies |
| Participants (name, age, gender) | Radek, 18, Male  
Vladimir, 18, Male  
Ivana, 24, Female  
David, 19, Male  
Michal, 24, Male  
Jaroslav, 20, Male  
Hynek, 19, Male  
Lukas, 19, Male |
| Start time: | 16:15 |
| End time: | 18:00 |
| Comments from facilitator on group dynamics: | No remark |
| Problems encountered: | While four young women were invited, only one came on the day of discussion. |
Focus Group Two (FG2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Date of focus group:</td>
<td>17 December 1999</td>
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<tr>
<td>Details on selection of participants:</td>
<td>On recommendation of managers of several private companies</td>
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| Participants (name, age, gender) | Petra, 21, Female  
Svatopluk, 20, Male  
Dagmar, 23, Female  
Ladislav, 24, Male  
Kamila, 23, Female  
Ivo, 24, Male  
Ilona, 23, Female  
Tibor, 21, Male |
| Start time: | 16.15 |
| End time: | 17.50 |
| Comments from facilitator: | Girls were more talkative |
| Problems encountered: | None |

About the individual interviews

Individual interviews were also carried out with the following people:

- Three young people achieving success in the workplace:
  - Jan, aged 24, male, a project manager
  - Milena, aged 23, female, a marketing assistant
  - Blazena, aged 21, female, a business assistant

- Three young people in low paid / low prestige jobs:
  - Radoslav, aged 24, male, an ambulance nurse
  - Zdenka, aged 24, female, a cook in a kindergarten
  - Lenka, aged 24, female, a chemistry assistant

- Three employers:
  - Miroslav, aged 37, male, the manager of a construction plant
  - Daniel, aged 30, male, the manager of the Czech branch of an international company
  - Vratislav, aged 29, male, the human resources manager of a clothing company
A summary of responses from the Focus Groups

This report reflects the order in which topics were discussed, following the discussion guidelines on this subject.

2.1 Definitions of and attitudes to success at work

In the main, young people associate success at work with self-realization, good income and benefits, social acknowledgement, and promotion at work. To some success is driven by a combination of the above aspects.

- ‘Things relate to each other. Success means being promoted. It covers several aspects. My superiors are satisfied with my work – success. It comes with a higher salary - success again. Working in a higher position can be more interesting and fulfilling because it is not routine work - you make decisions on important issues.’ (Kamila, FG2)

Other definitions of a successful career included personal productivity, good communication at the workplace, or owning your business.

2.1.1 Self-realization and finances as indicators of success

This part of the discussion was broadly determined by the relationship between self-esteem and income. Some participants found this a straightforward matter – for them high income generally corresponds with high prestige.

- ‘To have a good salary can imply being successful.’ (Kamila, FG2)

However, most participants considered professional self-esteem the more important aspect of success than money. They saw success as securing an interesting job offering the potential for professional development.

- ‘You can have a good salary, but if the job does not fulfil your expectations, you will try to find success elsewhere.’ (Dagmar, FG2)

- ‘For me the success is how I feel in the job. There is also the aspect of money. If I have an interesting job which I am good at, I would be ready to do it even for less money. On the other hand, for performing tasks at work which are not interesting I would need more money to compensate me. I feel successful when I have a job I like and I am doing well, not when I get a lot of money.’ (Tibor, FG2)

Income is considered the means rather than the end by a majority of young people.

- ‘I see success not merely as money; in terms of a means for living. More important is to have an interesting job, to do what I want to, not what others want me to do.’ (Radek, FG1)
However, sufficient income was seen a precondition for a successful career. Many participants stressed that income boosts self-esteem. In this sense income acts as a motivator and as a yard-stick for the quality of the results that their work produces.

- ‘For me, being successful means reaching a certain income level which allows me to think about my further professional development. When money problems no longer bother me, I can concentrate on self-improvement and company development’ (Ilona, FG2)
- ‘My salary should reflect my results’ (Petra, FG2)
- ‘It would not be acceptable to have a low salary when I have done a lot for the company. There should be a direct relationship between salary and outcomes – the better the outcomes, the higher the salary.’ (Ladislav, FG2)

2.1.2 Getting acknowledgement and promotion

In some cases, personal success was associated with the success of a company.

- ‘It is not enough to feel good about a job. My colleagues and superiors should be satisfied with my performance as well. My success is related to the success of the company.’ (Dagmar, FG2)

Others displayed a different attitude, associating success with moving up in the company’s internal hierarchy:

- ‘Success means when an employee stops being anonymous and becomes known. He becomes an individual, not just a member of the group. His suggestions and ideas are considered important, he contributes to the company’s success.’ (Ivana, FG1)
- Higher status goes with more power, which I consider success as well’ (Svatopluk, FG2)
- ‘...not to stay at the same level, but proceed as a “career leader”’ (Ivana, FG1)

2.1.3 Getting a sought-after job

There were two kinds of reasons why young people see securing a sought-after job as an indicator of success. The first is related to competition in the labour market. Getting such a job is an indicator of one’s capabilities.

- ‘I consider it successful to get the job many would like to have, because those who get such jobs are better specialists than others. Otherwise they would not get it.” (Michal, FG1)

Another argument explored social desirability as the decisive factor in what is regarded an interesting job:

- ‘Whoever wants to be successful will aim for work which others want to get. There is a high probability that it will be interesting work’ (Dagmar, FG2)

While there was a group consensus on the first reason …
• ‘If the job which I am interested in is at the same time the job which many others would like to have, then success is to get the job’ (Ilona, FG2)

... the second reason did not gain much support from most group members:

• ‘I think being successful implies that I get the job I would like to have. I do not care about what is ‘in’. I follow my own goals’ (Ivana, FG1)
• ‘I agree that the kinds of work others consider successful is not a decisive factor’ (Svatopluk, FG2)

2.2 Paths to success

2.2.1 Ambitions and initiative

There was a consensus among discussants that the key to success is personal initiative. Other factors were seen as merely contributory, not decisive.

Relevant quotes include:

• ‘The most important thing is to decide to be successful and then to do everything to make this happen – get an education, study visit abroad’ (Kamila, FG2)
• ‘... It requires perpetual self-improvement’ (Ladislav, FG2)
• ‘One has to be aggressive, be able to succeed and to follow your aim whatever the cost’ (Dagmar, FG2)
• ‘One should actively seek out opportunities, not wait until opportunities come your way’ (Ilona, FG2)
• ‘If you want to be successful you must go for it’ (Radek, FG1)

Opportunity, and people’s ability to use it for their own ends, was associated with personal initiative according to the participants:

• ‘To be in the right place at the right time and make use of it’ (Ivana, FG1)

2.2.2 Having values, moral principles

Participants stressed that values and moral principles can stand in the way of career success. There were some hard-nosed attitudes:

• ‘It is the other way round. The more immoral one is, the more chance of success you have. Moral principles limit you to behaving in certain ways. If I behave in these ways I will not be competitive with those who do not’ (Tibor, FG2)
• ‘You don’t need to be ethical unless you cause harm to someone else’ (Vladimir, FG1)
• ‘You cannot be successful and maintain moral principles at the same time nowadays’ (Tibor, FG2)
• ‘Moral principles are not important; you can achieve your goals by cheating. It is possible. You can play politics to get an advantage over other colleagues, in promotion for example. I would not do it but there are people who would.’ (Radek, FG1)
But there was also a sense of conflict between the upholding of moral principles and the reality of building a successful career.

