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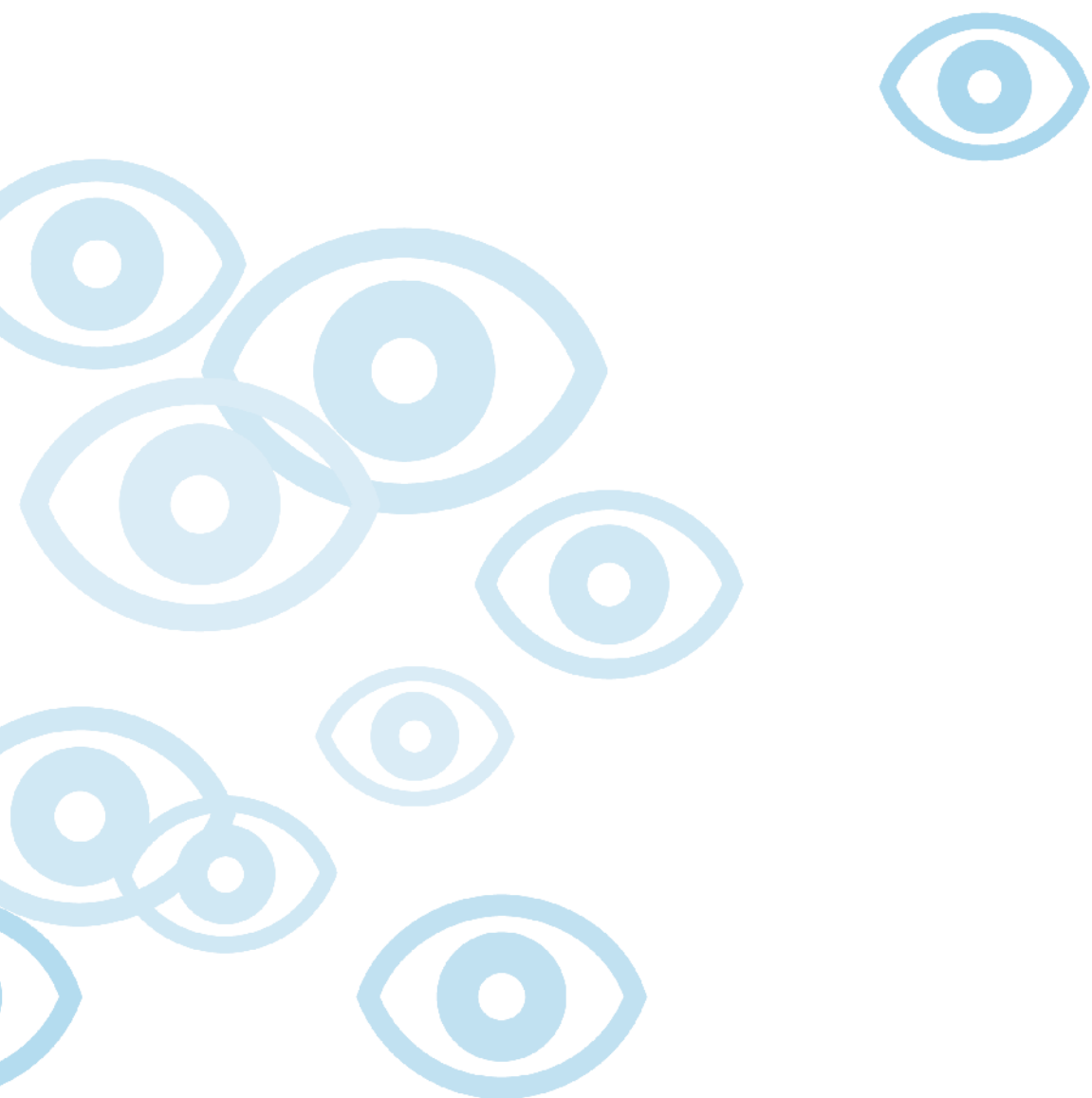


Lifelong
Learning
Programme

EN

Empowering vulnerable adults to tackle labour market challenges

Findings from study visits 2010/11
and 2011/12 and policy implications



Empowering vulnerable adults to tackle labour market challenges

Findings from study visits 2010/11
and 2011/12 and policy implications



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Europe 123, 570 01 Thessaloniki (Pylea), GREECE

PO Box 22427, 551 02 Thessaloniki, GREECE

Tel. +30 2310490111, Fax +30 2310490020

E-mail: info@cedefop.europa.eu

www.cedefop.europa.eu

Cedefop – Study Visits

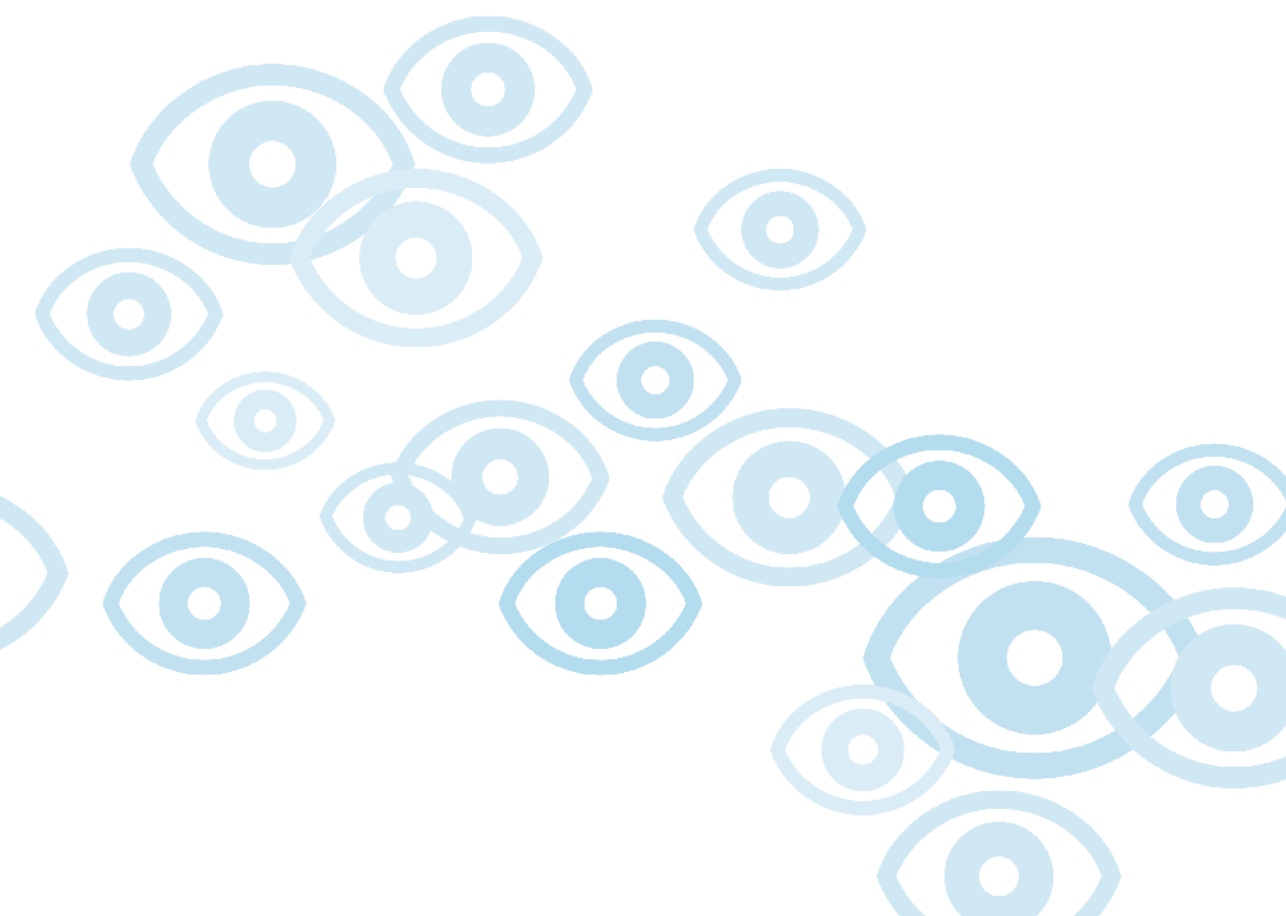
Tel. +30 2310490154, Fax +30 2310490044

E-mail: studyvisits@cedefop.europa.eu

<http://studyvisits.cedefop.europa.eu>

Christian Lettmayr, *Acting Director*

Laurence Martin, *Chair of the Governing Board*



Foreword

The current economic crisis has led to high levels of youth and general unemployment. Long-term unemployment (periods of 12 months and longer) ⁽¹⁾ is increasing throughout the European Union, bringing the risk of long-term exclusion of several groups from the labour market and society.

The European Union's goal of an employment rate of 75% for those aged 20 to 64 by 2020 (European Commission, 2010a) is a severe challenge and requires specific actions for disadvantaged groups particularly affected by recent developments.

To make change happen at grassroots level, regional and local policy-makers and practitioners need to discuss policies and practices, share ideas and experience, and reflect on the efficiency of approaches.

The initiatives presented in this publication have been selected by participants of study visits for education and vocational training specialists and decision-makers ⁽²⁾, a programme coordinated by Cedefop. The programme aids information exchange through presentation of initiatives that different countries have introduced to support the integration of vulnerable adults into the labour market.

⁽¹⁾ In 2008, long-term unemployment (periods of 12 months and longer) accounted for 2.6% of the active population and 37.0% of all unemployment. In 2011, long-term unemployment accounted for 4.1% of the active population and 42.9% of all unemployment (Eurostat, 2012).

⁽²⁾ The study visits programme is one of the key actions of the lifelong learning programme 2007-13 (European Parliament; Council of the EU, 2006a, pp. 45-68).

While this publication is addressed to practitioners, it includes important messages for EU policy-makers. The examples focus on providing vulnerable adults (migrants and ethnic minorities, low-skilled and older workers) with support for successful integration in the labour market: information and guidance, access to vocational programmes, opportunities to learn and stay longer in employment, and opportunities to upgrade, assess and recognise their skills and competences.

This publication intends to increase awareness of policies and practices which support vulnerable adults in meeting labour-market challenges. Study visit organisers and participants, experts and practitioners may find the examples helpful in finding partners for European cooperation projects and developing innovative ideas in the framework of the lifelong learning programme (2007-13).



Christian Lettmayr
Acting Director, Cedefop

Acknowledgements

This publication is based on the contributions of those involved in preparing and running study visits. Thanks are due to the all of these: participants; the 2010/11 and 2011/12 study visits group reporters who included the initiatives and projects in their group reports; the study visit organisers and representatives of hosting institutions who prepared the content of the visits; the national agencies who coordinate study visits in their countries and helped contact host institutions and collect information.

Thanks also go to participants and workshop reporters who discussed and validated the findings presented in this publication at the synthesis seminar 'Empowering vulnerable adults to tackle labour market challenges' (Thessaloniki, 6 and 7 June 2012) organised by Cedefop.

Thanks go to Angela Musca, Cedefop, who drafted and supervised the preparation of this publication and to Stephanie Wehrheim, Cedefop, who collected and prepared the information.

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Introduction

This publication is based on examples of good practice, common approaches and challenges described in the group reports of 25 study visits in 2010/11 and 2011/12; the visits focused on empowering vulnerable adults (migrants and ethnic minorities, low-skilled and older workers 55+) to tackle labour market challenges. The initiatives presented were selected by the study visit participants - education and vocational training specialists and decision-makers (for more information see Box 1) - and presented by their 'owners' at the synthesis seminar organised by Cedefop on 6 and 7 June 2012 in Thessaloniki, Greece (for more information see Chapter 4).

The 29 initiatives are grouped under three thematic headings:

- (a) support for migrants and ethnic minorities through information and marketing campaigns, lifelong guidance services and vocational training programmes;
- (b) support for low-skilled workers and other vulnerable groups through information and lifelong guidance services, vocational training programmes, opportunities for assessing and recognising skills;
- (c) support for older workers through learning for active ageing and measures to keep workers at work for longer.

The description of each initiative presents the context where the practice is implemented, its objectives, expected outcomes and target groups, main actors involved, activities undertaken, duration, results achieved and impact, and potential for transferability to other contexts. Each description also contains contact information on the host institutions and details of a contact person for further information.

These initiatives should be understood in their specific national, regional or local contexts. We believe that they will raise awareness of how specific education, training and employment issues are approached in different European countries and will generate reflection on what can work in other contexts.

Box 1. The study visits programme



The study visits programme is part of the lifelong learning programme 2007-13. Since 2008, Cedefop has coordinated the programme on behalf of, and in cooperation with, the European Commission. The programme has proved effective in stimulating discussion, reflection, exchange of ideas and experience among education and vocational training specialists and decision-makers, responsible for developing and implementing education and training in Europe.

Study visits cover a broad range of themes of common interest that are fully aligned with the European priorities for education and training (see Annex).

In the academic year 2010/11, 2 465 education and vocational training specialists and decision-makers from 30 countries ⁽³⁾ participated in study visits; in 2011/12 the figures were 2 723 participants from 33 countries. The largest group of participants comprised head teachers and teacher trainers at 27% and 25% respectively (see Annex, Figures 1 and 2) ⁽⁴⁾.

Participants visit education and training institutions in the host country and meet policy-makers, social partners, teachers, students and practitioners. They also learn about successful policies and practices, share ideas and expertise on a specific topic, establish contacts for future cooperation, and take ideas back home. On returning from a visit, many of them apply what they have learned and propose changes to their institutions and to education and training policies at local, regional and national levels. A survey conducted by Cedefop among 2010/11 participants shows that 56.6% of respondents proposed changes to improve the work of their institution after a study visit.

The study visits are effective ways of learning and stimulate exchange of ideas and reflection. About 97% of participants were satisfied with their learning experience in the 2010/11 study visits.

⁽³⁾ The programme is open to nationals and residents of any of the EU-27 Member States, as well as the EFTA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) and candidate countries (Croatia, FYROM, Turkey).

⁽⁴⁾ Other target groups include: directors of education and vocational training institutions, guidance centres, validation or accreditation centres, representatives of local, regional and national authorities, heads of departments, guidance advisers, social partners, education and vocational training inspectors, representatives of education and training networks, and associations of educational services, labour offices or guidance centres, researchers.

Support for migrants and ethnic minorities

Context

Across Europe migrants ⁽⁵⁾ and ethnic minorities ⁽⁶⁾ tend to have lower employment than host country nationals. In 2011, when the employment rate for those aged 20 to 64 in the European Union was 68.6%, employment among non-EU citizens in the same age group was only 58.0% (Eurostat, 2012). Non-EU citizens are more likely to be unemployed because of inactivity and job mismatch, which are sometimes associated with perceived discrimination and negative views on migration (Cedefop, 2011b). There is also misuse of the skills and qualifications of highly qualified migrants working in jobs for which they are overqualified. Due to this polarisation, the probability for a non-EU national to get a job below his/her skills is five times higher than for an EU-national (Cedefop, 2011a).

Building an inclusive society by integrating migrants is essential to maximising the economic and social benefits of immigration, for individuals as well as societies. Migrants can help fill the gaps in the labour market and contribute to addressing the demographic challenges that the EU faces. Cedefop's latest skill demand and supply forecast for the European Union for 2010-20 shows that migration influences the size and skill composition of the workforce in Member States and has important implications for skill demand and supply (Cedefop, 2012b).

Migrants should have the opportunity to learn the language of the receiving country, to have access to employment, health and care systems, and to have the economic capacity to support themselves (European Commission, 2011). They should be better equipped with the skills required in the labour market and receive better support to overcome barriers such as discrimination, unrecognised skills and qualifications, inadequate information, advice and guidance, low confidence or lack of basic skills. Some migrants need special assistance in finding jobs, for example, training and assistance in building up networks and possibly temporary employment to gain experience.

One of the most vulnerable ethnic minorities is the Roma. This group tends to face a range of disadvantages in gaining access to education, employment,

⁽⁵⁾ Any person who lives temporarily or permanently in a country where he or she was not born, and has acquired some significant social ties to this country' (Unesco, n.d).

⁽⁶⁾ 'A national or racial group living in a country or area which contains a larger group of people of a different race or nationality' (Cambridge dictionaries online, n.d.).

housing and healthcare (European Commission, 2009). The provision of lifelong guidance and vocational training for Roma is still weak in many countries in Europe, though there are several successful initiatives and projects addressing education and employment needs.

Examples of practice

A number of initiatives emerge from the study visits reports which focused on measures that support migrants and ethnic minorities. They are grouped into the following categories:

- (a) information and marketing campaigns:
these aim to raise migrant participation in training and employment. For example, information campaigns are organised in the Czech Republic for qualified foreign workers. Information about the labour market and living conditions is provided to migrants and their families in the receiving country (Section 1.1.1.). In Germany, campaigns are tailored to the needs of migrant communities which are offered training and opportunities for integration into the labour market (Section 1.1.2.);
- (b) lifelong guidance services:
these services are available to help migrants to enter the labour market in Finland (Section 1.2.1.) and Sweden (Section 1.2.2.). A refugee assessment and guidance unit provides guidance and training for migrants with a refugee background in the United Kingdom (Section 1.2.3.);
- (c) vocational training programmes:
the study visits findings emphasise the need to equip migrants and ethnic minorities with skills suited to the labour market, through vocational training programmes which enable citizens with a migrant background and members of the ethnic minorities to gain a qualification and take their skills a step further (one step up).

