



VICTORUPESI
Unity in diversity

Sustainability Guidelines

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The Sustainability Guide represents the intellectual output developed within the project "Vocational Innovation using Creative new TechnOlogies Resulting in Upskilling Pathways for Employability and Social Integration" (VICTORUPESI).

The VICTORUPESI project is co-funded by the Erasmus + Programme of the European Union within the strategic partnership for VET – vocational education and training (KA202).

IKF Malmö – Internationella Kvinnoföreningen from Sweden was the project coordinator and lead organisation within the scope of work of the VICTORUPESI project (and this intellectual output) with aggregated efforts of the partnership consortium:

- Asociatia de Ajutor AMURTEL from Romania
- BES Cooperativa Sociale from Italy
- CONFEDERACIÓN SINDICAL INDEPENDIENTE – FETICO from Spain
- EDUFONS – Centar za celoživotno obrazovanje from Serbia
- OZARA STORITVENO IN INVALIDSKO PODJETJE DOO from Slovenia
- PANAIT ISTRATI Brăila County Library from Romania

Editorial Information:

Sustainability Guidelines are the result of the collective work of VICTORUPESI partners, which took place under the coordination of Edufons – Centar za celoživotno obrazovanje from Serbia and the supervision of the leading project partner IKF Malmö – Internationella Kvinnoföreningen from Sweden, whereby each partner provided significant information from the point of view of their local and/or national context, their target groups and their own project experience.

Author Contributions

Conceptualisation, original draft preparation, literature review, writing and English editing.

All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

PROJECT PARTNERS



VICTORUPESI project-specific sustainability guidelines – are a very practical manual on how to approach socially excluded people in the process of social integration using vocational training.

The document collects the main results of the VICTORUPESI project, provides recommendations on how to repeat the experience in other countries and suggests measures to ensure the project's sustainability.

The guide also includes short life stories and lessons learned as testimonials of project activities.

The Sustainability Guidelines are addressed to a broad public, specifically targeting:

- operators working directly with adults who understand the concept and can apply the methodology
- policymakers



LANGUAGES: English, Italian, Romanian, Serbian, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish



KEYWORDS

vocational education, VET, sustainability, guidelines, adult education



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The guide is open and available through the project's online platform – www.victorupesi.eu/resources for all people who are interested in it.

Comments Suggestions

We want to hear from you!



Comments and suggestions on the issues raised in this guide are welcome and can be addressed to VICTORUPESI partners on the project website www.victorupesi.eu.



FOREWORD

The development of the Sustainability guide for the VICTORUPESI project was motivated by the need to ensure the long-term success of the project and the continued impact of its results beyond the project's duration. The guide would provide a roadmap for sustaining project achievements and their integration into the social and economic fabric of the communities where the project was implemented. It would also identify key stakeholders and partners to engage for sustainability and suggest strategies for ongoing collaboration with them. The guide would also outline steps for ongoing using developed VICTORUPESI materials, approaches, processes and tools and recap measures of the sustainability of the project's outcomes and how to adjust the pathway as needed. Ultimately, the purpose of the Sustainability guide would be to ensure that the project's impact is lasting, meaningful and contributes to positive social and economic change in the communities it serves.

To put this information in a well-defined context, this work is divided into the following short chapters, which deal with:

INTRODUCTION provides a project overview, including its description, objectives, target group, and the activities and results achieved. This intro synthesis also outlines how the project engaged with stakeholders, including target groups, local communities and other relevant actors, and how this engagement can be sustained in the future.

Chapter I – Replicability and scalability: a discussion on the replicability and scalability of the project, including recommendations on how the project can be adapted and expanded in other contexts and locations, along with hints for using developed materials and tools. The chapter contains four detailed sections devoted to a deeper analysis of ensuring the sustainability of VICTORUPESI efforts:

Advice for performing — Methodology description and use of project outputs

Advice for performing — Structural implementation and methodology (Success factors), this section provides a comprehensive overview of the success factors derived from the project experience in implementing the VICTORUPESI program. It explores how these success factors are interwoven into the VICTORUPESI program, emphasising the program's commitment to empowering individuals to acquire new skills. Additionally, specific elements related to the implementation of the VICTORUPESI program for disadvantaged groups are discussed in detail where applicable.

Advice for performing — Approach in terms of target groups, how to approach socially excluded people in the process of social integration and help in acquiring new skills that contribute to full social inclusion, using vocational training

Advice for performing — Recommendations for future projects or initiatives, a set of suggestions for future projects or actions targeting similar groups and goals, including advice for improving initiative implementation, sustainability and impact

Chapter II – Recommendations for other institutions and practitioners: contains guidelines for the transferability and adoption of approaches, tools and processes, including steps that any organisation should consider when they intend to apply for this programme, from the aspect of each partner's targeted project groups and countries. The emphasis is on project results and sharing the knowledge gained during the project with relevant stakeholders, including recommendations for using the project results to inform policy and practice.

Chapter III – Challenges, Short Life Stories and Lessons Learned: this section demonstrates brief stories as testimonials of the project activities, outlines challenges we faced during project implementation and the lessons learned from these challenges. The chapter also highlights best practices, success stories and the project's impact on the target group and local community.

Chapter IV – Recommendations for policy-makers: a set of recommendations and policy proposals targeting public decision-makers, describing the model and supporting its implementation in different contexts, considered from the perspective of each partner's targeted project groups and countries.

Chapter V – Stakeholder mapping is provided as a proposed list of interested parties who could apply the developed material for vocational training. It is augmented with strategies for maintaining partnerships and involving and engaging stakeholders, especially delineating a [Strategy for building partnerships between business entities and project partners](#).

CONCLUSION reviews achievements and outlines specific tools and activities of the VICTORUPESI project, emphasising their innovative and evidence-based nature to address the target groups' unique needs and challenges.

Overall, this Sustainability Guide should provide a comprehensive and detailed review for ensuring the sustainability of the VICTORUPESI project and the results achieved, as well as recommendations for future projects and activities, social integration, vocational training, work with disadvantaged groups to prepare them for employability and social integration using innovative technologies and upskilling pathways targeting similar groups and objectives.

INTRODUCTION

About the VICTORUPESI project – summary at a glance

The VICTORUPESI project was a three-year project and was realised through collaboration among seven partners from 6 European countries (Italy, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Serbia and Sweden).

The overall project goal was to capitalise on resources and work for the effective social integration of disadvantaged people in local communities, with specific measures for those who are exposed to social exclusion and who have difficulty accessing vocational centres in their communities.

Vocational skills are essential for individuals to be able to enter the labour market and have a successful career, so the project's ambition was to compile a methodology that meets the needs of a very diverse target group from the perspective of the national possibilities of socio-economic integration using up-to-date technologies and preparing for certified vocational training.