- ‘I do not think it is OK [being immoral], but I have to agree that moral principles cause problems in business’ (Kamila, FG1)
- ‘Does it mean that we should all be immoral while we are preaching the maintenance of moral principles? We cannot all be immoral.’ (Ilona, FG2)

2.2.3 Personal qualities

Talent was perceived as an inherent precondition for achieving success.

- ‘It is like in sport. I cannot compete with a good runner if I am not a gifted sportsman’ (Radek, FG1)

Other personal qualities such as presentation skills and mental flexibility were also seen as linked to success:

- ‘I think the ability to present the results of your work is important also - to be able to sell the results of your work. Success will not come to you if you sit in the corner’ (Ivana, FG1)
- ‘Mental flexibility is of great importance. One must not be afraid of new ideas. You need to be open to change’ (Tibor, FG2)

2.2.4 Good education

Education appeared to be an important selection criterion for employers.

- ‘If I was an employer and I asked two candidates to do the same thing and both performed at the same level, I would choose the one with the highest level of education’ (Radek, FG1)

The importance of education in recruitment procedures was confirmed by two of the three employers interviewed.

However, a university degree alone was not seen as enough. Discussants insisted that work experience and practical skills were essential.

- ‘I do not think education itself is enough for achieving success. University provides you only with theoretical knowledge’ (Kamila, FG2)
- ‘Sometimes one learns most things at the workplace, not at school’ (Radek, FG1)

That could cause a problem for young graduates, especially when they feel that employers prefer well-educated candidates with experience:

- ‘Sometimes it is more difficult for young people – graduates. Employers prefer candidates with experience and practice’ (Vladimir, FG1)
‘You should be a graduate and have at least three years experience according to some employers.’ (Radek, FG1)

In order to approach the job market with practical skills and experience a number of young people work during their degree.

‘Nowadays, students have opportunities to work for companies while studying to get experience.’ (Ilona, FG2)

The experience of one of the successful interviewees confirms this idea:

‘I worked for ABB during my university studies – I wrote a thesis on a topic suggested by ABB. I pursued a three-month study trip to Finland after graduation, where ‘I was working on a study for ABB EJF. At this time I was already employed by ABB’ (Jan, Project Manager, male, 24, individual interview)

Participants agreed that, broadly speaking, social status comes with education.

‘I will be accepted by others as suitable for a particular position’ (Tibor, FG2)
‘It depends on what kind of job we are talking about, but for higher positions, of course, you need a good education. (Ivana, FG1)

2.2.5 Access to a supportive environment

Although participants conceded that personal connections may play an important part in achieving success, some people seemed unhappy about this. Many felt that such favouritism endangers fair competition.

‘If you have personal connections, you will get information on job vacancies in advance, which is an advantage.’ (Ivana, FG1)
‘The more personal connections the better.’ (Radek and Lukas, FG1)
‘It depends on the company. In some companies results are important, unfortunately in others, connections are more relevant. My experience has taught me that.’ (Michal, FG1)
‘I agree that personal connections are important in our country these days.’ (Vladimir, FG1)

Most discussants mentioned the use of family connections particularly when first seeking employment:

‘At the outset of a career, parents can play an important role. Parents’ connections could help a young person to get a job for instance.’ (Dagmar, FG2)

However, it was also felt that this sort of leverage could also have its drawbacks:

‘I think it could cause problems if others feel that I have got this job because of my parents. Help is important in terms of support while studying’ (Kamila, FG2)
‘Personal connections are important for getting a job. Yet even if you get the job because of your father, if you do not perform well, then these connections will no longer be of any help.’ (Radek, FG1)

There was some divergence among participants on whether there was any correlation between parents’ education and their childrens’ career. After a short discussion, Kamila voiced the most acceptable viewpoint for FG2:

‘Not everyone could get a university degree under communism. Some people did not get access to university because they did not conform with the political system. In any case, having intelligent parents is more important than having parents with a university degree.’ (Kamila, FG2)

With the exception of Vladimir, FG1 felt that having well educated parents was not necessarily a prerequisite to vocational success.

‘I think educated parents will guide a child in such a way as to support him in his interests.’ (Vladimir, FG1)

2.2.6 Nationality and gender

Both groups were quite unanimous in their opinion that ethnic background is not necessarily an obstacle to success.

In FG1 two participants aired stereotypes on the topic of employing Roma but other participants did not agree.

‘I don’t think that nationality is the decisive factor’ (Ivana, FG1)
‘You cannot generalize. You can have ten candidates, one of them Roma, and he could be the best.’ (Michal, FG1)

Some mentioned inequalities in terms of salaries, fringe benefits and, of course, career opportunities. This introduced the topic of sex discrimination. All females agreed that there are still inequalities in society, particularly as far as job opportunities are concerned.

‘There are still advertisements in newspapers in our country, where being a man is one of the criteria required for a position. Abroad, it would be considered discriminatory. In our country, males are at an advantage. Employers tend to prefer men.’ (Ivana, FG1)
‘A colleague of mine, who is in the same position as me, does not have a company car. She has got approximately the same salary as I have, but I feel that the attitude of our superiors is different.’ (Tibor, FG2)
‘There are cases where a young 25 year old woman applying for a job is rejected because an employer assumes that she might get married and have a child in the near future...’ (Ilona, FG2)

There were some who did not believe that gender could be such an issue.

‘If I was an employer, I would be interested in gender, but more in qualification and abilities.’ (Ladislav, FG2)
2.3 Sources of information on job opportunities

There are three major sources of information - parents, friends (see 2.2.5) and the media. Schools were mentioned in second place. Job centres and employment agencies are not very popular according to these participants.

2.3.1 The Media

- ‘You can get information from the Internet. The most important thing, however, is to be among the right people.’ (Dagmar, FG2)
- ‘...advertisements in newspapers.’ (Michal, FG1)

2.3.2 Schools

- ‘The high school I attended sends me information regularly. Employers used to visit the schools.’ (Radek, FG1)
- ‘You can find organizations like AIESEC at the university’ (Michal, FG1)

2.3.3 Job Centres

Job centres were considered to be an indicator of a passive approach.

- ‘One should be active in looking for a job and not wait till the job centre finds something’ (Petra, FG2)
- ‘I would consult job centres and employment agencies as a last resort. First I would use personal contacts’ (Ilona, FG2)
- ‘Job centre would be the last thing.’ (Lukas, FG1)

2.4 Definitions of and attitudes to a good job

Participants saw the following attributes as integral to the definition of a good job:

2.4.1 Good income

- ‘You all are talking about interesting jobs, but what about pay? Do you think that you will take an interesting job for 3,000 [Czech] Crowns? I doubt it. I think the financial aspect of it is of the highest importance.’ (Radek, FG1)
- ‘Our manager is Belgian and was very surprised by the statistics which show that money is the greatest motivator for 75 % of employees in our country.’ (Radek, FG1)

2.4.2 Career prospects and access to further education and training

- ‘Career prospects, definitely …’ (Ladislav, FG2)
- ‘A good job is a job with the prospect of access to further education. It is more important to me than finances. I can be with less money if I'm receiving training of high
quality, because this makes me qualified for better paid work or positions in the future.’ (Ivana, FG1)

2.4.3 Interesting work

- ‘...it should not be a job which is boring’ (Michal, FG1)
- ‘The job which is interesting to me, which I would like to do.’ (Tibor, FG2)

There were no substantial gender differences on this issue.