Vulnerable adults with migrant backgrounds receive a second chance and are prepared for work in the social and health sector in Norway (Section 1.3.1.). In Spain, companies can select skilled workers among immigrants prepared through a vocational training programme organised by Xabec (Section 1.3.2.).

Integration through qualification is a national network which provides information, guidance and training courses for organisations which work with migrants in Germany (Section 1.3.3.). Support for migrants with a refugee background is offered by the network FLUCHTort in Hamburg (Section 1.3.4.); this includes refugee organisations, educational providers, business companies, jobs agencies, public authorities. The network follows an integrated

approach by considering the life context of refugees and by supporting their routes to training and qualifications.

Some measures are addressed to Roma people with the aim of improving access to education and vocational training and contributing to their successful integration into society and the labour market. For example, the Municipal enterprise supports the members of ethnic minorities (including the Roma community) in Slovakia to improve their employability skills by taking part in training for specific jobs. It also helps them to develop social contacts, status and strengthen self-confidence through access to education and employment (Section 1.3.5.). Roma people are prepared for a job in health and care at *Folk* high school in Sweden (Section 1.3.6.). The courses are successful and students have achieved an employment rate between 60 and 80%. In Hungary, Roma women are equipped with better reading, writing and life skills by taking part in the project *Your tale* (Section 1.3.7.).

Despite the number of successful initiatives identified in study visits, much remains to be done. There is no single solution across the EU-27 to increasing employment rates among migrants and ethnic minorities in a harmonised way, since the labour market realities and related challenges are specific to each country. More effort is needed at European level and also locally, regionally and nationally to achieve better targeted results. All key stakeholders – social partners, governments, education and training providers, labour market stakeholders, civil society organisations – need to be aware of their respective responsibilities in supporting migrants and ethnic minorities to participate in learning and enter the labour market.

1.1. Information and marketing campaigns

1.1.1. Active selection of qualified foreign workers, Czech Republic



WHERE
Labour Office of the Czech Republic – Local office in Opava
 Bochenkova 4
 74601 Opava, Czech Republic
 Tel. +420 950142300
 Fax +420 950112302
www.portal.mpsv.cz

CONTACT PERSON
Jarmila Materankova
 Director
Jarmila.Materankova@op.mpsv.cz

Initiative implemented at national level

successfully and quickly into the Czech Republic without having to give up their culture, customs and/or native language.

FOR WHOM

It is addressed to qualified foreign workers from 50 target countries such as Belarus, Bulgaria, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), India, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Russia and Serbia. Foreign graduates of Czech universities and secondary schools, regardless of their country of origin, also had the opportunity to apply.

WHO IS INVOLVED/CARRIES IT OUT

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (responsible, coordinating body), employment offices, Ministry of the Interior (granting permanent residence permits), Foreign and Border Police Service, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (checking the authenticity of the presented documents), Czech diplomatic missions, International Organisation for Migration (IOM) Prague (responsible for the information campaign both in the Czech Republic and abroad, first contact with applicants), social partners, non-governmental organisations.

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE ACTION

The project objectives were to bring qualified foreign workers to the Czech Republic and to help Czech employers find qualified workers for long-term vacant opportunities which could not be filled with Czech or EU workers. These foreigners and their family members could obtain permanent residence in the Czech Republic in a considerably shorter period than normally required. The project created conditions for foreign workers and their families to be integrated

HOW

- Two information campaigns were carried out, aiming to motivate qualified foreign workers in the target countries and to inform the Czech public about the project objectives.
- To make it easier for foreign workers to find a job in the Czech Republic, websites publicised long-term unfilled vacancies for qualified workers.
- The participants received assistance in the eventuality of job loss: 60 days period to find a job, with the support of public employment services and without losing their visas.

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

The initiative was implemented in the period 2003-10.

RESULTS/IMPACT ACHIEVED

About 2 000 foreign workers entered the project, along with 2 000 family members, mainly from Belarus, Bulgaria, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), India, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Russia and Serbia. About 1 000 foreigners obtained residence in the Czech Republic. Unfortunately, these numbers are far below the estimated ones.

WHY THIS INITIATIVE IS CONSIDERED GOOD PRACTICE AND HOW IT CAN BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER CONTEXTS

The objective of the project is to use easily controllable, simple and cheap tools for transition from passive reaction to active management of economically motivated migration.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The applicant had to have a work permit in the Czech Republic for a vacancy with a defined degree of qualification. Due to this essential requirement, the number of applicants was severely restricted.

1.1.2. Marketing methods to reach migrant communities, Germany



The infographic is styled like a web browser window with a blue border and navigation icons at the top. It is divided into two main sections: 'WHERE' and 'CONTACT PERSON'. The 'WHERE' section includes a briefcase icon and the address of the Kompetenzzentrum Handwerkskammer Hamburg. The 'CONTACT PERSON' section includes an eye icon and the name and contact details of Heinrich A. Rabeling. A note at the bottom states that the initiative is implemented at regional and local levels.

WHERE
ELBCAMPUS
Kompetenzzentrum
Handwerkskammer Hamburg
Zum Handwerkszentrum 1
21079 Hamburg, Germany
Tel. +49 40 35905710
Fax +49 40 3590544710
weiterbildung@elbcampus.de
www.elbcampus.de

CONTACT PERSON
Heinrich A. Rabeling
Managing director
harabeling@elbcampus.de

*Initiative implemented
at regional and local levels*

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE ACTION

Since 2010 Germany has faced a shortage of skilled labour. Despite strong economic growth, fewer young people are entering the labour market due to demographic trends. Migrants are people with at least one parent born outside Germany and represent an important part of the German population, especially in the large cities. Unemployment is high in their case. This initiative took place in the city state of Hamburg, with an overall migrant population of about 30%.

As migrants are hard to reach by traditional marketing methods, this initiative focuses on developing methods tailored to migrant communities. Participants received customised training and opportunities for integration into the labour market.

FOR WHOM

The main target group is unemployed adult migrants and migrants who have recently arrived in Hamburg. Basic knowledge of German is required.

Migrants who are not yet fully integrated are typically organised in communities, reflecting their home countries, and their religious or social orientation.

WHO IS INVOLVED/CARRIES IT OUT

The Elbcampus is a training centre mainly for blue collar training. At the end of 2009, it started a project on migrant qualification funded by the national government. The main players were the national and local labour authorities and potential employers of migrants.

The training content comprises interviews, profiling, language and technical training: duration is between three and six months. The content is agreed between the future employers, the labour authorities, and Elbcampus.

The challenge was (and still is) to find migrants who are interested in starting a career in a variety of blue collar jobs. A project team

was set up with people of various national backgrounds, especially from Russia and Turkey. This team had in-depth understanding of the characteristics of the most important target communities.

The marketing campaign targets migrant organisations, religious communities, sport communities and the consulates of the home countries. Training centres for basic language courses and various focal points for migrants, such as ethnic shops, hairdressers and tailors are also targeted.

HOW

A mix of marketing methods is used: direct approach to leaders and indirect approach to individuals. This project includes the following steps:

- step 1:
involving the leaders through personal visits to the chairmen of migrant associations, local religious leaders, and consulates. Developing personal contacts with the press, newspapers, radio, TV, including weekly supply of news on the project and success stories;
- step 2:
reaching the individual: using ethnic-marketing-agencies; developing ethnic-specific materials on print and online; organising regular press conferences to present success stories and testimonials; participating and distributing materials at ethnic events, such as the Muslim Friday

prayer, the orthodox or the African Sunday service, after football games, etc.; organising special events in shopping centres or market places, annual job fare for migrants, hands-on orientation weeks in the workshops of the Elbcampus and speed dating with employers. All these are very effective and the migrant people have started to talk about the Elbcampus as a place of job opportunities.

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

This initiative started in 2006, was developed in 2009 and further expanded in 2012.

RESULTS/IMPACT ACHIEVED

- The migrant communities, the press, the political leaders of the city state and the labour authorities strongly support the initiative.
- The government of Hamburg appreciates the contribution to the labour market, which is facing a shortage of skilled workers. Two new projects started in May 2012 with political support building on the initial success of the initiative;
- Employers are cooperating, as this initiative can be a solution to their recruiting challenges.
- The Elbcampus has reached about 2 500 migrants with approximately 500 professional profiles and more than 200 participants in training at various levels.

WHY THIS INITIATIVE IS CONSIDERED GOOD PRACTICE AND HOW IT CAN BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER CONTEXTS

The initiative proves that there is an opportunity to raise migrant participation in training and employment by using targeted marketing. It is essential to contact and understand the target groups, and develop communication methods to suit them.

1.2. Lifelong guidance services

1.2.1. Personalised guidance for learning and working, Finland



service which is operated with a commonly defined service process. The career centre professionals have information about each service offered by the centres, so enabling good quality of service for immigrants with different learning histories and competence/skill levels. Amiedu coordinates the network.

HOW

Amiedu and other vocational adult education centres provide language and integration training services to immigrants. All 13 centres provide guidance and counselling services and vocational adult education training services. The Ministry of Employment and Economy provides funding for language and integration services and the Ministry of Education and Culture provides funding for vocational training. Companies and institutions needing skilled workers provide practical work and learning opportunities within the vocational training programme phase.

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE ACTION

It supports the integration of immigrants into Finnish society and working life, their access to language courses, vocational training and employment.

FOR WHOM

Immigrants from various countries, male and female adults.

WHO IS INVOLVED/CARRIES IT OUT

Thirteen vocational adult education centres form a network of guidance and counselling services in the Helsinki metropolitan area. Each network partner has a career centre

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

The guidance and counselling initiative was established under the European Union Social Fund project funding as a common service centre in 2007. The present network model was established in 2011 and is funded by the participation of each guidance and counselling network member.

RESULTS/IMPACT ACHIEVED

The development of the guidance and counselling service model and the operation of the network were completed. The immigration training, vocational training and support for employment are continuing in 2012.

WHY THIS INITIATIVE IS CONSIDERED GOOD PRACTICE AND HOW IT CAN BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER CONTEXTS

The principle of individual learning pathways supported by personal guidance and counselling services enables focused and motivated learning opportunities, with prior learning taken into account. The transition from integration training for immigrants to vocational training is successfully implemented.

1.2.2. **Aspirant education: integrating qualified immigrants into the Swedish labour market, Sweden**



WHERE
Malmö University
 Centre for widening participation
 Citadellsvägen 7
 20506 Malmö, Sweden
 Tel. +46 406657353
www.mah.se/aspirant

CONTACT PERSON
Lasse Lindhagen
 Teacher/Internship coordinator
Lasse.lindhagen@mah.se

*Initiative implemented
at local level*

a Swedish university. The students apply for the programme at the same time as applying for higher education in Sweden. They are adult students, 35 to 45 years old, who had a good career in their home country.

WHO IS INVOLVED/CARRIES IT OUT

The programme is run like any other programme at Malmö University. The teachers of the career-planning course coordinate the individual study plan as well as the work placement for each student. Local employers support the programme.

HOW

A unique feature of Aspirantutbildning is flexibility in devising the curriculum and influencing its content by close ties to the labour market. The study plan is highly individualised and takes advantage of each student's previous experience and future career plans to create sustainable professional mobility on the Swedish labour market. Parts of the curriculum are developed and taught in collaboration with local employers.

Guidance is provided throughout the student's time at the university and is built into a pedagogical model for the entire programme in collaboration with the labour market. Students also get in touch with academic staff with expertise to assess what impact retraining and taking new courses would have on

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE ACTION

Aspirantutbildningen (aspirant education) is a supplementary education programme at Malmö University for immigrant graduates. It has been designed to enhance their employability and career prospects in the Swedish labour market. The programme consists of three parts: career planning, academic courses and work placement.

FOR WHOM

The target group is students with a degree from a foreign country who meet the requirements of studying at

their potential to compete for jobs on the new labour market.

In the final part of the programme, students are required to complete a work placement for 10 to 20 weeks. The placement is set up by the programme tutors according to each student's needs and interests. Finding the right placement for each individual also implies matching the specific requirements of employers. This process often obliges the student to be flexible and mobile, as their first choice of placement cannot always be met. The students take responsibility for setting up their own study plan and they are prepared to become lifelong learners. Within the programme, they learn how to make well-informed choices regarding their future education and career.

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

The programme has been running since November 2002.

RESULTS/IMPACT ACHIEVED

Since November 2002, 259 students have been admitted to the programme, though approximately half decided to quit for various reasons. Some decided to choose a different education path and others decided that this way of studying is difficult and perhaps hard to combine with family life. Some realised that they no longer can, or want to, work within their profession in Sweden after having spoken to employers and learned what is required to be competitive. They might choose a different career path outside the Aspirantutbildning. It is not easy to come back to university as an adult in another country and a different academic context, hence so many students dropped out.

Of the remaining students, 119 obtained employment at qualified jobs, either after having completed the programme or before.

WHY THIS INITIATIVE IS CONSIDERED GOOD PRACTICE AND HOW IT CAN BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER CONTEXTS

The combination of career counselling, academic courses based on individual needs, and an individually matched work placement, all within a higher education institution, makes this a good practice example.

The innovative aspect of the programme is the cooperation between a higher education institution and employers aiming to influence students study plans. All higher education is free in Sweden and this is an interesting alternative for immigrant students.

1.2.3. **Building bridges: career guidance, requalification and employment support for refugee health professionals, United Kingdom**

WHERE
London Metropolitan University, refugee assessment and guidance unit (RAGU)
 236-250 Holloway Road
 London N7 6PP, Great Britain
 Tel. +44 07133 2487
 Fax +44 07133 2419
www.londonmet.ac.uk/ragu

CONTACT PERSON
Azar Sheibani
 Head of RAGU
a.sheibani@londonmet.ac.uk
Initiative implemented at regional level

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE ACTION

This initiative aims to take a coordinated and integrated approach to the delivery of services to support refugee health professionals (RHP) back into employment. It provides specialist guidance and employment support to promote RHP progression towards, and entrance into, employment in the health sector at levels corresponding to their qualifications, skills and experience.

The refugee health professionals

programme at RAGU comprises the following interconnected programmes: provision of information, advice and guidance (IAG), work placement and the building bridges (BB) beneficiary fund. Clients eligible to access the programme are qualified and experienced in a wide range of registered health professions. The expected outcomes are the following:

- to offer advice, guidance and training for 300 refugee health professionals;
- to offer work placement to 45 refugee health professionals;
- to achieve job outcome for 60 refugee health professionals.

FOR WHOM

The target groups for this initiative are doctors, pharmacists, dentists, nurses, midwives, laboratory technicians and other related professionals who are in the United Kingdom as refugees. They need to pass through a rigorous requalification process to return to clinical practice in the United Kingdom. They are professionals whose expertise, skills and experience are needed in the United Kingdom. The employment of refugee health professionals has many benefits for National Health Service (NHS) organisations including workforce supply, meeting equality and diversity requirements,

and corporate social responsibility. The NHS London is aware of this pool of skills and has supported the initiative financially.

WHO IS INVOLVED/CARRIES IT OUT

London Metropolitan University is one of the partners in this initiative. Other stakeholders include the NHS in London, which is the commissioner, and the Refugee Council, which is the main national organisation in the United Kingdom supporting refugees. The Council is the lead agency as well as a delivery organisation.

There are also direct and active links with a wide range of health professional employers, professional training providers, and professional bodies: the General Medical Council, the General Dental Council, the Nursing and Midwifery Council, the General Pharmaceutical Council, and the Health Professionals Council.

HOW

- Provision of advice and guidance, specialist training, professional healthcare training, empowerment seminars.

- Professional registration with relevant health care bodies.
- NHS grants for specialist training and registration exams.
- Development and delivery of structured work placement programme.
- Employment support for RHPs to enter paid and voluntary health-related work (pre-registration).
- Training on cross-cultural competences and networking skills.
- Transferability of skills and employability skills reorientation.

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

The initiative has been running since 2009.

RESULTS/IMPACT ACHIEVED

The following results were obtained in the period 2009-12:

- 255 health professionals were prepared as doctors, dentists, nurses, midwives, pharmacists, etc.;
- 85 participants in the programme have entered into paid work;
- 56 participants have entered professional training.

WHY THIS INITIATIVE IS CONSIDERED GOOD PRACTICE AND HOW IT CAN BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER CONTEXTS

This initiative is built on 15 years of lobbying and advocacy work with health professional bodies and employers. It is a response to meeting the needs of the NHS, diversity of patient-base in the United Kingdom, and of refugees themselves:

- refugee health professionals who need to requalify and practice in their own fields and integrate successfully in the labour market;
- business case for getting highly skilled health professionals into the NHS;
- the patients whose cultural background and language barriers offer a challenge to the National Health Service; having a health professional representing those communities could respond successfully to this challenge.

This initiative is commissioned by NHS London and has already been successfully transferred to other fields and target groups in the United Kingdom, including teachers, engineers and finance professionals.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Box 2. A beneficiary's experience



Dr BB had taken the international English language testing system (IELTS) exam twice and had been unable to score seven in each paper. He was increasingly desperate and felt depressed.