Overall, the VICTORUPESI project has proven successful in accosting the challenges of socio-labour exclusion faced by disadvantaged target groups. Through the development and implementation of various vocational skills training programs, emotional support resources, and guidance tools, the project has helped these individuals to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to enter the job market and achieve social integration.

This is evidenced by the fact that the project has developed a set of tools and implemented activities that aim to improve the vocational skills of disadvantaged individuals to help them integrate into the labour market. The tools and activities include Mapping existing practices, training sessions of two pilots with a comparative report, a Digital Toolkit, a Diversity management toolkit, a Methodology guide, and Sustainability Guidelines.

Mapping existing practices was a crucial step in identifying the existing resources and actions that could be used to support target groups. This helped to ensure that the project built upon existing strengths and resources in the community rather than duplicating efforts or creating new programs that may not be sustainable. The Mapping also allowed for the designation of gaps in existing resources, which helped to guide the development of new tools and activities.

The training sessions of the two pilots were a critical component of the project, as they provided an opportunity to test and refine the project's tools and activities with target groups. The pilots allowed for feedback from the participants, which helped to identify areas that needed improvement and elements that were successful. The comparative report provided a valuable summary of the results of the pilots, which could be used to improve future iterations of the project.

The Digital Toolkit and Diversity Management Toolkit are innovative tools designed to address skills gaps and provide individuals with a competitive edge in the labour market. The Digital Toolkit aims to upskill individuals, increase their employability through the use of technology and provide training on a range of digital skills, including basic computer skills, internet use, and social media. The Diversity Management Toolkit feeds approaches on how to work effectively with diverse groups and addresses issues related to diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

The Methodology guide provides a comprehensive and integrative approach to matching the skills, aspirations, interests, and expectations of the target group with the needs of companies at the local level.

Thus, it is a valuable resource for professionals working with disadvantaged people who have experienced socio-labour exclusion, providing a clear framework to support their clients' vocational and social integration.

Finally, the Sustainability Guidelines, a critical tool in ensuring the long-term success and impact of projects like VICTORUPESI, provide recommendations for improving project implementation, sustainability and impact, as well as ensuring the involvement and commitment of stakeholders, including how to engage them and develop partnerships. By following these guidelines, partner organisations can ensure that the resources and tools developed through the VICTORUPESI project continue to benefit disadvantaged target groups and promote social integration in their communities, which will help to ensure that the project's impact is sustained over time.

Educational Topics — Concepts and Learning Objectives

As most societies are increasingly digitised, the VICTORUPESI project primarily focused on how to equip adults at risk of social exclusion with the tools to acquire the skills they lack to meet the current requirements of their local labour market. To facilitate their access to certified training and a broader range of employment opportunities, it is recognised as one of the priorities to provide them with VET education for necessary skills in the IT sector. Accordingly, project activities were directed at supporting the uptake of innovative approaches and digital technologies for teaching and learning and enhancing digital integration of the persons at risk of social exclusion by promoting the use of social media and IT tools in general for successful and more efficient integration into the labour market for the projects target groups. Its connection with IT and social media was reflected through generating digital integration by promoting the use of social media/IT for learning and teaching purposes, building on previous learning processes and using them to develop a positive professional identity of the target groups for the transition from education to the world of work. This approach could open up a space for better matching of skills and available current jobs in a way that companies get employees with updated knowledge that fits their requirements, while on the other hand people at risk of exclusion get included from the economic point of view.

Another aspect of the project included the promotion of inclusion in vocational education training by promoting positive job identities for vulnerable target groups to step into the world of work and VET-based learning. Therefore, significant elements of the project were also concentrated on strengthening key competencies in initial and continuing VET, in particular literacy, digital, as well as languages, including common methodologies for introducing those competencies in curricula, as well as for acquiring, delivering and assessing the learning outcomes of those curricula.

Learning Competences & Outcomes — knowledge, skills, attitudes/behaviours

The expected results during the project were to ensure better access to training and qualifications for all, with a particular focus on low-skilled people, through continuing vocational training, in particular by increasing the quality, offer and accessibility of continuous vocational training, validating non-formal and informal learning, promoting work-based learning and providing effective and integrated guidance services and flexible and permeable learning pathways; it includes the development of partnerships between micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and vocational training providers, intending to promote common competence centres, learning networks, support for pooling resources and providing initial training for their staff.

Target groups

VICTORUPESI project addressed the needs of vulnerable people aged 18 to 45 who are at risk of social exclusion, including:

- migrant women (Sweden)
- long-term unemployed people (Spain)
- people in prison with light sentences (Romania)
- people with disabilities (Slovenia)
- women with Asperger's diagnosis (Italy)
- women in rural areas (Serbia)

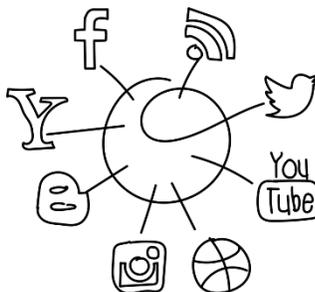
Other target groups were:

- professionals working in the field of social integration of vulnerable people at risk of social exclusion
- vocational training centres in each of the countries from a local level
- local companies that might be available to offer job opportunities to vulnerable people at risk of social exclusion

Outputs Overview — Summary

Partnership efforts resulted in developed VICTORUPESI materials, approaches, processes and tools, as evidenced by six intellectual outputs prepared by the joint work of organisations that are partners in the project.

1. Mapping of the existing practices
2. VICTORUPESI training sessions
3. Digital Toolkit
4. Diversity management toolkit
5. Methodology guide
6. Sustainability Guidelines



All these results and materials are designed to be easily adapted to other contexts and groups at risk of marginalisation (other disadvantaged groups).

1. Mapping of the existing practices

Dealing with the issue of developing professional skills from the perspective of different vulnerable social groups, this study shows both the concern of states to develop strategies and programs to support various vulnerable groups and the complexity of the European social field in the context of the labour market. At the same time, the study reflects the mechanisms used in different states to respond to the needs of vocational training and how their effort is perceived by the social categories to which they are addressed.

This European study used detailed documentation on legislation, policies and strategies, funding, statistical analysis of vulnerable groups and identification of opportunities and challenges, as well as qualitative research through in-depth interviews and focus groups to identify opinions and perceptions on policies and strategies, but also to identify needs and expectations in the area of professional skills development (especially in the area of digital skills) needed to increase access to the labour market for different social categories at risk of social exclusion.