Job security, social contacts, access to social security, and benefits are considered additional factors, but not necessarily decisive:

- ‘I think when you know that you will not be laid off in the near future, you put more effort into your work than in a case where you know you will do this job only for a few months. If you have just a certain insecurity about the job, you will strive to maintain it.’ (Petra, FG2)
- ‘The company apartment was a factor in my decision about the job.’ (Ladislav, FG2)

A certain level of stress is an intrinsic part of a good job according to most participants. However, there is a limit – the stress should not be too intense. Relevant quotes include:

- ‘It is hard to imagine my position as a manager without stress.’ (Kamila, FG2)
- ‘I like dealing with problems, I feel more satisfied when I succeed in overcoming them. Stress is good if you are able to cope with it. My tasks have to be difficult but solvable.’ (Tibor, FG2)
- ‘I’ve never heard of a job without stress.’ (Radek, FG1)
- ‘Stress is an intrinsic part of work.’ (Ivana, FG1)

2.5 Relationship between age and success

It emerged that young people think they have a better chance of being successful than older people. They pointed out that young people were better suited to an environment that responds to merit as they tend to feel more aggressive, flexible and willing to learn than older employees and are rarely held back by their past:

- ‘Young people are more aggressive, older people are more accommodating.’ (Ivana, FG1)
- ‘I have difficulties with my older subordinates who are not able to adapt to new technological changes. They are not willing to learn new things. In some cases they may be able to learn new things but the willingness is missing, because at the beginning the old system seems easier.’ (Tibor, FG2)
- ‘I suppose older people in our country are influenced by Communism. Under Communism, they were not used to hard work and the necessity for self-improvement.’ (Tibor, FG2)
- ‘Under Communism it was more important to have connections and the ‘right’ political attitudes than to work hard.’ (Petra, FG2)
However, the labour-market is not always kind to young people according to Petra:

- ‘There are still people in the middle and older generation, mostly in managerial positions in our country. I think the influx of international companies into our country may change this as they prefer to employ young people.’ (Petra, FG2)

However, participants did not dismiss experience and maturity and conceded that older people were at an advantage here.

- ‘I think there is a certain relationship between age and success. Experience is important for achieving success. Experience goes with age in terms of practice and maturity.’ (Ladislav, FG2)
- ‘I think that a 40 year-old person is able to learn. His advantage is his experience.’ (Dagmar, FG2)

2.5.1 Relationships of young people with middle-aged or older people in the workplace

Some said that older people are sometimes envious of young people, and that they have a problem accepting young people as equals or supervisors.

- ‘I have found that older people have difficulties in accepting a better paid young person.’ (Petra, FG2)
- ‘They do not say it aloud or express it explicitly, but I can see that they are not happy to see me at my age in the same position as they are.’ (Ladislav, FG2)
- ‘There is a generation gap that can cause the conflict. I see unwillingness to accept my opinions. They imagine that the way they are doing things is the best. They are closed to new ideas sometimes.’ (Ivana, FG1)

Not everyone shared this view:

- ‘I have no problems with older subordinates. I want them to perform at same level as young colleagues and they do.’ (Ladislav, FG2)
- ‘I am on good terms with older people. However if I have a new idea or suggestion which perhaps they should have come up with, it would be better to be diplomatic and not upset them.’ (Dagmar, FG2)

There was also a consensus in both groups that young people should learn from older people because of their experience.

- ‘It is wiser to learn from the mistakes of others than to make mistakes myself. I see it as important to listen to older colleagues.’ (Ladislav, FG2)
- ‘The advantage is that older people who have been working in a company for 20 years know the company well, they remember the changes the company has been through. They need to be open-minded, however.’ (Kamila, FG2)

In the focus groups as well as in individual interviews some people gave examples of situations where older people had helped, or hindered, their younger colleagues:
• ‘Older colleagues are ready to help me, to give me advice when I need it.’ (Jaroslav, FG1)
• ‘Older people can be reluctant to share their experiences with young people to avoid creating competition.’ (Michal, FG1)
• ‘For example, in our company you have those who are willing to share experiences and knowledge and also those who consider the young generation a threat to their own positions. They are reluctant to share their experiences as a result.’ (Jan, Project Manager, male 24, individual interview)

Almost all participants in both focus groups claimed that although they respect the views and advice of older people, they make their own decisions.

• ‘I am used to listening to the views of those who are experienced, but at the end of the day I decide for myself.’ (David, FG1)
• ‘I am used to deciding for myself and just informing my parents afterwards. I am used to relying on myself’. (Ilona, FG2)
• ‘I welcome advice from older people, but this advice is not a crucial factor in my decisions.’ (Tibor, FG2)
• ‘I decide myself. However, I think it is good to listen to other opinions as I may not be able to see all aspects of the problem.’ (Petra, FG2)

There were two participants who said that they did not discuss their decisions with older people at all:

• ‘I simply inform them about my decisions.’ (Dagmar, FG2)
• ‘I discuss my decisions with people of the same age, or those not more than 10 years older than me.’ (Kamila, FG2)

Some participants pointed out that is advantageous to be critical and evaluate opinions regardless of age and person:

• ‘I neither underestimate nor overestimate the opinions of older people. I approach them in the same way as others. You need to evaluate opinions, not the people that are expressing them. Age alone is not enough to convince of an opinion.’ (Ladislav, FG2)
• ‘If their advice is good, I take it into account.’ (Radek, FG1)

Almost all participants agreed that the market economy helps young people more than older people, because of their greater flexibility and self-assertion. There were similarities with the arguments regarding the relationship between age and success, illustrated by the following quotes:

• ‘Young people are better prepared and open enough to take on the challenges which the market economy offers.’ (Luška, FG1)
• ‘Older people may be less flexible. Some of their experiences in a centrally-planned economy may not be useful in a market-oriented economy.’ (Kamila, FG2)
• ‘Most of the people who worked in a centrally-planned economy were not taught to be aggressive.’ (Dagmar, FG2)
• ‘Our parents lived under a regime which suppressed individuality. This is not the case with young people.’ (Ilona, FG2)

An objection to this line of argument was voiced by Ladislav (FG2):

• ‘Generally it is true that young people are more able to cope with transition. I think, however, that character is a more decisive factor than age. I cannot agree that in the past there were people without ambitions in high positions. Those who were in managerial positions during the transition were at an advantage.’ (Ladislav, FG2)

2.6 Negative implications of having a successful job

Participants agreed that there was a price to pay for success - a lack of time for hobbies, family and friends, affecting relationships and health:

2.6.1 Relationships

• ‘A good job goes hand in hand with long working hours. There is little time for social contacts and physical exercise. To have a good social life means more than meeting your friends from time to time.’ (Petra, FG2)
• ‘If I work into the night, it may cause problems in my family life. This is a question of priorities.’ (Ladislav, FG2)
• ‘If you have no commitments in terms of family and children, the time and energy needed for work is not a big price to pay.’ (Ilona, FG2)
• ‘There is a price to be paid for working in a good job in terms of less leisure time and stress, but it is worth it.’ (Ivana, FG1)

They also mentioned the positive effects of success on relationships:

• ‘There is another reason why you can lose some of your friends – some of my friends who were not so successful were envious of my new car and house – my success helps me to distinguish between real and false friends. I consider that positive.’ (Tibor, FG2)
• ‘My position at work enabled me to help some of my friends find a job. It is a good feeling.’ (Ilona, FG2)

2.6.2 Health

Some participants thought that there are ways in which successful young people can balance out the health risks that can accompany a stressful job. However, there was no unanimity on this point.