Dr BB met a RAGU career adviser to assess all his career needs in June 2011. Following the guidance interview he was referred to an IELTS class which he started. He was also referred to the RAGU NHS Futures programme. This comprises four interlinked workshops designed to empower and motivate clients and help build skills and confidence. Clients tell us they find it very helpful. From this programme Dr BB decided to apply for a RAGU work placement. He also worked with a RAGU adviser over several appointments and came to RAGU employability workshops to prepare a CV, learn networking and interview techniques and other skills. All these skills contributed to Dr BB successfully entering the RAGU work placement in December 2011.

Dr BB started the work placement in a general practitioner (GP) surgery as a healthcare assistant. He was given a lot of responsibility, carrying out new patient health checks, phlebotomy, note summarising, sitting in with GPs and attending their meetings. He enjoyed his work and his confidence grew. He learnt about NHS processes, team working in the United Kingdom and his language skills improved significantly. After three months of work placement he took the IELTS exam again and finally passed in March 2012. The same week his work placement finished. The GP supervisor was so impressed by Dr BB's teamwork, clinical knowledge and communication with patients, that they offered him a paid part-time post.

Dr BB is now working part-time as a healthcare assistant and studying for Professional and Linguistic Assessment Board (PLAB). GPs at the surgery have said he is welcome to discuss clinical scenarios to help him through the PLAB exams.

1.3. Vocational training programmes

1.3.1. Health workers: education at nursing home, Norway



WHERE
Oslo adult education centre Sinsen
 P.b. 484 Økern, Lørenveien 11
 0512 Oslo, Norway
 Tel. +47 23466700
 Fax +47 23466700
[sinse@oslovo.no](mailto:sinsen@oslovo.no)
www.sinsen.oslovo.no

CONTACT PERSON
Bjorg Haugland
 Principal
bjorg.haugland.ove@ude.oslo.kommune.no

Initiative implemented at regional and local levels

The goal is to help them to finish and pass the exams as quickly as possible so that they can be economically independent and earn their own living.

FOR WHOM

Adults over 25 years who have not finished upper secondary school may have a second or even a third opportunity. If they are competent, they are accepted in the programme.

WHO IS INVOLVED/CARRIES IT OUT

Teachers at Oslo VO Sinsen, the school inspector and professionals working at the special nursing home in Oslo.

HOW

- Teachers at Oslo VO Sinsen offer courses for two days a week in the theoretical subjects: English, Norwegian, mathematics, social studies and natural sciences.
- The school inspector follows up the signed agreement between Oslo VO Sinsen and the special nursing home in Oslo where the students are learning three days a week.
- Two nursing teachers follow the students at the work site and there is a strong combination of practically-oriented teaching where the programme subjects are integrated in real life practice at the nursing home. Practice and theory

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE ACTION

Oslo adult education centre prepares marginalised adults with poor school background and difficulty in understanding the Norwegian language to work in the social and health sector, as assistant nurses/health workers. Different educational models were tried out as these students need both theoretical and practical education.

go hand in hand in this model and students can easily get relevant theory at any time.

- Professionals working at the nursing home follow up and give advice to students.
- Students participate in all activities involving the old patients living at the nursing home and follow staff working hours. Sometimes they might be in need of time-out; they are gathered in a group to share experiences and also to get better theoretical understanding of illnesses, symptoms, etc.

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

Since 2010.

RESULTS/IMPACT ACHIEVED

Adult learners are supervised in their work by two teachers and additional staff who cooperate to help them succeed in their education. The students are aware of the importance of meeting at work and working on school matters; through this they can be better integrated in the team. They have achieved good results due to effective learning processes combining school and work. Students performing well got their official grades and diploma in a shorter period of time. Some students got part-time or full-time work at the nursing home and good references for their job applications.

WHY THIS INITIATIVE IS CONSIDERED GOOD PRACTICE AND HOW IT CAN BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER CONTEXTS

A similar group in building and construction at a work site in Oslo was trained in cooperation with partners from the labour market. However, it is difficult to find partners that can include and supervise a group of 15 to 20 students and have appropriate rooms for the group work.

1.3.2. Vocational programme for people at risk of social exclusion, Spain



WHERE?
XABEC,
Vocational training centre
Esteban Dolz de Castelar 3
46019 Valencia, Spain
Tel. +34 963 389 882
Fax +34 963 389 881
info@xabec.es
www.xabec.es
(English version available)

CONTACT PERSON
Antonio Mir Montes
Director
antonio.mir@xabec.es
*Initiative implemented
at regional level*

Colombia and Ecuador), North Africa (Algeria and Morocco), South Africa (Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo), and Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Lithuania, Romania).

WHO IS INVOLVED/CARRIES IT OUT

The main actors are the job placement person in the school, human resources, social workers, the school head of studies, and representatives of regional government.

HOW

The unemployed people are informed about companies and their intention to offer a job place through the vocational centre. The training courses are related to maintenance specialisation and last from 60 to 800 hours.

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE ACTION

The programme aims to prepare immigrants and other people at risk of social exclusion to be competitive and get a job in the Valencia region.

The expected outcomes are to get the same percentage of job placements for immigrants as nationals and the highest rate of employment for both nationals and immigrants at regional level.

FOR WHOM

The target group includes immigrants from South America (Bolivia,

The main actors have the following tasks:

- the job placement person in the school is in contact with companies, knows their needs, interviews the students, tries to match needs and offers. He/she is also in contact with social institutions which send students to the vocational centre;
- human resources informs the school's job placement person about the needs of the companies;
- social workers which deal with disadvantaged people (immigrants, homeless, convicts, young drug addicts) select and refer students to the vocational centre;

- the school's head of studies prepares the skills' programme, knows the needs of the companies and the availability of the teachers to attend the courses;
- financial support was offered for three years by Valencia regional government but, due to the economic crisis, the sponsorship was stopped. At this moment, the support is received from a bank (its social branch).

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

This programme started in 2006 and it is still running, but not so strongly due to the economic crisis.

RESULTS/IMPACT ACHIEVED

The success of the programme depends on the prestige of the vocational school. Many companies come to the vocational training centre instead of going to the official agencies when they need to hire someone; here they can find skilled and suitable people for the available jobs. Recently, Xabec was recognised as a job placement agency.

A high percentage of work placements (close to 70%) were obtained from the beginning of the programme in 2006 until 2009. Currently, the rate is 15-20%, one of the highest in the region.

WHY THIS INITIATIVE IS CONSIDERED GOOD PRACTICE AND HOW IT COULD BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER CONTEXTS

This programme changed the perception of immigrants as disadvantaged people and helped companies to select them as skilled workers.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

To make such programme a success, training centres should be able to adapt academic programmes to the specific needs of the company. Teachers have to be properly prepared to respond to this demand, so it is necessary to invest time and resources in developing the teachers' skills by motivating them to become apprentices in companies, if necessary.

1.3.3. Integration through qualification (IQ), Germany



WHERE?
Tür an Tür
Integrationsprojekte gGmbH
Schießgrabenstr. 14
86150 Augsburg, Germany
Tel. +49 8219079919
Fax +49 8219079911
www.migranet.org
www.tuerantuer.de
www.netzwerk-iq.de

CONTACT PERSON
Anne Güller-Frey
Transnational coordinator
anne.gueller-frey@tuerantuer.de
*Initiative implemented at local,
regional and national levels*

FOR WHOM

It is addressed to migrants, chambers and associations, training providers, federal employment office and counselling institutions.

WHO IS INVOLVED/CARRIES IT OUT

The IQ programme is closely integrated into the aims and measures of the National action plan on integration of Germany. A multiprofessional network involving service providers, employment agencies, social partners, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) aims to meet skills needs in Germany. The working results achieved by the network are made available to the ministries, the federal employment service and the general public. An external evaluation team is devising a monitoring system for recording results and provides support at all levels of the network.

HOW

The IQ network transfers instruments and strategies in the following fields: recognition of foreign qualifications, occupational German language, business start-up, qualification, and training.

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

It was implemented in 2005. The Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research started a new phase of promotion to run between 2011 and 2014.

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE ACTION

Aiming to improve the labour market situation of adult migrants, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has been promoting the national IQ network since 2005. Recently, IQ developed and tested instruments, recommended procedures and concepts for counselling and vocational qualification. In the IQ programme, 16 regional networks cooperate with other local actors aiming to transfer instruments, procedures and concepts for the labour market integration of migrants.

RESULTS/IMPACT ACHIEVED

The IQ network developed, tested and transferred instruments and strategies, as follows:

- new courses, advice and guidance approaches, e.g. the fair Job-kontakt where vocational guidance and job placement are offered;
- instruments for competence and skills assessment;
- cooperation with job centres, for example Info-Day Migration;
- conceptual advice provided for the development and transfer of programmes such as the ESF-BAMF (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees), programme for occupational German and for business start-up.

WHY THIS INITIATIVE IS CONSIDERED GOOD PRACTICE AND HOW IT COULD BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER CONTEXTS

The IQ network should be seen as a good practice because it involves many actors working to improve labour market access for migrants: chambers of handicrafts, chamber of industry and commerce, communities, NGOs, and migrant organisations.

1.3.4. **Network FLUCHTort Hamburg: vocational integration for refugees and asylum seekers, Germany**



WHERE
Passage Ltd
 Nagelsweg 14
 20097 Hamburg, Germany
 Tel. +49 4024192785
 Fax +49 4024192787
www.fluchtort-hamburg.de
www.vernetzung-migration-hamburg.de/

CONTACT PERSON
Maren Gag
 Coordinator migration and international cooperation
maren.gag@passage-hamburg.de
Initiative implemented at national and local levels

of the deportation of a person who cannot leave the country voluntarily.

WHO IS INVOLVED/CARRIES IT OUT

Several partners are providing support to this project: Hamburg ministries, the job agency, businesses and chambers.

HOW

Targeted counselling, coaching, language teaching, and participation in internships in companies, are important ways of re-establishing employability. Participants receive support during training and after they start working. Project staff is available for consultation with employers.

The success of training programmes depends on whether the vocational education institutions succeed in taking the whole life context of the refugees into consideration. There is a close relationship between the life context of the refugees and their opportunities to apply for training and acquire skills. They need support to improve their legal status, but also their financial situation: intensive social support programmes should also be available to improve their housing conditions and medical care, to enable them to complete their training successfully.

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE ACTION

Network FLUCHTort Hamburg aims to support refugees and those with 'tolerated' (Duldung) status by offering counselling, coaching, training and public relations work for their labour market integration.

FOR WHOM

Asylum seekers and refugees with 'tolerated' status. This status does not give them a right to residence; it is only a time-limited suspension

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

A major development process was launched by the EQUAL community

initiative ⁽⁷⁾ for school and vocational support for refugees, asylum seekers and those with 'tolerated' status. That made it possible to set up models to try labour market policy measures in Hamburg from 2002 to 2007, to the benefit of these disadvantaged groups. In 2008, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs introduced the ESF federal programme for labour market support for such groups to consolidate existing forms of cooperation. FLUCHTort Hamburg is one of 28 networks cooperating in a national thematic network, funded until 2014.

approximately 2 000 participants have taken part in counselling programmes and approximately 1 250 have participated in qualification and training measures. 350 persons have completed practical training and 250 business enterprises benefited as partners. After the two year programme period (2007-09): more than 1 000 adolescent and adult refugees received counselling; more than 100 young refugees had training places arranged for them, mainly in the dual system; more than 100 were placed in jobs in Hamburg companies and more than 100 were recruited for training programmes within the network.

RESULTS/IMPACT ACHIEVED

After the 2000-06 EQUAL period,

WHY THIS INITIATIVE IS CONSIDERED GOOD PRACTICE AND HOW IT CAN BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER CONTEXTS

It includes a network of a number of actors such as refugee organisations, educational providers and school establishments, businesses, jobs agency and public authorities. This is a successful initiative because it follows an integrated approach considering the life context of refugees. Through networking and cooperation, bridges are built, access is provided to the target group, and routes to training and qualification are supported.

⁽⁷⁾ The EQUAL community initiative was financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) and cofunded by the EU Member States within the 2000-06 programming period. The initiative focused on supporting innovative, transnational projects aimed at tackling discrimination and disadvantage in the labour market. More information at: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal_consolidated/ [accessed 12.11.2012].

1.3.5. Municipal enterprise, Slovakia



The information card is styled to look like a digital interface. At the top, there is a toolbar with icons for navigation (back, forward, home, search) and editing (undo, redo, delete). The card is divided into two main sections: 'WHERE' and 'CONTACT PERSON'. The 'WHERE' section includes the name of the enterprise, its address, phone and fax numbers, and email and website addresses. The 'CONTACT PERSON' section includes the name, title, affiliation, and email address of Gabriela Doválová. At the bottom, there is a note about the initiative being implemented at the local level.

WHERE
Sociálny podnik Spišský Hrhov
 SNP 10
 05302 Spišský Hrhov, Slovakia
 Tel. +421/0534699057
 Fax +421/0534592238
bednarova@spisskyhrhov.sk
www.spisskyhrhov.sk

CONTACT PERSON
Gabriela Doválová
 Researcher
 Institute of Economic Research,
 Slovak Academy of Sciences
gdovalova@gmail.com

*Initiative implemented
at local level*

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE ACTION

Municipal enterprise aims to increase the employability of Roma marginalised group members and to help them develop necessary work habits and employment skills.

FOR WHOM

The target group is Roma community members in the municipality of Spišský Hrhov, where the unemployment rate is very high. Participants obtain basic work habits under supervision and then are placed in the labour market.

WHO IS INVOLVED/CARRIES IT OUT

Municipal enterprise was created as a specific response of elected representatives to tackle unemployment, which was very high in the village. It was created with 100% participation of the municipality. At the beginning it had a loan from municipality budget which has now been repaid; now it is self-financed. The mayor serves as a guarantor of the quality of work subcontracted to private companies.

The municipality offers training and supports Roma people to find a job in local companies. They attend training financed by European Social Fund (ESF) projects and are also trained at the workplace. The schooling of their children is also monitored.

HOW

Employers face some difficulties when employing marginalised groups: worries about low work effectiveness, high cost of maintaining the workplace, low mobility, need for complete qualification, and worries about work habits or prejudices. The municipal enterprise initiative tackled these problems mainly by creating and maintaining sustainable workplaces for this ethnic minority, cooperating with the private sector as subcontractor, and providing training for Roma people. All this effort leads to saving municipal funds and reducing discrimination in the village. The municipality was awarded

‘Village of the year’ in 2007. It was also nominated in the competition launched by the European Commission, in the category ‘Responsible entrepreneurship’ and finished among the best five in 2007.

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

The municipal enterprise was established in 2000. Based on this model of enterprise, at least 12 other successful municipal companies were created in Slovakia.

RESULTS/IMPACT ACHIEVED

- The municipal enterprise brings

benefits to the residents of the municipality; it reduces prejudices concerning the Roma minority.

- Employability of Roma people is increased; positive relationships are established between locals and Roma people.
- The municipal enterprise brings the following advantages to Roma people: ensuring finance for normal life, building and developing social contacts, a positive influence on their social status, strengthening confidence, contributing to education level and improving skills.

WHY THIS INITIATIVE IS CONSIDERED GOOD PRACTICE AND HOW IT CAN BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER CONTEXTS

It is a good example of an active bottom-up approach to tackle the unemployment of marginalised groups.

1.3.6. Roma vocational training at Folk high school, Sweden



WHERE
Arbetsmiljöforum
Support unit for project development for the European Social Fund of Sweden
Box 17550, Långholmsgatan 34
1891 Stockholm, Sweden
Tel. +4684424600
Fax +4684424608
info@processtodstockholm.se
www.processtodstockholm.se

CONTACT PERSON
Anne-Marie Flood
Head of Unit
Annemarie.flood@arbetsmiljoforum.se
Initiative implemented at regional and local levels

teacher assistant, child care, health and care professionals.

FOR WHOM

Roma adults.

WHO IS INVOLVED/CARRIES IT OUT

The initiative is led by the Swedish Folk high school of Sundbyberg which has several years of experience in working with the Roma group. It provides training and supports the employment of Roma people.

HOW

Tailor made courses for the ethnic group and individuals.

The students are at various levels of competence and much individual support is provided:

- cultural experience: lessons are conducted in such a manner to motivate all the students to contribute. For instance, some classes are gender separated and some discussions are age separated, to get everyone engaged and involved;
- Roma mediators: the school has employed young Roma adults to act as mediators between students, school/teachers, potential employers, and the family of the student. The mediator has a major role in creating trust between Roma people and others;
- short and practical courses: courses are short (most often one year) and very practical so that they will quickly lead to a job qualification

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE ACTION

The Folk high schools are small, liberal, often residential adult education schools (folkhögskolor) and offer training programmes on healthcare, agriculture, forestry training, etc. at upper secondary level. They can also offer supplementary education and post-secondary training programmes.

The aim of the initiative is to prepare Roma people for the following professions: child and youth leader, treatment assistant,

for adults. Courses are kept short because drop-out rate increases with longer courses;

- networking with the families: school teachers and mediators have a key role in connecting with the families of the students to build trust and ensure school attendance. This is necessary for the young students and also for the husband or wife of a student, who often needs to understand school life to be able to support the family member in continuing his/her studies;
- reference people from the ethnic group:

the school tries to get important spokesmen from the ethnic group to act as a reference person. If such a spokesman/woman gives his/her blessings this will make the life of the student much easier in relation to the others outside the school.

