



TrACE 2
PEER-REVIEW
FINAL REPORT

**TrACE 2 Project - LEONARDO DA VINCI Multilateral Projects
LLP 2013-1-IT1-LE004-04119**



PROVINCIA AUTONOMA DI TRENTO

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The present Final Peer-review Report is available and downloadable from the Employment Agency website www.agenzialavoro.tn.it – “TrACE 2 project” section - <http://www.agenzialavoro.tn.it/fse/interventi/trace2>



*Activation, Capability and Empowerment.
Pathways for the development of lifelong learning policies
targeting employment and social inclusion*

PEER-REVIEW FINAL REPORT

This Report is the result of the Peer-review process carried out within the TrACE 2 project partnership. The best practices and recommendations herewith presented are to be considered as non-binding in their application by the decision-makers.

The TrACE 2 project was aimed at the further development of the actions of the previous LLP TrACE partnership, which was awarded with the "STAR PROJECT 2012¹" European label. More specifically, TrACE had come to the definition of a shared Reference Model where training actions had been approached as a lever for long-lasting employment, full citizenship, self-generating activation and multi-generating capability. To this regard, TrACE 2 has focused on the usability of the shared Model of reference proposed by TrACE by focusing on the following subjects: a) Labour policies of life-long learning training with particular focus on the activation of young and elder people; b) Development potentials in the area of new skills for new jobs.

Starting from the common umbrella of the activation, capability and empowerment concepts, all Partner organisations have explored the subjects on the basis of their own particular interests and experience.

To develop the existing models through research-oriented learning and exchange methods, the new TrACE 2 partnership has created a platform of exchange, debate and mutual learning. This has articulated on a peer review methodology under a process of constant debate with the aim of defining the working areas on which training policies can be tailored in order to adjust to social needs and to productive systems under persistent evolution.

In particular, TrACE 2 has come to design of a Final Peer-review Report which incorporates a set of partner-reviewed best practices along with specific guidelines and advice for policy-makers on the basis of the previous TrACE recommendations. These practices were focused on the two target categories of workers that the European Recommendations on lifelong learning have extensively been addressing: young and elder workers, being at the highest risk of social and economic exclusion. The advice was aimed at increasing the training systems capacity to interpret and anticipate the current dynamics of professions and professionalism in order to effectively adapt training actions to the labour market needs.

¹  STAR PROJECT TrACE was awarded the [Star Project](#) LABEL by EST - European Shared Treasure in 2012.



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FOREWORD

TrACE 2 represents the progression of the previous Leonardo da Vinci TrACE project, as it was designed with the aim of making the products created in TrACE more usable to face the increasing challenges set by the labour market crisis which are imposing continuous improvement of the training systems.

In particular, the previous TrACE project had defined a shared "Reference Model of training defined through institutional dialogue and social multilateral". Such Model represented a set of significant best practices and operational guidelines for all the stakeholders in the training systems, regardless of their institutional, legal, cultural, social or experiential contexts. The Model was also intended as the tool for disseminating the project results, as well as for stimulating the innovation of the national and regional training systems and for consolidating permanent exchange, in the belief that exchange is the fundamental element for mutual learning.

Starting from the main TrACE goal of promoting activation, capability and empowerment among workers and citizens and from the aforementioned Reference Model, TrACE 2 was created to address the need to tune the objectives and the tools in to those that the Partnership has considered as the more demanding and challenging work areas, especially considering the persevering economic and labour crisis.

To further develop such Model, the TrACE 2 Partners have implemented exchange and mutual learning, focusing on two main areas:

- Training policies in favour of young and older workers;
- New skills for new jobs.

The PEER REVIEW methodology was used as work method, which proved to be an essential tool for securing the innovative adaptation of the training systems to the needs of a rapidly changing society.

The themes, all connected with the principles of activation, capability and empowerment, were developed by each partner according to their own interests and experiences.

As mentioned, TrACE 2 was focused on the discussion and elaboration of working hypotheses with reference to two main areas:

- young and older workers (victims of difficult conditions in the labour market, at risk of marginalization and of professional and social exclusion);
- development of the training systems capacity to interpret and anticipate the dynamics of professions and professionalism.

Therefore, the attention of TrACE 2 was addressed to the analysis of tools to support the evolution of lifelong learning systems, to facilitate formal, non-formal and informal learning, to anticipate the factors underpinning the evolution of professionalism, which needs to be able to adapt to new scenarios in terms of content, approaches, methodologies and tools.

All this, in order to set the conditions to benefit from a competitive and fully included human capital.

This Final Report represents the summary of the outcomes developed and processed within the partnership, according to the four stages of the Peer-Review methodology (Preparation - Visit with Best Practices - Peer Review Report – Comments/follow up). A specific section is devoted to the description of this methodology. Eventually, the peer-reviewed Best Practices are presented in summary sheets, featuring their main elements and the highlights.

The guidelines of TrACE 2, following the principles of activation, capability and empowerment have originated from the analysis and exchange of the best practices. As mentioned, these guidelines are the evolution of the ones developed under the previous LLP TRACE project, which, thanks to the peer-review process, have been further analyzed, integrated and grouped into six macro areas of intervention, and mainly: *Involvement and activation of individuals; Holistic approach; Development of skills and capacity; Practical and theoretical learning; Finding different ways of learning and Talent management.*

The Final Peer Review Report also features a specific chapter devoted to evaluation, for the assessment of the project in terms of results, impacts and satisfaction with the mutual learning process.

The working languages are English (working language of the partnership) and Italian (language of the coordinating partner). Two glossaries, in Italian and in English, contain the agreed definition of the technical terms used in this document.

Presenting and disseminating this Final Report is also meant to disseminate the project goals and the working hypothesis, even if they may be improvable and subject to further processing.

With this Report we would like to raise your attention to the significant goals the network has achieved, hoping to further improve and exploit these results as well as the mutual collaboration and learning.

My heartfelt thanks to all the project Partners and to my colleagues of the Province of Trento for their cooperation and commitment over the past two years of activities.

Enjoy the reading.

Dott. Luciano Galetti
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PROJECT COORDINATOR

THE TrACE 2 PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

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1. THE TrACE & TrACE 2 KEYWORDS

A few explanatory lines taken from the TrACE Reference Model on the TrACE 2 Keywords are proposed hereafter for a more effective reading of this document.

Before starting the discussion and the sharing of guidelines and recommendations among the partner organisations aimed at upgrading the existing lifelong learning systems with a view to promote employability and active citizenship, it has proven to be essential to share and agree on the meaning of the following concepts:

ACTIVATION,
EMPOWERMENT,
CAPABILITY.

All the aforementioned concepts are well-defined and are being used and debated in several scientific fields and disciplines. The concepts have been shaped in contexts like political philosophy, social ethics, sociology, psychology, economics but their definitions do not represent consolidated and immutable assumptions among the experts. Indeed, these concepts have recently been used in broader terms. An example is the present document, where those concepts are used in connection with the lifelong learning field, with a view to set new innovative pathways of development. To do this, it has proven to be fundamental to first provide possible definitions of such concepts, even though they are not to be regarded as univocal or indisputable. The definitions as expressed in this document represent the research made to interpret them in connection with this project and with the methodology used. This clarification is indispensable to avoid that the work made and the outcomes obtained may appear as binding and unalterable as a result of a shared epistemological choice made by the partners.

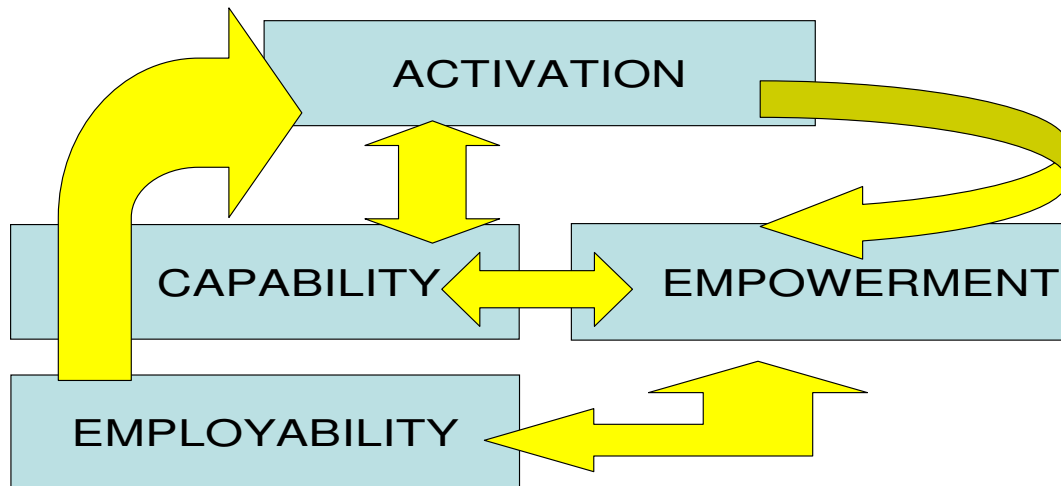
The definitions herewith suggested, even if they appear to be widespread in literature, they are to be regarded as possible interpretations only.

With this in mind, a preliminary analysis on the concept of "accessibility" was carried out. Accessibility is interpreted as the actual possibility to make the right to education effective (which otherwise would only be a potential right), as education represents the most central and pressing element for the project goals.

In this framework, accessibility represents an indispensable precondition to meet the two main goals set by the lifelong learning systems:

- **active** and responsible citizenship. Citizens should be guaranteed the possibility to acquire the necessary elements to be able to understand the context they live in, enhance their potential and actively and responsibly play their social role within their community;
- **employability**, that is the creation of favourable conditions to enter and stay in an ever-evolving labour market.

Effectively exercising the right to education means enhancing the potential of education, which may be summarized through the following diagram:



ACTIVATION

Generally speaking, it is common knowledge that there has been considerable debate about welfare systems since the end of the 20th century. This debate led to the decision to progressively dismantle welfare systems, both because of the growing distrust of citizens towards the excessive costs and bureaucracy involved with such systems, and also because they were largely considered as unable to meet the citizens' real needs and to interpret the new social risks originating from the new economic, social, cultural and demographic asset. Just in recent times these welfare systems have been rediscovered. This has been made possible by moving the focus from the more "correction oriented" approach, based on social and monetary support, to a more active one, based on investment and aimed at maximising the individuals' potential, to become SELF-SUFFICIENT AND ACTIVE members of the society. To this regard, the European Union has coined the phrase "active welfare state": an "ACTIVE" AND IN THE SAME WAY "ACTIVATING"² welfare state, that from the role of a distributor of passive protection devices, turns into a producer of promotional and customized services, in order to stimulate its citizens to develop the necessary resources to cope with difficulties and risks.

The central idea is ACTIVATION. From an activation point of view, in order to guarantee inclusion, protection and welfare, citizenship must first be "active"³. In other words, all the rights connected with citizenship necessarily involve the citizens' participation in the construction of well being conditions for themselves and for others. This participation mainly materializes in both the possibility to access employment as well as in the capacity to meet existing needs. Employability and salaried work, training and EMPOWERMENT represent priorities going under the name of ACTIVATION POLICIES, which are implemented through decentralised and customised services at local level.

²To build a "State of active citizens", according to the Belgian Minister for social affairs Frank Vandenbroucke, one of its main theorists.

³Barbier J.C. (2004), *Activation Policies, a Comparative Perspective, The European Employment Strategies for Young People*, Bruxelles, Etui.

To reinforce activation, several different tools, which do not necessarily involve the acquisition of new competences, such as information, counselling and guidance, may be used. These tools may be used to stimulate individuals to adopt certain behaviours and conducts. Psychological and social training tools may also be used, especially if they involve any coaching dynamics at individual or group level.

EMPOWERMENT

EMPOWERMENT is an essential tool to develop activation as well as social, labour and training policies.

In the field of psychological research, the concept of EMPOWERMENT, is defined as follows:

- a further away in time definition is connected with the concept of "close development area" (Vygotsky, tr it .1966, 1978), according to which it is possible to identify emerging cognitive processes: it is a dynamic assessment, aimed at finding out processes to promote. It is the opposite of the static assessment, which is aimed at confirming the presence of already well-settled processes. This concept and approach have been widely used by organisations to assess "potential", that is, a method to recognise the individuals' strong points and to anticipate their future career. In this framework empowerment is not regarded as an approach to develop individuals, but rather to identify if individuals have specific resources which may be developed and exploited because useful to the organisation;
- another trend may be associated with Rappaport (1977) and Zimmerman (2000), and it considers empowerment as a perspective to strengthen those individuals who are either in a temporary or permanent weak situation because of a social, economic or cultural conditions. Empowerment is the approach to make these individuals more independent and aware of the decisions they make in their life. Empowerment here has more of a political approach, and it includes a number of actions of support: from the counselling service to women in developing countries, to training opportunities for individuals or the whole community, or for workers, thereby making the benefit of their own employers too;

In public law there is a clear reference to empowerment-centred policies, especially as regards very technical sectors such as health. A health reform has long been debated in terms of strengthening of the single health authorities, though generally from a political point of view it is not easy to identify specific strategies where empowerment practises have been particularly efficient.

Despite the lack of experiences and verifiable outcomes, the concept appears to be particularly interesting if applied to the more general concept of ACTIVATION, and as far as our studies are concerned, activation policies in lifelong learning policies.

Generally speaking, empowerment could be considered as the development of "each individual's personal and professional potential".

The concept of potential may be erroneously connected with the concept of "credit" (alleged inborn intellectual capacities that all individuals own, to a different degree). It is impossible to distinguish between inborn potential and cultural, family, social acquisitions, etc. as the latter are subject to constant acquisition and increase.

Empowerment development involves a learning process that takes place at different levels: target individuals can be either aware or unaware, it can take place in formal, semi-formal and informal contexts.

CAPABILITY

It is a well-known fact that capability represents one of the most recent frontiers of political philosophy and economics. The capability approach brings decades of the utilitarian philosophy well-established assumptions into question.

Various authors have embraced the capability approach thereby reaching very interesting and fruitful results. As regards the connection with his project, the choice was made not to adopt a single interpretation, but to rather consider the implications of capability.

To this end, it is useful to recall the fundamental interpretation of "capability" (as synthesis of the concepts of capacity and opportunity to act and to be) as a new reading of the term *dynamis*, and "functioning" (effective acquisitions as a consequence of acting and being) as a new reading of the term *ergon* (both terms belong to the Aristotelian philosophy).

Without going into further detail, it may be useful to recall that further education may contribute to develop both the capability for work and the capability for voice, thereby helping individuals to acquire the necessary skills, competences and awareness to turn the available resources into behavioural strategies aimed at making valuable decisions, in order to assert their ideas in the work context, to be able to meet their own needs, and plan their own life.

Further education represents a crucial element for individuals, in order to guarantee their capacity to achieve the goal of CAPABILITY, that is to make significant decisions to meet their own fulfilment.

Sen⁴, Indian economist, Nobel prize for Economy in 1998, has underlined the EXISTING CLOSE CONNECTION BETWEEN HUMAN CAPITAL AND CAPABILITY, claiming that the former boosts the freedom to (responsibly) choose what is considered as valuable for oneself. This because the human capital increases the individuals' capacity to communicate, discuss, reach agreements, understand reality, use imagination, participate in the democratic process and in the political choices connected with it, thereby obtaining much more than purely economical results. In other words, CAPABILITY means that THE CITIZENS' WELFARE AND POSSIBILITY TO ASSERT THEIR SUBSTANTIAL LIBERTY LARGELY DEPENDS ON THEIR RICHNESS IN HUMAN CAPITAL.

In this framework, the definition of competences appears to be connected with a goal-directed approach, a "being able to" approach.

Reinforcing the individuals' capability profiles thanks to lifelong learning tools, means educating them to active citizenship, by getting them to develop empathy and participation in place of revulsion, when faced with diversity.

Increasing the individuals' capability implies training them to exercise higher "degrees of freedom" in the society. Society not only represents a democratic State, but also a community that cares about its citizens' gratification and self-fulfilment.

Increasing the individuals' competences as much as their capacity to actively contribute to building their professional or personal future (activation) does not necessarily involve increasing their capability profiles (even if these conditions are often essential pre-requisites).

⁴ Sen A.k.,(1997), *Human capital and human capability*, in "World Development", n. 12.

According to M. Nussbaum's "cognitivist" and "naturalist" interpretation of the concept of capability, there are possible "lists" of items in terms of fundamental human capabilities:

1. *life*, that is the capability to have a normal life;
2. *physical health*, that is the capability to be in good health and well-fed;
3. *physical integrity*, that is the capability to use one's body;
4. *senses, imagination and thought*, that is the capability to use senses, imagination and thought thanks to GOOD EDUCATION;
5. *emotions*, that is the capability to have emotions, feelings and love;
6. *practical reasoning*, that is the capability to MAKE ETHICAL AND CONSCIOUS CHOICES;
7. *belonging*, that is the capability to live TOGETHER WITH THE OTHER PEOPLE AND TO ENJOY THE SOCIAL BASIC PRINCIPLES OF RESPECT FOR ONESELF AND THE OTHERS;
8. *other species*, that is the capability to live in piece with other species of living creatures;
9. *game*, that is the capability to laugh, play and have fun;
10. *control of one's own political and material environment*, that is the capability to PARTICIPATE IN POLITICAL CHOICES, HAVE A PROPERTY AND A GOOD JOB.⁵

Many of these items are connected and oriented to the reinterpretation of the concept of learning, as it will be made clear later on.



⁵ Nussbaum M.,(2000), *Women ad Human Development. The capabilities Approach.*

2. THE METHODOLOGY, FROM GUIDELINE TO VALIDATION TOOL – FIRST RESULTS ACHIEVED

The making of a product or the activation of a process, however simple they can be, require the use of a method or a set of guidelines defining a chronological sequence of the actions to perform. Even more so when the product or process in question is particularly complex in terms of outcomes to reach, variety of stakeholders involved, lack of a consolidated experiential basis.

Therefore, it was imperative to provide the TRACE 2 project with a specific methodological reference base agreed with by all the partners.

Not only the methodology adopted was used as a tool to reach and evaluate the project goals, it also was evaluated as a separate element, and it also represented an independent goal.