The results of the mapping of existing practices are presented in the:

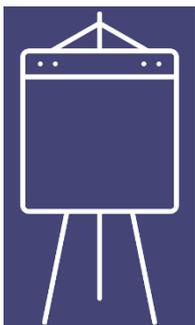
- European Comprehensive Report that includes a compilation of available approaches in Sweden, Italy, Serbia, Spain, Slovenia and Romania
- 6 National Reports (in all partner languages, summary available in English)



2. VICTORUPESI training sessions

VICTORUPESI training sessions in a format of the curriculum – Pilot course with three modules and accompanying coach circles to emotionally and technically prepare targeted vulnerable groups to attend vocational training, working with their self-esteem and teaching them the basic skills using online tools.

Joint partnership efforts have resulted in the development of VICTORUPESI training sessions, consisting of a package of materials for learners and trainers, tested through two pilots by each partner, all collected in an Overall European Comparative Report (bringing results from Pilot 1 and 2).

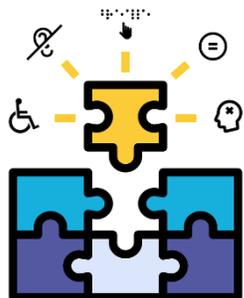


3. Digital Toolkit

The Digital Toolkit is a set of guidelines that complement the VICTORUPESI Training Program as an innovative digital skills training program for unemployed and/or disadvantaged people designed to support organisations intending to implement this programme type and adapt it to different targets, contexts and situations. The toolkit provides useful training guidelines and concrete examples from the pilot training experiences. It, therefore, has a dual purpose: to establish procedures for effective planning, delivery and monitoring of the VICTORUPESI training programme in all its development phases and, just as importantly, to offer concrete examples from actual pilot ventures to demonstrate how to maximise impact and avoid problems.

In the toolkit, users will find specific instructions for each training phase and advice coming from the Pilot training sessions conducted during the VICTORUPESI project.





4. Diversity management toolkit

The Diversity management toolkit aims to widen the dimension of beneficiary-oriented support, extending intervention elements and activities to more in-depth actions to facilitate the social inclusion of targeted vulnerable groups into society and the integration process from the perspective of beneficiaries and professionals when working with disadvantaged groups. Therefore, the core purpose of this toolkit is to serve all beneficiaries and target groups identified in the project and to enhance other project outputs.

Within the Diversity management toolkit, the partners brought together the knowledge and insights gathered in the first stages of the project, putting the main emphasis on people with disabilities and people with emotional and physical challenges. Especially bearing in mind that the group of people with disabilities needs more profound analysis and some adaptations, this usable toolkit was created with an appreciation of their emotional and physical challenges.

The Diversity management toolkit seeks to include diverse perspectives by building its approaches and content that address the psychosocial environment and background needed for efficient support. Thus, handling diversity management in different settings can benefit from harnessing these insights to prepare action plans for targeted groups.

5. Methodology guide

The Methodology guide describes the work carried out in the VICTORUPESI project and defines the model implemented to match the skills, aspirations, interests and expectations of the project's target groups with the needs of companies at the local level. The guide brings together all information from previous project activities and developed results, some of which have been tested with beneficiaries, including reports, training materials, labour orientation, guidance tools, emotional support resources, etc. It is intended for professionals who work with disadvantaged people who have suffered from socio-labour exclusion, such as social workers, trainers, labour counsellors, work mentors and other professionals who provide other social or labour support services.



6. Sustainability Guidelines

This paper – Sustainability Guidelines, the last intellectual output of this project as the crown of the final phase, strives to pool all developed project deliverables and aims to establish the foundation for effectively utilising the developed materials and tools. It achieves this by offering comprehensive guidelines on how other institutions and practitioners can transfer and adopt the approaches, tools, and planned processes. The main focus lies in ensuring the prospective exploitation and long-term success and sustainability of the project as a whole by facilitating its future use.

Introduction to the Sustainability Guidelines

The Sustainability Guidelines aim to provide guidance to partner organisations involved in the Victorupesi project on how to ensure the sustainability of the project and its results and to support them in developing and implementing sustainable initiatives that target disadvantaged groups and promote social inclusion through vocational training and employment. This publication also aims to lay the groundwork for the exploitation of the developed materials and tools by providing guidelines for the transferability and adoption of approaches, tools and planned processes by other institutions and practitioners, especially concerning the future exploitation and overall project sustainability.

Ultimately, this Sustainability Guide aims to ensure the continuation and impact of the VICTORUPESI project beyond its initial performance phase and the long-term sustainability of the project and its results.

The objectives of the Sustainability Guidelines are as follows:

1. to ensure the integration of the project tools and activities into existing programs and services of partner organisations
2. to support partner organisations in developing sustainable initiatives that target disadvantaged groups and promote social inclusion
3. to promote the use and replication of project tools and activities by partner organisations and other stakeholders in similar contexts and target groups
4. to promote the dissemination of project results and impact to a wider audience, including policymakers and other stakeholders in the field of vocational training and employment.

- WHAT DO WE EXPECT TO ACHIEVE?

Through the development of these guidelines, the potential for transferring the methods and tools developed in the project will be exploited, aiming to help the social operators of other institutions and European countries to adopt these techniques and improve the quality of their work, as well as to set recommendations and a policy paper targeting public decision-makers, describing the model and supporting its implementation in different contexts.

The main features incorporated in the prepared Sustainability Guidelines:

- ⇒ the innovative holistic and integrative methodology supports the psychological well-being of disadvantaged groups and mediators – adult education providers to gain new skills and tools
- ⇒ scalability and transferability – to ensure the sustainability of project results even after the project life cycle
- ⇒ should reflect the practical path for others who would use VICTUROPESI solutions for vocational education – how to apply the new methodology and replicate the experience in other countries
- ⇒ Learner-centred approach: based on learner needs – adjusted to be tailor-made for target groups and to give them the possibility to develop further and flourish
- ⇒ set recommendations that will help in acquiring new skills that contribute to full social inclusion
- ⇒ provide recommendations on how to apply the new methodology and can change their usual techniques and attitude and work better by positively affecting their organisations and local society
- ⇒ lessons learned, along with recommendations for using tools

The document will follow the other VICTORUPESI results in terms of the overall content and concept of the project, demonstrating the methodology and innovative psychological approach, reviewing the work system of the methods used in the field of specialised assistance for people at risk of social exclusion (women, people with disabilities, long-term unemployed, people deprived of their liberty, etc.), with possible adaptation to the specific local needs and local employees' syndicates.

Chapter I – Replicability and scalability

Advice for performing — Methodology description and use of project outputs

The partner organisations involved in the VICTORUPESI project will use the results of this project in several ways to positively impact the lives of vulnerable groups in the labour market and continue vocational training, including contributing to their own work and collaborating with others. Here are some examples:

⇒ **Research:** Mapping existing practices will serve as a starting point for further research on best practices for supporting disadvantaged groups in the labour market and could inform the development of future projects or policy recommendations.