• ‘I can afford relaxation in terms of good a holiday thanks to my salary.’ (Dagmar, FG2)
• ‘However, there is not a lot of time for holidays. Therefore the lifestyle related to my managerial position is taking its price in terms of health.’ (Tibor, FG2)
• ‘I think I can restore my form through sports activities.’ (Tibor, FG2)
• ‘I aim to reach my goals and success now. It is true that one usually thinks about health later – by which time it is already too late.’ (Dagmar, FG2)
Responses to individual interviews

Three young people achieving success in the workplace:

1. Jan, aged 24, male, a project manager

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<td>Interviewee (name, age, gender, position):</td>
<td>Jan, 24, M, project manager</td>
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<td>Start time:</td>
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Q1. Please tell me briefly about your family background first. How many family members do you have and what are they doing?

I have a sister. She studies economics. My father is a lecturer at the University. My mother works as a bank officer.

Q2. Are you living with your parents or do you live separately?

I moved out from my parents’ home 3 years ago.

Q3. Why?

I have got married. I am living with my wife.

Q4. Please tell me about your education. What education do you have?

Secondary technical school in Brno, Faculty of electronics– Technical University

Q5. Please tell me briefly about your job. What sort of a job do you have?

I am working as a project manager ABB-EJF. My responsibility is to co-ordinate orders in the switchboard division in the most effective way.

Q6. How did you get your present job?

I worked for ABB during my university studies – I wrote a thesis on a topic suggested by ABB. I pursued a three month study trip to Finland after graduation, where ‘I was working on a study for ABB EJF. At this time I was already employed by ABB.

Q7. Do you think it was a fortunate choice?

I think it was a good start. The future will tell.

Q8. Why/Why not?
Because ABB invests a lot of money into the further education of its employee, study stays and training abroad included.

Q9. Do you feel good about this job?
Yes

Q10. Why yes/no?
Because my work motivates me, it is demanding, I have an opportunity to learn new things. It offers professional growth.

Q11. Why did you get this job in your view? What factors played a role?
Education in the first place, language skills, active approach, cooperation with ABB during my studies.

Q12. Tell me about your experience with looking for jobs. Was it easy to find a job after you finished your education?
It was not very hard thanks to the co-operation with ABB, (already established)

Q13. Where did you learn about job opportunities?
I was actively seeking information on job opportunities, via friends, in discussions with other students, also at a Job Fair - ABB had a stand there.

Q14. Do you have some concrete plans for your future career? What would you like to do with your life?
Each employee elaborates his/her vision of his/her career plan in our company once a year. This year I have mentioned my intention to do a financial management and marketing course. In the second half of the year 2000 I will pursue a three months study stay in Sweden in ABB. I suppose, that these experiences will enable me to get the position of a line manager

Q15. Who are those who have been of greatest help to you so far?
My boss in the first place, then my colleagues.

Q16. How would you evaluate the support you have received from your parents since you were a small child?
They motivated me to study. Although it was not easy for them, they were willing to pay for my language course (I passed Cambridge Advanced Exam). They supported my education.

Q17. What role did parental support play in having education and finding a job?
It played a significant role. My farther works in a same profession as I do. He told me about ABB when I was looking for a topic for my theses.

Q18. Tell me what do you think about the relationship between young people like you and the older generations. Do these people have the same attitudes and values?

I don’t think so. It is hard to generalize, however.

Q19. In what sense?

For example, in our company you have those who are willing to share experiences and knowledge and also those who consider the young generation a threat to their own positions. They are reluctant to share their experiences as a result.

Q20. According to your experience do employers have a fair attitude towards young people?

ABB is the first company I am working in after graduation. My experience is good. I am used to being open and have found the same attitude in the top management of company.

Q21. Do employers respect the opinion of their young staff?

It depends. If they are too radical and they expect changes to be too quick, management is reserved. My experience has shown however, that our opinions are taken seriously; top management considers them. There are opportunities to discuss them.

Q22. Why/Why not?

They respect our opinions, because they are aware of the fact that society and market is changing opinions of young people and that this could be of high importance – particularly because young people see things differently. ..And why not? The opinions of young people are sometimes too radical and it is hard to implement them in the time or to the extent that they require.

Q23. Do you think young people are treated differently when employers hire or fire people?

I think it is different in each individual case.

Q24. In what sense?

It is sometimes more difficult to lay off the old employee who will have a difficulties finding a job today than to lay off the young person who will have several job offerings. I think however, that laying the person off because he doesn’t meet the requirements or because of breaking the rules is OK regardless of age.

Q25. What is important for employers when hiring people?
It depends on the position you are thinking of. In my opinion competition procedures should be carefully prepared. The requirements on the given position should be defined.

Q26. Which part of your education has been of most use to you so far?

The University teaches you how to solve problems, how to get the information you need, and of course some knowledge. At the moment I feel I know nothing and I need to learn a many new things.

Q27. Why?

The University.

Q28. Are there things that you missed in your education?

Yes. My education was rather technically oriented. I miss knowledge in economics, finance, marketing, and business at the moment.

Q29. Do you have some plans to improve your skills?

I have mentioned them already – I shall attend a finance management and marketing course.

Q30. What type of support would you need for achieving your goals?

The support I need from my employer includes the information, which I need for my further education, and time for studying. My employer is supportive in that sense.

Q31. Whose support would be most important in achieving your goals?

Support from my wife.

INTERVIEWER SKIPS TO QUESTION 33 IF Q1 REVEALS THAT RESPONDENT ALREADY HAS OWN FAMILY (SPOUSE/CHILDREN)

Q32. Do you have plans to establish your own family?

Q33. What relations do you see between your job career and own family responsibilities? How much conflict is there in your view?

There is a problem with having enough time for both family and further education. If I would like to do something above my responsibilities in order to improve my qualification, I would have automatically less time for my family. Therefore there should be agreement in the family about it. In my opinion, if my plans concerning further education would result in conflict in the family, it is not worth such sacrifice. The family is my highest priority.

Q34. Why?

The family needs me.
Q35. What relation do you see between your career and your health? Is there a conflict in your view?

*Sometimes. Stress is big. When there is a deadline or we are starting a project it is necessary to work above working hours.*

Q36. Why?

*In order to maintain good health I would need more rest, more time for sport, hobbies, family. Again, it is a matter of lack of time.*

Thank you very much.
Three young people achieving success in the workplace:

2. Milena, aged 23, female, a marketing assistant

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<tr>
<th>Location:</th>
<th>Private office, Brno</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date of interview:</td>
<td>13 December 1999</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interviewee (name, age, gender, position):</td>
<td>Milena, 23, F, marketing assistant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Start time:</td>
<td>15.20</td>
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<td>End time:</td>
<td>15.43</td>
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Q1. Please tell me briefly about your family background first. How many family members you have and what are they doing?

*I have a sister. My Mother works as an economist. My father is a disabled pensioner.*

Q2. Are you living with your parents or do you live separately?

*I live with my parents.*

Q3. Why?

*It is practical and convenient. I need not care for anything – I have no troubles.*

Q4. Please tell me about your education. What education do you have?

*I did a tourism course after I had finished high school. Then I was abroad for two and half years to learn languages – In Austria and in England.*

Q5. Please tell me briefly about your job. What sort of a job do you have?