This is why the methodological aspect deserves an own specific chapter in this Final Report.

At the project conception stage the methodology was described as follows: *"the TrACE 2 project is aimed at developing and implementing the Model of Reference developed by the former project TrACE, thereby creating a permanent forum of dialogue, communication and mutual exchange of experience in the field of activation, capability and empowerment (the 3 TrACE 2 key words) through the Peer Review method with particular attention to young and older workers"*.

Therefore, the Peer-review method represents the key element in the project development process and in the results collection, as it lead to the final review of the Best Practices in the way they are presented in this booklet.

Despite the introduction of this method has been a very ambitious choice, it has helped significantly create an open-minded and mutual trust environment, thereby contributing to increased transparency and dynamism in the learning process.

In brief, the Peer Review in the project is a model *of external evaluation aimed at supporting development initiatives and quality assurance*.

The Peer Review method also has an educational function as it is focused on the promotion of the continuous improvement of quality, thanks to extended evaluation made by the Peers. During the evaluation process, the Peers take visits to the institution to be reviewed.

The Peers are expert external subjects operating in a similar context to the reviewed. All the partners are independent.

In short, the Peer-Review process, in the way it is described in the European Framework of Reference represents a best method to reach the following goals:

- quality promotion and assurance;
- increased transparency and comparability of experiences through a common European standard;
- support to equal opportunities;
- promotion of open-mindedness, integrity and transparency as a pre-condition for mutual learning
- promotion of critical thinking among the Peers and the Institutions;
- awareness of the cultural influence on VET curriculums and on evaluation, especially in the transnational Peer-Review;
- activation of the Peer Review methodology, which is not to be intended as a beurocratic and technical procedure but as a motivational and dynamic process bringing added value to the peer-reviewed institutions;
- Activation of a virtuous process of analysis for identification of strong and weak points;

- Set-up of learning networks;
- Increased responsibility for the stakeholders.

As it is described in the diagram below, the Peer Review process is divided into 4 stages:

1. *Self-assessment* stage. The subject who will be peer-reviewed submits a self-assessment Report;
2. *Peer-Review* – the core of the process. The Peers visit the reviewed peer and submit an evaluation. Besides the visit, the evaluation includes the interviews carried out with various stakeholders. At the end of the visit, the Peers give some preliminary oral feedback;
3. Submission by the Peers of the *Peer Review Report*. The Peers submit the remarks to the visit which are in their turn commented back by the reviewed partner;
4. *Follow-up*: the recommendations resulted from the Peer-review process are translated into concrete planned improvement actions.



In the Peer Review process a coordinating body must be appointed, which is to be responsible for managing the network, the effective coordination of the members, the selection and training of Peers, development of common procedures (guidelines and indicators), as well as for coordination and monitoring of the Peer Review method itself, all this in order to ensure high quality of reviews and coordination of the network.

2.1 THE PEER REVIEW METHOD IN TrACE 2

As TrACE 2 was a transfer of innovation project, the exchange of experiences and best practices within a multi-actor partnership was crucial.

As also called for by the Memorandum of Understanding signed by all partners of the Trace 2 network during the kick-off meeting, the project was aimed at "*..the interaction of a European network of institutional, social and economic parties (multi-actor partnerships) in charge of the defining and implementing innovation in the training policies to face the economic and employment crises....*".

As envisaged by the Memorandum of Understanding, each partner of the project has been called to investigate a specific theme, such as labour policies for the inclusion of young and older workers, new professions, the dual system, the start-up of enterprises, disadvantaged groups.

To achieve these objectives, the partners were committed to cooperate in order to define and develop a permanent forum of dialogue to share their experiences and best practices, to encourage and stimulate the discussion on the subject of training and active employment policies, and to promote the circulation of information through the Peer Review methodology.

Hence it is clear that the peer-review method was central for the whole TrACE 2 project development, for the analytical analysis of the experiences and for the achievement of shared goals having a transfer potential.

The application of the peer-review method in TrACE 2, went through the following stages:

1. **Self-assessment.**

The Peer Review started with an initial preparatory phase of self-assessment by the Peers, who were called to prepare a **Preliminary Presentation** describing the single institutions and the respective social and economic context, the different roles of the social actors involved, the characteristics of the education and lifelong learning system. This stage has been preparatory to stage 2, when the visits by the Peers (*Reviewers*) take place. At the self-assessment stage, the Reviewed partner sent to the Peers a **description of the best practices** developed by his Member State/Region. These will be later analyzed in depth during visits. These descriptions were circulated within the Partnership, in order to enable the peers to have a preliminary picture of the single frameworks to be analysed during the visits.

2. **Peer Review.**

The **Peer Visit** to the reviewed partner used to take place at this stage. Such visits were central for the development process. Each partner visited the peers and made an own valuation. The evaluation considered the findings from the visits, the presentations and the discussion session. At the end of the visit each peer returned an own *verbal feedback* (round table in plenary). The meetings with the partners also represented important occasions to check the project progress, to plan for and coordinate activities, develop proposals, share operational changes and methodologies needed to guarantee the success of the actions;

3. **Peer-Review Report (PRR)**

After the visit, each partner drafted his own Peer Review Report (PRR) forwarded it to the reviewed partner who subsequently proceeded with commenting on the PRR. In the PRR the relation between the best practice and the 3 TrACE 2 keywords was highlighted. The single PRRs were later assembled and brought together in this *Final Peer-review Report*;

4. Follow-up:

The fourth stage was crucial for the achievement of the project goals. The PRRs produced by each partner in relation to visits have been processed by the reviewed partners, obtaining not only the guidelines featuring the success of the practice, but also general ***operational guidelines for the stakeholders*** originated from the analysis.

The project coordination and supervision of the implementation stages of the methodology was carried out by the Employment Agency of the Autonomous Province of Trento, which was responsible for coordinating the planning actions, for encouraging the mutual exchange between the peers and the development of a permanent network, for monitoring the degree of achievement of the objectives, and evaluating the process of mutual learning.

2.2 THE OUTCOMES OF THE PEER-REVIEW METHOD IN TRACE 2

Testing the application of the peer review methodology to such project was represented an own goal which needed to be followed by a specific monitoring, discussion and evaluation process.

The success was not guaranteed. This because the method involved:

- unusual complexity in the development of LLP projects;
- a strong involvement of the partners, who were called to analyse, reflect and revise the conclusions and to always consider different opinions;
- dealing with challenging and sometimes "naughty" assumptions and remarks given by the peers;
- dealing with a critical diagnosis of best practices.

The method applied lead the partners to reflect and identify the elements of comparability, thereby making the peer learning more effective, not only in terms of increased knowledge but also of developing potential innovation.

A similar opinion was shared by all the partners who supported this "action research" approach, with a view to concretely improve their opinions, generate the desire to experience further, or analyse where others have been successful or have failed.

This with a view to further strengthen the methodological tool used:

- by reducing the merely bureaucratic elements;
- by increasing the value of the relational dimension.

3. THE NETWORK MEETINGS

The topics under discussion are accompanied by the presentation of the experiences made in the field (best practices). The learning process was carried out through the methodology of peer review. Each partner has organized the visits aimed at analysing the respective institutions and contexts of reference, as well as the different roles of the social actors.

The meetings with the partners also represented a very important opportunity to check the progress of the project and to coordinate activities, develop proposals, and share the methodologies needed for the success of the actions.

6 meetings of the project partners were organized:

TrACE 2 first meeting: Trento (IT), 27-28 November 2013

TrACE 2 second meeting: Katowice (PL), 20-21 March 2014

TrACE 2 third meeting: Bruges (BE), 23-24 June 2014

TrACE 2 fourth meeting: Lugano (CH), 23-24 October 2014*

TrACE 2 fifth meeting: Belfast (UK), 12 May 2015

TrACE 2 sixth meeting: Madeira (PT), 23-24 June 2015

Before each meeting, the host partner has identified and sent to the other partners the description of the two best practices developed by their Member State / region based using a special template. The practices identified were then presented during the meeting and formed the basis of discussion for the whole meeting.



4. THE BEST PRACTICES

The following best practices, operated by the single partners, were analysed, peer-reviewed and implemented by the TrACE 2 partners:

- AGENZIA DEL LAVORO DELLA PROVINCIA AUTONOMA DI TRENTO (I)
Interventions to strengthen key competences (Italy) – Training actions to foster key competences among the unemployed
Youth Employment Package (Italy) – Support for young NEETs into employment through Youth Guarantee
- ESF – AGENTSCHAP VLAANDEREN (BE)
Stevig in de steigers (Fiandre) – In-company coaching
The Minerva Programme (Fiandre) – Tackling the end-of-career stage
- DIRECÇÃO REGIONAL DE QUALIFICAÇÃO PROFISSIONAL (PT)
Centres for Qualification and Vocational Education and Training (Madeira) – Centres offering qualifications and training
Apprenticeship Courses
- DISTRIC LABOUR OFFICE IN ŚWIETOCHLOWICE (PL)
Equal in business (Polonia) – Business set up for unemployed or job-seekers
Innovative support for you (Polonia) – Model of support into employment by Labour Offices
- PROTEUS NI LTD– Northern Ireland (UK)
CO-MENT – COLLABORATIVE MENTORING (Irlanda del Nord) – Mentoring programme for the NEETs
Youth in Action (Irlanda del Nord) – Youth work, young people and peace in Ireland
- ECAP – Canton Ticino (CH)*  **ECAP** Ticino UNIA
Career Circles (Canton Ticino) – Pathways for NEETs towards employment
Public employment services (Canton Ticino) – Organization and active labour policy

* This mobility was carried out at the Swiss institution ECAP, which hosted a network meeting on the occasion of the final conference of the LLP - Youth2Work project, in Lugano. The conference was aimed at reflecting on topics related to TrACE 2, particularly as regards the actions to support the NEETs. The occasion was ideal to analyze and learn from the study visits. The two best practices implemented in the Canton of Ticino, are also presented in this Final Report.

BEST PRACTICE:

Interventions to strengthen key competences

PARTNER:

AGENZIA DEL LAVORO
DELLA PROVINCIA AUTONOMA DI TRENTO (I)



A. SPECIFICATIONS OF THE BEST PRACTICE

1. Description of the best practice

This intervention is addressed to unemployed workers having lost their job in the last 6 or 12 months. Each unemployed worker can benefit from the participation in at least one training course focusing on the (re)acquisition of one of the eight key competences identified at European level (Recommendation 2006/962/CE) – 1) Communication in the mother tongue; 2) Communication in foreign languages; 3) Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology; 4) Digital competence; 5) Learning to learn; 6) Social and civic competences; 7) Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship; 8) Cultural awareness and expression;

Besides key competences, courses provide a mandatory outline of the following areas: - Methodologies and techniques for an efficient job search (at least 3 hours); - Labour law with a special focus on trade unions law (at least 2 hours); - Mandatory and complementary social security requirements (at least 2 hours); - Insights on Life Skills as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO).

The participation to training actions is made mandatory for workers benefiting from financial support provided by security cushions.

Courses are organized as a package of 60 hours divided in ten working days. The anticipated number of courses which will be organised is 60.

Courses on key competences are organised in various different locations in the province to facilitate the participation of unemployed workers. The didactic methodology adopted not only includes frontal lectures but also sessions of active exercises and simulation.

2. Main goals and expected results

The intervention supports unemployed people in the process of re-activation towards an effective professional reintegration. Indeed, the awareness of key competences is indispensable in a knowledge-based society which requires new and complex professional profiles. Even if the intervention does not per se provide unemployed workers with hard skills, it does nonetheless constitute a crucial moment of awareness and empowerment. Indeed, the intervention is intended to render workers aware both of their socio-professional competences and skills and of the socio-professional competences and skills required in the current socio-economic environment.

The main purpose of these courses is not to equip the workers with strong professional (re)qualification services rather to provide them with a "package" of socio-relational knowledge and basic expertise of the so-called *key competences for lifelong learning*.

The tool, not only is complementary to the local existing training actions which don't usually address soft skills, but it is intended to act as a "starter motor" in the activation process of unemployed workers. The short length, even if often highlighted as a critical point by the Partners, is aimed at making the tool adaptable to various goals and target groups, as well as to make it usable by a large number of workers.

3. Coordinating and managing bodies

The practice is promoted and coordinated by the Employment Agency of the Autonomous province of Trento and it is included in its three-year programming of training actions (2011-2013). The operational organisation as well as the management of training courses are contracted to local training centres.

B.EVALUATION OF THE BEST PRACTICE (PEER-REVIEW)*Through SWOT analysis with reference to EMPOWERMENT, ACTIVATION and CAPABILITY*

<h1>S</h1> trengths	<h1>W</h1> eaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By strengthening the (re)acquisition of key competences the intervention empowers unemployed workers by making them more aware of informal competencies possessed as well as of their professional potential; • The tool is activated on a local basis, it is simple and accessible; • The tool promotes the “learning to learn” approach and encourages the active involvement of the individual and of the citizen in all the social dimensions; • The tool releases the potential of the individuals, their socialization capacities and promotes the set up of a network of support to help re-enter the labour market; • Period of 12 months to measure client journey after project completion is a reasonable time to monitor the client’s ACTIVITY in the long term and it can influence the increasing of client ACTIVATION; • Large groups of clients covered with training support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training groups are formed randomly (on the basis of single individual registration). Hence, activation, capability and empowerment may not be efficiently addressed to the same extent for every different beneficiary and for every different edition of training courses; • A tailor-made approach would be more beneficial. • Training on soft-skills may be not sufficient to enter the labour market; • The motivation to take part in training by the individual may only be connected to the financial support.
<h1>O</h1> pportunities	<h1>Threats </h1>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This intervention may provide a new “lab” to experiment and implement training methodologies which empower, active and capacitate individuals through training paths different from formal learning; • The tool may act as a “starter motor” in the reactivation process of unemployed workers to encourage them invest on their training to improve their career opportunities; • This intervention constitutes an example of social empowerment. Even if it has been devised as an intervention of active labour policy, the training practice soft competences might be extended to other realms to include the most disadvantaged groups in society; • If experimented on other target groups, the tool may be used as a training/guidance tool to reconsider one’s own career path. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The orientation phase is key to present the project’s goals and activities. However, if this orientation phase put forward by the Job Centres is not efficiently implemented, capability processes are not activated; • The very limited duration of training courses as well as the focus on soft-skills may not turned into an effective activation tool for long term unemployed; • Should training groups be formed randomly (regardless of their skills and abilities), activation, capability and empowerment may not be efficiently addressed and lead to a decrease in the self-confidence and self-esteem level (disempowerment).

C. COMMENTS BY AGENZIA DEL LAVORO ON THE BP

At the implementation stage, the short length of the intervention may risk to result in "disempowerment" should the workers not be grouped together with other workers having a similar skills/knowledge set. Nonetheless, the Employment Agency would like to remind that the short length of the training program was designed with the purpose of becoming a sort of "starter motor" in the process of re-activation of unemployment workers. As regards the potential risk of disempowerment, the Employment Agency believes that this risk might also turn into an interesting training opportunity. If Training Organisations are able to develop training activities effectively, social dynamics of "cooperative learning" might arise, leading to positive experiences of "peer empowerment".

Such re-activation process is somehow "pushed" by a mandatory participation connected to the reception of an "economic incentive" (through social cushions).

In fact, in most of the cases, long-term unemployed would not enter training programs autonomously without such an economic conditionality.

The Employment Agency agrees on the importance to personalize the training actions according to the participant's needs. This intervention has concentrated on "key competences" as a tool for the "social learning process" that works on empowerment, activation and capability not only at level of training actions per se but also at the level of social and civic competences which are devised to be strengthened through social interaction as well.

Before turning the project into a standard, a critical reflection will be developed. At the end of the project, its effectiveness will be evaluated before deciding whether to transfer this experience at the policy level "as it is" or with further adjustments.

To this regard, the advice given by the Partners of setting an a priori percentage threshold of users that have completed the training action to support the quantitative (and successful) evaluation of the intervention surely, appears very important.

As all Peer Reviewers Partners have correctly acknowledged, one of the biggest threats of this intervention relates to the fact that before a request of "re-employment", the project provides training interventions as an answer.

Certainly the best answer would be the offer of a least one "re-employment" opportunity.

As it is well-know, this is not the answer that can be currently found in the local and national labour markets. For this reason, the Employment Agency has decided to intervene through a project that works in the enhancement of individual empowerment with the goal of equipping unemployed workers with a better awareness of their "key competences". This is in fact an essential requirement of the current labour market regardless of the job that one applies for.

4. PORTABILITY POTENTIAL of the BP

The practice entails a good potential of spill-over in all policy fields related to professional training. The Employment Agency has focused the entire project on the acquisition of the *key competences* as a social learning process. The tool can act as a real laboratory for experimenting and implementing training methodologies that enhance empowerment strengthen the activation and develop empowerment in individuals through flexible learning paths including non-formal learning, constantly being re-structured according to the different objectives.

BEST PRACTICE

Youth Employment Package

PARTNER:

AGENZIA DEL LAVORO
DELLA PROVINCIA AUTONOMA DI TRENTO (I)



A. SPECIFICATIONS OF THE BEST PRACTICE

1. Description of the best practice

The practice is activated in the framework of the Youth Guarantee Initiative and of the ESF. This intervention supports young people aged between 18 and 24 years in the process of entry in the labour market. In particular, this intervention targets young people who are first time job-seekers, unemployed and NEETs..

The YEP offers a package of four coordinated actions:

- **GUIDANCE:** it is the first step when training as well as professional courses are presented and identified, in a perspective of high personalisation. Indeed, at this stage due attention is paid to aptitudes, inclinations and expectations of the young person. This service may be provided also through the provision of a personalised "skills audit".
- **TRAINING:** it develops the following topics: methodologies and tools in the active job search; efficient communication in a professional context; European key competences in a life long learning perspective; transversal competences; security on the job: basic notions; training preparation. Training is articulated in five days for a total of 26 hours per each participant.
- **TRAINEESHIP:** it lasts 8 weeks (approximately 320 hours per participant) and a grant is provided to each participant. The traineeship takes place in a private firm placed in the provincial territory of Trento. The aim of action is allowing the young people acquire/strengthen transversal competences such as: diagnosis, relationship, problem management, problem solving, job oriented attitudes and efficient implementation of competences acquired at school.
- **SUPPORT TO PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION:** this last service supports the young person in getting integrated into the professional environment. The Enterprise/firm that employs the young person (it might be the same firm as for the traineeship or a different one) benefits from fiscal incentives provided by provincial legislation. The service is mandatory and the training organization in charge of finding the firm will only be paid upon employment of the young person (with a work contract of min. 6 months).