⇒ **Implementation:** continuous use of developed tools and implemented activities, ensuring that the project outcomes are sustained and go on to benefit the target group. Partner organisations will integrate the project's tools and activities into their existing programs and services in a way that is coherent with the organisation's overall mission and strategy. They will implement various tools and activities developed during the project in their own ongoing work with similar target groups. This could involve using the Methodology Guide to design and implement a similar program, using the Diversity Management Toolkit to improve diversity and inclusion in their organisations, or using the Digital Toolkit as a resource to support the development of IT-focused training programs to provide the target group with digital literacy skills, which are essential for social integration in today's digital age.

⇒ **Training:** vocational training sessions conducted during the project will be used as a model for future training sessions with similar target groups. Learning materials created will be valuable resources for the vocational teaching of adults at risk of social exclusion to acquire the skills they lack to meet the current demands of their local labour market and master the use of social media and IT tools, while Coaching Circles will serve as tools for emotional support. The comparative report can provide insights and recommendations for improving future training sessions.

⇒ **Collaboration:** partner organisations will strive to maintain well-established collaboration, continuing to work towards the shared goal of supporting disadvantaged groups in the labour market and vocational training, and will keep on mutual support for sharing knowledge and resources. They will also seek to collaborate with other relevant entities to maximise impact and sustainability.

Continuous learning and improvement are essential for ensuring the sustainability of the project. VICTORUPESI partner organisations should strive to learn from project activities and outcomes and use this knowledge to continuously improve performance. This can involve conducting regular evaluations, soliciting feedback from stakeholders, and implementing changes based on lessons learned.

Suggestions for further consideration:

Resource Mobilisation: To ensure the project's sustainability, partner organisations must have access to adequate resources. This may include financial resources, such as funding from donors or private investors,

as well as in-kind resources, such as access to facilities, equipment, and materials. It is essential to identify potential funding sources and develop fundraising strategies to ensure that the project can continue beyond its duration.

Collaboration and Networking: Collaboration and networking with other organisations and stakeholders in the field can help ensure the project's sustainability. Partner organisations should work to establish partnerships with other organisations that share similar objectives and can contribute to the project's sustainability. Networking can provide opportunities to share resources, expertise, and best practices, as well as to build support for the project among key stakeholders.

Roadmap for ensuring the long-term success of the project and the continued impact of its results beyond the project's duration - steps for ongoing use of the developed VICTORUPESI materials, approaches, processes and tools and the recap sustainability measures of the project's outcomes and adjustment of the pathway as needed:

- **Capacity Building:** Effective capacity building is crucial for ensuring the sustainability of the project. It involves providing the necessary skills, knowledge, and resources to partner organisations and stakeholders to enable them to continue and expand the project's activities beyond its duration. Use the project tools, such as the training materials and coaching circles, to build the capacity of staff and trainers and enhance their ability to work more effectively and inclusively with similar target groups and disadvantaged people. Capacity building can include training programs, coaching, mentoring, and networking opportunities.
- **Dissemination:** Share the project results with other organisations, networks, and stakeholders to increase awareness and promote best practices in vocational innovation, digital skills, and diversity management. Effective dissemination and communication of project activities and outcomes are crucial for ensuring sustainability. This involves sharing project results, best practices, and lessons learned with other organisations, stakeholders, and the broader community.
- **Replication:** Adapt and replicate the project methodology in other regions or countries with similar socio-economic contexts and target groups.
- **Advocacy:** Use the project findings and recommendations to advocate for policy changes at the local or national level to support the integration of disadvantaged groups in the labour market.
- **Research:** Conduct further research and analysis based on the project results to deepen understanding of the challenges and opportunities in supporting the socio-labour inclusion of disadvantaged groups.
- **Innovation:** Build on the project's innovative approaches, such as the digital toolkit and training sessions with coaching circles, to develop new solutions and strategies for vocational innovation and social inclusion.

VICTORUPESI project partners are expected to make additional efforts to provide adult education providers with valuable insights and guidance on how to effectively apply the VICTORUPESI methodology.

Driving Excellence: Empowering Adult Education Providers for the VICTORUPESI Methodology

This focuses on actions aimed at empowering adult education providers to undertake the VICTORUPESI methodology, ultimately enhancing the quality and effectiveness of adult education programs.

Share best practices: Share success stories, lessons learned, and best practices derived from implementing the VICTORUPESI methodology with other adult education providers to help them understand and apply the approach effectively.

Foster collaboration: Encourage collaboration and knowledge-sharing among adult education providers, creating opportunities for them to exchange experiences and support each other in implementing the methodology. Collaborative learning opportunities facilitate the exchange of knowledge and support among providers, fostering a community of practice.

Provide ongoing support: Offer continuous support, guidance, and mentoring to other adult education providers as they navigate the implementation of the VICTORUPESI methodology, ensuring they have access to the necessary resources and expertise. Ongoing support and guidance ensure that adult education providers have the elemental reinforcement to navigate the implementation process successfully.

Utilise feedback loops: Establish mechanisms for collecting feedback from participants and stakeholders involved in the implementation of the methodology, using this feedback to refine and improve the approach over time.

Promote sustainability: Emphasise the importance of long-term sustainability, encouraging adult education providers to integrate the VICTORUPESI methodology into their regular practices and adapt it to their specific contexts to achieve sustainable impact.

1. Mapping existing practices

The results of Mapping existing practices can be integrated into ongoing work, and the information and insights gained from this process can be used both in the context of preparing the target group for social integration and for informing and improving own services for the target group and in the community as a whole on several ways:

1. Identify existing services and resources in the community: that can support the target group's social integration, such as local community centres, job training programs, language classes, and other services that can help the target group develop the necessary skills and knowledge for social integration.

2. Identify gaps in services and resources and areas for improvement: The mapping process may have identified areas where existing services and resources do not meet the target group's needs and which can be addressed to better support their social integration. This information can be used to identify areas for service improvement or to advocate for improvements in existing services and resources.

3. Tailor services to target group needs: understanding existing resources and services available in the community can help tailor vocational education services that better meet the specific needs of target groups. For example, one can identify a lack of job training programs for a target group and develop one's own job training program to fill this gap.

4. Evaluation of one's own services and assess the effectiveness of existing practices: the mapping process findings can help to assess existing approaches and programs to support social integration and evaluate the impact of different programs on the target group's social integration outcomes. By comparing one's own services with existing services and resources in the community, one can evaluate the effectiveness of services and identify areas for improvement.

5. Develop partnerships and collaborations: Information obtained from the mapping process can be used to identify opportunities for collaboration and develop partnerships and cooperations with other organisations and stakeholders in the community. For example, one might recognise an organisation that

shares the same goals and values or an entity that already provides services to the target group and explore ways to work together to expand or improve these services.