*I am working as a marketing assistant.*

Q6. How did you get your present job?

*By chance - I got the information from the labour office.*

Q7. Do you think it was a fortunate choice?

*I think so.*

Q8. Why/Why not?

*I feel good here. The colleagues are nice.*

Q9. Do you feel good about this job?

*Yes.*
Q10. Why yes/no?

I have an opportunity to learn a lot of new things from marketing and sociology.

Q11. Why did you get this job in your view? What factors played a role?

My boss considered me attractive I think. The only other requirements were skills needed for administrative work, PC literacy.

Q12. Tell me about your experience with looking for jobs. Was it easy to find a job after you finished your education?

I planned to pass the state exams in English after I had returned from abroad. I was not interested in finding a job at that time. I had to report to the labour office in order to get benefit from state. I got the job by the chance - sooner than I expected.

Q13. Where did you learn about job opportunities?

At the labour office

Q14. Do you have some concrete plans for your future career? What would you like to do with your life?

I have no plans concerning my career. I am content with my current position.

Q15. Who are those who have been of greatest help to you so far?

My parents.

Q16. How would you evaluate the support you have received from your parents since you were a small child?

They supported me financially. They respected my own decisions.

Q17. What role did parental support play in having education and finding a job?

They supported me in my decisions concerning education.

Q18. Tell me what do you think about the relationship between young people like you and the older generations. Do these people have the same attitudes and values?

No, they do not.

Q19. In what sense?

It is because older people were living under another regime most of their lives. Young people have different opinions, because they can travel, get acquainted with other cultures. They have the opportunity to gain experience that our parents could not.
Q20. According to your experience do employers have a fair attitude towards young people?

It depends on circumstances. In our company they are fair I think.

Q21. Do employers respect the opinion of their young staff?

It depends on the particular opinion.

Q22. Why/Why not?

Some employers could mistrust young people because of their age, lack of experiences. It depends on the particular employer.

Q23. Do you think young people are treated differently when employers hire or fire people?

I cannot tell, I am working just for a short time.

Q24. In what sense?

I think abilities and skills are decisive, not the age.

Q25. What are employers looking for when they hire people?

I think the way one presents oneself is important. Education and job experiences.

Q26. Which part of your education has been of most use to you so far?

Almost nothing.

Q27. Why?

I am working in another area than I studied.

Q28. Are there things that you missed in your education?

Yes, I think so.

Q29. Do you have some plans to improve your skills?

I attend language courses.

Q30. What type of support would you need for achieving your goals?

Financial support. And time.

Q31. Whose support would be most important in achieving your goals?

I expect no support.
Q32. Do you have plans to establish your own family?
Yes in the future.

Q33. What relation do you see between your career and family responsibilities? How much conflict is there in your view?
I suppose it would be in conflict.

Q34. Why?
If one works a lot, one has not enough time for family.

Q35. What relation do you see between your career and your health? Is there a conflict in your view?
I do not think that it is in conflict.

Q36. Why?
There is stress of course. I think however, one should be able to cope with it.

Thank you very much.
Q1. Please tell me briefly about your family background first. How many family members do you have and what are they doing?

Our family has four members. My mother works as a secretary, my father is a pensioner, and my sister works as an assistant to a general manager. Both, my mother and sister work in the private sector.

Q2. Are you living with your parents or do you live separately?

I live separately in my own flat.

Q3. Why?

I wanted to be on my own. I have moved to Brno because of that and because of job opportunities as well.

Q4. Please tell me about your education. What education do you have?

After secondary school I did a management course.

Q5. Please tell me briefly about your job. What sort of a job do you have?

I am working as a business assistant. I am responsible mainly for customer service.

Q6. How did you get your present job?

Personal contacts – the wife of the general manager of our company was my lecturer. I got the offer from him to work here in the Brno branch of our company.

Q7. Do you think it was a fortunate choice?

I think so.

Q8. Why/Why not?

Our company is small, which is suitable for me. Working hours are convenient. The work I am doing is interesting – I do not consider it routine work. I would like to use my language skills more frequently.
Q9. Do you feel good about this job?
Yes, I am.

Q10. Why yes/no?
There are good relationships at the workplace. There is good communication with customers. I am satisfied with salary as well.

Q11. Why did you get this job in your view? What factors played a role?
My knowledge and abilities, maybe also because of age. They were looking for young person.

Q12. Tell me about your experience with looking for jobs. Was it easy to find a job after you finished your education?
Yes, because I got this offer already during my studies.

Q13. Where did you learn about job opportunities?
If I would look for a job, I would monitor advertisements.

Q14. Do you have some concrete plans for your future? What would you like to do with your life?
I would like to go abroad to improve my language skills. I would like to get position of manager in the future. But I will need to change company, because there are no such opportunities here.

Q15. Who are those who have been of greatest help to you so far?
At the beginning it was almost my activity. I needed no help. Later, it was general manager of our company.

Q16. How would you evaluate the support you have received from your parents since you were a small child?
They supported me of course, but I always followed my own decisions.

Q17. What role did parental support play in having education and finding a job?
They did not play a substantial role.

Q18. Tell me what do you think about the relationship between young people like you and the older generations. Do these people have the same attitudes and values?
I don’t think they have the same attitudes. But I don’t see any problems in it.
Q19. In what sense?

Older people are more money oriented, they use to think about the past more often and they use to complain. They are afraid of future – of insecurity (they are afraid of unemployment).

Q20. According to your experience do employers have a fair attitude towards young people?

I think they have a fair attitude – in our company for sure.

Q21. Do employers respect the opinion of their young staff?

There is room for self-expression and self-realisation.

Q22. Why/Why not?

See Q21

Q23. Do you think young people are treated differently when employers hire or fire people?

Not really.

Q24. In what sense?

Employers might think that for young people it is easier to find a new job. I do not see any other differences.

Q25. What are employers looking for when they hire people?

Active approach, drive, self-assertion, good self-presentation skills, PC literacy.

Q26. Which part of your education has been of most use to you so far?

Management course

Q27. Why?

I have got good PC literacy and communication skills needed for successful customer communication, negotiation.

Q28. Are there things that you missed in your education?

Better foreign language skills

Q29. Do you have some plans to improve your skills?

I would like to take a language course in English
Q30. What type of support would you need for achieving your goals?
To get more opportunities to improve foreign language skills in practice – e.g. translations

Q31. Whose support would be most important in achieving your goals?
Support of my employer. Our company has business partners and clients abroad. I would be happy to have more opportunities to deal with these clients.

INTERVIEWER SKIPS TO QUESTION 33 IF Q1 REVEALED THAT RESPONDENT ALREADY HAS OWN FAMILY (SPOUSE/CHILDREN)

Q32. Do you have plans to establish your own family?
Yes I would like to.

Q33. What relation do you see between your career and family responsibilities? How much conflict is there in your view?
In the case I would have a child they will be in conflict.

Q34. Why?
I suppose I would have to look for the job in another company after maternity leave. The company will not wait three years.

Q35. What relation do you see between your job career and your health? Is there a conflict in your view?
I suppose it might be.

Q36. Why?
If you do nothing but work, your health will suffer because of stress. Also the relationships will suffer.