The YEP starts with a preparatory stage where the Job Centres take up the responsibility for assisting the young person. This phase is implemented in coordination with the School of origin of the young people. During this phase the young person is informed, sensitized, accompanied and oriented towards the adhesion to the YEP course.

2. Main goals and expected results

The main goal of the practice is to facilitate the young people enter the labour market by providing them with increased awareness and updated competences. From a methodological standpoint, the YEP hinges on the model of alternance training. The YEP constitutes the first example of intervention in Italy implementing the Youth Guarantee.

It starts with a preparatory stage where the Job Centres take up the responsibility for assisting the young person. This phase is implemented in coordination with the School of origin of the young people. During this phase the young person is informed, sensitized, accompanied and oriented towards the adhesion to the YEP course.

3. Coordinating and managing bodies

The practice is promoted by the Employment Agency of the autonomous Province of Trento. The practice takes place in the framework of the EU's Youth Guarantee Initiative and of the ESF funding.

At macro-level an ad hoc Steering Group (including representatives of the Agency as well as of Social and Economic Parts) coordinates the overall implementation of the Youth Employment Package (YEP). At micro-level the Job Centres of the Employment Agency define and personalise the services included in the package. In order to ensure efficacy and efficiency in providing the services included in the Youth Guarantee, the provincial territory has been divided in 8 territorial areas. In each area a different private Training Organisation (TO) is in charge of providing the services included in the YEP.

B.EVALUATION OF THE BEST PRACTICE (PEER-REVIEW)*Through SWOT analysis with reference to EMPOWERMENT, ACTIVATION and CAPABILITY*

S trengths	W eaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The intervention aims at fostering activation, capability and empowerment of young people through a personalised intervention; • The process of activation is particularly stimulated by the provision of training in a way that complements “theory” with “practice” with a strong attention on the socialization process of the young person; • A large number of young people are sick of staying in school. For this reason, the alternance approach between theoretical education and practical experience may be a good solution to keep up motivation among young people; • The process of capability is particularly strengthened by the “skills auditing” services. Indeed, when the young people become aware of their competences, they increase awareness on how construct their future of citizens and workers; • The connection between educational and professional learning (with a strong hinge on local SMEs) favours the process of empowerment of young people; • The local aspect of the measure makes it much more practical and down to earth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be effective empowerment should not only take place at procedural stage (in the provision of the different training services) but also at the concluding stage of the intervention. To this purpose, an additional service of “accompaniment” should be made available for young people in order to help their integration in the labour market as well as a possible (re)integration on the education system; • Activation should be also understood as “re-motivation” by the counselling services; • Capability: young people should be provided with additional tools of knowledge of the socio-economic opportunities offered in the Province of Trento and outside it (Italy, Europe). The access to the so-called “self-promotional webs” should be also strengthened through the use of ICT; • By the means of which indicators can empowerment, activation and capability be measured at the monitoring stage?; • Is there enough focus on the weakest target group, like the NEET’s or the people who are the furthest away of the labour market?
O pportunities	T hreats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process of empowerment may also be extended to the overall labour environment where the young person undertakes traineeship (and hopefully a job contract as well). Indeed, forms of cooperative learning should be facilitated as to understand the young person not only a “recipient” of learning but also a learning provider as well (e.g. the firm might be enriched by the “ICT” skills usually possessed by young people); • Capability: this is an opportunity that social and economic parts have at the macro-level. Given its strong character of experimentation, this intervention may become an interesting testing ground to experiment new synergies between formal training provided by Schools and non-formal training provided by TOs with a view of facilitating new processes of entry in the labour market; • Activation: The personalised services to promote activation experienced in this project may draw new lessons for the future three years programming period of the Employment Agency; • The intervention could be extended to other age groups, like young people aged 18-24 and 25-36 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowerment, capability and activation processes may all be jeopardized by a low quality of the traineeship. Which may be the quality standards to fulfil?; • How to monitor (and adjust) the possible segmentation in the territorial provision of services?; • What responses (in terms of policies) should be provided to young people that are not able to find a job placement after the traineeship in order to avoid the risk of making them re-falling in inactivation? How to keep their empowerment and capability high? Through which channels?; • A too wide and undefined (no selection criteria) group of young people may bring up to a ‘burden’ effect (it may turn out that support will be offered to clients that do not need it in the end).

3. COMMENTS BY AGENZIA DEL LAVORO ON THE PEER-REVIEW

As rightly pointed out by several partners while analysing the "Youth Employment Package", one of the weakest meshes of web actors and stakeholders involved at the implementation stage of the project is represented by the efficient coordination among them.

Undeniably, the correct implementation of the overall project relies on its preliminary stage i.e. sensitizing young people to enter project activities. Such action will be jointly developed by schools and Job Centres.

At a more advanced implementation stage, the partners correctly highlight the importance of strengthening guidance and coaching for young people involved in the project with a special focus to the most excluded, such as the NEETs.

Such focus has been introduced at operational planning level, by asking Training Organisations involved in the project to be particularly sensitive when dealing with the most vulnerable individuals.

To this regard, while evaluating the projects sent by the local Training Organisations in the competitive confrontation for its implementation of the project, the Employment Agency will pay special attention to empowerment, activation and capability. Indeed, in the qualitative evaluation of the projects presented, privileged access will be provided to projects enshrining a participative methodology. In other words, the evaluators' ratio will favour those project methodologies which do not regard "young people" as mere "recipients of knowledge" but as "actors for change" of both their personal and of their professional lives.

In relation to the insight provided regarding the need to strengthen the support to young people that wish to re-enter the educational system, the counselling service will be partially strengthened in order to provide also advice on this dimension.

As far as the final evaluation of the project is concerned, the Employment Agency in Trento shares the suggestions given on the importance of defining a "job ratio" in order to be able to precisely evaluate the outcome of the project on a quantitative level.

However, given the high flexibility of the current job market, such "job ratio" cannot be precisely identified at the project level. The risk is in fact that of "crystallizing" the evaluation criteria on a picture that might change radically 12 months after its implementation.

All Peer Reviewers have correctly underlined the need to provide quality internship, as well as the need to include this intervention in a bigger framework, in order to avoid disempowerment of young people who will remain outside the labour market either for low-quality internships or for both structural/personal reasons.

This is an experimental intervention, and as such it entails a process of "learning by doing" not only towards beneficiaries but also towards policy makers. When the first on-going evaluation data will be collected on the project, new interventions are designed with a view to concretely respond to the beneficiaries' needs.

4. PORTABILITY POTENTIAL of the BP

The practice is intended to be an "emergency aid" tool to cope with the current situation of high unemployment for young people.

Should this dramatic situation continue for a timeframe longer than the project hypothesis, lessons learnt from this experimental intervention should be implemented at policy level in a more comprehensive intervention.

Needless to specify that the higher sustainability factor depends on the current local and European production system. At the moment, the practice cannot spill over the political system as it is but it needs to be readjusted in the light of its final impact.

Nonetheless, some lessons learnt in the implementation of some services may spill-over to other target groups addressed in the employment policies of the Agency.

In particular, lessons learnt in "activation" services (balance of competences, training on the job) may be extended to a larger realm of inactive people of different ages. At the same time, lessons learnt in this realm may be applied also to working people in a life-long learning perspective.

BEST PRACTICE

The Minerva Programme

PARTNER:

ESF Flanders
Agentschap (BE)



A. SPECIFICATIONS OF THE BEST PRACTICE

1. Description of the best practice

Minerva is an innovative programme that entails measures to motivate the ageing workforce to remain active longer and presents an overview of career paths during the transition phase to retirement.

The Minerva programme focuses explicitly on the end of the career phase, when employees aged 55+ need to face the consequences of the government increases in the retirement age. More generally, the practice is focussed on tackling the end-of-career stage, the final years of a career to be considered as an integral part of labour policies.

Target group: employees aged 55 and over.

Relevant policy area: active ageing (2012 European Year for Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity), extension of retirement age (amended Belgian Pensions Law 2013).

The Minerva Programme per se does not involve any additional cost; for the Experience@Work project, an up-front start-up fee is required. The set-up of the model will generate costs for the establishment at the beginning but should after three years be self-supporting because of the recovery via a fee by the hiring organisations.

2. Main goals and expected results

Three underlying concepts constitute the Minerva basis: 1) Self-determination by the employee ("if one does something well and likes what he is doing and decides to do that activity, then he can do that activity for a longer time"), 2) Job-crafting to reshape functions according to the strengths and competences of the employee but considering the needs of the organisation 3) the introduction of the I-deal concept or individual deal, where the employee is empowered to decide on how he/she wishes to shape his/her career in the transition phase to retirement. This decision is drawn up in a psychological contract to be mutually agreed on by both the employee and the employer, and which can be revised once a year according to the employee's personal situation. This emphasizes the mutual commitment. Every employee should determine if his work situation is consistent with the following four dimensions: 1) competences and interests, 2) time to spend, 3) level of complexity, 4) remaining time to retirement. This results in 5 possible ends of career choices:

The 5 Minerva Tracks:

Track 1: "Continue working at same level or even higher"

Track 2: "Work less" (downshift time-wise)

Track 3: "Work lighter" (reduced responsibilities)

Track 4: "Work less & lighter"

Track 5: "Work outside of KBC" (external redeployment in NPOs or for-profit companies and keeping the KBC agreement e.g. the extra-legal benefits).

3. Coordinating and managing bodies

Partners: KBC (HR department) in Belgium: Major financial services company in Belgium – creator of the Minerva Programme, how to work longer instead of keep on working with early retirement schemes.

For a sub-programme (the creation of a vehicle) HazelHeartwood – management consultancy specialised in organisational change and social innovation projects, including related to active ageing – creative source behind the co-creation project (Experience@Work - MC²) with KBC and other companies for Minerva's Track 5 (external redeployment in profit and non-profit companies)

Stakeholders:

- Employees (aged 50 and above);

- Employer (KBC) – creator & stakeholder – Minerva enables the employer to manage medium- and long-term capacity planning better;

- Social partners (trade unions) – help to convince their members of the advantages of an innovative Minerva programme that gives an overview and perspective for employees and management;

- Government/public authorities – although not a direct stakeholder, they are key to active ageing from a society point of view;

- Consumers.

B. EVALUATION OF THE BEST PRACTICE (PEER-REVIEW)

Through SWOT analysis with reference to EMPOWERMENT, ACTIVATION and CAPABILITY

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of self-determination of employees; • The I-deal: a mutually agreed psychological contractual commitment where both employer and employee agree on pre-retirement phase terms; • Innovative HR management: from standardised one-size-fits-all to customised framework to manage a more diversified workforce with disparate needs; • Triple-win: (empowerment, activation and capability) For employees: motivated to work longer and expectations explicated with own management. For businesses: better cost management whilst ensuring continuity and knowledge retention that would otherwise be lost to early retirement. For the greater society: longer retention of a skilled workforce that can also be deployed to businesses demanding specific skilled profiles; • Increase the visibility, influence and contribution of older employees; • Increase of self-esteem and value of the workers. 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middle management resistance: Middle management is often squeezed between the performance targets imposed by top management, and by the dissatisfaction of/lack of engagement by employees. To solve this, strong leadership and HR support are necessary, as well as strong role models at middle-management level; • Rigid labour laws that do not permit flexible ways of working; • Lack of preparatory stages to the coaching services; • Lack of a coordinated framework of services in support to the intervention; • Lack of a holistic framework which implements the practice within a well-organized and coordinated set; • The attitudes and competences of line managers may play an important role in the maintenance or departure of older workers; • Resistance from Trade Unions could be a barrier in certain jurisdictions; • There could be resistance internally from some supervisory levels; • In some instances national legislation restrictions could prevent the scheme being adopted widely.
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From lifetime employment (reactive) to lifetime employability (proactive): the I-deal can be extended to all employees as part of the lifelong career development. Employees can customize their career path from entry until retirement, incorporating learning & development along the way. This should lead to higher employee motivation/satisfaction and lower absenteeism/burnouts; • Flexible working arrangements (job crafting); • The experience may be useful also for other targets of vulnerable subjects which are excluded at the socioeconomic level; • Combating negative stereotypes about the second half of the career; • A way to introduce more flexible working patterns and working environment in an organisation; • Potential transferability to other groupings apart from pre-retirement in an organisation. 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government: expectation that the retirement age will go up further, but not compensated by more flexibility to motivate older people to work longer (e.g., not adapting pension schemes to stop penalising older people for continuing to work on a part-time basis even past retirement age, not customize their career path from entry until retirement, incorporating learning & development along the way); • The company might abuse the “flexibilisation tool” to maximise a profit only through the lowering of labour cost; • Trade unions could also become a major threat, if their buy-in is not successfully managed at the initial stages of the project or if they are conservative towards alternative organisations of work conditions; • An excessive structuring of the methodology may lead to an excessive standardisation of the instrument and to the detriment of its personalisation.

C. COMMENTS BY ESF FLANDERS ON THE BP

ESF Flanders and the project management bodies acknowledge the strengths mentioned by the network partners, namely:

- To elevate the visibility, influence and contribution of older employees.
- Self-esteem and value: meaningful work, lifelong learning and development adapted to personal needs are an important way to feel good about oneself.
- Older workers can help maintain a reliable, dedicated workforce and provide a significant cost savings for both the short and long term.

ESF Flanders realizes that it is a challenge to work with 3 innovative systems in the Minerva plan (self determination, i-deals and job crafting). At the moment i-deals are working very well (even people who do not want to change their career are doing an i-deal) but when it comes to job crafting there is still a way to go (and definitely an opportunity to reshape functions). ESF Flanders is convinced that it is imperative to start from the specific strengths of an employee and therefore the job/function description should be personalized.

As regards the "Weaknesses" highlighted:

Most of the partners of the network mentioned the potential resistance by the managers as a weakness. ESF Flanders totally agrees with this remark. Of course the mindset of the management is very important, for this reason the development of the plan had been agreed with the higher management.

Another weakness mentioned is the strict labour laws (especially for people who are choosing the possibility to work for another organisation). ESF Flanders completely agrees with this remark. To this regard, KBC started negotiations with the federal government to change the law. The government has approved some changes in the law but unfortunately there are still some loose ends (concerning pensions and joint and several liabilities) and KBC will restart negotiations with the new federal government. The project "Experience@work" is about to be started, where KBC will work together with some other companies (AXA-Belgacom-SD Worx- and probably IBM) to have an exchange of employees between those organisations and even with other organisations. In the future this group of enterprises can become bigger and employees (even younger employees) should get the possibility to work for a certain time in another company (either in the light of development of their experience or because of the lack of skilled employees in the other company).

As regards the "Threats":

One of the threats highlighted is the potential abuse by companies of the "flexibilisation tool" to maximise their profit only through the lowering of labour cost. Even if this is a fair comment, ESF Flanders with KBC counter this comment by saying that the savings by doing that would be very minor. The potential profits have been calculated and they would be a minor saving in the budget and for that reason they prefer to go on with their Minerva-plan (because it is positive for their employees and also for the CSR of the company).

The opportunities mentioned such as the increased flexibility in the working environment (like for instance the use of tele-working, teleconferences, etc) have been particularly appreciated.

KBC is currently working further with the Minerva-plan to develop a plan for senior management.

D. PORTABILITY POTENTIAL of the BP in the political system

Minerva will only increase in importance over time, as more and more employees will enter the 55+ category, and as retirement age is pushed up further. Moreover, in the long run, the Minerva concepts should become available to all employees along the entire career path, enabling customised career planning, including lifelong learning & development adapted to personal needs with flexible, innovative career paths. But the Minerva programme focuses on how to make working longer more and more feasible in present working conditions.

Most of the Minerva tracks do not require changes to external policies, but are the result of adapting to the new realities (ageing workforce, later retirement age). However, as regards Minerva Track 5 (external redeployment), this will require changes to the existing labour law to enable more flexible ways of working, not just from a technical/practical perspective (e.g., permitting teleworking on a grand scale), but also fundamental changes to permit external secondments of personnel, and continuation of work after retirement age, regardless of age or career or pension rights. Promoting active ageing is a shared responsibility between the private sector and public authorities (government).

Existing government regulations are mostly focusing on the old employment models: work from one employer from start until retirement. This should be fundamentally reviewed in the view of more innovative and flexible career paths in the future.

BEST PRACTICE

Stevig in de Steigers

PARTNER: ESF Flanders
Agentschap (BE)



A. SPECIFICATIONS OF THE BEST PRACTICE

1. Description of the best practice

'Stevig in de Steigers' - literally 'Solid (or strong) in Scaffolding' - is a tool that enables organisations to provide coaching for their lower-educated employees. Today, coaching seems to be a privilege reserved for executives, 'high potentials', or other higher-educated employees. Coaching also often only takes place after the request by an employee or as part of a specific training programme. In addition, organisations usually have to look outside the firm to find (expensive) external coaches. Moreover, in most companies, there are no (or very few) coaching initiatives aimed at lower-educated employees. The direct supervisors of these employees often do not have the experience, resources, abilities, motivation, or opportunity to coach their subordinates. Therefore, companies that want to introduce coaching would benefit greatly from a tool that would make coaching possible and available at all levels throughout the organisation, ideally without the need for external coaches.

Currently, 167 copies of the tool have been distributed to 154 different organisations in Flanders.

2. Main goals and expected results

'Stevig in de Steigers' is a tool to make coaching accessible to everyone, and to enable organisations to use internal coaches at all levels, including lower-educated employees.

Advantages of using the tool:

For employees:

- Improving their job-related skills and develop these skills autonomously, thereby improving their self-management skills (increased self-direction in learning, self-reflection, self-awareness of own strengths/weaknesses...);
- Becoming more employable in the job market.

For supervisors and other internal coaches:

- Developing their coaching skills;
- Developing better knowledge of the skills and weaknesses of their employees;
- Increasing awareness of what is going on in the workplace.