2. Training sessions with the comparative report

The results of the **training sessions** conducted with target groups in 6 different countries and the comparative report can be used in several ways, including:

1. Improving the training curriculum: The results of the training sessions can be analysed to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses in the training curriculum. This can help to improve the three-module training with accompanying coaching circles and ensure that it is tailored to the needs and expectations of the target group.

2. Professional Development: Professionals in vocational education, career counselling, adult education or social work can use the results to inform their own professional development. By learning about the training methods and strategies that were successful in the pilot programs, professionals can improve their own practice and better serve their clients.

3. Informing future training programs: The reports of the training sessions can provide insights into what works and what doesn't work when designing and implementing vocational training programs for disadvantaged individuals. This information can be exploited to inform future vocational training programs and ensure that they are more effective and relevant to the needs of the target group.

4. Program Development: Organisations that provide training or support services for disadvantaged individuals can use the results to inform the development of their own programs. By incorporating successful strategies and best practices from the pilot programs, organisations can create more effective and relevant programs for their clients.

5. Sharing best practices: The results of the training sessions and the comparative report can be shared with other professionals working with disadvantaged individuals. This can help to disseminate best practices and proven strategies for training and upskilling disadvantaged individuals, leading to more effective services and better outcomes for the target group.

6. Advocacy and policy-making: The results of the training sessions and the comparative report can be used to advocate for policies and initiatives that support the training and upskilling of vulnerable people at risk of social exclusion. By illustrating the positive impact of training programs on the target group, policymakers can be convinced to invest more resources into training and upskilling programs. Advocates for disadvantaged individuals can also use the results to advocate for policies and initiatives that support training and upskilling programs. By demonstrating the positive impact of vocational training programs on the target group, they can make a stronger case for increased funding and resources for these programs.

7. Research: Researchers can use the results to inform their own studies on the effectiveness of vocational training programs for disadvantaged individuals. By analysing the data and conclusions from the pilot programs, researchers can identify areas for further study and exploration.

Altogether, the results of the training sessions and their comparative report are valuable resources and can be used by project partners, professionals, organisations, advocates, and researchers working to support social integration to inform their work and contribute to developing practical vocational training and upskilling programs for disadvantaged individuals.

3. Digital Toolkit

Incorporating the Digital Toolkit in working with the target group can help prepare them for employability and social integration by providing essential digital literacy skills, using innovative technologies and upskilling pathways tailored to their needs. This can help the target group access job opportunities, connect with others in their community, and participate in online activities that promote social integration.

The Digital Toolkit can provide a variety of advantages to project partners and others, including:

- 1. Using to teach basic computer skills:** such as using email, browsing the internet, and employing basic software programs. These skills are essential for social integration in today's digital age.
- 2. Developing job search skills training programs:** that teach the target group how to search for jobs online, create a resume, and complete online job applications. This can help the target group access job opportunities and become more financially self-sufficient.
- 3. Using it to teach the target group digital marketing skills:** such as creating a social media presence, developing online content and utilising digital marketing tools. This can help the target group connect with others in their community and promote their own businesses or services.
- 4. Using innovative technologies to teach digital skills:** can help make the learning experience more engaging and interactive, improve learning outcomes and increase retention rates.
- 5. Developing upskilling pathways:** that provide the target group with new technical skills that are in demand in the job market and can improve the employability of the target group.

6. Customising the Toolkit

- *Tailor the digital training to focus on job search skills:* for example, you can develop training programs that teach the target group how to use job search websites, create an online profile, and communicate with potential employers online.
- *Tailor the training programs to target group needs:* for example, develop training programs that focus on the specific technical skills in demand in the local job market or address the unique cultural challenges that the target group faces.
- *Use data analytics to measure the effectiveness of the training programs:* this can help to identify areas where the training can be improved and personalised and measure its impact on the employability and social integration of the target group.

4. Diversity management toolkit

Integrating the Diversity Management Toolkit into work with the target group can help prepare them for social integration by promoting diversity and inclusion, providing a supportive environment, and customising training to meet their distinctive needs.

Leveraging the Diversity Management Toolkit can provide diverse usefulness for project partners and others, including:

- 1. Developing diversity and inclusion training programs that promote cultural awareness and understanding** (within your community and your organisation for your staff): this can help prepare the target group for social integration by fostering an inclusive environment that respects and celebrates cultural differences.

2. Creating policies and procedures that promote diversity and inclusion (within your organisation and community): this can include promoting non-discriminatory hiring practices, creating inclusive language policies, and ensuring that all employees and community members are treated with respect and dignity.

3. Engaging in outreach activities that promote understanding and dialogue between different groups: may include organising cultural events, supporting community forums on diversity and inclusion, and partnering with other organisations to promote cross-cultural understanding. This can help make the training more engaging and interactive, improve learning outcomes and increase retention rates.

4. Integrating upskilling pathways into the training programs: for example, by offering training programs that not only promote diversity and inclusion but also provide the target group with new technical skills that are in demand in the job market.

5. Customising the Toolkit

- *Develop diversity and inclusion training specific to the target group:* for example, create training programs that address the unique cultural and linguistic challenges facing the target group. This can help ensure that training is relevant and productive in promoting social integration.
- *Use data analytics to personalise training:* gather data about the learning preferences and needs of the target group and use this data to personalise the training experience. This can help improve learning outcomes and increase the employability and social integration of the target group.

Integrating Toolkits

Diversity Management and Digital Toolkits can be integrated by developing training programs that incorporate both digital literacy and diversity and inclusion training, for example:

- offer workshops on using social media to promote diversity and inclusion or teach the target group how to use digital tools to connect with diverse communities
- develop upskilling pathways and offer training programs that teach digital skills through the lens of diversity and inclusion, as courses that teach technical skills and also promote cultural awareness and understanding
- use digital tools to promote diversity and inclusion, such as using social media platforms to share stories and experiences that promote understanding and respect for different cultures and backgrounds

This can help make training more engaging and relevant to the target group, create a sense of community and belonging for the target group, and develop digital literacy skills while also promoting understanding and respect for different cultures and backgrounds.

5. Methodology guide

The Methodology guide can be used as a reference and guidebook for professionals who work with disadvantaged people who have suffered from socio-labour exclusion. By following the comprehensive and integrative approach outlined in the guide, professionals can match the skills, aspirations, interests, and expectations of project target groups with the needs of companies at the local level.

Using the guide can provide several benefits for project partners and others, including:

1. Guiding the development of programs and services: The Methodology guide can provide professionals with a structured approach to designing and implementing their programs and services. By following the guide, they can ensure that their programs and services are evidence-based, effective, and meet the distinct needs of the target group.

2. Improving the effectiveness of labour and social services: By following a comprehensive and integrative approach, professionals can provide more effective work and social services to disadvantaged individuals. This can help to improve their employability and social integration, leading to a more fulfilling life.