Thank you very much.
Three young people in low paid / low prestige jobs:

4. Radoslav, aged 24, male, an ambulance nurse

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<td>5 December 1999</td>
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<td>Interviewee (name, age, gender, position):</td>
<td>Radoslav, 24, M, ambulance nurse</td>
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<td>16.45</td>
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<td>17.05</td>
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Q1. Please tell me briefly about your family background first. How many family members do you have and what are they doing?

I have got four sisters. They are on maternity leave. My father has his own business. My mother died.

Q2. Are you living with your parents or do you live separately?

I live separately, in a dormitory.

Q3. Why?

My father has got married again, we don’t get along very well

Q4. Please tell me about your education. What education do you have?

I have got primary education only - grammar school.

Q5. Please tell me briefly about your job. What sort of a job do you have?

When I was fifteen I worked as a shop assistant. Then I worked as a labourer. I work in an ambulance (as a scrub nurse) at the moment.

Q6. How did you get your present job?

My cousin is working here.

Q7. Do you think it was a fortunate choice?

I think so.

Q8. Why/Why not?

I like this job, except for the salary.

Q9. Do you feel good about this job?

No, I did not.
Q10. Why yes/no?

*Because it is low paid work – Almost no money for a lot of work.*

Q11. Why did you get this job in your view? What factors played a role?

*Age was important – I had to be full-aged.*

Q12. Tell me about your experience with looking for jobs. Was it easy to find a job after you finished your education?

*I have got no difficulties with finding a job.*

Q13. Where did you learn about job opportunities?

*I was registered with the labour office, they found my first job. The other two jobs I got via personal contacts.*

Q14. Do you have some concrete plans for your future career? What would you like to do with your life?

*I would like to attend vocational school. Maybe a cookery course.*

Q15. Who are those who have been of greatest help to you so far?

*My sister.*

Q16. How would you evaluate the support you have received from your parents since you were a small child?

*My parents tried to do their best.*

Q17. What role did parental support play in having education and finding a job?

*None*

Q18. Tell me what do you think about the relationship between young people like you and the older generations. Do these people have the same attitudes and values?

*I do not think so.*

Q19. In what sense?

*The older generation is more arrogant. They are not flexible, their attitudes are influenced by routine. They usually disagree with young people.*

Q20. According to your experience do employers have a fair attitude towards young people?
I think they do. Age should not be the decisive factor in my opinion.

Q21. Do employers respect the opinion of their young staff?

This is not the case in our workplace.

Q22. Why/Why not?

The older one is, the more his opinion is respected.

Q23. Do you think young people are treated differently when employers hire or fire people?

No, they are not.

Q24. In what sense?

There is no difference – the employers treat everyone in the same way.

Q25. What are employers looking for when they hire people?

It depends on the particular employer. Mostly - the first impression, the way one presents himself.

Q26. Which part of your education has been of most use to you so far?

My previous job experience helped me a lot. Life has taught me.

Q27. Why?

I have learned to be on my own.

Q28. Are there things that you missed in your education?

I have no idea.

Q29. Do you have some plans to improve your skills?

I would like to learn foreign languages to be able to communicate with people abroad.

Q30. What type of support would you need for achieving your goals?

Financial support. You cannot get education (cookery course) for free.

Q31. Whose support would be most important in achieving your goals?

I need to help myself.
Q32. Do you have plans to establish your own family?

*For sure.*

Q33. What relation do you see between your career and family responsibilities? How much conflict is there in your view?

*The family should have priority.*

Q34. Why?

*It is more important to me. I did not enjoy it. I would like to provide my children with things I missed in my childhood.*

Q35. What relation do you see between your career and your health? Is there a conflict in your view?

*I think there could be.*

Q36. Why?

*My spine suffers when I am lifting heavy weights. My work in health service is physically demanding as well.*

Thank you very much.
Three young people in low paid / low prestige jobs:

5. Zdenka, aged 24, female, a cook in a kindergarten

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<td>17 December 1999</td>
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<td>Interviewee (name, age, gender, position):</td>
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Q1. Please tell me briefly about your family background first. How many family members do you have and what are they doing?

*My mum has her own business; my father is working in a pub. I have a brother who is 27 years old. He works in a company dealing with exporting.*

Q2. Are you living with your parents or do you live separately?

*I live separately.*

Q3. Why?

*I left my parents when I was 18. My mother got married for the second time, so I had no other alternative.*

Q4. Please tell me about your education. What education do you have?

*I was doing a cookery/waitress course.*

Q5. Please tell me briefly about your job. What sort of a job do you have?

*I am employed in a kindergarten as a cook.*

Q6. How did you get your present job?

*I did not want to work in a pub. I did not want to work nights. I have chosen the kindergarten. I felt I would be more helpful there than in pub. I got this job via personal contacts.*

Q7. Do you think it was a fortunate choice?

*Yes and no.*

Q8. Why/Why not?

*With respect to salary – no. I could earn more money as a waitress. On the other hand - yes, because I like this job.*
Q9. Do you feel good about this job?

Yes.

Q10. Why yes/no?

I like children. I have nice colleagues, better atmosphere than in the pub.

Q11. Why did you get this job in your view? What factors played a role?

At the beginning I was standing in for another cook who was ill at that time. Then she left this job for good, because of money. I have started to work instead of her.

Q12. Tell me about your experience with looking for jobs. Was it easy to find a job after you finished your education?

It was not difficult. Thanks to circumstances. All that happened very quickly.

Q13. Where did you learn about job opportunities?

Via personal contacts.

Q14. Do you have some concrete plans for your future career? What would you like to do with your life?

I would like to have a family. I am not the kind of person who would plan a career. I like to be in a non-stressful environment, among nice people. I do not need more. This would satisfy me. The only problem is the lack of money. (Prices are higher and the salary is the same)

Q15. Who are those who have been of greatest help to you so far?

I got no help from my parents. I live with my boyfriend. We help each other.

Q16. How would you evaluate the support you have received from your parents since you were a small child?

It was not bad till we lived together with my mother. It was not easy for her, because we lived without my father. She has not supported me anymore since she got married again.

Q17. What role did parental support play in having education and finding a job?

First I wanted to be a nurse. I have not passed the entrance examination. The second choice was cook/waitress. Maybe because my father has been working in a pub.

Q18. Tell me what do you think about the relationship between young people like you and the older generations. Do these people have the same attitudes and values?

In our workplace there are no differences.
Q19. In what sense?

We are good team. I feel accepted among them.

Q20. According to your experience do employers have a fair attitude towards young people?

It depends on the particular employer. My employer is fair.

Q21. Do employers respect the opinion of their young staff?

Our director does. She is open-minded and has a young spirit herself.

Q22. Why/Why not?

It is her character.

Q23. Do you think young people are treated differently when employers hire or fire people?

I don’t know. I have no such experience. A friend of mine was laid of because she was the youngest.

Q24. In what sense?

Not applicable

Q25. What are employers looking for when hiring people?

Qualification for the given work. First impression.

Q26. Which part of your education has been of most use to you so far?

Everything I have learnt as a cook apprentice.

Q27. Why?

See Q26

Q28. Are there things that you missed in your education?

No.

Q29. Do you have some plans to improve your skills?

I tried to accomplish leaving examinations. I did not finish it because of lack of time and money. I needed to pay for it. I have no such plans at the moment.
Q30. What type of support would you need for achieving your goals?

*Higher motivation*

Q31. Whose support would be most important in achieving your goals?