During the development phase of the project, a quantitative study was conducted in order to measure the impact of the tool. A survey was submitted to both the lower-educated employees and their direct supervisors. The survey was submitted twice: before ($N = 324$ employees, 101 supervisors) and after ($N = 16$ employees, 31 supervisors) the 'intervention' (testing the tool).

3. Coordinating and managing bodies

'Stevig in de Steigers' was developed with the support of the European Social Fund Flanders.

The following organisations have each contributed their own specific expertise to the development of 'Stevig in de Steigers':

- **Vlerick Business School** is a leading international business school. The school has developed an expertise the 'People Management & Leadership' domain, amongst which coaching and developmental techniques. VBS is *project leader* and *content developer* of the tool.
 - **Wonen en Werken vzw** is an organisation that provides training & employment opportunities for people that have been unemployed for a longer period, or have a lower education background. They are in charge of the *practical applicability* of the tool.
 - **Centrum Informatieve Spelen** is an organisation that develops and produces games with an educative purpose. They have put their expertise in game methodology in the actual *production* of the tool.
- In addition, the following **7 Flemish companies** tested the earlier prototype versions of the instrument to make it applicable over the widest possible range of professional profiles, industries, sectors (profit/non-profit), etc.: Volvo Cars Belgium, SKF Logistics, Care, Solidariteit voor het Gezin, vzw Web, Tabaknatie, Durabrik.

B.EVALUATION OF THE BEST PRACTICE (PEER-REVIEW)*Through SWOT analysis with reference to EMPOWERMENT, ACTIVATION and CAPABILITY*

S trengths	W eaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for lower skilled/lower educated employees to identify their talents; • The tool is delivered in the workplace and is therefore very accessible and can be implemented at every level within the company; • The tool allows workplace bonding across organizational levels; • Coaches belonging to the same company know the institution very well, have knowledge on the areas that need to be developed within the company, can provide ongoing observation of the changes within the company and provide solution to such changes; • Numerous benefits for the employee (awareness of lifelong learning, own potential, self-reflection) and for the employer (development of coaching skills, knowledge on strengths and weaknesses of their employees, better awareness of what is going on in their workplace); • Personalised approach towards training and orientation and use of participative methodologies; • The follow-up stage activated 6-8 weeks after the end of the intervention, may help the progressive adjustment of the overall intervention; • The use of a structured methodological instrument (GROW method) ensures minimum guaranteed quality standards in the provision of the service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tool requires management support (time, resources) and a particular organisational culture (focused on learning & development) to guarantee effective implementation; • The tool is very demanding in terms of resources (i.e. staff time, careful management); • The tool requires careful planning to integrate with regular working practices and timetables; • The tool may create unrealistic expectations on the coachees. Even if the coaching process is successful and there is a change in behaviour, this does not automatically lead the coaches to a reward or success in their personal or professional life; • It may be difficult to implement in some organisations, because of the organisation culture and the profile of coaches and coachees; • Coaches may not have the experience, resources, abilities or motivation to coach their subordinates; • Too small number of clients that were covered by qualitative analysis that was aimed to assess the impact of using of this instrument (pre-analysis covered only 324 employees and 101 superiors, post-analysis covered 16 employees and 31 superiors); • Lack of preparatory stages to the coaching services and of a coordinated framework.
O pportunities	T hreats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching is a practice that is being introduced in more and more organisations and could easily be transferred to other contexts (e.g. job seekers, youth development); • Make coaching accessible to everyone (not only to 'high potentials', or other higher educated employees); • Use of internal coaches; • Create a true learning and coaching culture throughout the entire organisation; • Possibility to update the instrument according to the users' recommendations • The experience may be useful also for other targets of vulnerable subjects which are excluded at the socioeconomic level; • The coaching tool may be applicable to different labour contexts and may favour the development of the "team spirit" (it helps develop team building and problem solving attitudes); • The tool may favour the acquisition of useful elements for the whole community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decline of interest in coaching on the longer term?; • The indicated improvements in percentage terms are really minimal and this could have an adverse effect on the continuing use of coaching in workplace contexts; • Trivialization of coaching; • resistance/unwillingness of employees to work with coaches; • Lack of efficacy of the coaching intervention may depends on the lack of practical actions which allows the concrete "action" of the lessons learnt; • An excessive structuring of the methodology may lead to an excessive standardisation of the instrument and to the detriment of its personalisation potential.

C. COMMENTS BY ESF FLANDERS ON THE BP

ESF Flanders totally agree with the remark by the network that the tool places a certain demand of resources and planning. In this view, the management appears to be fundamental. If the companies have the right mindset to introduce this way of working, of course the planning is definitely worthwhile.

Moreover, the use of this product should become part of the human resources management and should get incorporated into the normal business of the HR manager (the tool should not be used once and then be abandoned).

ESF Flanders also agree with the fact that the coaches and the HR managers may lack the experience to coach. For this reason, a booklet was designed for HR managers to provide them with some advice on how to work with the tool. The enterprise "Wonen en Werken" have also realized that there is a need for more training and they are going to invest more in training in the future. "Wonen en werken" also work with their own job coaches, and they, of course, have the experience to work with the product.

Some partners argued that the product had not been sufficiently tested. "Wonen en werken" has been going on with the product testing, especially in social economy organisations, and results have proven to be very good. The tool is also being disseminated in 150 enterprises in the Flanders.

Wonen en werken do not totally agree with the remark that there is a "lack of preparatory stages to the coaching services". In fact they do have several preparatory stages which are part of the tool. There is indeed one weak element in the tool, which has not been mentioned by the partners of the network, and it is that it is difficult to use this tool with people who do not (or barely) speak the language. Coaching comes down to talking to people so that those employees start to reflect on themselves and try to see their own possibilities and talents. But if the language becomes a barrier, the conversation will risk to be very basic.

Wonen en werken agree with the possible threat regarding "resistance/unwillingness of employees to work with coaches". It is true that the perception of coaching can be very negative. That is why Wonen en werken also included a training stage for the coaches so that they can cope with this problem. The enterprise can provide this training as well as external trainers.

The instrument has been designed in such a way to provide a safe environment to both the coach and the coachee. The coach is not required to invent any questions as they are already contained in the tool. Both the coach and the coachee tackle the tool together (this gives less the feeling that the "boss or team leader" is coaching the subordinate).

D. PORTABILITY POTENTIAL of the BP in the political system

The tool that has been developed is a very practical tool and can be used online or as a tangible tool. Therefore the threshold to use this tool is very low. The project promoter has put a lot of energy in disseminating the tool and is going to question the enterprises if they find the tool useful.

The Flemish government is putting more and more focus on career development (not only for high potentials but also for people who are further away from the labour market). Therefore we are convinced that this tool will find its way in the enterprises.

The tool is also very easy transferable because the tool is very practical and the only thing to do is to translate the tool.

BEST PRACTICE

Centres for Qualification and Vocational Education and Training

PARTNER:

Direção Regional
de Qualificação Profissional, Madeira (PT)



A. SPECIFICATIONS OF THE BEST PRACTICE

1. Description of the best practice

A network of *Centres for Qualification and Vocational Education and Training (CQEPs)* was created by the National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education and Training (ANQEP) to bridge the existing gap between education, training and employment. This network replaced the New Opportunities Centres, which had been adjusted in 2013 (based on an impact evaluation study) to better focus on the labour market requirements and the professional retraining and to align it further with guidelines of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships. The CQEPs are structures of the National Qualifications System and have a significant role in the relations between the Educational, Training and Employment worlds, considering a life long learning perspective.

These Centres are intended to all people who are looking for a qualification, aiming at the continuation of schooling and/or a transition/reconversion to the labour market. The challenge of meeting the skill needs of the Portuguese population, coupled with the responsibility to set the present and future priorities of the labour market, puts the focus of the activity of CQEP on the information about the training provision and monitoring of individuals in structuring a learning approach adaptable to the different life stages.

CQEPs can operate in schools, local authorities, companies, associations and other accredited training bodies.

There are currently 232 CQEPs, located in different places (3 in the Region of Madeira), from the North to the South of the country. In the Autonomous Region of Madeira, the Regional Department for Professional Qualification (Direção Regional de Qualificação Profissional) is responsible for the coordination of CQEPs.

2. Main goals and expected results

CQEPs provide guidance and counselling about schools, vocational education and training and dual certification opportunities. These centres help young people and adults find education and training, develop school and professional processes for recognition, validation and certification of competences, collaborate in the definition of criteria for the establishment of a network of educational and training provision, monitor how student training adheres to previously defined paths and collect information on learning outcomes and the labour market. CQEPs constitute a chartered tool to meet the young and adult population qualification needs, disposing of qualified and specialised teams to develop the work in the following intervention stages:

1) Collection, validation, organisation and dissemination of information; 2) Reception; 3) Diagnosis; 4) Information/Orientation; 5) Identification of individual projects of education and professional qualifications; 6) Guidance; 7) Monitoring; 8) Recognition and Validation of Competences

3. Coordinating and managing bodies

The practice is promoted by the National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education and Training (ANQEP). This is a public body under the joint supervision of the Ministry of Solidarity, Employment and Social Security, and the Ministry for Education and Science in articulation with the Ministry of Economics. As a central service involved in indirect State administration, the ANQEP has administrative and financial autonomy and pedagogical independence to pursue its official activity. The mission of the ANQEP is to coordinate the implementation of policies regarding the education and vocational training of young people and adults, as well as to ensure the development and management of the National System for the Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences.

To consolidate this mission it was necessary to create key instruments to develop the whole strategy and implement the objectives, on the one hand continuing the work began with the New Opportunities Programme and on the other with the National Qualifications System [the SNQ (Sistema Nacional de Qualificações, SNQ, 2007) is aligned with the European Qualification Framework and aims at allowing an easier comparability of qualifications across the education sector (general, vocational, apprenticeship) and informal education and international programmes. It also aims at better informing students of the value of each qualification on the labour market and enhancing double certification qualifications].

<h1 style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0;">S</h1> <h2 style="margin: 0;">trengths</h2>	<h1 style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0;">W</h1> <h2 style="margin: 0;">eaknesses</h2>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering activation, capability and empowerment of young people and adults through stages; • Combating early school leaving, and low qualification levels that persist in adult Portuguese populations; • Promoting equality, inclusive education and personalized learning through the early identification of special needs; • Possibility for people of all ages to increase their chances or to have their experience and competences certified; • Supporting school youth in career guidance and professional orientation; • Easy & ongoing access to lifelong learning resources for local community; • Providing practical training in modern workshops/classrooms with professional equipment; • Development of a coordinated network of bodies; • The action is addressed to both young people and adults; • Particular attention to the social and business inclusion of the low-qualified; • Development of a model of recognition, validation and certification of competences and creation of a tailor-made portfolio; • Activation of a self-training process thanks to the non-formal learning experiences made during life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty in assessing the activation, capability and empowerment in the monitoring phase; • Activation: the financial difficulties of some candidates do not allow them to be assiduous to the sessions; • The working field of CQEPs is extensive, as they receive young people (aged 15) and adults, as well as people with the 12th grade (now the mandatory schooling) or more (graduated), more intervention stages are performed, which create difficulties in the development of the activities; • Certified qualifications should be translated into a stronger position on the labour market (more responsibilities in the job, higher wages etc.); • Not enough investment in the preconditions to follow and finish the courses (like for instance childcare, housing, etc.). A holistic approach towards the individual is necessary; • More attention to monitoring the results; • Investing more in a tailor-made approach; • Too many stages in the process can discourage the client to finalize the process of receiving professional education; • Dependence on ESF funding; • As the target groups may feature different characteristics, the action may risk to result in low-quality standards.
<h1 style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0;">O</h1> <h2 style="margin: 0;">pportunities</h2>	<h1 style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0;">T</h1> <h2 style="margin: 0;">hreats</h2>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CQEPs are accessible by any adult or young person (including disabled citizens and disadvantaged groups), allowing to obtain new skills, respecting and valuing their individual profile; • CQEPs operate in an integrated and coordinated manner in the territory intending to respond to the real training needs of young people and adults; • Activation: The scale acquired by the New Opportunities Initiative, involving more than one million adults over a period of about four years “compels” CQEP to continue with this work in a more rigorous and demanding way; • Opportunity for promoting answers to the qualification of young and adult population, organizing the training offer to meet the labour market as well as the young people and adults’ needs and expectations; • The increase in the level of competences in Madeira can attract other enterprises with jobs with higher profiles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the diagnosis and orientation phases put forward by CQEPs are not implemented efficiently, capability processes can’t be activated; • Shortage of training courses aimed at candidates with lower qualifications; • Lack of ability to monitor the various process steps puts at risk the rigors and demands of the functioning of CQEP; • The work of the CQEPs is still undervalued by various stakeholders; • Gap between the needs of the labour market and the people’s needs; • Too many stages in the process can the discourage the client to finalize the process of receiving professional education; • Withdrawal of ESF funding; • Businesses may not recognize the value of the competences achieved.

C. COMMENTS BY THE DIREÇÃO REGIONAL DE QUALIFICAÇÃO PROFISSIONAL ON THE BP

The comments received contributed to enhance the implementation of the practice and allowed a better and more efficient planning.

With regard to the critical points highlighted by the TrACE 2 Partners in their respective Peer Review Reports, the Regional Department for Professional Qualification would like to add the following specification to the analysis, in order to improve the mutual learning process of the project.

We agree with the strengths mentioned by most of the partners, namely:

- Development of a model of recognition, validation and certification of competences and creation of a tailor-made portfolio, thereby favouring empowerment;
- Easy and ongoing access to lifelong learning resources for local community;
- Gives the possibility to people of all ages to increase their chances or to have their experiences and competences certified;
- Particular attention to the social and business inclusion of the low-qualified.

In respect to the "Weaknesses" highlighted:

We totally agree with the need for a holistic approach to the individual. An investment is necessary in the preconditions to follow and finish the courses (like for instance childcare, housing, etc.). The financial difficulties of some candidates do not allow them to be assiduous to the sessions. In fact, many candidates would not enter training programs autonomously without a financial support.

As regards the weakness mentioned of the need for "more attention to the monitoring the results", we agree with this comment because the monitoring of results should be a priority of ANQEP, but at this point, the lack of ESF funding makes monitoring insufficient. Also the working field of CQEPs is very broad, and this makes it difficult to develop the activities, namely the monitoring.

The Regional Department does not totally disagree with the following comment: "as the target groups may feature different characteristics, the action may risk to result in low-quality standards", but we believe that organizations should be able to develop training activities through a "tailor made approach, leading to positive experiences of empowerment with high-quality standards.

In respect of the "Threats" highlighted, we appreciated the comment that certain stakeholders do not always value enough the work of the centres. Unfortunately, this is completely true and there is still a very stereotypical view of the candidates. In fact, an approach is needed to face this threat. It is necessary to establish partnerships with relevant local bodies that may contribute to a more integrated and consistent intervention, to the identification of the specific qualification needs and to find solutions for the public and the businesses. This approach can help to decrease the gap between the labour market and the people's needs.

D. PORTABILITY POTENTIAL of the BP

This practice is based on a strategy of learning throughout life and is part of the orientation of policies and actions adapted by the European Union.

The CQEP was created by legislative initiative of the Portuguese government. The qualification of young people and adults is a strategic priority of the country. This practice involves close coordination of policies and measures promoting individual training to closely monitor the dynamics at the level of employability of the different parts of the country.

BEST PRACTICE

Apprenticeship Courses

PARTNER:

Direção Regional
de Qualificação Profissional, Madeira (PT)



A. SPECIFICATIONS OF THE BEST PRACTICE

1. Description of the best practice

In Madeira Apprenticeship courses are provided by the Vocational Training Centre (CFPM) and by certified training organisations accredited by the Regional Department for Professional Qualification (DRQP). Entities/enterprises that support alternance school/work are also part of the process. Companies supporting alternance, thanks to protocols signed with the VET providers, frame the trainees during the courses. These companies (public and private) belong to several economic areas including audio-visuals and media, ICT, commerce, building and repairing of motorized vehicles, electricity and power, electronics and automation, hospitality and restaurant, materials (cork, plastics), metalworking, among others.

2. Main goals and expected results

Portugal needs mid-level technicians and other professionals to develop the industry, increase productivity and competitiveness and also to combat unemployment.

According to these principles, one of the goals of the current Portuguese government is to invest in technical education and vocational training, including through a "dual training system" that combines theoretical training at vocational schools with practical training in companies. In this training system, both the State and companies are jointly responsible and cooperate in its implementation.

The Portuguese National Qualification System establishes apprenticeship courses as an initial vocational education and training modality. The objective of these courses is to support the labour market entrance of young people (15-25 years) by improving academic, personal, social and relational skills, providing knowledge and know-how in the field of science and technology and offering practical work experience. They are carried out in alternance training schemes, privileging the insertion in the labour market but also enabling the pursuing of studies. More precisely, apprenticeship courses are a double certification training alternative, as they simultaneously confer a Diploma level 4 vocational qualifications and the upper secondary academic qualification.

3. Coordinating and managing bodies

At national level the practice is promoted by the Employment and Vocational Training Institute (IEFP) in coordination with the National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education (ANQEP).

ANQEP is responsible for drawing up the skills and training standards to be included in the National Catalogue of Qualifications (CNQ) and for promoting the creation of *dual certification training courses*.

At regional level the practice is promoted by the Regional Department for Professional Qualification (DRQP). The mission of DRQP is to ensure the execution of the regional policy defined by the Regional Government for the qualification, skills and vocational certification sectors and for the European Social Fund, according to its competences.

One main responsibility of this Public Department is to coordinate, foster and manage, at a regional level, vocational education and training courses developed according to dual-certification schemes, and to ensure a complementariness of the educational and the training systems as well as the provisions' quality.