3. Increasing accountability and transparency: By following a structured methodology, professionals can increase transparency and accountability in their work with disadvantaged individuals. They can use it to communicate clearly to stakeholders what their goals are, how they plan to achieve them, and how they will measure success. This can help build trust with stakeholders and ensure that services are delivered fairly and transparently.

4. Enhancing knowledge-sharing and collaboration among professionals: The Methodology guide can be used as a basis for knowledge exchange and cooperation among professionals and other organisations working with the same target group. By following a joint methodology, professionals can identify and share best practices and compare results, leading to improved services and outcomes for the target group.

5. Providing a framework for monitoring and evaluating programs and services: By using the guide, professionals can collect data and assess the effectiveness and impact of their programs and services on the target group, and make any necessary adjustments.

6. Saving time and resources: By using a comprehensive and integrative approach outlined in the guide, professionals can save time and resources by avoiding duplication of effort and focusing on effective strategies that have been proven to work.

Overall, the Methodology guide can be a valuable tool for professionals who work with disadvantaged individuals, helping to improve the effectiveness of labour and social services, enhancing knowledge-sharing and collaboration, increasing accountability and transparency, and saving time and resources.

Advice for performing — Structural implementation and methodology (Success factors)

The project experience produced a series of observations related to structural implementation, which are defined here as Success Factors and grouped into six main categories applicable to all target groups covered by the VICTORUPESI project. In thinking out these success factors, the focus is put on components that can contribute to improving the social inclusion of individuals, allowing them to actively participate and smoothly acquire new skills, which is firmly woven into the VICTORUPESI program. If necessary, more detailed elements regarding the VICTORUPESI programme implementation were additionally specified for some of the disadvantaged groups.

Promote Lifelong Learning: Encourage individuals to embrace lifelong learning by fostering a culture that values continuous skill development and personal growth.

Identify Skill Gaps: Conduct skill gap assessments to identify areas where individuals may need additional training or support to enhance their skills and increase their social inclusion.

Provide Accessible Training Opportunities: Ensure accessibility and inclusiveness by considering factors like physical accessibility, language barriers and diverse learning styles. Offer flexible learning options such as online courses, evening classes, or part-time programs.

Offer Supportive Learning Environments: Create safe and supportive learning environments that encourage active participation, open communication, and mutual respect. Foster a sense of belonging and inclusion for all participants.

Foster Collaboration and Peer Learning: Create opportunities for individuals to collaborate, share knowledge, and learn from each other. Peer-to-peer learning can enhance skill acquisition and promote social interaction and community engagement.

Tailor Training to Individual Needs: Recognise unique individual learning needs and preferences. Provide personalised training plans by considering various factors such as learning pace, preferred learning styles, personal goals, etc.

The Methodology used in the VICTORUPESI project was specifically prepared also from the viewpoint of PwD as a target group (see IO4 Diversity management). Persons with complex personal statuses that can include mental health problems and intellectual disabilities are playing an important partner when defining the methodological approach in such training. Each individual is unique, and the mentors/trainers need to explore beforehand the level of knowledge, skills and skills areas that would be of benefit to work on in the future. Person-centred approach and planning on an individual level are inevitable when making an individualised plan that promotes setting SMART objectives for personal life. However, according to the prerequisite of full inclusion under the motto “nothing about us without us” the methodological approach in such training should use and/or include workshops that allow participatory and group work elements in order to define a structure of training that builds on motivation elements residing on the benefit of peer’s support. Slightly elder population is in these terms even more vulnerable as official vocational training has finished for them already and gaining new skills according to a structured vocational training plan with learning objectives and aims needs to include an approach within different levels (organising exercises level-wise, planning activities with option from easy to complex). In such a way the project’s training can help to prepare for official vocational training that is not offered by public schooling when we speak about a population older than 26 years of age.

From this experience drawn from this project, it seems that there are still other categories of socially excluded people that are under-researched and need attention. For example, children of imprisoned people have to bear the stigma of their parents, as we have observed and also as outlined in the following article. Also, sometimes gifted children are excluded by their peers who see them as weird.

We believe that excluded people should be encouraged to use examples.

This training path aims not only to offer hard skills (digital skills or knowledge about laws, rights and duties) but also soft skills, so it is important to guarantee a complete curriculum and the presence of experienced facilitators. In addition, it is to be highlighted that increasing the soft skills of participants can enable them to gain hard skills more effectively. First of all, this VET program represents an opportunity for self-reflection, empowerment and sharing a safe space with other people, both participants and trainers. If the environment is adequate and people feel at ease, it is possible to develop hard skills such as digital skills useful for searching and entering the job market.

In Spain, a comprehensive person-oriented approach has been applied to the implementation of the VICTORUPESI Program, taking into account the individual needs of each user (education, knowledge and skills, previous professional experience knowledge, interests, etc.) to prepare them for integration or reintegration to the labour market or the access to specific training paths.

The initial training program was redesigned to adapt to the needs of our target group, eliminating some parts and reinforcing some others. The first step in this adaptation process was to review the materials and select those topics, training content, practical activities, and dynamics that we consider most effective to address the objective: improve employability.

Individual and group coaching activities reinforced the learning experience and ensured topic consistency.

For the successful implementation of the program creating a participatory and collaborative environment has been a key aspect. In this sense, it is convenient to work with small pilot groups of no more than 5-6 participants with common needs of training and support to create a confident environment, achieve an active engagement of participants and allow sharing of experiences and mutual learning.

The final objective of the training program is to help participants to acquire employment skills and gain self-confidence and motivation to face their process of reincorporation into employment.

The coaching program was structured in the following thematic sessions:

CHALLENGES: Group reflections about common challenges (participants share in a reflection group the emotional, educational, cultural and physical challenges that they face to access employment, and at the end, we work to detect challenges common to all participants)

NEEDS: Mapping of the primary personal job-related skills and identifying skills gaps

ACTION PLANS: Participants get involved in the design of their own “Personal Action Plan” understood as a kind of “contract” with themselves which contains the strategy to follow to achieve personal objectives (SMART objectives) and dynamics about how to overcome different obstacles we can meet to reach the goals defined in our Personal Action Plans

Each participant presents their own Action Plan to the rest. These presentations are used to stimulate participants to talk about the future, challenges they consider they have to face and how they think they can manage them.

The final objective of the coaching program is empowering participants towards a more proactive and aware attitude to get back to the labour market. For this, it is crucial to provide resources and tools to participants for self-reflection and self-evaluation of their skills in terms of the strengths they have and the weaknesses they must face to improve their employability.