*I have no idea.*

INTERVIEWER SKIPS TO QUESTION 33 IF Q1 REVEALED THAT RESPONDENT ALREADY HAS OWN FAMILY (SPOUSE/CHILDREN)

Q32. Do you have plans to establish your own family?

*Yes, I do.*

Q33. What relation do you see between your career and family responsibilities? How much conflict is there in your view?

*I do not see any conflict.*

Q34. Why?

*If I have a child, she/he can be here in kindergarten while I am in work. Being in the same place will be helpful.*

Q35. What relation do you see between your career and your health? Is there a conflict in your view?

*No.*

Q36. Why?

*I have no stress here, I feel no health losses because of work.*

Thank you very much.
Three young people in low paid / low prestige jobs:

6. Lenka, aged 24, female, a chemistry assistant

| Location: | Laboratory, Brno |
| Date of interview: | 16 December 1999 |
| Interviewee (name, age, gender, position): | Lenka, 24, F, chemist assistant in the department of preventive medicine |
| Start time: | 10.05 |
| End time: | 10.35 |
| Comments from facilitator: | No particular remark |

Q1. Please tell me briefly about your family background first. How many family members do you have and what are they doing?

My father is employed in the state sector.

Q2. Are you living with your parents or do you live separately?

I live with my parents.

Q3. Why?

I don’t earn enough money to live on my own. However, it would be necessary to move if I get married.

Q4. Please tell me about your education. What education do you have?

I have finished vocational school – refinement of textiles. I also did a two years course at chemistry vocational school.

Q5. Please tell me briefly about your job. What sort of a job do you have?

I am working as a chemist’s assistant in the Department of preventive medicine. It is quite an interesting job.

Q6. How did you get your present job?

By chance. I was on a placement here as a student. I got to know that they needed somebody in the lab here so I applied for this job.

Q7. Do you think it was a fortunate choice?

Yes and no. I supposed that I would find something else in two months when I got this job. But I did not. I got health problems and I was two months out of work.

Q8. Why/Why not?
No – because one has no chance to get a better position here. I am doing the same work all the time and the salary is low.
Yes – it is interesting job

Q9. Do you feel good about this job?

Yes

Q10. Why yes/no?

It is interesting. But I would not think twice if someone offered me a bigger salary.

Q11. Why did you get this job in your view? What factors played a role?

I took this job for a colleague who is on maternity leave. I must leave when she comes back. There was no competition, but they asked me about my knowledge. I was lucky because I could get this job although I had no practice. Usually it is hard to get the job of chemists assistant without practice. I have got a good recommendation from my teacher.

Q12. Tell me about your experience with looking for jobs. Was it easy to find a job after you finished your education?

No, it wasn’t. As I have already mentioned they require at least three, four years practice everywhere. When the practice is not required, the minimal salary is offered to you.

Q13. Where did you learn about job opportunities?

I got some information at school.

Q14. Do you have some concrete plans for your future career? What would you like to do with your life?

The colleague will be back from maternity leave in one year. I will lose this job. I don’t think I will look for another lab. I cannot work for such a low salary. I think I will try to find some kind of administrative work.

Q15. Who are those who have been of greatest help to you so far?

During school - my parents helped me.

Q16. How would you evaluate the support you have received from your parents since you were a small child?

They were willing to help.

Q17. What role did parental support play in having education and finding a job?

I discussed my decisions with them. They gave me advice.
Q18. Tell me what do you think about the relationship between young people like you and the older generations. Do these people have the same attitudes and values?

I do not think so. But it is very individual.

Q19. In what sense?

Young people below 20 do not know much about the past and communism. On the contrary, some of the older people above 50 think that situation in our country was better under the communist regime.

Q20. According to your experience do employers have a fair attitude towards young people?

I think that everybody has an equal chance today.

Q21. Do employers respect the opinion of their young staff?

They should.

Q22. Why/Why not?

I think there could be a conflict in some aspects, but at the end we would come to a consensus.

Q23. Do you think young people are treated differently when employers hire or fire people?

I do not think so.

Q24. In what sense?

I think it is not a matter of age.

Q25. What are employers looking for when hiring people?

In the case of young women – whether she has a child. I think men are in better situation.

Q26. Which part of your education has been of most use to you so far?

Chemistry course.

Q27. Why?

We do things here, which I have learnt at school.

Q28. Are there things that you missed in your education?
Yes. I work at the Faculty of Medicine and I got no knowledge of biology or anatomy at school.

Q29. Do you have some plans to improve your skills?

PC courses. I am also doing accounting as a part time job. That’s why I need to improve my knowledge in this area (relevant law amendments).

Q30. What type of support would you need for achieving your goals?

Financial.

Q31. Whose support would be most important in achieving your goals?

From parents.

INTERVIEWER SKIPS TO QUESTION 33 IF Q1 REVEALED THAT RESPONDENT ALREADY HAS OWN FAMILY (SPOUSE/CHILDREN)

Q32. Do you have plans to establish your own family?

Yes.

Q33. What relation do you see between your career and family responsibilities? Is there much conflict in your view?

I do not think so.

Q34. Why?

It is not so demanding here. Working hours are flexible.

Q35. What relation do you see between your career and your health? Is there a conflict in your view?

Yes.

Q36. Why?

I work in a lab, sometimes with dangerous materials.

Thank you very much.
Three employers:

7. Miroslav, aged 37, male, the manager of a construction plant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location:</th>
<th>Private room in a pub, Brno</th>
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<tr>
<td>Date of interview:</td>
<td>14 December 1999</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interviewee (name, age, gender, position):</td>
<td>Miroslav, 37, M, manager in a construction plant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Start time:</td>
<td>20.00</td>
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<td>20.26</td>
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Q1. Please tell us briefly about your firm. How many employees do you have and what is the main activity of this enterprise?

2400 employees. The main activity is construction in the area of transport building – motorways, highways.

Q2. Can you tell me what percentage of your employees are under the age of 24? Even a rough estimate would do.

Estimation is about 15 per cent.

Q3. Until what age would you regard your employees as “young”?

Until 35 years.

Q4. What type of jobs do young people normally have at this firm?

Workers, and basic technical and financial positions.

Q5. Does your firm have a special human resource policy for young employees?

Yes ✅

No ➔ go to Q7

Q6. Could you give us some details of this policy’s rules and arrangements?

They could be found in several documents. The essential document is “The human resources development directive” – it involves recruitment policy related to young people from schools. Our company has established cooperation with schools. Then some aspects of the policy are mentioned in a collective contract.

Q7. Would you say that your firm is a youth-friendly workplace?

Yes ✅

No ➔ go to Q9
Q8. Why? In what ways?

The activity of the enterprise we do has a future. It has its place in the labour market and in building. We offer new vacancies which draw the interest of young people. Our company is interested in graduates.

Q9. What are the factors you look at when hiring people?

Education. Also other abilities which you cannot get through education.

Q10. Are there any government programmes/policies that help you hire young people?

Yes.

Q11. What are these?

For example the company is getting financial support in the case where it employs a young graduate who is registered with the labour office. The requirement is that he/she will not be laid off for three or four years by our company.

Q12. Could you give examples of some positive or negative experience with young employees?

It depends on people.
Positive – when the young people are competent and efficient
Negative – when they are not interested in work

Q13. What do you think about the relationship between young people and the older generations? Do they have the same attitudes and values?

Some values and attitudes are the same. But there are differences as well.

Q14. In what sense?

There are older people who have the same attitudes as young people. Those are able to create a great team to work with. The generation gap (different working style) however can make problems and conflicts at the workplace.