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

The tailor-made Roma courses have been conducted for 21 years.

RESULTS/IMPACT ACHIEVED

The courses have between 60-80% employment rate (80% for the course on health and care).

WHY THIS INITIATIVE IS CONSIDERED GOOD PRACTICE AND HOW IT COULD BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER CONTEXTS

The model with mediators and tailor-made training can be adapted to all kind of disadvantaged groups.

1.3.7. Your tale, Hungary

WHERE
Roma education fund
Terez Krt. 46
1065 Budapest, Hungary
+36 0612358030
+36 0612358031
info@romaeducationfund.org
www.romaeducationfund.org

CONTACT PERSON
Anasztázia Nagy
anagy@romaeducationfund.org

*Initiative implemented
at regional and local levels*

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE ACTION

The Your tale project aims to improve literacy skills, parenting skills and increase learning and employment opportunities for Roma disadvantaged mothers through tale reading. It is a non-formal adult education programme aiming at motivating mothers to complete formal education and enhance parenting skills. The project also contributes to early childhood development of Roma and other disadvantaged children and better school readiness. The project also targets pre-service teacher training university students who are supported to gain practical knowledge in a multicultural setting.

FOR WHOM

The primary target group is disadvantaged Roma mothers who are mostly school dropouts with zero to eight years of formal education. The secondary target groups are their children and pre-service teacher training university students.

WHO IS INVOLVED/CARRIES IT OUT

Roma education fund (REF) is the project coordinator providing educational expertise and international experience. REF was created in the framework of the initiative Decade of Roma inclusion in 2005. Its mission and ultimate goal is to reduce the gap in educational attainment between Roma and non-Roma. It supports policies and programmes which ensure quality education for Roma, including the desegregation of education systems.

The professional supervision of the project was carried out by a psychologist, who is the leader of the main local NGO; the involvement of university students provided important added value. The trained Roma facilitators contributed to the success of the programme.

HOW

The project supports mothers as agents of change to improve the quality of life of their families. This is done by equipping them with better reading and writing skills, improving life skills via weekly sessions where mothers read and discuss tales under the guidance of trained facilitators. The mothers replicate and practice

the reading at their homes for their children and so improve the school readiness of their children. Students fulfil their mandatory university practice in the project. This activity proved to be beneficial for students and mothers by learning about different life-management models and educational paths.

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

The project started in June 2010 and has been running since then.

RESULTS/IMPACT ACHIEVED

The main result of the project was that of the 172 participating mothers, 58

have found work places and 46 have enrolled in adult education courses targeting primary and secondary school completion. The project also developed a good and strong community environment, which strengthened the role of mothers and Roma in the local community. Attendance in kindergarten and school by children of women participating in the project increased. Further, based on the reports of university students, the project had a positive impact on their attitude towards Roma and it increased tolerance. The project fully met the original objectives.

WHY THIS INITIATIVE IS CONSIDERED GOOD PRACTICE AND HOW IT COULD BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER CONTEXTS OR TARGET GROUPS

The pilot project has proved to be successful in raising participant educational outcomes and improving labour market integration, even though this was not the primary objective. This alternative adult education practice could be replicated in other countries as well.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The project developed the motivation of young mothers to complete their formal education, increased their self-confidence and improved parenting practices. It has been beneficial not only to participants but also to their close family members; later it proved to be a tool for economic sustainability as some of the mothers found employment.

Support for low-skilled and other vulnerable adults

Context

In 2011 some 72.5 million Europeans aged 25 to 64 were estimated to have either low qualifications or no qualifications at all ⁽⁸⁾. The unemployment rate among the adult low-skilled increased from 9.8% in 2008 to an average of 14.7% in 2011 due to transition to higher technology and the impact of the economic crisis. Preliminary results for the first half of 2012 indicate further deterioration with levels over 16% ⁽⁹⁾.

Lower-skilled workers are threatened by the risk of skills obsolescence. For example, some 33% of the lower-skilled experience lack of skills development in their present career, compared to around 19% of highly-skilled workers (Cedefop, 2012c).

Cedefop's latest skill demand and supply forecast for the European Union for 2010-20 indicates that the share of people with higher-level qualifications will rise to more than one third of the workforce; people with medium-level qualifications will continue to account for about half of the workforce (Cedefop, 2012b). Even those occupations that used to require mostly low-level skills are increasingly requiring medium- or even high-level qualifications. This means that people with low-level (or no) formal qualifications will find it more difficult to get a job in the future.

As jobs are becoming more knowledge- and skills-intensive, continuous investment in education and training is needed, along with better use of the potential of staff and recognition of skills acquired at workplace.

To tackle these challenges, the Member States are developing and implementing measures to encourage education and training institutions and employers to collaborate, particularly in training low-skilled adults. They are also developing procedures for recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning, supported as appropriate by national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) (European Commission, 2010b). Many countries devote considerable attention to the role of NQFs in supporting the validation of non-formal and informal learning (Cedefop, 2012a). Stronger links between NQFs and validation systems enable people to have their prior (formal, non-formal and informal) learning assessed and recognised according to qualifications in the NQF. The European Commission has prepared a proposal for a Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning

⁽⁸⁾ Eurostat, labour force survey data of 2011 for EU-27. Date of extraction 9 October 2012.

⁽⁹⁾ Idem.

(European Commission, 2012a) which invited Member States to establish coherent national validation arrangements.

Examples of practice

The study visits findings highlight that information, guidance services, vocational training programmes and opportunities to assess and recognise their skills are offered for low-skilled workers and other job seekers by different means in different European countries.

(a) Information and lifelong guidance services

Unemployed, low-skilled women are helped through career guidance and vocational training to rejoin the labour market in Poland (Section 2.1.1.). Ballymun job centre (BJC) in Ireland offers career guidance and mentoring support for vulnerable adults (low-skilled, long-term unemployed, etc.) (Section 2.1.2.). A network of information points, Prometeo 3, was created in Italy to support workers with temporary employment contracts with training, information, guidance and consultancy services (Section 2.1.3.).

(b) Vocational training programmes

VDAB competence centres in Belgium offer training for low-skilled adults and opportunities for them to have their learning assessed and validated (Section 2.2.1.). Vocational training and retraining opportunities are offered in occupational rehabilitation centres for disadvantaged adults in Germany (Section 2.2.2.). The Essential skills certificate is an education and training tool designed to help vulnerable adults to access education and training and/or progress in the labour market in Ireland (Section 2.2.3.).

(c) Assessing and recognising skills

The vocational qualification programme (VQP) in the Netherlands helps many experienced but low-qualified production workers to gain a sector-recognised diploma (Section 2.3.1.). Many employees in the retail sector are supported in Iceland to recognise their work-related skills and knowledge and encouraged to continue further learning (Section 2.3.2.). Standardised methods of recognition/validation of prior learning are used in Denmark (Section 2.3.3.). This is meant to promote the participation of all citizens, and especially of low-skilled workers, in continuing training and to improve their opportunities in the labour market.

Study visits emphasised that good cooperation and well-targeted measures from EU institutions and the Member States should be developed in the coming years to enable low-skilled workers to tackle labour-market challenges better.

2.1. Information and lifelong guidance services

2.1.1. Raising awareness of women about the labour market, Poland



WHERE
District Office in Ruda Śląska
Balestremów 16
41700 Ruda Śląska, Poland
Tel. +48 327715900
Fax +48 327715988
karu@praca.gov.pl
www.puprudaslaska.pl

CONTACT PERSON
Beata Kubina-Glenz
Programme specialist
karu@praca.gov.pl
*Initiative implemented
at regional and local levels*

cities in the southern part of Poland (Silesia Voivodeship). They were interested in changing their lives by entering or returning to the labour market. They were selected for this action through individual interviews with a vocational advisor. Two groups of women were formed:

- 10 women above 45 years old;
- 10 women with children under five years old.

WHO IS INVOLVED/CARRIES IT OUT

This project was implemented and financed by the district labour office in Ruda Śląska (Powiatowy Urząd Pracy w Rudzie Śląskiej) in cooperation with companies in charge of training and with employers that provided traineeships. The companies were selected by and received funding from the district labour office; a grant was also provided to women for their traineeship. The district labour offices play an important role in helping people who have difficulties in finding a job suited to their qualifications.

HOW

Women were supported to enter the labour market through the following:

- training to develop interpersonal abilities (60 hours) on topics like:
 - (i) how to manage time and stress, how to communicate with employees and employers, how to exploit their own potential;

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE ACTION

To support a specific group of unemployed women to enter the labour market. The aim was to raise their self-confidence and awareness of the labour market situation by providing adequate guidance, training and traineeship.

FOR WHOM

The project was addressed to 20 unemployed women living in Ruda Śląska, one of the biggest mining

- (ii) flexible forms of employment;
- a workshop on self-presentation and improving self-image;
- vocational guidance and counselling (two to three hours) helped women to choose an appropriate vocational training and further studies;
- individual vocational training (60 to 200 hours, depending on the type of course) and traineeship (five months) gave them the opportunity to improve the skills needed on the labour market;
- in some cases, grants were provided to help them set-up a business.

Training to develop interpersonal abilities and vocational guidance and counselling were addressed to all women involved in the project.

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

This project lasted from April to December 2010, but the work of the labour district office continues and includes the implementation of many projects with similar components.

RESULTS/IMPACT ACHIEVED

The women involved in the project obtained new qualifications and improved their self-knowledge while becoming more aware about the reality of the labour market. Some women took part in traineeships, one started postgraduate studies, others established a business and some of them got a job.

WHY THIS INITIATIVE IS CONSIDERED GOOD PRACTICE AND HOW IT CAN BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER CONTEXTS

The idea of integration in small steps is very important, especially for the long-term unemployed with small children. It gives them the opportunity to get accustomed to the new situation and enter the labour market. It also provides an individual approach adapted to participant needs and various opportunities to strengthen the position of women.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The participants were two different groups of women. Connecting them was a very important experience and an opportunity to improve the solidarity between generations. The care of their children was also ensured.

2.1.2. Ballymun job centre (BJC), Ireland



The screenshot shows a web browser window with a blue header bar containing navigation icons. The main content area has a light blue background. Under the heading 'WHERE', there is a briefcase icon and text providing the address, phone, fax, and website of the Ballymun job centre. A horizontal line separates this from the 'CONTACT PERSON' section, which features an eye icon, the name Nuala Whelan, her title, email, and a note about the initiative's implementation level.

WHERE
Ballymun job centre
 Unit 36A Ballymun town centre,
 Ballymun
 11 Dublin, Ireland
 Tel. +353 18667000
 Fax +353 18420134
www.bmunjob.ie

CONTACT PERSON
Nuala Whelan
 Assistant manager
whelann@bmunjob.ie
*Initiative implemented
 at local level*

years old, come from a disadvantaged background and often face multiple barriers to employment. The target group includes the long-term unemployed, early school leavers, people recovering from substance and alcohol abuse, people with a criminal history, low-skilled workers, and those facing specific barriers to employment, education or training.

WHO IS INVOLVED/CARRIES IT OUT

The BJC is a non-profit and non-governmental organisation which provides free of charge services. It is funded through the local employment services, the department of social protection, and with support from the Ballymun drugs task force and private funding. The BJC has also built relationships and works closely with a wide range of public, private, community and local, national and European organisations.

HOW

The BJC provides a comprehensive range of services: individualised and group career guidance and counselling, basic and specific skills training, and coordination of inter-agency approaches to meet the needs of vulnerable job seekers and to create pathways to further training, education or employment. Unemployed job seekers can register with the service voluntarily or may be requested to attend an appointment as part of the national employment action plan.

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE ACTION

The Ballymun job centre (BJC) aims to develop the skills and labour market aspirations of individuals by providing them with the opportunity to improve their employability skills, increase earnings and reduce their vulnerability to poverty. The BJC aims to support individuals not just to get a job but to develop careers, leading to more sustainability in the labour market.

FOR WHOM

The BJC provides support services to unemployed job seekers aged from 16 to 65. Most of them are 18 to 35

A typical route for an individual in the BJC service starts with a registration process where the needs are identified through a one-to-one information session. The person is then referred to a guidance practitioner working in a specialised service, for example to support early school leavers, the long-term unemployed, or deal with addiction issues, criminal histories, vocational education and training (VET)/third level education, job seeking, and post-placement support. This all happens within a quality career guidance framework. The guidance practitioner assists them in identifying their career interests, working style, skills and potential. Mentoring and guidance interventions enable the person to develop greater self-awareness, career objectives and self-efficacy. The BJC has developed (through national and EU funding) various guidance tools and methodologies aiming to assist both the individual and practitioner in this process. They include the following:

- e-guide, a quality framework and a range of audio-visual web-based tools (for example, interest explorer, behavioural profile, cognitive explorer) created specifically for the delivery of career guidance to disadvantaged job seekers;
- 'inform', an audio visual web-based tool for identifying competences

developed in everyday life. It is used mainly with vulnerable clients who feel they have no potential in the workplace due to weak basic skills, low self-confidence and a poor career history;

- 'know how', an audio visual web-based tool for understanding the learning to learn key competence (including learning styles, learning skills and barriers to learning). It is used with people who are entering into education and training for the first time or after a long absence and who may have concerns about their ability to learn;
- 'manage your career', a methodology used by practitioners working with people in individual guidance settings. It can be used to assess whether individuals have developed their career management skills and provides the practitioner with a checklist to assess the further development of 10 career management competences.

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

The BJC was established in 1986.

RESULTS/IMPACT ACHIEVED

A total of 2 274 individuals accessed guidance and employment support services in 2011; 253 of them found jobs and 832 started education and/or training activities.

WHY THIS INITIATIVE IS CONSIDERED GOOD PRACTICE AND HOW IT CAN BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER CONTEXTS

Over the years the BJC has made efforts to ensure that the work based on research and European projects contributed to improving services and activities delivered. The BJC also places a high value on improving the skills of the guidance staff as a way of maintaining the quality of the services. This model can be transferred to other contexts and target groups.

2.1.3. Prometeo 3: a network of information points to support atypical workers, Italy



The image shows a stylized information card for 'Prometeo 3'. At the top, there is a header bar with icons: a left-pointing triangle, a right-pointing triangle, a circular arrow, a close 'X' button, a house icon, and a magnifying glass. The card is divided into two main sections. The first section, titled 'WHERE' with a location pin icon, lists the address of 'IAL Innovazione Apprendimento Lavoro Toscana srl. impresa sociale' in Florence, Italy, including contact details like phone, fax, email, and website. The second section, titled 'CONTACT PERSON' with a person icon, identifies 'Gabriella Pusztai' as the responsible person for international projects, providing her email address. At the bottom of the card, it states 'Initiative implemented at regional level'.

WHERE
IAL Innovazione Apprendimento Lavoro Toscana srl. impresa sociale
Via di Ponte di mezzo 56
50129 Firenze, Italy
Tel. +39 0553215240
Fax +39 0557349063
ialtoscana@ialtoscana.it
www.ialtoscana.it

CONTACT PERSON
Gabriella Pusztai
Responsible for international projects
pusztai.ialtoscana@cisl.it
Initiative implemented at regional level

workers with training, information, guidance and consultancy services;

- create a network which interacts with the job centres;
- develop an internet portal on the atypical world of work in Tuscany which ensures the link with all regional stakeholders and implements a synergic system to support many people to access information, training and services.

FOR WHOM

This initiative targets the increasing number of workers with precarious work contracts:

- atypical workers: all workers who have a work contract which is not a permanent employment contract;
- technically unemployed workers which face temporary difficulties and request from the Italian state to keep them with a temporary reduced working time but with their salary at the same level.

Among them there are many low-skilled and older workers. Some typical Tuscan industries (such as textiles) face a serious crisis and the actual labour market situation is characterised by precarious jobs: 13% of current working contracts and 86% of all new work contracts are atypical.

WHO IS INVOLVED/CARRIES IT OUT

The activities are carried out by the three regional trade-union confederations (CGIL, CISL, UIL) ⁽¹⁰⁾

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE ACTION

To support vulnerable workers and find solutions regarding the increasing precarious nature of jobs. This implies a systemic approach to developing the adaptability and competences of atypical workers and informing them about their rights and opportunities.

The project aims to extend the monitoring of the atypical work phenomenon at regional level. The expected outcomes are the following:

- create a network of information points across Tuscany to support atypical

⁽¹⁰⁾ CGIL: Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro; CISL: Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori Toscana; UIL Unione Italiana del Lavoro.

and their respective training agencies (Smile Toscana; IAL Toscana, Enfap Toscana). The local job centres are involved in identifying atypical/technically unemployed workers and of those who need training and guidance.

HOW

A network of 56 information points was created to undertake the following activities:

- contact users and provide them with information and advice on atypical work conditions: types of contract, general information on the labour market, specific information on rights, social security, pensions, and issues related to women's employment, such as the right to maternity leave;
- provide career guidance according with the needs of workers;
- organise training in small groups according to the specific needs of workers; the topics of training are linked to sectors where jobs can be found in Tuscany, such as tourism, accountancy, project writing and training tutoring; plus other transversal modules: informatics, Italy is my country (for migrants), labour market information and guidance, entrepreneurship, active job searching methods.

The network interacts with local stakeholders and collaborates closely with job centres on courses and guidance activities.