VICTORUPESI methodology includes more stages, and it is really important to give attention to each stage to be efficiently applied and that implies putting in the middle of the activity the target group you are working with. What does that mean? We look at a person in her context, with her of the story out of which some needs were born. We divide the needs into emotional, financial, social and educational. After we look around at the social, political and economic context of the area and region where the person is, and develop relations, and partnerships with possible employers, we find out what are their needs in the field of work requests, out of which we understand what kind of skills the future employer should have. In case some of the women with foreign backgrounds have those skills and knowledge, but are not emotionally ready to enter the job market, we provide only the support of the coaching circles, to give them the

courage and the emotional resources to adapt to the company culture and can skip the other modules. In case they are lacking the hard skills as well, we provide the whole training and identify. If she needs some technical training according to the industry, she is trying to find a job in and develop her career, then we match her with an accredited training centre to learn about that vocation within the Swedish context.

A step forward — Structural implementation and Methodology (Success Factors)

- some ideas to work on further elaboration and application of the VICTORUPESI programme (proposals as an upgrade for future development and implementation)

Assess and Recognise Learning Outcomes: Implement a system to assess and recognise the learning outcomes of individuals who have acquired new skills. Try to provide certifications or qualifications that will be recognised and valued by employers and society.

Provide Practical Application Opportunities: Offer practical training opportunities where individuals can apply newly acquired skills in real-world contexts. This can include internships, apprenticeships, job shadowing, or volunteering.

Provide Mentorship and Coaching: Offer mentorship and coaching programs where experienced individuals can guide and support learners in acquiring new skills. Mentors can provide valuable insights, advice, and networks to enhance social inclusion.

Collaborate with Employers: Establish partnerships with local employers to align training programs with industry needs and provide employment or work experience opportunities. Engage employers in the design and delivery of training to ensure relevance and enhance employment outcomes.

Advice for performing — Approach in terms of target groups

The project's diverse target group, which includes disadvantaged people classified into six categories (migrant women, long-term unemployed people, people in prison with light sentences, people with disabilities, women with Asperger's diagnosis and women in rural areas), may have unique needs when it comes to developing vocational skills and accessing employment opportunities. More detailed descriptions and approaches are elaborated in the Mapping existing practices and Methodology guide.

In the following, several aspects of each target group are discussed through the prism of problem/need, solution and achievements.

These aspects were selected by assessing the impact on the sustainability and implementation of the VICTORUPESI project results.

1. MIGRANT WOMEN

In Sweden, the image of migrant women is not so positive and many institutions and companies still victimise migrant women, looking from their sight the potential these women have. This is why our mission is to bring into the light the qualities, and the added value that these women can bring to Swedish society. Because the mentality is that the migrant women are, isolated, poor women, illiterate and with a fear of society, the public policies and measures are built only in the sense of providing service to cover the basic needs and not see the person as a whole and the ways that person can bring a change and even contribution to the local community. So, our observation is that no matter how skillful or emotionally prepared is the person we are trying to support in our projects, if the general mentalities are putting this

person in a box, then this is an external factor that is not in that person's power anymore to change it. So, an important work in this intervention is also some activities in combating stereotypes and changing limiting beliefs of the society and community we are trying to integrate our target groups.

Problem/Need: Migrant women in Sweden face negative stereotypes and victimisation, resulting in limited opportunities and societal recognition of their potential. Public policies often focus on providing basic services without considering the holistic capabilities and contributions these women can bring to society. These women may be isolated, marginalised, and perceived as lacking skills, which further perpetuates their challenges in integration and empowerment.

Solution: To address the challenges faced by migrant women in Sweden, a multifaceted approach that challenges stereotypes and empowers these women is necessary

- **Empowerment Programs:** Design and implement programs that focus on building the self-esteem, skills, and confidence of migrant women. These programs can include vocational training, language education, leadership development, and cultural orientation.
- **Cultural Sensitivity Training:** Conduct training sessions for institutions, companies, and communities to raise awareness about cultural differences and combat stereotypes. This can lead to more inclusive practices and perspectives.
- **Community Engagement:** Foster interactions between migrant women and the local community to showcase their skills, talents, and contributions. Collaborative initiatives can help break down barriers and build understanding.
- **Mentorship and Role Models:** Connect migrant women with successful individuals who have similar backgrounds. Positive role models can inspire and demonstrate that success is attainable.
- **Advocacy and Policy Change:** Work with policymakers to advocate for policies that recognise the potential of migrant women and provide avenues for their integration and success. Encouraging holistic approaches rather than focusing solely on basic needs is crucial.
- **Media and Communication:** Develop media campaigns that highlight the achievements and stories of migrant women. Positive narratives can challenge stereotypes and change public perceptions.

Achievements: Implementing these solutions can lead to several positive achievements

- **Empowered Individuals:** Migrant women who participate in empowerment programs will gain the skills, confidence, and knowledge necessary for successful integration and contribution to society.
- **Changed Public Perception:** Through community engagement, training, and media campaigns, negative stereotypes can be challenged, leading to a more positive perception of migrant women's capabilities.
- **Increased Opportunities:** As societal perspectives shift, migrant women may gain access to better job opportunities, education, and social engagement, leading to improved quality of life.
- **Diverse and Inclusive Society:** Recognising the potential of migrant women can lead to a more diverse and inclusive society that values and leverages the contributions of all its members.
- **Policy Improvements:** Advocacy efforts can lead to changes in public policies that address the holistic needs of migrant women, promoting their empowerment and integration.
- **Strengthened Communities:** The involvement of migrant women in community initiatives can lead to stronger social bonds, increased cross-cultural understanding, and a more cohesive society.
- **Ultimately, the goal is to break down the barriers and limiting beliefs that hinder the integration and success of migrant women in Swedish society. By emphasising their capabilities, skills, and contributions,**

Sweden can harness the potential of these women, creating a more inclusive, diverse, and prosperous nation.

Recommendations that will help in acquiring new skills that contribute to full social inclusion

The self-directed learning approach in our organisation is “learning in the wild”, especially for language acquisition, which involves walking in the parks or community activities with your neighbours or friends, where you are using the occasion of involving native speakers in teaching you the local language. Also, from the perspective of the coaching circles the Circle of Excellence, provided to the participants in the second circle, helps in identifying internal (emotional) resources that later on play the role of a positive anchor to overcome any obstacles, and this could be a self-learning approach to succeed in any difficult situation, transitions or intense emotions, caused by an interview, evaluation meetings with your leaders, or even for working better in a team.

Some observations in the context of the other target group categories according to the situation in Sweden

In Sweden, it is really hard to get a job as the competition is really high and the priority is given to the locals and people that are coming through personal recommendations. This is why it is really important to expand your social capital and take part as well to as many networking events to get to know the local people and be recommended for a job by someone who has already the respect of the local community.

2. LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE

The primary target group in Spain is represented by long-term unemployed people (LTU).