B. EVALUATION OF THE BEST PRACTICE (PEER-REVIEW)
Through SWOT analysis with reference to EMPOWERMENT, ACTIVATION and CAPABILITY

<h1>S</h1> <h2>trengths</h2>	<h1>W</h1> <h2>eaknesses</h2>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because these courses have a relevant number of training hours dedicated to work experiences, they are important ways to develop skills in young students that stimulate their ability to activation and empowerment; • Combination of theoretical and practical skills; • Investing in double certification (obtaining a school level and a professional certification); • Prevention of early school leaving and sets out to establish secondary level qualifications as a minimum requirement to be reached by everyone; • All stakeholders see apprenticeship as a full and valuable system within education and for the transition to the labour market; • Building skills to be more attractive for the labour market (activation); • Practice in a real work environment; • Working with a tutor (personal mentor) stimulates the client to be more active and capable of their own success in skills development and securing employment; • Strong employers engagement; • Well structured instruments - all parties involved know their roles&duties (Cooperation Agreement, Learning Agreement, Individual Plan of Activities); • The action favours and supports the transition from the school system to the business world; • School curriculums can benefit from continuous update to meet the business needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised legislation – Reduction in the number of training hours dedicated to work experiences; • Long term courses (3 years); • An integrated certificate (instead of a double certificate) could be a better option for young people still at school; • No different approach for students 15-18 year and 18-25 year. There should be a different approach for students 15-18 year and 18-25 year (this last group should be financially supported because otherwise courses of 3 years is too long); • The quality of the tutorship depends on the competences of the tutor; • The highest employability of ex-trainees is 12-24 months after completion of the apprenticeship – this seems a bit too long period for this instrument to be effective in the long term and lead to sustainable employment of the client; • Dependent on ESF/government funding; • Not enough financial support (more financial support by the private sector could be a plus); • The ESF funding should be reduced in case this was the one and only source of funding; • The double qualification is only partially recognized in the school field.
<h1>O</h1> <h2>pportunities</h2>	<h1>T</h1> <h2>hreats</h2>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to increase the diversity and quality of vocational options for young people; • Secondary education is now offering students more flexibility in setting up training pathways and more permeability between courses, allowing the reorientation of education pathways; • Structuring a relevant training offer, adjusted to the needs of the enterprises and labour market; • Courses organized in units of short-term training - UFCO (25 and/or 50 hrs) autonomously certified; • Providing some incentives/bonuses to employers (e.g. Companies to pay lower taxes if they hire the trainee after the apprenticeship) could increase the sustainability of this instrument and increase the number of new work places; • Possibility to tailor the actions using convertible units. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low Investment in the training of Tutors; • Only the State supports (subsidises) apprenticeship; • The available equipment and facilities may not comply with the latest technological standards; • Ask yourself the question: should the labour market take the talents of young people into account or do we have to force young people in apprenticeships for bottleneck jobs; • Do we need to train people in jobs which will become obsolete in the near future (and how to deal with this?); • Withdrawal of ESF/government funding; • The placement into companies may not reflect high quality training standards; • The companies involved may not be representative of the most dynamic sectors in terms of labour demand and supply.

C. COMMENTS BY THE DIREÇÃO REGIONAL DE QUALIFICAÇÃO PROFISSIONAL ON THE BP

The comments received by the partners contributed to enhance the implementation of the practice and allow a better and more efficient planning.

With regard to the critical points highlighted by TrACE 2 Partners in their respective Peer Review Reports, the Regional Department for Professional Qualification would like to add the following specification to the analysis, in order to improve the mutual learning process of the project.

We agree with the strengths mentioned by most of the partners, namely:

- All stakeholders see apprenticeship as a full and valuable system within education and for the transition to the labour market;
- Developing skills to be more attractive for the labour market (activation);
- Practice in a real work environment;
- Working with a tutor (personal mentor) stimulates the trainee to be more active and capable of their own success in skills development and securing employment;
- Strong employers engagement;
- Well structured instruments - all parties involved know their roles&duties (Cooperation Agreement, Learning Agreement, Individual Plan of Activities);
- The action favours and supports the transition from the school system to the business world;
- School curriculums can benefit from continuous update to meet the business needs;
- Standard apprenticeship programme.

In respect to the "Weaknesses" highlighted, we totally agree with the weakness "The quality of the tutorship depends on the competences of the tutor". This is an important issue, because in some traditional sectors tutors have very low qualifications. We hope that DRQP will provide training programmes for tutors in the near future.

Regarding the weakness "No different approach for students aged 15-18 years and 18-25 years", DRQP would like to explain that normally the young people that come to apprenticeship courses are at least 18 years old. In fact, when they are younger (from 15 to 17) they usually opt for other training offers (e.g. CEF courses).

As almost all Peer Reviews have acknowledged, we agree that there may be a problem on being "Dependent on ESF/government funding. We also agree that "more financial support by the private sector could be a plus". Very soon these courses will face some improvements, in order to be lined up with one important goal of the current Portuguese government that is to invest on technical education and vocational training, including on a "dual training system". It will be very interesting to follow up the evolution (in terms of strategy) of these courses in order to get closer training prosecutors and companies.

Concerning the "Threats" underlined:

Regarding the question "Do we need to train people in jobs which will become obsolete in the near future (and how to deal with this)? This is in fact a permanent concern of the DRQP as being the Regional department responsible for the implementation of the regional policy defined by the Regional Government for the Qualification, Skills and Vocational Certification Systems. In this line, the DRQP only authorizes courses that are aligned with the "Prospective study of Professional Profiles for Strengthening Competitiveness and Productivity of the Regional Economy (2014-2020)".

We agree that sometimes "the placement into companies may not reflect high quality training standards". That's why it is so important that VET providers plan the practical component very carefully, not only in terms of choosing the most suitable companies but also in terms of the definition of the objectives and learning outcomes that they want to achieve.

In relation to the "Opportunities" emphasized:

We agree with the opportunity to tailor the actions using convertible units. In fact, VET providers could draw Training path that meet not only the young people's specific needs and circumstances but also the needs of the regional companies.

D. PORTABILITY POTENTIAL of the BP

This practice is based on a strategy of learning throughout life and is part of the orientation of policies and actions adapted by the European Union.

The Apprenticeship Courses were created by the legislative initiative of the Portuguese government. The Autonomous Government of Madeira also created legal diplomas that establish how these courses should be promoted in Madeira.

The Portuguese government recognizes vocational education and training as key factors for our socio-economic development.

BEST PRACTICE

Equal in Business

PARTNER:
DISTRICT LABOUR OFFICE IN ŚWIĘTOCHŁOWICE (PL)



A. SPECIFICATIONS OF THE BEST PRACTICE

1. Description of the best practice

The action supported 34 unemployed clients or job seekers from the city of Świątchłowice (19 females and 15 males, of which 6 beneficiaries aged up to 25 years of age and 3 aged over 50 years of age), interested in the set up of an own business with a wide range of instruments including vocational training, work placements or subsidized employment.

The project comprised the following activities:

- client diagnosis delivered by a psychologist to determine the type of support required;
- psychological support offered to clients with barriers to open up and run own business;
- provision of business start up courses and support to prepare business plans;
- refund of childcare cost to women-mothers taking part in project activities;
- provision of financial grants of 40 000 PLN (10 000 EUR) per person to set up an own business as well as further financial monthly support for initial operational expenses up to 6 months of 1200 PLN (300 EUR);
- further business advice after company set up;
- refund of cost of taking part in specialized training by the client;
- provision of Health and safety and Risk management training to clients that have set up own businesses.

The project was addressed to unemployed or job seeking individuals in the District Labour Office in Świątchłowice who had not registered a company within the period of one year before joining the project and who declared willingness to acquire knowledge and skills on how to set up and run an own business.

29 out of 34 clients completed business start-up course and 25 of them applied for financial grant for business start-ups. In the end, 24 clients received financial grants.

The District Labour Office was responsible for:

- project management, coordination and monitoring;
- PR activities (project promotion);
- selection of project participants and training organization that provided business-start up course;
- provision of financial grants to participants.

Business start up courses as well as business advice was delivered by an external training organization.

The main barriers the target group have been facing when entering and staying on the labour market are the legal and administrative impediments, an insufficient number of business advisors which provide free of charge advisory services as well as a limited number of free business start up courses.

In addition, unemployed clients have limited financial resources to invest in own business.

Gender gaps exist as well, that make women much less likely to take up business start-up.

2. Main goals and expected results

After a thorough analysis of the problem, DLO Świątchłowice wanted to encourage women to start their own business by introducing special instruments of support addressed only to women such as motivational workshops conducted by a psychologist and refund of childcare cost. 34 people (19 women and 15 men) benefited from the project. The share of women among all participants was 56 %, however the target was attained because of the fact that of 24 participants who set up own companies 62.5% were women.

The specific objectives were focused on:

- promoting entrepreneurial attitudes among unemployed clients,
- reducing psychological barriers to the running of an own company (particularly for unemployed women),
- providing unemployed clients with the knowledge and skills required to open and run an own business,
- providing financial support for the clients to set up own businesses,
- reducing the number of the unemployed clients.

3. Coordinating and managing bodies

The action was coordinated and delivered by the District Labour Office in Świątchłowice, a public labour market institution that carries out employment services regulated by a statute on employment promotion and labour market institutions, as well as the services regarding the mitigation of unemployment on the local labour market.

The project "Equal in business" was an intervention delivered under OP Human Capital, measure 6.2.

B. EVALUATION OF THE BEST PRACTICE (PEER-REVIEW)*Through SWOT analysis with reference to EMPOWERMENT, ACTIVATION and CAPABILITY*

<h1>S</h1> trengths	<h1>W</h1> eaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The action aims at fostering activation, capability and empowerment of the unemployed people through taking up self-employment; • Promotion of entrepreneurship in the city of Świętochłowice; • Empowerment of women-entrepreneurship on the labour market; • Provison of comprehensive support which includes financial and training support in setting up of own company stimulates the client's capability; • Possibility to take part in specialized training corresponding to business profile and to receive additional financial support in the initial period of company operation builds up for client's capability; • Amount of financial grant for business start-up was twice as much as the grant available from public budget; • Wide range of expenses eligible within the grant awarded; • Long period of spending the grant awarded (up to 3 months); • No personal contribution required from the client as an input into business plan; • Additional financial support awarded in the initial period of operation when most new businesses generate more costs. That profits helps foster clients empowerment and reduces risk of clients/new businesses drop outs; • Creating strong relations between project participants (cooperation of new businesses); • 80% of new businesses created in the project are still operating. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too little number of clients interested in applying for business start-up project which decreases competitiveness and may affect activation process; • Too long period from the moment of starting the project until the moment of receiving financial grant which may jeopardize clients activation (return to unemployment); • Additional financial support is provided only up to 6 months of the initial period of new business operation; • No penalty imposed on client (e.g. reimbursement of grant awarded) if the business has stopped operating after 12 months (too short penalty period).
<h1>O</h1> pportunities	<h1>Threats </h1>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing the unemployed clients with the opportunity to start own business without the requirement of investing own capital; • Creating additional work places in new business that have been established; • The process of activation is stimulated by acquiring new work experience by the clients that have become self-employed; • Empowerment: increasing awareness among women about work-life balance when running own business; • Capability: Opportunity to generate higher profits while becoming self-employed; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing down new businesses after 12 months of operations due to problems with sustaining on the market may jeopardize activation, capability and empowerment; • Setting up own business only to receive financial support makes activation be a failure; • Clients selling out equipment that was purchased from the grant received.

3. COMMENTS BY THE DISTRICT LABOUR OFFICE ON THE BP

Peer-reviewing by the partners pointed out that the client is too dependant on the business advisor, who not only acts as a mentor helping the new entrepreneur find the right path, but also gives advice which directions the new business should go in order to grow, where to look for additional money (credits/loans) to extend operations, which institutions to contact in order to receive specialized support (training, advice etc.). The District Labour Office agrees with the partners that small enterprises, especially in their initial period of operation, have limited capacity and resources so they need to be well managed to survive. For this reason, business courses included various modules on how to manage the business effectively exploring the knowledge on taxes, accounting, payroll, sales & management, CRM etc. Besides that, clients were advised where else they could look for some specialized knowledge on how to run and manage small business effectively (other complementary EFS provision offered by other institutions from the region).

As to the objection made that the project presented brings little added value other than some limited potential activation opportunities for a small number of unemployed individuals, and thus has no points of learning in relation to the TrACE key words, the District Labour Office argued that despite the small number of unemployed clients involved, it ended up in a success. The most recent findings (after 2,5 years after project completion) show that more than a half of the start-ups created with ESF grant are still operating on the market. What is more, they have expanded and established new branch offices.

As regards the remarks made by a few partners on the short period of penalty the District Labour Office highlighted that a 12-month period of obligatory operation for a new business start-up does not mean that the intervention is defective – this duration is anyway regulated by the operational programme specification defined by the ESF Implementing Authority in Poland.

As a remark to the limited period of intervention, when analyzing the duration of the separate stages of the project, it is to be noted that the financial support to new businesses to cover their costs is only provided for of up to 6 months from the initial operations, not up to 12 months, as it was eligible for in the programme specifications, the reason lying in the preparation of the new enterprises to become independent and operate autonomously in the competitive market.

As regards the remarks made on the very short period of incubation, the District Labour Office agrees with the observations. Despite that, the extension of the incubation period up to 3 years was not possible because of the project time-bound timetable. However, further incubation for the start-ups was made possible, of course, by accessing provision by other institutions in the region which specialize in provision of business advice, training and additional financial support (loans, credits) etc.

The project partners suggested the introduction of an ex-ante project evaluation to support the most sustainable and successful ideas. The District Labour Office believes that the ex-ante evaluation did actually take place during the recruitment process where every idea of the business was presented and a selection committee verified its viability and sustainability. Also, at that stage, a job advisor carried out client diagnosis and analyzed their entrepreneurial skills.

All the partners claimed that it perhaps would be better to work with loans/micro credits instead of grants, however this project was aimed to help clients start the business and prepare them to operate on the market. Once realized that it was the right type of employment for them and wishes to expand, they still had the opportunity to access further specialized support offered by business incubators and reach additional funding (loans/credits etc.)

Since years 2007-13 represented a preparatory stage for Poland the Polish Implementing Authority opted for a non-refundable grant distribution for business start ups. In the new perspective 2014-20, the Polish Implementing Authority have replaced non-refundable grants with microloans.

4. PORTABILITY POTENTIAL of the BP

As it results from the ex-post evaluation carried out, 80% of the new businesses that were created in the project are still operating. Some of them have branch departments and provide jobs for other clients. Project participants have still been in contact with each other as their businesses have been cooperating. Some of these businesses work with DLO and offer vacancies and internships to other unemployed clients job seekers. An important aspect of the support offered in the project was to combine financial support with specialised training which enabled unemployed clients to acquire knowledge on accountancy, marketing, employment law etc. that help them to run the business successfully.

At present, the Polish statute on employment promotion and labour market institutions which regulates the operations of District Labour Offices allows to provide the unemployed clients with a standard business start-up course and financial grant up to 22 000 PLN (5 000 EUR). Due to the fact that the business start-up course is not mandatory for clients applying for financial grant, there is very little interest in this kind of support. That is why it is recommended as a good practice to cover all clients interested in setting up an own business with training and business advice support so that they are well prepared to run the business effectively. It may also be recommended to introduce an instrument of additional financial support into the statute which would help businesses keep their financial stability, in particular in the initial period of their operations.

BEST PRACTICE

Innovative support for you

PARTNER:
DISTRICT LABOUR OFFICE IN ŚWIĘTOCHŁOWICE (PL)



A.SPECIFICATIONS OF THE BEST PRACTICE

1. Description of the best practice

The project is addressed to 150 long-term unemployed clients (for at least 12 consecutive months within the period of the last 24 months) - 90 females and 60 males - 50% of which being affected by family unemployment (i.e. where at least one parent is a long-term unemployed). 75 long-term unemployed clients covered by project intervention will complete the project and will sustain employment (45 females and 30 males). In line with the project target group there will be a control group of 150 long-term unemployed clients with the same profile as the target group which will not be covered by project activities. This will enable to assess if the target group involved in the project will actually be more successful in being secured sustainable employment than the control group which won't have benefited from the project.

This is an innovative model of interaction between the District Labour Offices and the Welfare Centres in supporting long term unemployed clients into securing sustainable employment which comprises the following elements:

- support by a personal advisor for each unemployed client who is responsible for coordinating delivery of all employment services offered to them by DLO and WC as well as for monitoring the financial support;
- a computer application CONNECTOR which is an online platform that enables DLO and WC exchange information and access the clients' portfolio and support they have received. It helps reducing paper work and calculates diminished financial support;
- a model of DIMINISHED FINANCIAL SUPPORT offered to the clients who take up employment – it is aimed to help the client survive during the first months of employment until they become financially independent.

The action will be tested (implemented) in 3 selected districts in Silesia and Opole regions: city of Zabrze, city of Świętochłowice (Silesia region), district of Strzelce Opolskie (Opole region).

2. Main goals and expected results

The main objective of the project is to elaborate and disseminate the innovative method of interaction between DLO and WC that will effectively support long-term unemployed clients to secure sustainable employment, in particular those from families affected by family unemployment and which will ensure effective spending of public money.

The specific objectives of the project are:

- creation of new mechanisms that will motivate long-term unemployed clients become active in professional and social life;
- creation of effective mechanisms of information exchange and coordination between DLO and WC on unemployed clients and types of support offered to them by DLO and WC which will provide coordination in the support offered to the most disadvantaged clients;
- implementation of the Austrian best practices related to the professional activation of long-term unemployed clients into the Polish labour market;
- strengthening a proactive attitude in combating long-term unemployment.

3. Coordinating and managing bodies

The project is headed and managed by CTC Poland Ltd which is a consulting company that specializes in applying for EU funds and in the delivery of EU projects. The other District Labour Offices involved are DLO Zabrze (Silesia Region) and DLO Strzelce Opolskie (Opole Region) as well as a transnational partner from Graz, Austria, Bit Schulungscenter GmbH which is responsible for the transfer of the Austrian best practice to the Polish labour market. The other associate (silent) partners engaged in project delivery are the Welfare Centres (WC) from the regions where the partnering PLO operate, Regional Employment Agencies and Regional Centres of Social Policy in Silesia and Opole Region, Zabrze Town Hall, local NGOs including "Dress for Success" in Katowice.