A website addressed to workers contains relevant and updated information regarding the atypical work contracts, related rights and opportunities.

At macro-level, the project is collecting data on the phenomena of atypical work and technical unemployment, which will support regional stakeholders in a systemic way to plan future regional interventions and services.

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

The initiative has been operational for five years (since 2008) and will continue until 2013.

RESULTS/IMPACT ACHIEVED

The interim results for the period from 15 June 2009 to 31 December 2011 (30 months) show that:

- 10 700 atypical workers were contacted;
- 11 315 technically unemployed users were involved;
- 1 123 hours of training were delivered for atypical workers;
- 2 949 hours of trainings were delivered for the technically unemployed.

WHY THIS INITIATIVE IS CONSIDERED GOOD PRACTICE AND HOW IT CAN BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER CONTEXTS

In the context of the economic crisis, there is decreasing work stability and sometimes fewer rights, less protection, and a lack of career path continuity, both in contractual and financial terms. This initiative manages to improve such worker competences as self-management, proactive behaviour, awareness of the labour market, and information on employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.

2.2. Vocational training programmes

2.2.1. Job focus in the VDAB competence centres, Belgium



WHERE
VDAB
Keizerslaan 11
1000 Brussels, Belgium
Tel. +32 25061511
Fax +32 25061590
info@vdab.be
www.vdab.be

CONTACT PERSON
Carlo De Smedt
Training methodology expert
carlo.desmedt@vdab.be

*Initiative implemented
at regional level*

increase this to 65%. This asked for more specific training and guidance methodologies.

FOR WHOM

This initiative is addressed to every trainee in the competence centres and especially to ethnic minorities, older persons (50+), low skilled, people with disabilities.

WHO IS INVOLVED/CARRIES IT OUT

As a public service provider, VDAB aims to support a transparent and dynamic labour market in Flanders for job seekers, employees and employers through cooperation with all labour market actors: sector organisations, schools, VET suppliers, VOKA ⁽¹²⁾ (Chamber of Commerce and Industry), UNIZO ⁽¹³⁾ (Organisation for the Self-Employed and SMEs).

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE ACTION

VDAB ⁽¹¹⁾ introduced the Job focus initiative in 2008. The basic idea is that any guidance or training activity should be a step towards employment. At that time, about 55% of the trainees leaving VDAB competence centres immediately found a job: the objective was to

HOW

- Coaching on soft skills relevant to the labour market is essential as recruitment is often based on generic skills in addition to purely technical competences. A set of 12 soft skills that are relevant to getting a job and keeping it was used (e.g. perseverance, respecting rules,

⁽¹¹⁾ VDAB (Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding) is a Flemish external autonomous agency for employment and vocational training.

⁽¹²⁾ VOKA (Vlaams netwerk van ondernemingen Flanders).

⁽¹³⁾ UNIZO (Unie van Zelfstandige Ondernemers).

dealing with stress, workplace safety, basic ICT skills);

- personal job coaching at the workplace: an external coach supports the new employee, his/her employer and colleagues;
- language coaching during training and at the workplace: linguistic guidance and support for both trainees and instructors and also for new employees in the workplace (VDAB language coaches).

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

The Job focus strategy was implemented in 2008 and is still running.

RESULTS/IMPACT ACHIEVED

In 2011, most of the competence centres reached the objective of 65% of trainees entering the labour market. The target for the next years is 70%.

WHY THIS INITIATIVE IS CONSIDERED GOOD PRACTICE AND HOW IT CAN BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER CONTEXTS

Starting from a general objective, namely an employment rate of 65%, the training and guidance methodology is adapted to the specific needs of different target groups.

2.2.2. Reha-KomIn: sustainable integration of people with disabilities in the labour market, Germany



WHERE
**Berufsförderungswerk
 Frankfurt am Main**
 Huizener 60
 61118 Bad Vilbel, Germany
 Tel. +49 6101 400-0
 Fax +49 6101 400-170
info@bfw-frankfurt.de
www.bfw-frankfurt.de

CONTACT PERSON
Hartmut Fuchs
 Managing director
hartmut.fuchs@bfw-frankfurt.de

*Initiative implemented at local,
 regional and national levels*

services are offered to young adults and adolescents with disabilities, women in specific situations (e.g. single mothers) and elderly people with disabilities. Approximately 800 trainees, more male than female, aged between 20 and 55 are taking part in the project in 2012.

WHO IS INVOLVED/CARRIES IT OUT

Berufsförderungswerk is an association of 28 vocational training centres with a total of approximately 15 000 places across the country. They act as advice and guidance centres, offering a wide range of specialist services such as information, diagnosis, training and help in finding a job. In each of these institutions, teams of specialists from various fields offer vocational training as well as pedagogical, medical, psychological and social assistance.

The services of the Berufsförderungswerke are funded by different organisations such as the employment agency and the German pension insurance.

HOW

There are three basic pillars of Reha-KomIn: individualised training in internal and external training companies; individually tailored support system where individual demands are revealed by a profiling instrument; and integration management that controls the whole process.

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE ACTION

To help disabled people and those threatened by disability to participate in working life and society. People who are no longer able to work in their original profession or who are in danger of losing their job due to an impending disability receive vocational training and, if necessary, medical or psychological assistance.

FOR WHOM

The target groups include people with various physical and psychological disabilities. Special

The portfolio covers different types of training: 24 months for 18 different professions with diplomas from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry; shorter training for approximately 10 different professions; initial vocational training for young adults; and in-company health management, individual case management and testing of vocational abilities.

The process of integration usually starts with assessment of vocational abilities and a recommendation for a new profession which is then followed by the necessary training modules. The whole process is constantly supervised and controlled by the integration manager and, if necessary, adjusted so that the trainee's profile matches the demands of the labour market.

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

The system of vocational rehabilitation and integration has existed – and been successful – since the early 1970s. Based on an initiative of the German government, a new model of vocational rehabilitation and integration of people with disabilities was developed in 2006-07. A working group developed Reha-KomIn to adjust the system of vocational rehabilitation to the current social and economic changes and the constantly changing labour market.

RESULTS/IMPACT ACHIEVED

As a part of the after-care services, former students are interviewed at 6, 12 and 24 months after their training. This has shown that approximately 70% of the trainees are successfully reintegrated into the labour market in their new professions over the years.

WHY THIS INITIATIVE IS CONSIDERED GOOD PRACTICE AND HOW IT CAN BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER CONTEXTS

By offering vocational training and support services to disabled people and those threatened by disability, the vocational training centres fulfil an important social task at national level: to promote every person's right of self-determination and participation in life and society on an equal basis, as laid down in the German social security statutes.

2.2.3. The essential skills certificate, Ireland



WHERE
EQUAL Ireland
 Building 8 6d, Liosban Business
 Park, Tuam Road
 Galway City, Ireland
 Tel. +353 872237231
 +353 91778600
www.equalireland.ie
 Study! Learn! Achieve!

CONTACT PERSON
 **Eddie Higgins**
 Executive director
eierrs@gmail.com
eddiehiggins@ireland.com
*Initiative implemented at local,
 regional and national levels*

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE ACTION

The essential skills certificate (workplace community and education) is an EQUAL Ireland education and training tool designed to help adults to access education and training and/or progress on the labour market.

EQUAL Ireland Education Research and Related Services Co. Ltd is a not-for-profit charitable trust trading under the name EQUAL Ireland, originally founded in 2001.

FOR WHOM

Adults who missed out on earlier

education and training opportunities and who now find their access to, or progression within, the labour market inhibited.

WHO IS INVOLVED/CARRIES IT OUT

The following groups are involved:

- social partners contribute to the academic content as follows: participant support systems, training levels, staff tutoring, delivery methodologies;
- education and training providers manage the development and delivery of the programme and ensure academic rigor and quality;
- adult learners ensure the content relevance for everyday life and the suitability of delivery methodologies and support systems;
- community representatives collaborate in the development of the academic content;
- recently work has also involved the Ireland vocational education committees (VECs).

The original partnership – involving social partners, academics, community representatives and adult learners – was successfully developed with funds from the EU EQUAL initiative and will now be repeated in the new Sectoral Skills Alliances.

HOW

There are two ways to provide the essential skills certificate:

- when an enterprise has difficulties and workers begin to lose their

jobs, EQUAL Ireland is invited to address the workforce either by the employer, the trade union or both. The aim is to motivate workers to use education as an option for self-development, dealing with job loss and finding future employment;

- EQUAL Ireland carries out information sessions and education programmes in the community.

The essential skills certificate (workplace, community and education) has the following modules:

- learning to learn: a reintroduction to study and learning for those people who have been out of formal education and training for some years;
- communication: this module develops the learner's capacity, confidence and competence in written and oral communication;
- everyday numbers: a maths programme which sets learning in everyday situations that adults are comfortable with and encounter as part of their normal everyday life;
- ICT skills: the learner becomes familiar with Word, PowerPoint,

Excel, file management, basic Internet research, social networking and emailing;

- introduction to enterprise and community development.

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

The essential skills certificate programme was conceived in 2002 and was then named the Access to 3rd level (A3L) programme. In 2006, this became the essential skills certificate (workplace community and education).

RESULTS/IMPACT ACHIEVED

It has recently successfully passed a programmatic review by Ireland's higher education authority. Approximately 1 000 adult learners took part in the programme. Most have completed all modules, while around 60% have progressed to the next level, the higher certificate in Workplace and community studies, and over 25% of them passed from the higher certificate to the bachelor of arts (BA) in Business enterprise and community development.

WHY THIS INITIATIVE IS CONSIDERED GOOD PRACTICE AND HOW IT CAN BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER CONTEXTS

The essential skills certificate has been successful because of the inclusive manner of its development, commitment to the adult education approach, the flexible delivery system and the participant support methodologies. It also meets the EU key competences for lifelong learning.

Following the success of this tool in Ireland, a transnational project, ESCape, was set-up for its dissemination. The programmes were translated and delivered to 25 participants from each country involved in the project and accreditation is being explored. EQUAL Ireland is still leading the consortium for the development of this vehicle for essential workplace and community skills, transferable across the European Union.

2.3. Assessing and recognising skills

2.3.1. Vocational qualification programme, the Netherlands



The screenshot shows a web browser window with a toolbar at the top containing icons for back, forward, refresh, close, home, and search. The main content area has a light blue background with a white box containing contact details. The box is divided into two sections: 'WHERE' and 'CONTACT PERSON'. The 'WHERE' section includes the address, telephone number, email, and website. The 'CONTACT PERSON' section includes the name, title, email, and a note about the initiative's implementation.

WHERE
Philips Electronics Netherlands, Building VB-11
 Boschdijk 525
 5621 JG Eindhoven, the Netherlands
 Tel. +31 402783166
hmn.wpg@philips.com
www.hmn.philips.com/cv/cv/english.jsp

CONTACT PERSON
Frank Visser
 Manager of vocational qualification programme/Philips employment scheme
Frank.visser@philips.com
Initiative implemented at national level

qualifications and/or access the labour market;

- bringing employees up to a basic qualification or offering alternatives for those who are not able to reach this level;
- taking into account the employees' non-formal learning gained through their work experience.

FOR WHOM

The VQP project is addressed to employees who are skilled in their current profession but who cannot prove this because they never followed or completed a vocational training course. There are various potential reasons for this, including personal circumstances and lack of motivation. Some may fail to meet the admission requirements for certain training courses.

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE ACTION

To train the staff of Philips Electronics Netherlands and enable them to meet the skills and knowledge requirements of the company and labour market. The aim is also to help many experienced but unqualified production workers to gain a sector-recognised diploma.

The project has the following objectives:

- improving the potential of employees by enabling them to gain

WHO IS INVOLVED/CARRIES IT OUT

VQP is a joint initiative of Philips Electronics and the four largest employer organisations in the Netherlands. The project was first incorporated into the collective labour agreement (CAO) in 2004. The success of training projects such as VQP depends on a close cooperation with line managers and company management. Stakeholder involvement makes the outcome of the validation practice and training more relevant to the continually changing labour market and more

trusted and respected among other employers; this is an ultimate goal of the initiative. It is also supported by local government bodies, the Dutch social security agency UWV ⁽¹⁴⁾ and the Ministry for Social Affairs and Employment.

HOW

In 2004, local VQP training programmes were set up in each production unit, all under the umbrella of the VQP training scheme at national level. The national framework makes it possible to adapt the programme to the local situation, training needs and infrastructure. Dual training courses were included in the VQP training plan, where at least 60% of the time is devoted to practical tasks in processing, metalwork and logistics industries. Before the training, candidates with at least two or three years of work experience took part in assessment of their prior learning (APL). The outcome this procedure is used as a basis for an individually tailored training programme.

In 2010, 75% of Philips Electronics Netherlands employees (3 000) had either already undergone or were currently in training. After 2010, the company focused on low-skilled, aged 40+ employees who had not took part in training.

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

From February 2004 to December 2011.

RESULTS/IMPACT ACHIEVED

From February 2004 to the end of June 2010, 1 900 employees gained a national recognised diploma through the support provided by VQP.

Some of the lessons learned are described below:

- it is important to develop training initiatives in times of economic security, to ensure that the employability of staff is guaranteed within the organisation. It is useful to provide 'spaces' for reflection and learning in the work environment;
- in this way, employee development projects can be tailored to changing circumstances and needs;
- initiatives should build on what is relevant for the labour market;
- the whole organisation has to adapt. For example, VQP provided training programmes partly during work time; employees were allowed to attend and received guidance;
- good coaching throughout the entire process is a key for personal success;
- being an organisation that truly believes in its workers and puts considerable effort into improving their qualifications and career prospects pays off in the longer term.

WHY THIS INITIATIVE IS CONSIDERED GOOD PRACTICE AND HOW IT CAN BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER CONTEXTS

This experience shows that, even in difficult times, it is possible to involve employees in effective apprenticeship training. VQP proves that it is possible to train people with lower qualifications, or without, so that they are able to gain a national recognised diploma.

⁽¹⁴⁾ UWV (Uitvoeringsinstituut Werknemersverzekeringen).

2.3.2. Recognition and validation of prior learning in retail, Iceland



WHERE
Education and training service centre/Fræðslumiðstöð atvinnulífsins
Ofanleiti 2
103 Reykjavík, Iceland
Tel. +354 5991400
Fax +354 5991401
frae@frae.is
www.frae.is

CONTACT PERSON
Björn Garðarsson
Project manager
bjorn@frae.is

Initiative implemented at national level

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE ACTION

Many employees in the retail sector have not received formal education or training in this field. The objective of the project is to recognise their work-related skills and knowledge, document and evaluate them against reference standards based on the curriculum in retail studies. This makes the knowledge visible both to the individual who is often not aware of his/her own skills – and does not know how to present them to a potential employer – and to the formal and non-formal education systems.

FOR WHOM

The target group is retail assistants with little or no formal education. Requirements for participation are a minimum age of 23 and three years of work experience within retailing. Most of the participants have been between 35 and 50 years old and a high percentage above 50.

WHO IS INVOLVED/CARRIES IT OUT

- The competence standards used were developed by the Educational Council for Trade and Service based on a curriculum in retail studies, in cooperation with education and training service centre (ETSC), lifelong learning centre (Mimir) and other stakeholders;
- the methodology for recognising competences was developed by the ETSC in Iceland. Its legitimacy was confirmed in the Act on upper secondary school (2008) and the Act on adult learning (2010);
- the RPL process is promoted and managed by the lifelong learning centres around Iceland;
- career counsellors support and guide the candidate throughout the process and afterwards;
- evaluators carry out the RPL evaluation of the candidate. They are trained in the methodology and evaluation and have relevant knowledge of the retail sector, curriculum and standards.

HOW

- The first step is selection of candidates who are referred to a career counsellor who supports them throughout the process;
- the second step is preparation of the competence map, where the candidates review their formal, non-formal and informal education and collect evidence supporting the RPL;
- the third step is self-evaluation against the standards;
- the fourth step is an interview with evaluators;
- at the end of the process, the candidate receives a confirmation of RPL. If she/he fails in any subject she/he can try again or attend a relevant course.

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

RPL in retail has been carried out since 2010 in three lifelong learning centres in Iceland, involving between one and four groups each year with 10 to 15 candidates per group. The individual can expect the RPL process to last between four to six weeks. If the results recommend further training or teaching, the time can be extended.

RESULTS/IMPACT ACHIEVED

Between January and May 2012, a total of 45 candidates applied for RPL in retail in two separate groups; 27 passed the selection step and 26 finished the process and received confirmation.

There has been no study of the presumed advantage of RPL for candidates in terms of getting a better job. However, a guidance counsellor involved in the process knew about two candidates who had got a job as a result.

One participant said: 'I saw an advertisement at my labour union website and decided to apply, just out of curiosity. When I met the counsellor and the assessors I was thrilled by the way I was treated. They were ready and enthusiastic to support and assist me. I got confirmation that I knew a lot about and I could do a lot of things in retailing. The confirmation of RPL was stimulating and I was admitted to the University of Bifrost in Iceland to obtain a diploma in retail management' (a store manager at duty free store, Iceland).

WHY THIS INITIATIVE IS CONSIDERED GOOD PRACTICE AND HOW IT CAN BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER CONTEXTS

The RPL in retail increased participant self-confidence and awareness of their valuable knowledge and experience which can be used to strengthen their position at the workplace in times of uncertainty. It can be also used as a stepping stone to further education or rejoining the labour market.