Q15. According to your experience do young people have the right attitudes towards employers and jobs?

Some of them have the right attitude – some do not. I know of a young boy – a graduate - who knows exactly what he wants to achieve in his professional career. And I also know of a young boy who does not care.

Q16. Can you tell me which graduates can easily find a good job?

Those who are interested in the given work and are making all efforts to get this job. I mean they know how to present themselves – their abilities....
Q17. And who are those having difficulties in getting a job?

Those who are not interested in the given job. Those who just want to get a stamp they have to present at the labour office to get benefits.

Q18. What kind of employers are popular among young people?

International companies, companies offering good wages, companies who have a good image.

Q19. Why?

Image is an important thing.

Thank you.
Three employers:

8. Daniel, aged 30, male, the manager of the Czech branch of an international company

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<th>Location:</th>
<th>Company office, Brno</th>
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<tr>
<td>Date of interview:</td>
<td>17 December 1999</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interviewee (name, age, gender, position):</td>
<td>Daniel, 30, M, manager of the Czech branch of an international company dealing with metallurgy</td>
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Q1. Please tell us briefly about your firm. How many employees do you have and what is the main activity of this enterprise?

The name of our company is Warnan International. Its main activity is metallurgy - heel pumps production. It is an international company with branches all around the world. The headquarters are in Great Britain. In the Czech Republic branch in Brno we have got 7 employees.

Q2. What percentage of your employees are under the age of 24? Even a rough estimate would do.

I cannot tell.

Q3. Until what age would you regard your employees as “young”?

About 30.

Q4. What type of jobs do young people normally have at this firm?

There are no age limitations for particular positions. It is important whether they prove to be capable to perform the given position well. The young person can be an area manager or sales if he/she is doing a good job. In the Brno branch we have got no young people in these positions however.

Q5. Does your firm have a special human resource policy for young employees?

Yes
No ➔ go to Q7

No, there is no special policy concerning young people, just standard arrangements.

Q6. Could you give us some details of this policy’s rules and arrangements?
We have got a general policy concerning new employees. There are directives concerning training that a new employee will receive, concerning his/her adaptation process etc.

**Q7. Would you say that your firm is a youth-friendly workplace?**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Yes</th>
<th>✓</th>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>➔ go to Q9</td>
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</table>

**Q8. Why? In what ways?**

Our company gives room for dynamic professional career growth. It offers good wages.

**Q9. What are the factors you look at when hiring people?**

The candidate should have relevant qualities – abilities, character qualities, and education. The age is not decisive factor.

**Q10. Are there any government programmes/policies that help you hire young people?**

I don’t know.

**Q11. What are these?**

Not applicable

**Q12. Could you give some examples of positive or negative experiences with young employees?**

I have no negative experience. I have got a young assistant. She is good. However I think it is rather because of her abilities than her age.

**Q13. What do you think about the relationship between young people and the older generations? Do they have the same attitudes and values?**

I think their attitudes and values are not the same.

**Q14. In what sense?**

The time in which my (older) generation was living (most of their lives) was different to the time we live in today and the young generation is growing up. The differences are in opportunities. Today there are many more opportunities than before 1989. This is not only the question of opportunity to travel. Also career opportunities are bigger. Young people can sell their abilities in the labour market, which was not possible before. But it is not only a matter of change in regime. The whole society is unfolding very rapidly (new technologies). For those who are not able to adapt quickly, there could be difficulties. They have different values and opinions than young people. Then I suppose the older people have sometimes a better attitude to work. The impression I have got in discussions with young people is that they would like to have a
high living standard without hard work. The older generations have a different life style – to find a job (sometimes for life) after school and settle down. The young people today are more dynamic, they want to get experience with more jobs, they want to get experience from abroad, they are not settling down after school.

Q15. According to your experience do young people have the right attitudes towards employers and jobs?

It is hard to generalize. The loyalty to a company is lower. The salary, professional career growth, other benefits which companies offer are more important for young people. I think it is the right attitude.

Q16. Can you tell me which graduates easily find a good job?

Computer specialists. Those who have foreign language skills.

Q17. And which ones have difficulties in getting a job?

I suppose graduates who did economics. The labour market is saturated already. It is difficult to find a job with a salary relevant to their education. Some of them are doing work where university degrees are not required. The small companies cannot afford to pay a specialist in economics.

Q18. Which kind of employers are popular among young people?

Employers who are offering career growth, good salary or other benefits are popular.

Q19. Why?

If an employer offers these things, he should be popular among young people. Good communication with superiors is important.

Thank you
Three employers:

9. Vratislav, aged 29, male, the human resources manager of a clothing company

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<th>Location:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Date of interview:</td>
<td>17 December 1999</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interviewee (name, age, gender, position):</td>
<td>Vratislav, 29, M, human resource manager of a clothes company</td>
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Q1. Please tell us briefly about your firm. How many employees do you have and what is the main activity of this enterprise?

Our company is a branch of a Danish company whose main activity is clothes trade. Jackpot & Cottonfields is the trademark of clothes we sell. Our company has about fifty employees in the Czech republic.

Q2. What percentage of your employees are under the age of 24? Even a rough estimate would do.

More than half of our employees are under 24. About 30 people.

Q3. Until what age would you regard your employees as “young”? 

All our employees are aged up to 35 years old. I consider all of them young. Our general manager in the Czech republic is 35. He is the oldest in the company.

Q4. What type of jobs do young people normally have at this firm?

All kinds of positions. There are no age limitations. From shop assistant to general manager of our branch here in the Czech Republic.

Q5. Does your firm have a special human resource policy for young employees?

Yes ✓
No ➔ go to Q7

The policy does not differentiate between young and older employees.

Q6. Could you give us some details of this policy’s rules and arrangements?

It is the policy developed centrally in Denmark. It comprises training, the training of Czech employees is conducted in Denmark.

Q7. Would you say that your firm is a youth-friendly workplace?
Yes of course.

Q8. Why? In what ways?

To be a youth–friendly workplace is the essential thing for our company. Our business commodity is fashion and clothes - the area where young people play an important role.

Q9. What are the factors you look at when hiring people?

Education or practice is not very important. We consider communication skills important. You need to assess the person accurately, to feel that he is the right person for the job. The crucial thing is how a candidate behaves in interview. Most of our employees are high school graduates.

Q10. Are there any government programmes/policies that help you hire young people?

There are, but we do not use them.

Q11. What are these?

Not applicable

Q12. Could you give examples of some positive or negative experiences with young employees?

The positive thing is flexibility of young people. I have no negative experiences.

Q13. What do you think about the relationship between young people and the older generations? Do they have the same attitudes and values?

No they do not have.

Q14. In what sense?

As I have mentioned already, young people are more flexible. Older people are resistant to attitude change. For example they choose the work where they need not work alot although they will receive less money rather than hard work for three times the salary.

Q15. According to your experience do young people have the right attitudes towards employers and jobs?

In our company, yes. Definitely.

Q16. Can you tell me which graduates easily find a good job?

Specialists in a given field. People with practical knowledge regardless of their degree.
Q17. And who are those who have difficulties?

*Those who did humanities. Those who are not flexible enough to work in another field.*

Q18. What kind of employers are popular among young people?

*Those who prefer a democratic leadership style.*

Q19. Why?

*Because their opinions are taken into account. The employees are participating on company policy.*

Thank you