B. EVALUATION OF THE BEST PRACTICE (PEER-REVIEW)*Through SWOT analysis with reference to EMPOWERMENT, ACTIVATION and CAPABILITY*

<h1>S</h1> trengths	<h1>W</h1> eaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct cooperation between DLO and WC in delivery of support to unemployed client, creating a joint data base of information about unemployed clients (quick and effective exchange of information); • Individual support offered to each unemployed client (with attention to the client's needs, comfort at work, frequent contact with client); • Instrument of diminished financial support which motivates clients to become active on the labour market and look for sustainable employment; • Empowerment: working with the unemployed client is focused on reaching the joint objective which is securing sustainable employment; • Sustainable effect in change of unemployed client attitude and awareness to become active and capable on the labour market; • Participation of different actors to project development; • Personalization of interventions; • Gradually diminishing financial support for those coming off benefits should assist with activation and ease the path into the labour market; • Focus on women empowerment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployed clients who are not motivated enough to get out of unemployment may consider diminished financial support as an alternative source of income – empowerment and activation fails; • Gradually diminishing financial support for those coming off benefits could provide too much of a comfort zone for lazy individuals; • Risk of faster professional burnout of personal advisors in case of strong emotional engagement; • Lack of counsellors being able to ensure coordination among the various services provided to the same beneficiary; • Counselling services towards the same worker are provided by different actors with diverse approaches and orientation; • Combating institutional silo mentality is a major obstacle to the success of this particular intervention; • Motivation of clients to start the project; • Focus should be on being innovative and creative instead of the subventions.
<h1>O</h1> pportunities	<h1>Treats </h1>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Decreasing approach" in the provision of financial/advise support to the beneficiary in order to develop a progressive sense of individual independence; • Opportunity to benefit from a "multidisciplinary support" in a P2P Perspective; • Ongoing monitoring of clients who move into work should allow for preventative measures to combat the return to unemployed status; • The project has also the opportunity to eager for a one stop shop for entrepreneurs or for a kind of resource centres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Danger of falling into a "dependence" cycle from social benefits which may even discourage the individual to take "job responsibility"; • Unemployed workers who are potentially unmotivated may fall into the risk of not considering opportunities of reemployment without social benefits; • Financial support for those coming off benefits could provide too much of a comfort zone for lazy institutionalised unemployed people; • Inability to promote this model to policy makers could threaten the success of the Pilot; • If people fail, this may have a very negative impact in their activation and empowerment.

3. COMMENTS BY THE DISTRICT LABOUR OFFICE ON THE BP

The peer-reviewing process by the partners highlighted a potential risk of silo mentality as a major obstacle for the success of this practice. To this regard, the DLO would like to underline that in order to facilitate the exchange of information about the unemployed client, several support tools have been designed. These include a series of specialized workshops and meetings with labour market experts in order to stimulate team work and being aimed at integrating both institutions providing support to the same clients so that their activities become compatible in order to succeed in leading the client into sustainable employment. The implementation of a joint database (CONNECTOR) is aimed to facilitate cooperation between the two institutions and collate all information about clients so that they can be quickly diagnosed and relevant intervention can be provided to them. This will also help avoid duplication of interventions and provide effective spending of public money.

When it comes to some other potential obstacles pointed out by some of the partners, such as potential resistance from staff in local offices complaining about the workload to deal with the client, it is to be noted that the staff involved has been offered additional remuneration to carry out the extra tasks. This may act as an incentive and motivate them to put more clients into jobs. Since April 2014 the amended law on public employment services in Poland has introduced the incentive system for client advisors which means they will be offered some bonuses for putting more unemployed clients into sustainable jobs.

As all Peer Reviews have acknowledged that there may be a problem with real, long-lasting motivation of the long-term unemployed client to gradually refuse the benefits and move into sustainable employment. The solution to such problem is the introduction of a series of motivational workshops for the client. However, what matters most is the individual work of the clients with a personal advisor dedicated to them from the very beginning which acts as their mentor during the whole programme. 1-2-1 sessions are aimed at rebuilding/changing client's attitude so that after they have taken sustainable employment and social benefits have been reduced, the client is self-determined to continue to work on the labour market without the risk of losing their job and falling back into to social system. Such motivation and stimulation activities to affect the clients' civic attitude are supposed to eliminate the clients' passive attitude (laziness to start looking for proper job).

As to the remarks concerning the difficulty to promote this practice among the policy makers, the project has included wide dissemination activities, starting from the promotion of this model among the social services and the job offices at local and regional level, in regional conferences organized across Poland with labour market experts as well as at national level to reach the most prominent decision makers in the field of labour market policy (Polish Ministry of Labour and Social Policy).

As a comment to the remarks made that there might be a problem with convincing employers to hire this specific group of employees (long-term unemployed clients), it should be emphasized that this innovative programme is aimed at changing the concept of the long-term unemployed clients being always perceived as lazy, passive and claimant workers in the eyes of employers. Of course, there will always be clients like that, however, thanks to personal advisors designing a new picture of the long-term unemployed client, building their motivation to change, supporting contacts with employers and maintaining positive relations with the local employers (employer-engagement), long-term unemployed clients can be perceived as very reliable workers. Success stories of our previous long-term unemployed clients that have benefited from support by personal advisors in previous projects prove that 1-2-1 support by personal advisor means a lot in changing their attitude and bringing them back to community life once taking up sustainable employment. Local employers that hired the clients were positive and satisfied with them since they were provided with motivated and job-prepared workforce.

4. PORTABILITY POTENTIAL of the BP

The purpose of mainstreaming activities will be the adaptation of the final products into the Polish system which means to ensure their usage and application in the long-term perspective. For the final product to be used on a large (national) scale, it will be necessary to convince policy makers of the need to introduce relevant legislative changes at regional and national level.

In order to ensure the spill-over of the final product in the political system, the following expertise will be carried out:

- expert evaluation of the mechanism of diminished financial support and its prospective modification;
- proposal of legislative changes;
- expertise on introduction of a new financial support (diminished financial support).

BEST PRACTICE

Youth in action

Youth work, young people and peace in Ireland

Proteus (NI) - UK

PARTNER:



A. SPECIFICATIONS OF THE BEST PRACTICE

1. Description of the best practice

Within this project, young people, community leaders and sectoral leaders were supported to practically and strategically address reconciliation, promote diversity and inclusion, and demonstrate models of integration. Innovative actions and leadership at different levels supported young people to better acknowledge and deal with the past, and address attitudinal and cultural change. The project focussed on young people aged 13-25 years who had mostly not previously actively engaged in community relations or integrated, educational and meaningful interactions with 'others'. The project took place across 3 geographical sites, including work across and within border areas.

A total of 2614 young people were engaged over the 3 year project. Some of these young people were involved in one-off workshops/events while others were involved in longer term social action initiatives.

Of the 2614 young people/leaders:

- 1547 young people attended conflict resolution workshops.
- 1241 young people/leaders engaged in structural peace-building/reconciliation programmes.
- 354 young people engaged in visible volunteering /leadership
- 303 young leaders undergoing accredited community leadership/ peace building training.
- 44 young people taking part in the theme of reconciliation through youth drama.

Over 420 young people also developed a youth peace manifesto. This was formatted into a year diary which was disseminated, including to Members of the Legislative Assembly and local councillors.

The practice supports cross community participation by young people from different religious/political backgrounds by:

- Building their capacity as peace champions to tackle sectarianism and racism.
- Inspiring and motivating them to new possibilities of better and long lasting relationships
- Build maintain and develop youth friendly partnerships across different traditions.
- Challenging the status quo and building young people's confidence to travel and experience traditions.
- Young people identifying ways to work together on common issues such as policy dialogue events
- Young people promoting peace building across a range of communication channels
- Supporting positive relationships with civic and other political leaders from all parties from their community.

The approaches include:

- Outreach
- Community Relations Delivery
- Volunteering / Leadership Development

Over 36 programme based interventions took place over the 30 month period with 18 events, such as policy dialogue and symbolic civic peace gestures.

2. Main goals and expected results

Anticipated outcomes for young people:

- Ø Young People will meet other young people from across NI and Border counties.
- Ø Young people will engage in discussions around Peace Building and how it impacts on their everyday life.
- Ø Young people can identify a range of issues in relation to Peace Building
- Ø Young people are being recognised as Champions of Change.
- Ø Young People feel they have made a positive contribution to Peace Building

3. Coordinating and managing bodies

The project is managed by YouthAction Northern Ireland, a regional youth work charity, with a 70 year history of successfully tackling issues most critical to young people, from 6 regional hubs in NI. YouthAction improve the life chances of over 15,000 young people each year; their 2013-2017 business plan sets out 8 practice and policy outcomes: increase volunteering and leadership; build resilience; increase creative expression; increase economic activity, reduce inequalities; increase contribution to peace building; increase advocacy and political engagement; and be more active in communities.

B. EVALUATION OF THE BEST PRACTICE (PEER-REVIEW)*Through SWOT analysis with reference to EMPOWERMENT, ACTIVATION and CAPABILITY*

<h1>S</h1> trengths	<h1>W</h1> eaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experienced youth workers with a commitment to youth work and peace and reconciliation; • Young people having an appetite to engage in contentious issues for the first time in their lives; • Young people creating their youth peace manifesto based on consultations and evidence from other young people; • Young people co-designing the format for their manifesto and being actively involved in presenting this to politicians at different events; • Active visibility of young people in symbolic peace events and social action events; • Fusing research and practice into the development of a theory or model for youth work; • Dialogue between young people, politicians and policy shapers; • Fostering motivation to reach the goal of peace and co-existence; • Providing safe places, where to enhance personal growth; • Allowing young people to express themselves to foster integration, sharing and safety; • Creating a platform of dialogue between two communities who otherwise would not talk to each other Developing ambassadors for change; • Working together not only with the young people but also with the parents (intergenerational); • Making young people aware of the fact that despite of their different religion they all face the same problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gatekeepers in some communities can prevent this work getting off the ground; • Lack of political progress and endorsement to commit to the youth peace manifesto; • Difficult to sustain young people as peace champions beyond a 'project' due to other life commitments and developments; • Lack of engagement of statutory youth service in strategic area based youth work partnerships which have active engagement the local council and voluntary sector partners (NGOs); • Lack of wider diversity work with minority ethnic groups or event pan-European partnerships and working; • Limited resources and training on a model of peace-building youth work; • Lack of youth work and political policy commitment to integration, sharing and community relations; • Training based on a peace-building model may not directly meet the needs of the labour market; • Gatekeepers in some communities; • It is difficult to sustain young people as peace champions once the project is over; • Family and surrounding community pressures based on religious and social principles; • Problems with securing support for the project by wide group of decision makers; • Communities from which the young people come from are reluctant to project idea.
<h1>O</h1> pportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance of projects where young people come together for shared activities such as music as well as engaging in more focussed prejudice reduction dialogue; • Opportunity to showcase the impact of youth work in dealing with the hard and difficult questions in Northern Ireland; • Conflict resolution; • Activation of young people; • Involvement of a large number of institutions through sharing and integration processes; • Mainstream the methodology of creating dialogue in the whole society of Northern Ireland; • Use the methodology for diversity work and to fight radicalisation; • Fostering in young people the understanding and tolerance towards different beliefs and opinions; • Comprehensive support to young people. 	<h1>T</h1> hreats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding being based on project tenders which pay little attention to wider full community approaches; • Focus on inter-community relationships at the expense of investment in intra community work; • The thematic focus seems to be too strictly connected to local problems; therefore, it can not be used to ask for new resources outside PEACE; • Lack of political commitment; • Economic shifts in Northern Ireland might stoke up the problem; • Targeting only a narrow group of youth from NEET group; • An attempt to reconcile different groups may cause new conflicts; • Reluctance of young people to participate in the project; • Lack of continuing this intervention due funding constraints.

C. COMMENTS BY PROTEUS ON THE BP

Proteus acknowledges the TrACE 2 Partners for their Peer Review Reports analysing the best practice "YouthAction". Proteus will share the analyses with the project concerned in order to improve the mutual learning process of the project.

D. POTENTIAL OF TRANSFERABILITY of the BP

This project involved many dialogue events between young people and politicians, north and south of the border. Each Member of the Legislative Assembly was presented with the youth peace manifesto diary and asked to commit to an action which was placed on a peace tree at Stormont buildings during community relations week in 2014. The project was also presented and discussed at the Oireachtas committee in Dublin. Representatives of the peace team have also presented in Cyprus, Brussels, Vienna and the Basque country. YouthAction are currently liaising with the Special European Union Programme Body (SEUPB) about a cross disciplinary peace network across Europe, incorporating victims/survivors and ex-combatants. A range of educational curriculum resources have also been designed and developed.

They are currently in negotiation with a strategic all Ireland alliance to better co-ordinate a range of peace building interventions through a possible IV investment. This will incorporate a wider range of institutions which can be infiltrated through sharing and integration (communities, schools, businesses, youth initiatives, sporting clubs etc).

It seems like fundamental to open up to communities in a wide range of subsinstitutional contexts. They have also built a legacy of young leaders who have an appetite for peace and sustained leadership in their communities.

BEST PRACTICE

CO-MENT – COLLABORATIVE MENTORING

Proteus (NI) – UK

PARTNER:



A. SPECIFICATIONS OF THE BEST PRACTICE

1. Description of the best practice

CO-MENT is a collaborative mentoring programme to support young people who are NEET, developed by GEMS NI, a company limited by guarantee and registered charity/social enterprise organisation, in 2010.

CO-MENT was designed and developed within the European policy framework of the Bruges Communiqué and EU2020 objectives with the key aims of supporting employability and economic growth and addressing broader societal challenges particularly promoting social cohesion and supporting young people at risk of exclusion.

The didactic model: This is based on each young person having a dedicated mentor who supports them to develop their confidence and motivation for learning and work, assists them to 'negotiate' with the various 'systems' they are in contact with (e.g. health care, housing, youth justice, addiction services etc.). Using time-banking, each young person banks their time in 4 Zones: Learning, Life, Leisure and Work – the programme is customised to meet a young person's complex and changing needs and instead of them attending traditional training programmes/centres, the programme 'wraps around' them and enables them to bank their time in each zone, in a flexible and personal schedule that extends their choices and recognises the importance of life and leisure in maximising their potential for learning and work. All mentors are trained in the standardised assessment tool and action planning tool and quality management system.

Integrating New Technology: The dedicated mentor and young person use a bespoke Ipad application to develop the young person's personal action plan across the 4 Zones and review and record progress using the application which is linked to a secure database which collects the data and records significant events/issues prompts. This enables information to be recorded in 'real time' and reduces the formal administration to a minimum. There is a dedicated website for young people where they can interact.

As well as face to face training workshops and events, a project 'Basecamp' has been established which allows the project management team to issue advice and updates to mentors with mentors participating in a range of discussion forums. All project templates are available on this project management site.

2. Main goals and expected results

- Reducing the incidence and impact of poverty on the achievement and life chances, supporting the physical, social, emotional and mental health, promoting healthy lifestyles and reducing inequalities, providing opportunities to learn that raise aspirations, encourage excellence, build resilience and personal confidence to experience success and make a positive contribution for young people aged 16/17 who are in the priority NEET Target Group;
- Removing/reducing barriers to access, participation, achievement; not tolerating discrimination and abuse.
- A clear message to young people that conveys the importance of their views and opinions to local decision makers and promotes their engagement and involvement;
- Interactive activities that promote young people working together to develop their ideas, energizing them and maintaining their involvement, with the added value of personal development, confidence building and networking skills;
- Young people have the opportunity to develop their skills in using multi-media activities and other innovative approaches which support their engagement and involvement; they will be more emotionally ready to apply their learning, skills and behaviours to further learning or work;
- Mentors will support sustained engagement, transition and progression through creation of Individual support packages, appropriate to the particular needs of the young person.

3. Coordinating and managing bodies

Since its launch in 2002, GEMS NI have developed and delivered best practices in employability/employment services and are recognised as delivering excellence in IAG and VET with the development of models of best practice in employability interventions that support long-term unemployed/economically inactive people and in particular marginalized and disadvantaged groups. GEMS NI strives to promote social inclusion in the labour market and respects the client's right to freedom of career choice and freely chosen employment choice. CO-MENT is a Department for Employment and Learning (NEET) - Pathways to Success, Collaboration & Innovation Fund project securing £635,000 funding in 2012 to deliver an innovative model of VET to young people aged 16/17 & 18/24 who have low skills/no or few qualifications and have not had their needs met by existing VET provision.

B. EVALUATION OF THE BEST PRACTICE (PEER-REVIEW)
Through SWOT analysis with reference to EMPOWERMENT, ACTIVATION and CAPABILITY

<h1>S</h1> trengths	<h1>W</h1> eaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young person-centred approach; • Engagement to reach communities; • Recognised as best practice by EU Youth Unemployment Task Force; • Offering support which focuses on client's 4 spheres of life that are closely linked to one other; • Attention to problems of young people; • Personalized support in addressing client's personal barriers; • Use of innovative tools – application of modern technology (I-pad application); • Comprehensive way to overcome different problems the client is facing; • Empowerment and activation of young people; • The Basecamp idea for the mentors; • Flexibility of the service, based on the need to meet and support users; • Time capitalization – services can be provided according to each person's needs; • Identification of the person's needs and processing of tailor made action plans; • Development of all-inclusive solidarity relations with individuals; • Involvement of social stakeholders; • Strong investment on training key profiles mentors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High demand for the programme which cannot be met due to funding constraints; • Limited possibility to support more clients (the number of prospective clients to be covered by this type of intervention is much bigger than the scope of this intervention); • Not enough number of mentoring hours; • Little motivation to take active participation in the project; • The mentor's approach might be too intimate while working with a young person; • Difficulty to face the young people's emotional disorders (such as low self-esteem, insecurity etc); • Short term nature of the funding; • The 6 month follow up may be too short; • The success of the project largely depends on the effective relationship between mentor and young person; • The cost of the service may be particularly high; • The use of mentors may turn users into passive individuals.
<h1>O</h1> pportunities	<h1>T</h1> hreats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring the young people's needs; • Supporting young people at risk of social exclusion; • Mobile and innovative character of intervention (I-Pad application); • A chance to work out a positive relationship between the client and the mentor; • Sustaining the relationship after the project ends; • The application could be further developed so that it could become an interesting registration tool for ESF-projects; • Developing further new ideas of new technology in projects; • Working together with a broad group of stakeholders to make the project sustainable (could deliver extra funding); • Creating interactions, including two-way interactions, between users and mentors; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cuts to public sector funding; • Disappointment of the young person if he gets rejected (could bring the young person in a negative spiral); • Financial sustainability; • Broadening the targets in a general way.