2.3.3. Recognition of prior learning (RPL), Denmark



The screenshot shows a web browser window with a blue header bar containing navigation icons. The main content area has a light blue background and is divided into two sections. The first section, titled 'WHERE' with a location pin icon, provides contact information for VIA University College. The second section, titled 'CONTACT PERSONS' with a person icon, lists two individuals: Kirsten Aagaard and Ellen Enggaard Rasmussen, along with their roles and contact details. At the bottom of the section, it states that the initiative is implemented at local, regional, and national levels.

WHERE
VIA University College
 Hedeager 2
 8200 Aarhus N, Denmark
 Tel. +45 87551898
ctj@viauc.dk
www.viauc.dk
www.viauc.dk/projekter/NVR/Sider/english.aspx

CONTACT PERSONS
 **Kirsten Aagaard**
 Head of knowledge centre for validation of prior learning
kiaa@viauc.dk
Ellen Enggaard Rasmussen
 Responsible for VPL applications in relation to VIA UC's diploma degrees
ele@viauc.dk
Initiative implemented at local, regional and national levels

to promote their participation in adult education and continuing training and to improve their opportunities in the labour market.

FOR WHOM

It is addressed to all citizens, with a special focus on the low-qualified.

WHO IS INVOLVED/CARRIES IT OUT

The development of the RPL process and its implementation lies in the context of Denmark's strategy for lifelong learning (2007-12) ⁽¹⁵⁾ where the validation of non-formal and informal learning is addressed to all citizens.

The Danish Ministry of Education launched initiatives to promote the use of prior learning assessment, including a partnership agreement with social partners and a national information and networking campaign on recognition of prior learning.

HOW

The Danish principles for recognition of prior learning in education are as follows:

- each citizen can have his/her real competences validated based on principles and rules available for each education level;
- everyone is responsible for contributing to the documentation of his/her real competences;
- a fee can be charged for validating

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE ACTION

To create better opportunities for adults wishing to have their knowledge, skills and competences assessed and recognised within adult education and continuing training, regardless of where and how they have been acquired. This is meant

⁽¹⁵⁾ More information is available in English at: <http://eng.uvm.dk/Fact-Sheets/General/Lifelong-learning> [accessed 16.11.2012].

- competences except for those with low levels of educational attainment;
- validation is always based on aims and admission requirements for each education level;
- an individual's competences are validated irrespective of where and how they were obtained but without reducing the level and quality of education;
- methods used must be reliable and ensure confidence in the results;
- the validation is documented with a certificate ⁽¹⁶⁾.

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

A review on recognition of real competences was launched in 2004 for the Danish Parliament and specific legislation has since been adopted. In June 2007 the Danish Parliament approved an act which gives every citizen the right to RPL.

RESULTS/IMPACT ACHIEVED

The national knowledge centre for validation of prior learning

was established in 2007. It does research and development projects on implementation, dissemination and exploitation of RPL in Denmark and cooperates with national and European stakeholders.

Since the individual validation of competences (IKV in Danish) was introduced in adult vocational training centres, the Ministry of Education has continuously supported the centres and the process. Participation increased by 54% in the period 2008-09.

A guide was launched in 2012 about the work of the adult vocational training centres on the individual validation of competences. It showed limited use of RPL: 46 out of 103 approved adult vocational training centres had RPL activities in 2010 and 40 out of 96 in the first half of 2011 ⁽¹⁷⁾. This indicates that there is still a gap between political intentions and practical dissemination and exploitation of RPL.

WHY THIS INITIATIVE IS CONSIDERED GOOD PRACTICE AND HOW IT CAN BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER CONTEXTS

The RPL model can be used for different target groups in various contexts.

⁽¹⁶⁾ Review on recognition of real competences to the Danish Parliament (2004).

⁽¹⁷⁾ The Danish Ministry of Education (January 2012). Guide to the institutions' work on individual validation of competences in adult vocational training centres. Available only in Danish at: <http://www.uvm.dk/Uddannelser-og-dagtilbud/Uddannelser-til-voksne/Overblik-over-voksenuddannelser/Arbejdsmarkedsuddannelser/~media/UVM/Filer/Udd/Voksne/PDF12/120131%20Vejledning%20til%20institutionerne%20IKV%20i%20AMU.ashx> [accessed 16.11.2012].

Support for older workers (55+)

Context

In 2011, the employment rate for older workers (55-64 years old) in the European Union was 47.4%, well below the 68.6% reported for 20 to 64 year-olds ⁽¹⁸⁾. The key policy goal is to create an environment that encourages older workers to stay in employment rather than leave the labour market early due to low levels of up-skilling, low demand from employers, lack of support for jobseekers, etc. Upskilling and increasing lifelong learning opportunities ⁽¹⁹⁾ are crucial for older workers and special attention should be given to those in midcareer (European Commission, 2006).

Addressing the skill needs of older workers through more and better education and training, promoting active ageing, creating more inclusive labour markets, and tackling labour market segmentation and segregation are fundamental challenges for our societies (Cedefop, 2011c). Successful active ageing requires commitment and involvement from ageing workers and employers, in a context that supports learning and recognises the specific needs of such workers (Cedefop, 2010).

Actions are required at company, national and European levels through policies that maintain and promote the health of all employees, develop and update the skills of workers, and aid transition between working and non-working periods throughout their working lives (Eurofound, 2011).

The European year of active ageing and solidarity between generations (European Commission, 2012b) ⁽²⁰⁾ aims to support Member State action to promote active ageing and empower older people to stay in good physical and mental health so they contribute more actively to the labour market and to their communities.

Examples of practice

The examples selected from the study visits are grouped into the following categories:

⁽¹⁸⁾ Eurostat, labour force survey data of 2011 for EU-27. Date of extraction 9 October 2012.

⁽¹⁹⁾ Participation by this group in lifelong learning is very low. According to the labour force survey it was 5.3% for this group in 2010.

⁽²⁰⁾ <http://europa.eu/ey2012> [accessed 09.04.2013].

(a) learning for active ageing

The study visits findings show that many European countries invest resources in measures to involve older workers in learning and skills development to improve their employability and labour market access. For example, in Greece low-qualified and long-term unemployed older workers take part in vocational training, receive personalised support in seeking employment and in their transitions between working and non-working periods (Section 3.1.1.). In France, older employees take part in training and join a mentor network to support the integration of less qualified young employees in the company. The benefits for the company include increased motivation of older workers, good preparation for retirement, and good integration of new employees (Section 3.1.2.). In Italy, special attention is given to workers in midcareer 45+. They receive information and career guidance and take part in practical training courses. This initiative was successful due to a high satisfaction with the structure of the training courses and high participants employment (Section 3.1.3.). Unemployed seniors are supported in Spain through intergenerational literary gathering for their successful integration in the community and labour market (Section 3.1.4.).

(b) keeping workers at work for longer

Study visit participants discussed some examples of Member States initiatives and measures to encourage older workers (55+) to stay in their jobs longer. For example, a board game combined with a toolkit, Fair play for older workers, was developed in the Netherlands to raise awareness and stimulate discussion on age-related policies and practices. It is used in the health and education sectors aiming to retain older workers in employment and help organisations to develop an age-oriented policy (Section 3.2.1.).

The older unemployed are supported in Germany through regional partnerships created by the programmes Perspective 50plus and Impulse 50plus. Innovative strategies and instruments were developed and tested to support the placement of unemployed people aged 50+ in local companies (Section 3.2.2.). In France, older workers have the opportunity to validate and certify their prior learning to improve their employment prospects (Section 3.2.3.). A tool called WerkWijzer was developed as a result of a study visit and aims to change the perception about older workers in the Netherlands. It encourages older employees to use the benefits of age, overcome prejudices, identify strengths and qualities and raise their self-confidence (Section 3.2.4.).

3.1. Learning for active ageing

3.1.1. Supporting older job-seekers through learning, Greece



WHERE
V.T.C. Ekpedefitiki Paremvasi SA
 Oikonomou 5
 546 27 Thessaloniki, Greece
 Tel. +30 2310552670
 Fax +30 2310552673
info@kekekpa.gr
www.kekekpa.gr

CONTACT PERSON
Evridiki Exarhopoulou
 Guidance counsellor
exarhopoulou@kekekpa.gr
Initiative implemented at local level

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE ACTION

The objectives and expected outcomes are to:

- re-engage older job seekers in education and training through guidance activities;
- remove barriers and stereotypes that usually exist in companies regarding older job seekers;
- improve their employability.

FOR WHOM

It is addressed to 20 low-qualified and unemployed people, aged over 45 unemployed for over two years.

WHO IS INVOLVED/CARRIES IT OUT

Ekpedeftiki Paremvasi SA (EKPA) is a private vocational training centre. It was the leader and coordinator of the initiative and provided necessary training courses. The development agency of Thessaloniki was responsible for providing counselling and career guidance for participants. The employers were private local sales companies.

The ESF Actions Implementation Authority funded this initiative.

HOW

The main activities of the initiative include the following:

- 350 hours of training courses on issues such as time management, sales, basic IT skills, work legislation;
- job interview techniques through specialised career guidance; counselling and psychosocial support for social skills development;
- specialised vocational guidance to explore the competences, skills, talents and interests of users;
- 150 hours of work practice experience in enterprises.

The basic training course lasted 350 hours and took place five times per week. The learners were taught targeted work-related issues that would be addressed during their apprenticeship (mostly clerical duties and sales tasks). They were introduced to the use of the internet, basic informatics and technology skills. The trainees received counselling and guidance to overcome personal difficulties such as depression caused by unemployment, anxiety, and low self-esteem. Personalised one-to-one support was offered to help individuals reflect on their past learning and work experience. Specialised vocational guidance and job interview techniques were offered. The participants were stimulated to reflect on their future learning activities and lifelong learning. Then, participants completed their work practice in the selected companies

and continued to receive support from specialists.

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

The actions took place over approximately eight months between 2006 and 2007.

RESULTS/IMPACT ACHIEVED

All participants successfully completed the programme and, after six months, nearly half of them were employed; three were employed by the companies where they did their work practice. Most of the participants were willing to take part in further training and felt more self-confident in seeking employment. The companies participating in the project were invited to complete questionnaires to express their views. They were more positive in hiring older and low-qualified job seekers than before.

WHY THIS INITIATIVE IS CONSIDERED GOOD PRACTICE AND HOW IT CAN BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER CONTEXTS

EKPA worked closely with companies that would potentially hire the project participants. Support was provided to the companies to improve the working environment and change attitudes to older employees. Guidance and counselling was offered during the apprenticeship period. This support to the individuals was important since it took into account the difficulties a person faces when unemployed for a long period and lacking opportunities to acquire new competences. For the companies participating in the initiative, their human resources practices and management style have changed.

3.1.2. Inter-generational mentorship network, France



WHERE
Savoirs pour réussir
 2, place François Mireur,
 Immeuble communica
 13008 Marseille, France
 Tel. +33 663714237
savoirpoureussir@wanadoo.fr
www.savoirpoureussir.fr

CONTACT PERSON
Thierry Mathias
 Training director
sprmathias@orange.fr

*Implemented at local, regional
and national level*

with more than three years' work experience in the same company. Low-qualified young people and the disadvantaged are the second target group for this action.

WHO IS INVOLVED/CARRIES IT OUT

Companies, training centres, NGOs, public social services, health insurance organisations, pension organisations are involved in the network.

Savoirs pour réussir is an association which leads and coordinates the project. Funding comes from the following sources: membership, grants from public institutions or foundations, and payments made by companies.

The companies contribute to the project through their older employees who will be trained as mentors and join the mentor network. The companies pay for this training and then benefit from the work of the network to support the integration of less qualified youngsters in the company.

HOW

This action is community and voluntary based. There is no formal selection of older workers who take part in training, nor for the youngsters who benefit from the mentoring. For both groups, volunteering and commitment are the basis and the challenge of the project.

Savoirs pour réussir trains the future mentors through external stakeholders or collaborative

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE ACTION

The objectives and expected outcomes are to:

- develop older workers' professional and mentorship skills to accompany young or disadvantaged workers in enterprises;
- encourage older workers to play a leadership role in civil society and prevent the exclusion of young people;
- motivate older workers to stay in employment and prepare them for retirement.

FOR WHOM

The initial target is 55+ workers

platforms. The training topics include the use of ICT networking tools, knowledge management, mentoring and social accompaniment. The training lasts 39 hours over three months. The length of time during which the young benefit from mentoring depends on individual needs.

The mentoring mainly consists of the following actions:

- training in the workplace: needs are identified in situ allowing the young worker to feel quickly at ease at the workplace;
- job crafting: the tasks to be performed are adapted to the capacities of the young person;
- coaching: the mentor always encourages the young worker and provides positive assessment of his/her progress;
- networking: the social network helps interpersonal communication and social learning;
- ensuring that financial, health, psychological, judicial and housing problems are solved or well managed.

When the mentoring starts, a young person is recruited by a company and the decision to employ him/her belongs to the company. However, information on competences is

provided by the mentor and the mentoring is a guarantee of success. Because of the social networking, the chances of being recruited are very high.

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

Using older workers in companies to mentor younger colleagues has been in place for five years. A virtual inter-professional network is under construction.

RESULTS/IMPACT ACHIEVED

Mentorship has shown very good results in terms of integrating young people in the labour market: more than 80% succeeded. The mentorship starts before the new employee joins the company and provides them with proper benchmarks, knowledge and skills to help them succeed in training and integration in the company. The networking allows personalised communication regardless of the career of the future employee. The intergenerational relationship between the older worker and the mentored trainee is a major success factor of this initiative. The benefit for the company is the increased motivation of older workers, good preparation for retirement and good integration of new employees.

WHY THIS INITIATIVE IS CONSIDERED GOOD PRACTICE AND HOW IT CAN BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER CONTEXTS

Volunteering by older people, once retired, through associations or NGOs is frequent, but mentorship by older workers still in employment is an innovative aspect. Older workers have professional experience in the company and can support the unemployed looking for a job to develop their basic skills. NGOs and social services can use the network to train and integrate the unemployed in the labour market.

3.1.3. Over-45 vocational training courses, Italy



WHERE
Associazione FORMA Azione srl
 Via Luigi Catanelli 19
 06135 Ponte San Giovanni,
 Perugia, Italy
 Tel. +39 0755997340
 Fax +39 0755996085
www.azione.com

CONTACT PERSON
 **Sylvia Liuti**
 Manager
liuti@azione.com

*Initiative implemented
at regional level*

improving their self-awareness and self-esteem.

FOR WHOM

Over 45 years old unemployed women and men, mainly low-skilled (without any secondary education).

WHO IS INVOLVED/CARRIES IT OUT

The main stakeholders are the regional governmental body, local companies and enterprises.

Associazione FORMA Azione srl is the VET provider in charge of managing the project. The project is cofinanced with the ESF allocated by the region of Umbria.

Private companies and local enterprises provide on the job training and the opportunity to test acquired competences directly at the workplace. They give adults the opportunity to be employed and restart their professional career.

The tutors from FORMA Azione support the learning process and are well prepared to tackle social exclusion, low motivation and the risk of dropping-out. They deal with practical aspects of the training courses and interact with learners and teachers/trainers, listening to their needs and personal efforts, doubts, and demoralisation.

HOW

The main activities were:

- initial selection of the candidates, according to their motivation, attitude and availability for the

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE ACTION

The objectives and expected outcomes are to:

- improve the basic skills of low-skilled adults or adults at risk of marginalisation in the labour market due to their social difficulties and long-term unemployment;
- increase their competitiveness in the labour market, through vocational training courses in specific occupations including gardener, elderly care assistant, property manager, floor attendant in accommodation facilities;
- motivate adults as active citizens by

entire learning programme. The vocational training rules at regional level foresee an institutional committee comprising a representative of Forma Azione, an external expert on the topic of the training, and a representative of the Umbria region;

- preliminary theoretical and practical training for 100 to 150 hours, addressing specific knowledge and competences according to the professional profiles (for example, Daily diet for elderly people). Teachers and trainers are highly experienced workers and professionals. Every training centre accredited by the Umbria region can provide this training, if the proposal is approved and financed by the region. The work experience follows preliminary training;
- six months work experience in the companies and enterprises, supported by an experienced worker and the VET provider tutor.

The following are important for successful implementation of the initiative:

- select highly motivated adults and, if

possible, those with similar cultural background and education level;

- use didactic methodologies, focusing on practical aspects;
- use the 'learning by doing' approach to motivate participants and improve their practical skills.

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

Four different vocational training courses were implemented between 2007 and 2011. The local ESF calls for proposals in Umbria and province of Perugia considers the access of 45+ adults to the labour market a priority.

RESULTS/IMPACT ACHIEVED

Employment rates after 12 months to the end of the project are the following:

- gardener: 20%;
- elderly care assistant: 71%;
- property manager: 71%;
- floor attendants in accommodation facilities: 10%.

These rates refer to the trainees who were initially selected, started and completed the training course.

WHY THIS INITIATIVE IS CONSIDERED GOOD PRACTICE AND HOW IT CAN BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER CONTEXTS

Good practice is indicated by the high employment rate and the satisfaction of adult learners on the training programme. The alternance of theory and practice and the six months stage at work were highly appreciated.