C. COMMENTS BY PLOTEUS ON THE BP

Proteus acknowledges the TRACE 2 Partners for their Peer Review Reports analysing the best practice "CO-MENT". Proteus will share the analyses with the project concerned in order to improve the mutual learning process of the project.

D. PORTABILITY POTENTIAL of the BP in the political system

CO-MENT has been identified as best practice by Eurocities: Integrated Services at Local Level. The model is being developed for Ireland, Austria, Italy and Netherlands via Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic Partnership for VET project 2014-2017 €438,000. The project lead (Susan Russam) participates in the NGO NEET Strategy Forum Executive Committee which works in partnership with the NI Executive NEET Advisory Group which monitors the progress of the Pathways to Success NEET Strategy/Policy. CO-MENT targeted 160 NEETs aged 16-24 years between Sept 2012 and March 2015. It will be delivered between 2015 – 2018 as an ESF Project targeting 570 young NEETs.

BEST PRACTICE

Public employment services

HOSTING PARTNER

ECAP – ENTE PER LA FORMAZIONE CONTINUA
E L'EDUCAZIONE PERMANENTE (CH)



ECAP

Ticino UNIA

A. SPECIFICATIONS OF THE BEST PRACTICE

1. Description of the best practice

In Switzerland, public employment services operate on the basis of a national framework legislation (Law for unemployment insurance, LADI), which integrates passive measures (compensation) and active ones (by making the first payable under condition of activation by the job-seeker and his participation in the measures identified in his support). The cantons are responsible for implementing the measures, and for organizing the network of the regional employment centres, which operate also seeking synergies with private employment agencies, and enabling partnerships with subjects entitled to the delivery of active measures (in the form of guidance, employment programs, continuing education). In Ticino next to LADI (national law) operates the L-Rilocc (cantonal law).

In Ticino, the Labour Department operates through the regional employment centres (RECs) in Bellinzona, Biasca, Chiasso, Lugano and Locarno, and promotes measures aimed at placement.

The RECs are responsible for all matters concerning the labour market and act as liaison on land between employers and people seeking employment.

The unemployed are obliged to subscribe to the RECs for access to benefits (passive measures), but also for the assignment of active measures. The RECs offer personal advice to the unemployed in the definition of an action plan, access to active measures, information on vacancies. By specialized centres coaching on job searching is also offered (including the drafting of application forms, support to job search, preparation for interviews, etc.). At the same time the unemployed are required to take action on the basis of the agreed action plan, and their behavior is monitored and controlled (regular interviews with the consultant staff).

The public employment service offer to businesses:

- Selection and placement of job-seekers into companies;
- Information and simple procedures for the notification of job vacancies;
- Personal advice on the incentives for companies to promote the recruitment of persons seeking employment and for the creation of new jobs;
- Registration of vacancies in the database (SSI, Internet, etc.);
- Access to a database of staff available in various professional fields and according to the different profiles requested by the companies.

2. Main goals and expected results

The objectives of the RECs are:

- Promote and collaborate with companies operating in the territory of the canton;
- Favour quick and durable reintegration into employment;
- Apply targeted measures to support employment;
- Fight against the abuses regarding unemployment insurance (thus applying penalties to job seekers who do not meet their obligations, through the reduction of unemployment benefits)

The efficiency of the RECs is monitored by SECO (federal authorities) based on the level of placement reached and the reduction in the average duration of the unemployment condition.

3. Coordinating and managing bodies

Coordination and national framework: SECO (State Secretariat for Economics)

Implementation: DFE - Department of Labour (<http://www4.ti.ch/dfe/de/sdl/servizi/servizi/>)

Implementing interventions: Regional Offices Distribution; Active Measures Office of the State, for the regulation of support measures

B. EVALUATION OF THE BEST PRACTICE (PEER-REVIEW)
Through SWOT analysis with reference to EMPOWERMENT, ACTIVATION and CAPABILITY

<p>Strengths</p>	<p>Weaknesses</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-structured and efficient service (also connected with the positive trend in the labour market) - Extremely low unemployment rates and smaller burden of long-term unemployment as evidence of the operation of the services – this even if the Ticino canton is more affected by the cross-border than other Swiss regions; • Integration of active and passive measures public - private partnership, which allows the delivery of quality guidance services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The system is focused on the obligations imposed to the job-seeker and to his adaptability to the labour demand. This approach favours the exploitation of the existing resources but not the empowerment of the worker; • Insufficient coordination with other social policies and subjects. This is due to the insurance system based on for watertight compartments (e.g. social assistance, disability, etc.)
<p>Opportunities</p>	<p>Threats</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving efficiency through better integration between active measures, training and placement efforts • Long-term investment, including through measures to favour the qualification, the weak targets in the labour market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative effects on the labour market associated with a worsening of the economic situation, which could lead to the reduction of measures (the insurance system is based on a national average unemployment rate that does not exceed 3%)

BEST PRACTICE

Career Circles for employment of the NEETs

HOSTING PARTNER:

ECAP – ENTE PER LA FORMAZIONE CONTINUA
E L'EDUCAZIONE PERMANENTE (CH)



ECAP

Ticino UNIA

A. SPECIFICATIONS OF THE BEST PRACTICE

1. Description of the best practice

The project involved the testing of a guidance and support service to the work aimed at young NEETs in Ticino, where the phenomenon, though still of limited size, is growing, even in the local context.

Career circles is an intervention model that winds through small group meetings (roughly 5/6 people), animated by one or two facilitators, designed to unlock passive behaviour towards job search, and to reactivate energy from a reflection approach, by comparing their experiences and expectations. The initiative is aimed at encouraging the development of social and personal skills necessary to key seekers, and is aimed at young people ideally between 20 and 25 years, at risk of exclusion from the labour market.

The experiment was carried out in the context of active measures for the labour market in Ticino. Online access was also made available, through self-assessment questionnaires that allowed young people to discover their potential: learning about one's own skills and personality traits allows young people to take advantage of their strong points in order to be successful. See <http://www.youth2work.eu/it/>.

2. Main goals and expected results

The goals of the Career Circle are the following:

- provide participants with a reflection-oriented environment where to talk freely about their career prospects and challenges, dealing with young people experiencing a similar situation;
- improving the participants' soft skills
- enabling young people to successfully enter the labour market by increasing their self-esteem and awareness in their abilities.

The model also aims to strengthen their capacity to exploit the potential of social learning and of Web 2.0 in job search (online community to support and strengthen the "peer support" approach that features the Career Circles.)

3. Coordinating and managing bodies

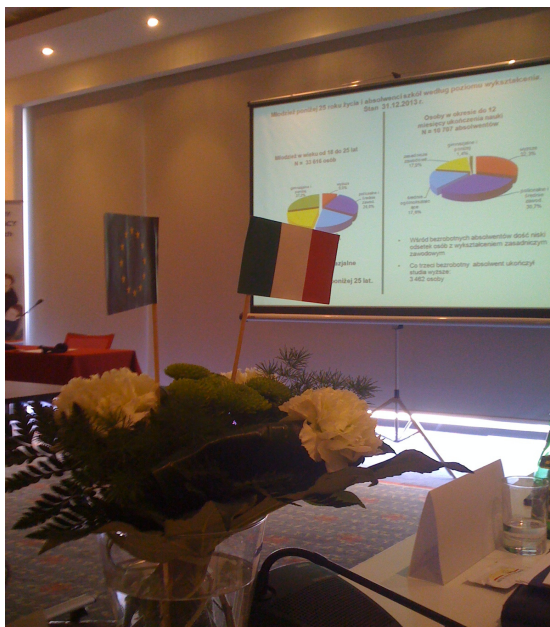
Following the experimentation carried out, the license for the management of Career Circles in Switzerland has been granted - for several cantons - to ECAP Foundation and Stellaction. The model is owned by Inova Consulting Lmt (registered trademark), which handles the development and trains the facilitators allowed to use the method.

B. EVALUATION OF THE BEST PRACTICE (PEER-REVIEW)*Through SWOT analysis with reference to EMPOWERMENT, ACTIVATION and CAPABILITY*

S trengths	W eaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive effects (verified in testing) in terms of improvement of lack of guidance and motivation underlying the NEETs phenomenon; • The method supports activation; • Positive effects on the improvement of soft skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The method aims to enhance self-reflection on past experiences, though the NEETs usually have no significant past experiences; • The method does not provide a skills-based intervention or action in terms of qualification or requalification; • The results in terms of empowerment can be frustrated by the real conditions of labour demand; • The activation of social learning through the web is difficult.
O pportunities	T hreats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The method can be tested with higher level profile (in terms of experience and expertise) participants (eg. unemployed over 50); • Better integration with qualification measures (Second Chance). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obstacles to dissemination of the tool because its use is subject to having the licence to use it; • Difficulty to finance the tool, as most of the financing is addressed to interventions to support job search.



Meeting TRENTO (I)



Meeting KATOWICE (PL)



Final Seminar YOUTH2WORK LUGANO (CH)



Study visit BRUGES (BE)



Meeting BELFAST (NI-UK)



Partnership MADEIRA (PT)

5. PRINCIPLES AND OPERATIONAL ADVICE

5.1 Foreword

The following set of recommendations was developed out of the variety of projects/actions analyzed in the various countries of the TRACE 2 project. They come as a result of the best practice analyzed by the network of partners in the different fields and countries. They represent the development, implementation and evolution of the recommendations produced within the previous LLP TrACE project, which have been further studied and incorporated into 6 main units, each related to activation, capability and empowerment, these being the project key words and therefore the umbrella under which the practices were developed. In this regard, this set of advice has been designed to include the valuable results achieved by TrACE which have been further developed and updated thanks to the TrACE 2 peer-review methodology. The recommendations have been grouped into six main areas of intervention:

Involvement and activation of the individual;

Holistic approach;

Development of competencies and skills;

Practical and theoretical learning;

Recognizing different ways of learning;

Talent Management.

The recommendations presented hereafter are the result of a peer-review process of good practice identified by the partners, who have contributed to the collaborative design of a set of advice which can be used by the different stakeholders in the labour market and in the different countries. How these recommendations will be put into practice will largely depend on the different contexts and situations e.g. labour market situation, target of individuals (employees, school leavers, unemployed, entrepreneurs, policy makers, disadvantaged, NEETs), etc.

The application of these principles will also depend on their potential for concrete implementation in the different countries. As the context of the labour market differs in the various countries, some advice will be more useful or easily transferable than other. In the way they are presented, they do not reflect any level of hierarchy of importance nor are they meant to be used as a roadmap.

ADVICE 1

Involvement and Activation of the individual

To stimulate the activation of individuals you should involve and engage them in their own career pathway.

The activation of individuals is hardly ever a spontaneous process. Activation should be promoted by using a number of *different tools* (e.g. guidance, training, mentoring, incentives, etc.). While the main responsibility for activation lies with the individual, public institutions should guarantee that these tools are easily accessible and available at little or no cost (*conditio sine qua non*).

Individuals, be they employed or unemployed, should be put in the driver seat of their own career. This implies that they should be stimulated to take responsibility for managing their own careers. This means that both employed and unemployed persons should not wait for others to tell them what to do but they have to take initiative to achieve their own ambitions and expectations. Besides it is not only the job itself but rather the career path of the individual that should be sustainable.

Education has an important role to play in this respect. Education is the starting point of the career pathway. Pupils should be able to discover their talents; young people should be supported in discovering their learning pathway, in developing self confidence and other personal attitudes. Other important actors are public employment services and NGOs; they have to find and motivate the different target groups to take up this challenge. Also the HR services and team leaders within enterprises should be ready to take up this challenge.

Sometimes the activation mechanism proves to be harder with individuals whose level of education is rather low and as a consequence are not able to appreciate the relevance of learning. This category of individuals is also usually unable to identify their own training needs, they don't feel comfortable with the idea itself of learning, they don't think they need it or that they may be able to. In these cases it is essential that the public employment service or employers organize training actions, that should take place in a favourable environment to support motivation.

The operational implementation of the advice is represented by the following best practices:

- *Equal in business (Poland)* – Business set up for unemployed or job-seekers
- *Stevig in de steigers (Flanders)* – In-company coaching
- *Minervaplan (Flanders)* – Tackling the end-of-career stage
- *CO-MENT (Northern Ireland)* – Mentoring programme for NEETs
- *Career Circles (Canton Ticino)* – Pathways for the NEETs towards employment
- *Public services for employment (Canton Ticino)* – Organization and active labour policies

ADVICE 2

Integrated/Holistic approach

To empower and activate individuals an integrated/holistic approach should be used. To do so, all the different stakeholders should be involved.

To guarantee high quality standards, for activation of individuals, private and public key organisations should work together. The participation of social partners, enterprises and local organisations and institutions is essential.

Solutions should be found and thresholds must be overcome in an integrated approach so that the proposed activities are in harmony with each other. Organizations dealing with housing, legal systems, education, training etc should work together to put in place a tailor-made approach. Coaching also has a major role to play. Thanks to the personalized and tailor-made approach coaches can develop a personal relationship based on trust with the coachees. The coach has to make sure that all the barriers can be taken away so that there is no argument anymore not to participate in the labour market.

Special tools (like for instance a platform used by all the different stakeholders) can help to ensure this integrated/holistic approach. But also the development of an umbrella organization could be an added value.

Cooperation between different actors should also lead to a better identification of the training needs in terms of labour market demand, technological development adjustment, as well as other needs of the social and economic system.

The operational implementation of the advice is represented by the following best practices:

- *Innovative support for you (Poland)* – Model of support into employment by Labour Offices
- *Youth employment package (Italy)* – Support for young NEETs into employment through Youth Guarantee
- *CO-MENT (Northern Ireland)* – Mentoring programme for the NEETs

ADVICE 3

Development of competencies and skills

Technical as well as soft and civic skills should be particularly invested in and adapted to the labour market reality of today and tomorrow.

Training can not be focused on the acquisition of technical competencies only. It should also improve the individuals' ability to live in complex societies, exercise their own rights, and responsibly meet their duties.

Investing in key competencies not only results in higher productivity but also in the building of more democratic and citizen-oriented systems.

An important role should be played by education but also during the life course of the career attention should be paid to the further development of competencies and skills. Continuous investment in competencies and skills does not only increase productivity of organisations but also enhances the position of individuals in society. Therefore lifelong learning in all its different facets should be supported and recognized.

Close cooperation between different stakeholders (education, enterprises, public and private bodies) should also lead to appropriate answers to meet the challenges of continuous technological change (e.g. new skills for new jobs). Enterprises must also put focus on job design, in order to update and meet the skills needed for the new jobs (e.g. the skills and competencies of a secretary have changed dramatically over the years).

The operational implementation of the advice is represented by the following best practices:

- *Key competences (Italy)* – Training actions on key-competences for the unemployed
- *Youth employment package (Italy)* – Support for young NEETs into employment through Youth Guarantee
- *Equal in business (Poland)* – Business set up for unemployed or job-seekers
- *Stevig in de steigers (Flanders)* – In-company coaching
- *CO-MENT (Northern Ireland)* – Mentoring programme for the NEETs
- *Centres of qualification (Madeira)* – Centres offering qualifications and training
- *Career Circles (Canton Ticino)* – Pathways for NEETs towards employment
- *Minervaplan (Flanders)* – Tackling the end-of-career stage

ADVICE 4

Practical and theoretical learning and accessibility of integrated tools

Practical training (apprenticeship, dual learning, dual schemes etc) and theoretical learning should happen in close cooperation and in an integrated way.

This means close cooperation between the providers of theory and practice to realize the individual training program.

A longer practical and integrated training should be adopted in preference to a practical training of one day or one week. Such a way of working is an added value to activate individuals to enter the labour market and to empower them.

It is not always necessary that the theoretical training should be left to the the school and the practical training fall to enterprises. Integrated learning means that it can also be done the other way around. But to realize an integrated way of learning the necessary arrangements and a good learning pathway have to be in place.

Practical learning can be achieved through a range of methods, including volunteering, community engagement, motivational experiences, mobility programmes for apprenticeships, internships.

The operational implementation of the advice is represented by the following best practices:

- *Equal in business (Poland)* – Business set up for unemployed or job-seekers
- *Apprenticeship (Madeira)* – Model of apprenticeship
- *Youth employment package (Italy)* – Support for young NEETs into employment through Youth Guarantee

ADVICE 5

Recognizing different ways of learning

We should recognize different ways of learning (formal, non-formal and informal learning) and adapt them to different target groups, with particular attention to disadvantaged and fragile target groups.

We should differentiate and invest in different methods of learning. Learning is more than an intellectual activity; it involves the whole person in all its facets. It is about increasing competencies (knowledge, skills and attitude). People can also learn via theatre, art, music etc. Providing a wider range of learning methods will help empower different target groups (young people, ethnic minorities, people further away from the labour market etc.) and give them the possibility to take further steps towards or into the labour market.

The use of tools for informal or semi-structured learning should be promoted to increase opportunities of integration in the labour market, such as insertion enterprises or work experience. European mobility should become a learning opportunity effectively and concretely expandable especially for young people.

Specific measures should be taken to address disadvantaged or more vulnerable target groups, who should be particularly looked after, especially in periods of economic crisis, as they are likely to become even more fragile. They find no job and the risk of social exclusion increases, as well as the frustration connected with the lack of income.

They are to be valued according to their potential and the best ways of learning should be used to meet their needs.

The operational implementation of the advice is represented by the following best practices:

- *Youth in Action (Northern Ireland)* – Peace building programme for young people
- *Centres of qualification (Madeira)* – Centres offering qualifications and training
- *Key competences (Italy)* – Training actions on key-competences for the unemployed

ADVICE 6

Talent Management and Recognition of Competencies

Organizations should be aware that everyone has talents, both in work as in private life. and should value the competencies people have obtained through work experience.

A talent gives energy to people and is something one likes to do (and is also good at doing it). Talent management could be understood as the creativity to find the talents that are useful for the development of the personality of the employee and useful for the organization itself. Talents should be recognized and talent management should be implemented in an efficient and conscious way.