3.1.4. Integration of seniors through intergenerational literary gathering, Spain



WHERE
Laboratorio CreActiva
 Avda. Divina Pastora 7, bloque 6,
 18012, Granada, Spain
 Tel.: +34 697734501
<http://laboratoriocreactiva.eu>

CONTACT PERSON
Elena Foscolo
 Project manager
elena.foscolo@gmail.com
<http://laboratoriocreactiva.eu/>

*Initiative implemented
at regional and local levels*

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE ACTION

The main idea of the intergenerational literary gathering is to support unemployed seniors and promote their integration in the community and labour market. The aim is to train low-skilled adults, especially those with a disadvantaged background, to enjoy reading literature and share emotions and ideas about a book. The literary gatherings aim at helping participants to:

- acquire basic literacy, social and language skills while improving their cultural knowledge;

- upskill and reskill them;
- improve their ability to take initiatives, analyse and discuss issues of common interest, and express themselves;
- maintain good physical and mental health.

The following results are expected:

- develop a stronger sense of history, tradition and cultural roots in the community;
- create mutual understanding between generations and maintain family traditions;
- improve cooperation between families and schools, intergenerational school-based and out-of-school activities;
- support participant integration in the labour market.

The young participants learn from the stories told by seniors and take advantage of their knowledge, experience and wisdom.

FOR WHOM

The main target group is low-skilled seniors, especially those with no formal training and those with disadvantaged backgrounds. However, the group is heterogeneous and intergenerational, involving highly qualified volunteers (ex-teachers or school directors), people that still represent the workforce of the country, unemployed adults, migrant and ethnic minorities, senior people and young people from 10

to 18 years old. The roles and benefits for each group are different.

WHO IS INVOLVED/CARRIES IT OUT

The project is coordinated by Laboratorio CreActiva, a non-profit organisation in cooperation with two important libraries, four schools and a public adult education centre. The school provides the students while the library offers the meeting places and contacts the senior people. This partnership is a great example of cooperation to create new tools for non-formal education. Parents' associations, women's groups, cultural and educational institutions could also join such a partnership.

HOW

The group gathers once a month and discusses a specific book selected to be read during the previous month. Participants share their knowledge, feelings, opinions and ideas by presenting and discussing their favourite parts. The literary works discussed are classical and universal; they can be adapted for different participant ages and backgrounds.

The participants are expected to contribute at all stages: before, during and at the end of each gathering. In the last of these they evaluate and make suggestions for

further improvements.

Gradually, starting from the fifth meeting until all 10 sessions have taken place, the unemployed adults receive support for their integration in the community and labour market. They can develop their own literary gatherings in other public institutions or start collaborating with different schools. They can be provided with necessary tools for these gatherings and tutor (ex-teacher) support.

For those who have been working in this field, such as school teachers, these gatherings are a great opportunity to share their experience and knowledge and maintain their role in the society. They become more aware that they are still indispensable in society and can continue their teaching activity, especially for low-skilled adults.

For children, youths and adults who cannot attend formal school, such gatherings can be the only way to become literate.

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

This project started in November 2011. Six gatherings have taken place and the initiative is continuing.

RESULTS/IMPACT ACHIEVED

Participants showed great interest in the gatherings and the initiative has met most of the original objectives.

WHY THIS INITIATIVE IS CONSIDERED GOOD PRACTICE AND HOW IT CAN BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER CONTEXTS

These literary gatherings can easily be developed for different types of organisation, including schools, adult education centres and libraries. This allows the promotion of inter-generational learning, exploiting the knowledge, skills and competence of older people for the benefit of society as a whole.

3.2. Keeping workers at work for longer

3.2.1. Fair play for older workers: helping organisations change their age-related practices, the Netherlands



WHERE
CAOP
Lange Voorhout 13
2514 EA Den Haag, the Netherlands
Tel. +31 703765759
Fax +31 703457528
info@caop.nl
www.caop.nl

CONTACT PERSON
Joke Dekker
Project coordinator
joke.dekker@caop.nl

*Initiative implemented
at national and European levels*

game combined with a toolkit was developed to raise awareness and stimulate discussion on age-related practices and policies.

FOR WHOM

The project was carried out in government health and education sectors in the Netherlands.

It targeted groups of employers and employees, directors of human resources, managers, and employers' representatives from various organisations.

WHO IS INVOLVED/CARRIES IT OUT

A + O fonds Rijk and Stichting Arbeidsmarkt Ziekenhuizen (StAZ) were the main social partner organisations involved in the EU cofunded Dutch project. A + O fonds Rijk is a joint organisation representing both the Dutch ministries (employers) and the civil servants unions (employees). StAZ is a joint organisation in the health sector representing both Dutch hospitals (employers) and workers' unions in the hospitals (employees). Other partners involved were:

- VanDoorneHuisjes, a consultancy company, specialised in communication, management, monitoring, research and training which developed the boardgame and the toolkit;
- SBO, a centre of expertise of employers and employees in education;

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE ACTION

Fair play for older workers was a comprehensive project involving organisations from several European countries. It aimed at getting and retaining older workers in employment and helping organisations develop an age-oriented policy. The expected results were that these organisations would carry out actions that would give older workers a better position in the labour market.

In the Netherlands, a board

- CAOP, the largest knowledge and service centre on the labour market and labour relations in the public domain in the Netherlands; this helped in developing the process and coordinated the creation and dissemination of the board game and toolkit.

HOW

The board game was introduced into organisations using the ‘train the trainer’ method, at the end of which participants receive a board game and a toolkit for their employer. Organisations and individuals may also access the material through social partner websites.

The main elements of the toolkit are:

- an age-audit: an instrument to get information about employees of different ages;
- an age driver: an instrument for employers to assess their strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats for an age-related policy;
- business case, practices, dilemma cards and knowledge map/literature;
- elements for an action plan.

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

It was carried out from 2004 to 2010. The game is still in use in the healthcare sector.

RESULTS/IMPACT ACHIEVED

The game was used by almost all Dutch ministries and by many hospitals and schools. Employers and employees started discussions about age.

Some governmental organisations changed some of their practices, as follows:

- emphasising efforts on human resources management to equip, train and support employee development;
- moving from job security to employment security;
- improving dialogue: age becomes a topic for discussion;
- expressing appreciation to each other;
- using job rotation and mobility approaches to adapt the quantity and quality of tasks to the profile of the employee;
- increasing participation by older workers in training;
- improving strategies for career management and personal development;
- encouraging knowledge and experience transfer from older to younger employees;
- increasing the recruitment of older workers and reducing age discrimination in recruitment;
- thinking less in terms of age, more focus on individual specificities.

WHY THIS INITIATIVE IS CONSIDERED GOOD PRACTICE AND HOW IT CAN BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER CONTEXTS

The board game is an attractive and easy method, which brings people together in a relaxed and reflective setting. The discussion between players produces bottom-up and tailor-made approaches.

3.2.2. Perspective 50plus: regional partnerships for the older unemployed, Germany



WHERE

Perspective 50plus
Gsub – social business consulting mbH
Kronenstraße 6, D
10117 Berlin, Germany
Tel. +49 3028409411
Fax +49 3028409410
www.perspektive50plus.de

Institute for work, skills and training
Forsthausweg 2, D
47057 Duisburg, Germany
Tel. +49 2033792686
Fax +49 2033791809
www.iaq.uni-due.de

CONTACT PERSONS

Dieter Simon
Project manager of the federal programme, Perspective 50plus
dieter.simon@gsub.de

Prof. Matthias Knuth
Project manager for the evaluation of Perspective 50plus
matthias.knuth@uni-due.de

Initiative implemented at local, regional and national levels

unemployed into the labour market, supporting them, and valorising their potential. The subprogramme Impulse 50plus was set up in 2010 to support the older unemployed to overcome various obstacles related to their integration in the labour market and to develop their employability skills.

FOR WHOM

The programme Perspective 50plus (P50plus) is addressed to the unemployed aged 50+ and employers, especially in small- and medium-sized enterprises. The subprogramme Impulse 50plus addresses a subgroup of the target group of P50plus: people unemployed for more than two years and facing multiple obstacles such as health problems, low-level skills or social exclusion.

WHO IS INVOLVED/CARRIES IT OUT

P50plus is a federal scheme initiated and funded by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and coordinated and monitored by the service enterprise gsub mbH. Since 2011, P50plus has been implemented in 78 regional partnerships between various job centres, which are the regional public providers of basic income support and employment assistance.

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE ACTION

The objectives are integrating older workers (50+) and the long-term

HOW

The programme P50plus provides the opportunity to develop and test innovative strategies and instruments which support placing unemployed people aged 50+ in local companies. It is based on intensive individual assistance, accompanied by different strategies and instruments to address health and mobility issues and develop professional and soft skills. Regional partnerships have strategies for specific subgroups, such as migrants or women.

Different strategies can be used with the participants at P50plus and Impulse 50plus. The former need to be motivated, but they are more likely to adapt to the requirements of the working environment: they have basic social and professional skills on which they can build. For the participants at Impulse 50plus, social skills are more important than professional ones. It is crucial to strengthen their self-confidence and autonomy before focusing on the development of professional skills and placing them in the labour market.

The strategies, instruments and methods used in the context of P50plus and Impulse 50plus include assessment, profiling, coaching, short-term vocational training, psychological and medical support, information seminars on health issues, and how to manage a low budget.

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

The programme P50plus started in 2005 and its first stage lasted until 2007. A second stage followed in 2008-10 and then the programme was extended for a third time until 2015.

RESULTS/IMPACT ACHIEVED

169 771 people were involved in 2010 in the P50plus nationwide and 54 515 participants started a job. 19 046 people participated in Impulse 50plus and 1 622 started a job.

The Institute for Work, Skills and Training and the Institute for Applied Economic Research have evaluated P50plus nationally. A detailed assessment of results and impact is expected by the end of 2012 ⁽²¹⁾.

WHY THIS INITIATIVE IS CONSIDERED GOOD PRACTICE AND HOW IT CAN BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER CONTEXTS

The initiative combines various strategies, instruments and methods that can be used by professionals who offer individual and intensive assistance to long-term unemployed older workers.

The experiences gained through P50plus and Impulse 50plus are transferred in the context of assistance for employment. Job centres can transfer the examples of good practice to other target groups locally while similar programmes can be established nationally for other target groups.

⁽²¹⁾ Not available at the time this publication was being prepared.

3.2.3. Measures to support older workers in companies, France



WHERE
Délégation académique à la formation continue de Lyon (DAFCO)
15 Avenue Lacassagne
69003 Lyon, France
Tel. +33 472404330
Fax +33 437912165
dafco@ac-lyon.fr
www.ac-lyon.fr/greta

CONTACT PERSON
 **Dominique Saiget**
Counsellor for further training
Dominique.saiset@ac-lyon.fr

Initiative implemented at regional level

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE ACTION

Since 2010, French companies and public administrations with more than 50 employees have been requested to draw up an action plan for the employment of older workers, addressing issues such as recruitment, anticipation of career paths, improvement of working conditions, skills development and vocational training, preparation for the end of career, and transmission of knowledge and skills acquired.

In the region of Lyon, the second

largest city of France, the action plan for older workers is coordinated by the regional delegations for continuing training (DAFCO). This offers a series of public services, entirely oriented towards helping older workers and the unemployed people improve their position in the labour market. This action plan includes the following measures:

- skills audit and mid-career diagnostic;
- accreditation of experiential learning (validation des acquis de l'expérience, VAE);
- adult vocational training courses, to complete or acquire new qualifications and access better jobs.

FOR WHOM

Workers (45+) and jobseekers who want to move one step up, gain a different qualification or widen their skills to secure their job or find a new one.

WHO IS INVOLVED/CARRIES IT OUT

Forty years ago the Ministry of National Education created GRETAs (groupement d'établissements) to address the vocational training needs of adults. These are local, and in some cases sectoral, networks of vocational training institutions offering training and career-related services to individuals and enterprises in the country. These networks include competence analysis schemes

(CABC) and skill accreditation schemes (DAVA).

The action plan for older workers coordinated by the DAFCO of Lyon involves cooperation between the local GRETAs and its different departments, Pôle Emploi – the national labour market organisation – and various public information and guidance centres. The actions are jointly financed by the businesses or organisations concerned (through the statutory training contribution) and by national or regional organisations which support the unemployed. The challenge is to convince all these parties to work in partnerships to reinforce each other.

HOW

A skills audit enables people to analyse their personal and work-related skills, aptitudes and levels of motivation concerning a change of career. The audit is always carried out by an external assessor. At the end of the process the employee receives a document with the findings. This can be shown to the employer only with the agreement of the employee.

The mid-career diagnostic identifies the professional situation of the worker, specifies his/her expectations, and elaborates an action plan for internal or external mobility to a different career and/or company. It can be decided by the company or the worker.

VAE enables an individual to obtain a qualification based on his/her prior experience, including from paid, non-paid or voluntary activities. Preparation for the accreditation of work experience includes an information session

about process, advice to identify the appropriate qualifications for a specific background, and counselling to prepare the admission file.

Adult vocational training courses are mostly provided in vocational *lycées*. Alongside with the preparation for a professional qualification (from first aptitude certificate to the advanced technician's certificate), GRETAs also offer qualification modules that vary in content and length according to individual needs and aims. In the Lyon Académie, the GRETAs network offers training in all sectors. Older workers are especially interested in improving basic skills: communication in foreign languages, secretariat, ICT and environmental awareness.

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

This specific action plan was elaborated in 2011 for the Lyon Académie.

RESULTS/IMPACT ACHIEVED

The following results/impact are noted:

- in 2011, 15 employees from the national railway company (SNCF) did a mid-career diagnostic: 42% of them are 45+ and 10% are 55+;
- 312 persons 45+ have undertaken a VAE process to validate a diploma from the Ministry of Education: 58% got full validation and 30% partial validation;
- 3 525 trainees (45-54 years old) and 1 318 trainees (55+) followed various general or vocational training courses;
- 59 trainees (45-54 years old) were prepared for a professional qualification, mostly a first aptitude

certification (in construction and catering). Only 11 trainees aged 55+ were prepared for such a qualification;

- most of the people aged 55+ participated in short qualification

modules on sustainable energy, computing, foreign languages, etc.;

- some low-skilled trainees followed a module on key competences for lifelong learning: 488 trainees (45-54 years old) and 241 (aged 55+).

WHY THIS INITIATIVE IS CONSIDERED GOOD PRACTICE AND HOW IT CAN BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER CONTEXTS

It is expected that companies and competence centres such as Pôle Emploi will develop a positive view of older workers in the labour market. The VAE procedure has many advantages for older workers: recognition and self-esteem, job mastery and self-confidence, increased chances of progress.

3.2.4. **WerkWijzer: a tool to help change the perception of older workers, the Netherlands**



The screenshot shows a web interface with a toolbar at the top containing icons for navigation and search. The main content area is divided into two sections. The first section, titled 'WHERE' with a briefcase icon, provides contact details for CAOP. The second section, titled 'CONTACT PERSON' with an eye icon, identifies Joke Dekker as the project coordinator. A note at the bottom states that the initiative is implemented at European, national, regional, and local levels.

WHERE
CAOP
PO Box 556
2501 CN
Den Haag, the Netherlands
Tel. +31 703765765
Fax +31 703457528
info@caop.nl
www.caop.nl

CONTACT PERSON
Joke Dekker
Project coordinator
joke.dekker@caop.nl

Initiative implemented at European, national, regional and local levels

sectoral, national and international levels for:

- employers, employees (older and younger) and their representatives;
- the unemployed;
- all citizens.

WHO IS INVOLVED/CARRIES IT OUT

CAOP, the largest knowledge and service centre on labour market, and labour relations in the public domain in the Netherlands.

The Nationale DenkTank is a network that aims to provide Dutch society with innovative ideas. Every year, 20 young and talented people from diverse fields think about a social issue and provide practical solutions. In 2011, they examined Dutch industrial relations, including the issue of active ageing. One of the solutions proposed was to introduce a change on how one thinks about the older people on the labour market. WerkWijzer was proposed as an instrument to support this change.

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE ACTION

It aims to promote a positive perception of older workers by inviting people to check if their representation of age and employment are consistent with reality. It encourages older employees to use the benefits of age, overcome prejudices, identify strengths and qualities, and raise their confidence.

FOR WHOM

It is addressed to individuals and organisations and can be used at

HOW

The concept WerkWijzer is composed from the following words: Werk – which means work - and Wijzer – which means indicator/guidance, but also wise. WerkWijzer is an electronic tool/questionnaire that offers the user 12 statements about age and labour in which facts and fictions are mixed. The user has three minutes to respond to the questions: immediately after

this, he/she receives a response fact sheet with the results and an explanation of the right answer. Finally, the respondents' perception of age is pointed out as well as how this is influenced by social beliefs. Therefore, the users are encouraged to overcome prejudices, believe in themselves, and act in that direction.

Individuals and organisations at any level (local/sectoral/national) can use WerkWijzer for free.

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

It is implemented since December 2011.

RESULTS/IMPACT ACHIEVED

From the beginning, more than 400 people – professionals and others – used WerkWijzer. The following activities were completed:

- a workshop was organised as a follow up of the WerkWijzer tool. Through a role playing-game participants have experienced how someone's image of age can impact his/her behaviour;
- references to WerkWijzer were included in several publications;

- a report containing the opinions of 400 respondents was published by CAOP and Nationale DenkTank;
- dissemination of the instrument through newsletters, websites, publications, workshops and conferences, via social media and personal contacts.

The following activities are still going on:

- dissemination of the WerkWijzer at sectoral and national levels, through publications, social media, etc.;
- a course on 'Jobcrafting – Invent your own work again' as an opportunity for organisations and older workers to understand how work could better suit their needs, talents and, as a result, boost their motivation and productivity;
- secondary analysis of the responses of WerkWijzer, to see which impressions respondents consider as facts or whether the perceptions of younger respondents differ from those of older ones;
- a process that helps a sector or an organisation to screen their attitude regarding age-related prejudices.

WHY THIS INITIATIVE IS CONSIDERED GOOD PRACTICE AND HOW IT CAN BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER CONTEXTS

WerkWijzer is an instrument that can be used easily, taking only a few minutes to complete. People are eager to know the answers to the statements. Users are empowered to take action, use their potential and advantages of their age.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

WerkWijzer is a direct result of the study visit Older workers in companies and on the labour market, organised in 2011 in Düsseldorf. Participants across Europe confirmed the importance of promoting a positive perception of older workers.

The Cedefop synthesis seminar

Cedefop held the seminar Empowering vulnerable adults to tackle labour-market challenges, in Thessaloniki on 6 and 7 June 2012. It summarised the findings of 25 study visits organised in the academic years 2010/11 and 2011/12. It focused on ways to support vulnerable adults to overcome the challenges they face, to exploit their knowledge, skills and competences to the full, to participate in vocational training, to recognise their skills and competences, and to have access to meaningful and rewarding employment.

The event brought together 40 organisers and study visit participants, representatives of initiatives identified during visits as examples of good practice, experts on the themes, and representatives of the study visits national agencies. Participants had relevant experience and substantial expertise in areas contributing to the labour market integration of vulnerable groups at local, regional, national and European levels. They were directors of education and vocational training institutions, educational and vocational training inspectors, head teachers, teacher trainers, directors of guidance centres, representatives of the chambers of commerce, and directors of validation/accreditation centres from different European countries participating in the study visits programme.

Summarising around 25 visits in 2010/11 and 2011/12, presentations from 19 countries emphasised how policy-makers across Europe can help vulnerable adults to:

- (a) receive individualised services: information, guidance and counselling. Practitioners directly working with vulnerable adults should receive appropriate training;
- (b) be involved in the design, development, delivery, management and evaluation of services meant for them;
- (c) have their skills acquired abroad recognised, giving them access to high-skilled occupations, and generally making better use of their skills in their home country;
- (d) increase participation rates in continuing vocational education and training. Groups which traditionally have low participation in training, such as the low-skilled and older workers, should be specifically targeted by such measures;
- (e) encourage them (especially older workers, 55+) to stay in employment. This means they should have access to more opportunities to improve their skills at any stage of working life.

Participants worked together during the seminar to develop a better understanding of, and solutions to, the challenges faced by vulnerable adults (migrants and ethnic minorities, low-skilled and older people) when accessing the labour market. They agreed that all stakeholders – social partners, governments, education and training providers, labour market representatives, civil society organisations – need to be aware of their own responsibilities in supporting vulnerable adults to participate in learning and enter the labour market.

Materials from the seminar are available at the Cedefop study visits website: <http://studyvisits.cedefop.europa.eu/index.asp?cid=3&artid=8952&scid=77&artlang=EN>.

List of abbreviations

A3L	access to 3rd level
APL	assessment of prior learning
BAMF	Federal Office for Migration and Refugees
BB	building bridges
BJC	Ballymun job centre
CABC	competence analysis schemes
CAO	collective labour agreement
CGIL	Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (Italian General Confederation of Labour)
CISL	Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori (Italian Confederation of Trade Unions)
DAFCO	délégation académique à la formation continue
DAVA	skill accreditation schemes
EKPA	Ekpedeftiki Paremvasi SA
ESF	European Social Fund
ETSC	education and training service centre
GP	general practitioner
GRETA	groupement d'établissements
IAG	information, advice and guidance
IELTS	international English language testing system
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IQ	integration through qualification
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NHS	National Health Service
P50plus	Perspective 50plus
PLAB	Professional and Linguistic Assessment Board

RAGU	refugee assessment and guidance unit
REF	Roma education fund
RHP	refugee health professionals
StAZ	Stichting Arbeidsmarkt Ziekenhuizen
UIL	Unione Italiana del Lavoro (Italian Labour Union)
UNIZO	Unie van Zelfstandige Ondernemers (Organisation for the self-Employed and SMEs)
UWV	Uitvoeringsinstituut Werknemersverzekeringen (social security agency)
VAE	Validation des acquis de l'expérience
VDAB	Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding
VET	vocational education and training
VOKA	Vlaams netwerk van ondernemingen (Flemish Chamber of Commerce and Industry)
VQP	vocational qualification programme

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ANNEX

Study visits 2010/11 and 2011/12: key data

Table 1. **Study visits 2010/11 and 2011/12, by type**

Study visits	2010/11	2011/12
On general education	103	76
On vocational education and training	42	49
With a lifelong learning approach	98	91
Total	243	216

Table 2. **Study visits themes**

Categories of themes	Topics for study visits
Encouraging cooperation between the worlds of education, training and work	• Transition from education and training to the world of work
	• Workplace learning
	• Integration of disadvantaged groups into the labour market
	• Increasing attractiveness of VET
	• Social partners' contribution to lifelong learning
	• Cooperation between education and training institutions, enterprises and local communities
	• New skills for new jobs
	• Fostering entrepreneurship and employability

Supporting initial and continuous training of teachers, trainers and education and training institution managers	• Quality assurance mechanisms in schools and training institutions
	• Teachers' and trainers' initial training, recruitment and evaluation
	• Teachers' and trainers' continuing professional development and career opportunities
	• Leadership and management in schools and training providers
Promoting the acquisition of key competences throughout the education and training system	• Increasing literacy and numeracy levels
	• Language teaching and learning
	• Use of ICT in learning
	• Developing entrepreneurship
	• Education for active citizenship and sustainable development
	• Developing creativity in learning and teaching
Promoting social inclusion and gender equality in education and training, including the integration of migrants	• Learning mathematics and science
	• Early learning opportunities
	• Personalised learning approaches
	• Measures to prevent early school leaving
Developing strategies for lifelong learning and mobility	• Equal opportunities for disadvantaged groups
	• National and sectoral qualifications frameworks linked to EQF
	• Tools to promote transparency of qualifications and mobility of citizens
	• Validation of non-formal and informal learning
	• Reforms in national education and training systems
	• Developing links between VET and higher education
	• Implementation of flexible learning pathways
	• Lifelong guidance for learning and working
	• Learning mobility in education and training

Figure 1. **Study visit participants 2010/11, by category, in %**
(total number of participants: 2 723)

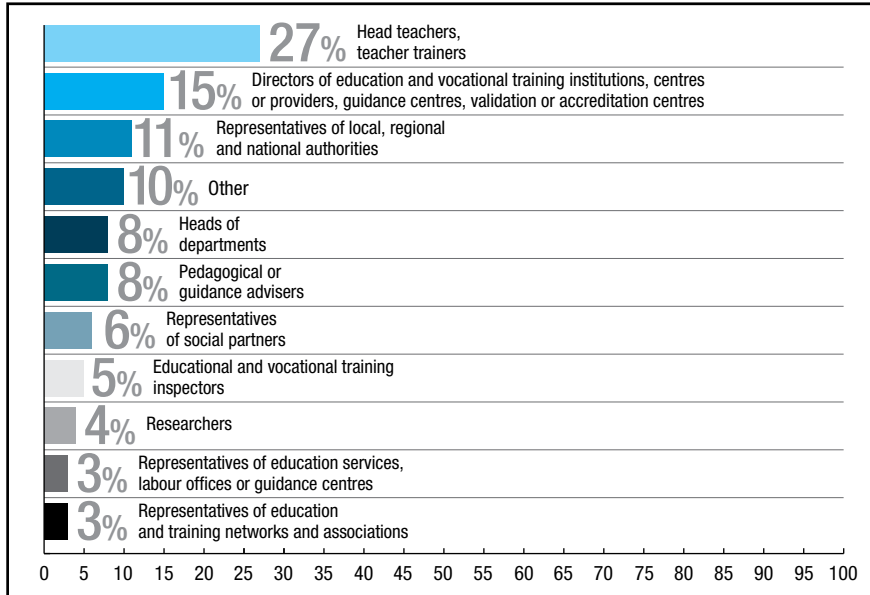
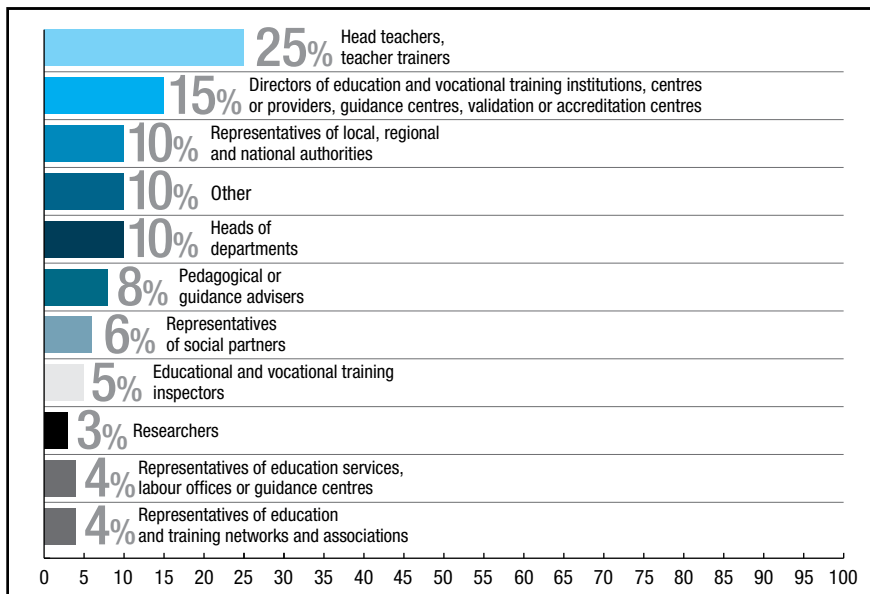
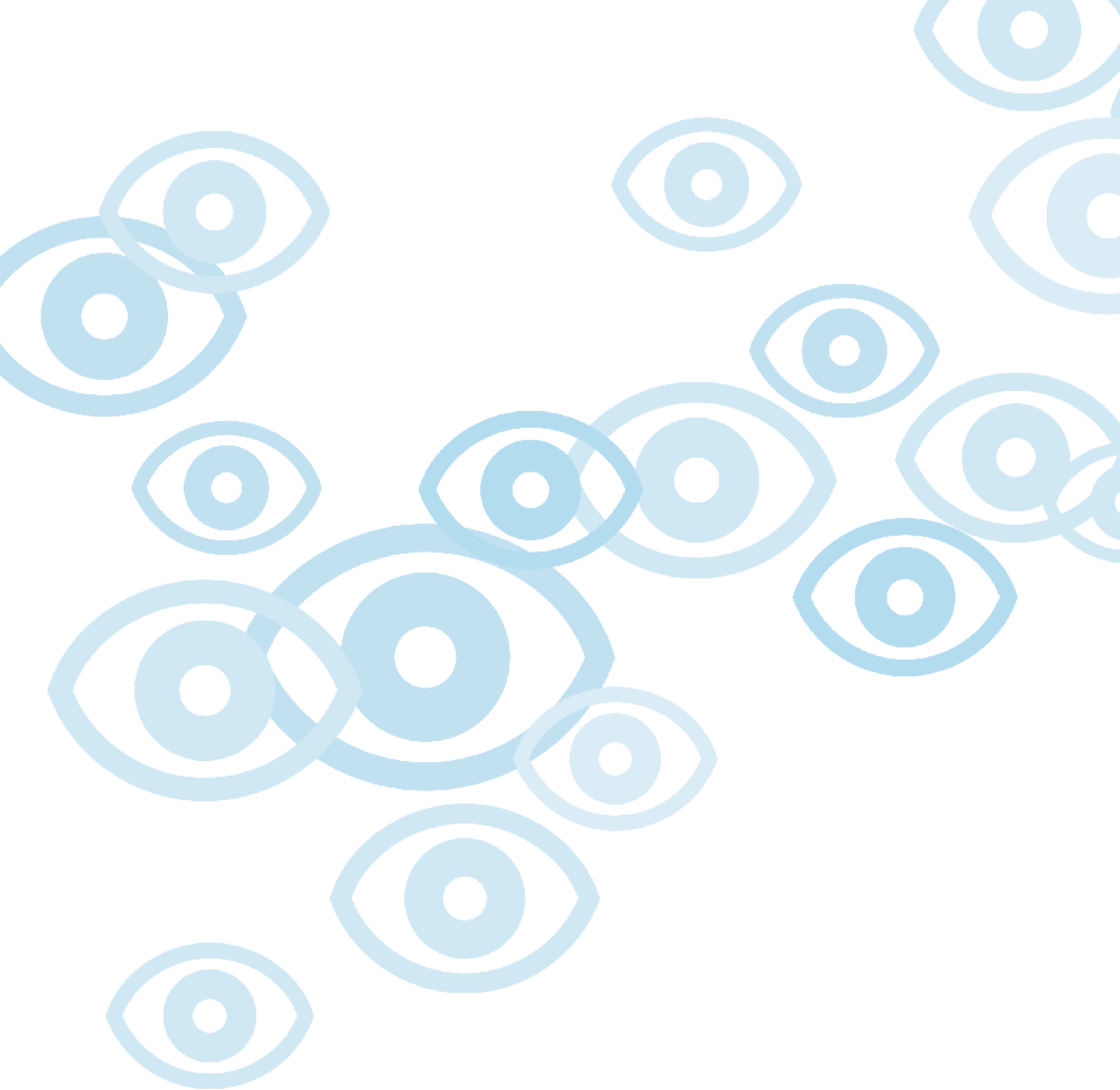
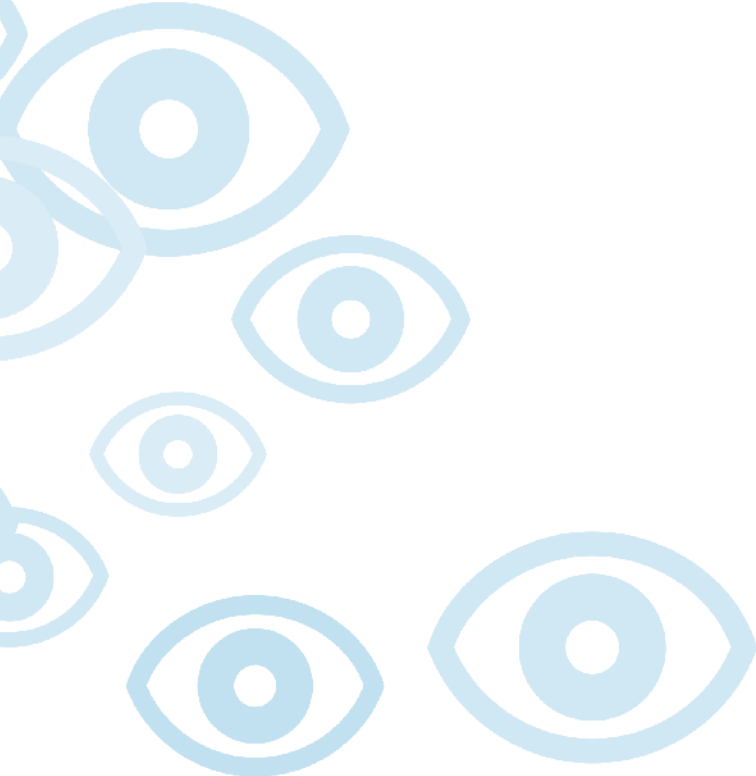


Figure 2. **Study visit participants 2011/12, by category, in %**
(total number of participants: 2 465)







CEDEFOP

European Centre for the Development
of Vocational Training

Empowering vulnerable adults to tackle labour market challenges

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Findings from study visits 2010/11 and 2011/12 and policy implications

This publication presents findings from 25 study visits, in 2010/11 and 2011/12, related to empowering vulnerable adults to tackle labour-market challenges. It focuses on ways to support vulnerable adults to exploit their knowledge, skills and competences to the full, to get information and guidance, to participate in vocational training, to recognise their skills and competences, and to have access to meaningful and rewarding employment.

Group reports prepared by study visit participants were the main source of information; 29 successful initiatives are featured. These were presented at a Cedefop seminar on 6 and 7 June 2012 in Thessaloniki, Greece.

This publication aims at enriching the awareness and understanding of decision-makers and practitioners on how European countries deal with the specific challenges of education, training and employment. It should also help them find partners for cooperation projects and networks at national and European levels.

**CEDEFOP**European Centre for the Development
of Vocational Training

Europe 123, 570 01 Thessaloniki (Pylea), GREECE
PO Box 22427, 551 02 Thessaloniki, GREECE
Tel. +30 2310490111, Fax +30 2310490020, E-mail: info@cedefop.europa.eu

visit our portal www.cedefop.europa.eu



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