Also, the competencies obtained by the individuals through experience should be certified and made usable at different levels.

On the one hand individuals should be given the opportunity to upgrade their education and qualification level through formal education and training, to expand their level of knowledge, skills and competencies. On the other hand equal importance should be given to competencies not obtained at school but obtained through experience on the workforce.

Human resources are very often evaluated only on the basis of the qualifications of the individual without really considering the experience he or she has had in the labour market and his or her talents. If people and their talents are deployed on the right place inside the enterprise, productivity but also the workability of the employee will increase thanks to talent management.

The operational implementation of the advice is represented by the following best practices:

- *Minervaplan (Flanders)* – Tackling the end-of-career stage
- *Stevig in de steigers (Flanders)* – In-company coaching
- *CO-MENT (Northern Ireland)* – Mentoring programme for the NEETs

6. FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

6.1 Foreword

This Report represents the tool for the final evaluation on the goals met and on the actions carried out within the TrACE 2 project. To this regard, the Report has been designed to thoughtfully synthesize the opinions given by the different project Partners. The evaluation also brings out a number of significant useful indications, should the learning network be continued.

As it was envisaged at the very start of the TrACE 2 project (*box F.5 – Application form*), the Final Evaluation Report (hereafter FER) not only considers and synthesizes the results of the mid-term evaluation, but it also aims to provide a final assessment on the project most significant points.

Specifically, The Protocol of Understanding signed by all the network partners was aimed to:

*"- .. evaluate the degree of achievement of the project objectives (innovation and representativeness), as well as the degree of achievement of the Partners' expectations (a self-assessment will be carried out at the end of the project through a dedicated documentation);
- evaluate the mutual learning process developed by the Partnership..."*

In line with the expectations, though the mid-term evaluation had paid particular attention to the quality of the best practices and their degree of transferability, as well as to the effectiveness of the peer-review method to ensure a structured analysis and detect elements of possible development, the FER, in addition to operating a second ex-post evaluation of these aspects, is specifically intended to explore the achievement of the goals, the quality of the partnership, the project strengths and weaknesses, as well as the future networking prospects.

6.2 Methodology

The FER collects, recasting them in a synthetic vision, the main elements of the assessments made by the single partners along with specific remarks which need to be specifically interpreted.

A semi-structured questionnaire using the GoogleDrive® application was submitted to each partner.

The questionnaire consisted of 8 multiple-choice questions with index values ranging between 0 and 6 (where 0 = inadequate; 6 = very positive) and 10 open questions.

In particular, given the limited number of questionnaires and the need for an in-depth analysis, a primarily qualitative evaluation has been conducted.

In total, five questionnaires were submitted to the 5 network Partners:

- DIRECÇÃO REGIONAL DE QUALIFICAÇÃO PROFISSIONAL (PT)
- ESF – AGENTSCHAP VLAANDEREN (BE)
- DISTRIC LABOUR OFFICE IN ŚWIETOCHLOWICE (PL)
- Agenzia del Lavoro della Provincia autonoma di Trento (I)
- PROTEUS NI LTD – Northern Ireland (UK)

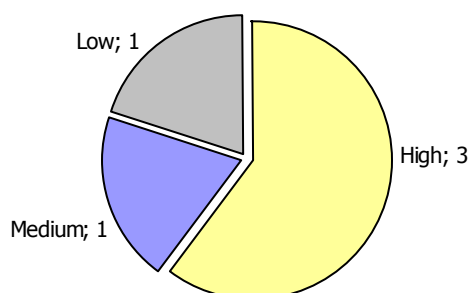
6.3 Results of the survey and outline of the evaluation provided

On the whole, the results of the FER prove to be fully in line with the previous mid-term evaluation. The results of the survey feature a very good level of satisfaction as regards the achievement of the goals, the peer-learning, the quality of the best practices analyzed and their consistency with the physiognomy and the needs of partners composing the network and the elements of potential transferability.

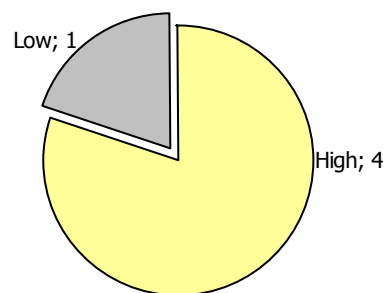
A partial exception is the assessment made by the partner in Northern Ireland. Indeed, NI had been repeatedly stressed the inconsistency of the project outcomes for their institution. This result may also be ascribable to the different legal basis/nature of their organisation (private body) which may have ended up with a different level of involvement in the subjects addressed by TrACE 2 compared to the rest of the network partners.

As regards the level of relevance, consistency, and achievement of the objectives with the needs initially expressed, the Partners express very good levels of satisfaction, as described in the following charts:

Q1. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GOALS SET
(v.a.)



Q2. LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS (v.a.)



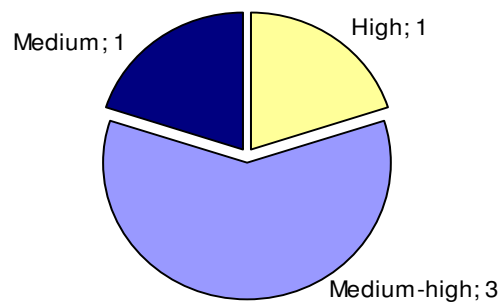
The objectives assigned to the project have overall been confirmed as being relevant and consistent with the development strategies pursued by the partners (support to youth employment and re-employment/retraining of older workers). The partners also consider the objectives set in the field of institutional learning as achieved, by stressing the value of the peer review method, which proved to be a very good tool for the structured communication and reflection on the best practices.

As to the investigation on the quality of the composition of the partnership, and therefore the ability of the organizations involved to effectively contribute to the achievement of project objectives, the evaluation was positive. The experience of all the partners in the management of projects and actions has been fully recognized. The assessment also reveals a high level of synergy of each partner with their local stakeholders. This has allowed a more in-depth analysis of the single practices during the visits as well as more thorough reviews by the partners.

Very positive proved to be the choice of the practices selected, while the exit from of the Danish partner the network received a unanimous negative feedback, as the Danish institution featured a number of top value practices.

In respect of the quality of the partnership, again the Irish partner underlined the difficulty to benefit from the mutual exchange because of the private nature of their institution.

Q3. QUALITY OF THE PATNERSHIP (a.v.)



As for the mid-term evaluation, also the final evaluation devoted a specific section to the analysis of the work method, and in particular to the methodology of peer-review.

It seems important to bring to mind that the TrACE 2 project has paid particular attention to the extensive use of this method compared to its precursor (TRACE project), thereby structuring the process of mutual learning according to a standardization of its phases.

To this regard, the Partners who had participated in the previous TRACE project (ESF Flanders and DRQP Madeira) confirm that the new mutual learning process developed by Trace 2 has increased the quality of mutual learning.

According to the evaluation, the use of the peer-review method facilitated the exchange of the practices in a much more "structured, simple and tangible" way.

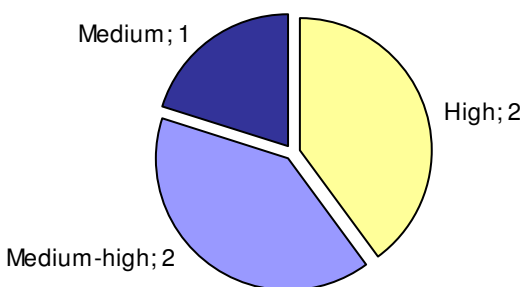
In particular, the use of the SWOT analysis - although sometimes judged as "repetitive and laborious" - has certainly allowed the immediate detection of the trouble spots/weaknesses as well as the strengths and their transfer potential.

This has contributed significantly to the improvement of the practices and to the recognition of the elements of transferability from a critical and conscious perspective.

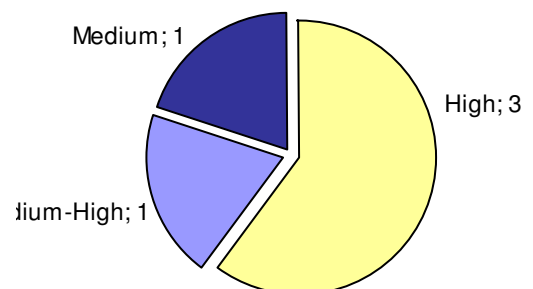
Group learning, improvement of decoding and re-encoding skills, from the development of critical learning & critical thinking at individual and group level, have been considered as the strengths of the peer-review method. On the other side, the insufficient number of debating as well as of synthesis sessions have been rated as the weak points of this method of work.

Chart 4-5

Q4. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE WORKING METHOD (v.a.)



Q5. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PEER REVIEW (v.a.)



As regards the evaluation of the quality of the best practices and their transferability in the local contexts, the evaluation features very positive results.

Several partners have highlighted the practices about the activation of workers along with the conditionality tools as particularly interesting, as well as those presenting innovative methods for the inclusion of the weaker targets, and finally the practices about the integration of formal training with work and for the improvement of entrepreneurship.

The transferability potential of the best practices has also been judged as fairly high, despite the obvious impossibility to transfer them outright. Many practices, however, present several elements of potential adaptability to different contexts from the original one.

For example, the Province of Trento has already adopted and is implementing the model of the "Diary of activation" used in Ticino Canton to attest activation by the beneficiaries of social welfare. Moreover, again in the Province of Trento, the tools analysed in the project to support workers in difficulty from the activation and from the social point of view (with mentoring, coaching and tutoring) will be introduced and adapted to the local context. The Province also intends to promote the dual training approach, taking into account the opportunities and risks analyzed thanks to the comparison with partners having made similar experience.

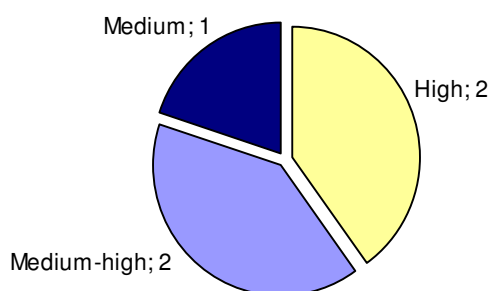
The Madeira partner instead, seeks to address various elements of the Youth Guarantee, with particular attention to guidance and vocational training tools. Madeira is also willing to enrich their practice on the tools for information and guidance in the qualification centres with several measures contained in the Italian practice on key competences.

The FER also investigates the opinions of the Partners on the possibility to continue the work undertaken by the network and future prospects.

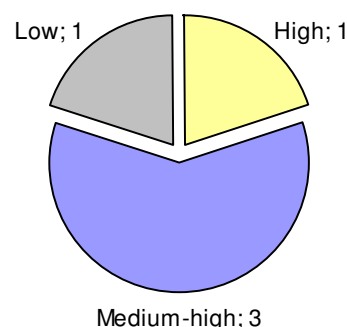
With the exception of Northern Ireland - for the same reasons described above - all the partners, would like to continue with the activities of the network also to avoid wasting the results obtained with the mutual learning process.

Charts 6-7-8

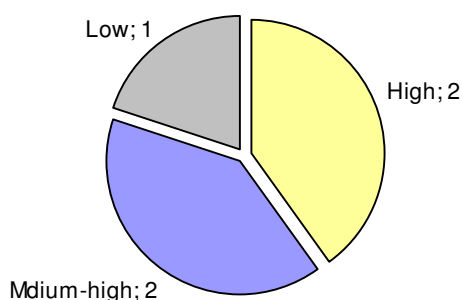
Q6. LEARNING OUTCOMES (FROM THE BEST PRACTICES) (a.v.)



Q7. TRANSFERRABILITY OF THE PRACTICES (a.v.)



Q8. PROSPECTS FOR FUTURE COOPERATION (a.v.)



In particular, the partners highlight as possible subjects of interest the strengthening of institutional learning in the field of labour market policies specifically targeted to weaker targets and the measures aimed at reducing youth unemployment, career management, and new funding opportunities such as Erasmus or + Horizon 2020.

Finally, the FER presents the aggregated outcomes regarding the success and failure of the project, also considering the progress achieved compared to the previous TRACE project, and therefore to the ability of the network to acknowledge and solve the critical points that had come out in the previous project edition. As it was previously detailed, the peer-review method has been confirmed as an extremely significant element in the development of Trace 2 and a substantial methodological basis. Despite that, while all the partners agree on the importance of continuing to use this method, the network also agrees on the need to leave more space for group discussion, focus groups etc.. Some Partners highlight the commitment that is required of each partner for the methodology of peer-review to be effective, and which sometimes has appeared insufficient. The number of sessions devoted to collecting and synthesising the outcomes should also be increased.

With a view to continue the cooperation, particular attention should be paid to the choice of subjects and practices to be analyzed. To this regard, the number of partners in the network may be increased and the involvement of excellence partners should be favoured. On the contrary, the involvement of partners who do not have the characteristics to benefit from the mutual learning process should be avoided in future projects.

6.4 Conclusions

The project coordinator notes the shared positive opinions expressed by the partners in relation to the ability of the project to:

- meet the challenge to support employability/re-employability and employment of workers (especially for weaker targets);
- further exploit a more effective and positive cooperation;
- share and disseminate quality best practices.

It is therefore to be noted that the network has reached a good level of "maturity" in terms of mutual learning.

As that circumstance is also "shared" by the single partners it would be recommended to continue the collaboration in the future, using the various existing European funding.

7. GLOSSARY

Accessibility: The chance to make a right concrete, to make it enjoyable regardless of people's conditions and situation. It is not a matter of codifying a right but of making it possible for everyone to benefit from it.

Active approach: Transition from a passive and generalized promotion of initiatives to proactive actions, aiming at identifying needs and stimulating demand to use the instruments available.

Passive approach: Approach that is limited to undifferentiated promotion actions.

Activation: In order to guarantee inclusion, protection and well-being, citizens must be active. In other words, citizenship rights pass through the joint participation of individuals-citizens in the building of well-being conditions for themselves and others. The recipient must also be active and aware.

Self-training: Through self-training, individuals gain autonomy and master their learning, by self-reflection, autobiographical thinking and self-evaluation, as well as through strategies of self-direction with the support of self-realization and self-motivation dynamics aiming to develop a strategic "self-training" competence to complete and enhance one's training.

Personalized training action: Personalized training actions are tightly connected with the process of being included in the labour market and refer to the following areas: personal area, social area and professional area.

Capability for Lifelong learning: Aptitude of Lifelong learning to develop capability dynamics.

Capability for Valuable learning: Aptitude to evaluate learning processes that are suitable to create capability conditions.

Capability Welfare State: Welfare state, aiming at the well-being of citizens and therefore at pursuing their capability.

Capability: The well-being of citizens as a consequence of the chance to exercise the substantial freedom to develop their objectives in a democratic context.

Coaching: training or development strategy in which a person called a coach supports a learner in achieving a specific personal or professional goal. The learner is sometimes called a coachee. Occasionally, coaching may mean an informal relationship between two people, of whom one has more experience and expertise than the other and offers advice and guidance as the latter learns; but coaching differs from mentoring in focusing on specific tasks or objectives, as opposed to general goals or overall development.

Active citizenship: The ability of all individuals, regardless of their age, in better understanding the contexts they live in, the characteristics of their life cycle, in acquiring the necessary elements to interpret situations, express opinions, behave responsibly and identify fields of participation in community life and in exercising their rights and duties.

Development welfare state: Dynamic welfare state, that develops through cumulative innovation pathways due to the fact that its reform is a strongly self-powered process with a high intensity of knowledge.

- Empowerment:** The process of gaining access and the development of one's abilities, aptitudes and potential, in the view of an active participation in shaping one's life and that of the community in economic, social and political terms.
- Initial training:** General education and training offered during the initial education system, usually before entering the labour market.
- Human capital:** The competences, knowledge and experience of an individual or population seen in terms of their value and cost for an organization or country.
- Social inclusion:** By social inclusion we mean the promotion of equal opportunities in accessing education, training, employment, housing, community services. Special attention is paid to disadvantaged individuals: immigrants, prisoners, drug addicts, the handicapped, etc...
- Innovation:** Research of new instruments, formulae and mechanisms.
- Learnfare:** The word learnfare was born to identify programmes for the re-inclusion in school of young students who dropped out early because they became young parents depending on assistance, trapped in unemployment and unable to complete their studies. When these programmes are extended to the whole population, a training perspective follows as a citizen's right and instrument for active participation, in a framework of equal access opportunities. From this we have the historical choice to use the word to describe the active Danish welfare model and then to recall all those systems in which training and lifelong learning are a vital key for modern welfare systems, of inclusion and employment.
- Lifelong learning:** All learning activity undertaken throughout life, which results in improving knowledge, know-how, skills, competences and or qualifications for personal, social and or professional reasons.
- Mix of policies:** Means/instruments put into effect through different resources and operators with different competences.
- Model:** Organic whole of indications and recommendations, or strategic and operational "principles" .
- Employability:** A combination of factors that give people the chance to prepare to enter the labour market, keep their job or make a career.
- Personalization of interventions:** Transition from standard actions or target oriented to initiatives thought for the single individuals interested.
- Professionalization:** Training actions chosen by the person, with the aim to acquire competences at different levels that end with a certification recognized by the State or simply by the production system. Participation is voluntary and not always free of charge. This type of training is offered by institutions, public or private bodies interested in training. In this area we also include high schools, advanced professional training, university, post-diploma or post-graduation courses, masters, but also offers made by enterprises to their operators, distance training and self-training.
- Self-reflection:** Acquisition of the ability to observe and understand one's own setting and ways of working.
- Professional re-qualification:** Training that allows to acquire new competences that give access to new employment and new professional activities.

Knowledge-based society: A society the processes and praxis of which are based on the production, spread and use of knowledge. Welfare state (or well-being state) that is active and activating, that from being a provider of methods of passive protection, becomes supplier of promotional and personalized services, with the aim to stimulate individuals to develop the necessary resources to face the risky situations they may bump into in life.

Welfare to work: Governmental programme to replace dependence on benefits with employment in the private or public sector.

Workfare: It is the approach that assigns the social state a minimal protection for the needy and makes "able" individuals autonomous through paid employment. Employment becomes a condition, although not always necessary or sufficient, to acquire individual and social wellbeing.