Among LTU people, those with a higher degree of vulnerability are low-skilled adults over 45 years old and young people with low levels of education and training. This means that these workers' skills do not meet the needs of the job market and have been the target groups who have been considered in VICTORUPESI training activities in Spain and beneficiaries of the pilot courses implemented in the testing phase: LTU low-skilled young people less than 30 years old with lower educational levels and LTU low skilled adults over 45 years old with.

The vocational training and labour guidance provided in the project has been addressed to improve the employability of this target group using a comprehensive, flexible and labour market skills needs-oriented approach.

Problem/Need: Long-term unemployed people (LTU) represent one of the most serious problems in the Spanish labour market, where LTU rates are the second highest of all EU member states in 2022.

Long-term unemployed face multiple barriers in integrating or re-integrating into the labour market. Among the key factors that constrain LTU from employability are:

- Lack of information about the labour market and lack or outdated of the skills needed in the current job market
- Chronification of many unemployment situations due to the longer people are out of employment, the less likely they are to find a job again
- Discrimination in the labour market based on age, gender, cultural and migrant background, etc.
- Erosion of skills, confidence, and motivation, as well as a decline in social relations during extended unemployment spells
- Risk of becoming discouraged and falling into inactivity as a result of an unsuccessful job search

- Long-term unemployment can negatively affect people's physical, psychological and emotional health and wellbeing of job seekers, leading to a vicious cycle
- Insufficient and inadequate support from employment and social services to the long-term unemployed
- Lack of investment limiting job creation and a lack of responsiveness in the labour market

Solution: To address the challenges faced by the long-term unemployed, a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach is needed, which would include Skills Development and Training, Active Labor Market Policies, Combating Discrimination, Psychosocial support and counselling to job seekers, Enhanced Social Services, Job Creation and Economic Investment

Achievements: By addressing the diverse needs of the long-term unemployed, society can work towards reducing unemployment rates and creating a more inclusive and prosperous labour market. This can include achievements such as:

- Increased Employability: LTU will have improved access to information, skills development, and support services, making them more competitive in the job market
- Reduced Long-Term Unemployment: with active labour market policies and investment in job creation, the rates of long-term unemployment can decrease, leading to improved economic outcomes
- Enhanced Well-being: providing psychosocial support and addressing mental health concerns can positively impact the overall well-being of job seekers, breaking the negative cycle of long-term unemployment
- Inclusive and Diverse Workforce: combating discrimination in the labour market can result in a more inclusive and diverse workforce, benefiting both employers and employees
- Stronger Economy: a reduction in long-term unemployment can lead to increased economic productivity and stability, benefiting society as a whole

Recommendations that will help in acquiring new skills that contribute to full social inclusion

Long-term unemployed face multiple barriers to labour market integration or re-integration. Among the key factors limiting LTU's employability is the lack of skills or outdated skills needed in the current job market. People with low skills are more likely to engage in unemployment or informal employment.

There is a clear mismatch between the skills of LTU and the skills demanded by companies, which means that acquiring new skills through reskilling and upskilling programs is essential to replace outdated skills that are no longer relevant to the actual job market.

Among recommendations that will help to acquire the new skills that contribute to socio-labour inclusion of LTU are:

- Provide training opportunities to adapt to the demands of the sectors and companies with labour shortages at the local level
- Provide individualised guidance and support measures in the development of the training process
- Promote training in key employability skills, such as digital and soft skills, to cope with the continuous process of change and transformation of the companies
- Encourage cooperation and collaboration in multiagent-partnerships with employers and other private and public institutions to effectively support training and access to employment of LTU
- Enhance work-based learning approaches such as job placement or on the job-training programs
- Holistic, Individualised, and integral support to LTU because single isolated measures such as training alone are showed not to be effective

Long-term unemployment affects a variety of people due to the composition of long-term unemployed groups is very heterogeneous. This diversity of situations requires support tailored to the needs of each person. Project experience suggests that intensive, comprehensive, and individualised support approaches are needed to effectively help the long-term unemployed acquire new skills that improve their employability.

3. PEOPLE IN PRISON WITH LIGHT SENTENCES

The primary target group in Romania was people in prison with light sentences.

Problem/Need: The imprisoned population in Romania and elsewhere faces various challenges related to their education and transition back into society upon release. Imprisoned individuals are often an under-researched group, and there is a need for effective adult learning approaches to support their reintegration into society successfully. Key challenges include:

Limited Education Opportunities: Many imprisoned individuals may have limited access to education and training during their time in prison, resulting in gaps in their knowledge and skills.

Weak IT Experience: the prisoners' past IT experience may be weak, making it challenging for them to adapt to the digital world and modern technologies upon release.

Relevance and Motivation: To engage and support imprisoned learners effectively, the education and training provided should be relevant to their needs and goals, and they need to be internally motivated to learn.

Transitioning to Freedom: Prisoners transitioning into new roles as free individuals face unique challenges in adapting to society, finding employment, and rebuilding their lives.

Solution: To address the needs of imprisoned individuals and support their transition back into society, a tailored and comprehensive adult learning approach should be implemented:

Individualised Learning Plans: Recognising that imprisoned learners have diverse backgrounds and experiences, education and training should be customised based on their specific needs, skills, and interests.

Experiential Learning: Incorporating hands-on, practical activities can help prisoners learn by doing and gain relevant skills that can be applied upon release.

Relevance and Goal Setting: Ensuring that the educational content is relevant to the prisoners' real-life situations and goals can increase their motivation to learn. Encouraging them to set personal and professional goals will help foster a sense of direction and purpose.

Past Experience Integration: Acknowledging and incorporating participants' prior background knowledge and life experiences into the course materials can enhance their learning experience and make concepts more relatable.

Supportive Learning Environment: Creating a safe and supportive learning environment where prisoners feel respected and empowered to take ownership of their learning journey is crucial for their successful development.

Life Skills Training: Along with technical skills, providing life skills training can help prisoners develop essential competencies, such as problem-solving, communication, and decision-making, which are valuable in their transition to freedom.

Achievements: Implementing a well-designed adult learning approach tailored to the unique needs of imprisoned individuals can lead to several positive outcomes:

Enhanced Employability: By providing relevant and practical skills training, prisoners can increase their employability and job prospects upon release, reducing the likelihood of recidivism.

Increased Self-Confidence: A supportive learning environment that recognises and values prisoners' experiences can boost their self-confidence and sense of self-worth.

Successful Reintegration: Equipping prisoners with essential life skills and technical knowledge can facilitate a smoother transition into society and increase their chances of leading productive lives as free individuals.

Reduced Recidivism: Providing meaningful education and training during imprisonment can contribute to reducing recidivism rates, benefiting both individuals and society.

Empowered Learners: Emphasising internal motivation and ownership of their learning journey can empower prisoners to take charge of their personal and professional development, setting them on a positive path for the future.

Recommendations that will help in acquiring new skills that contribute to full social inclusion

The approach to prisoners in Romania, and probably elsewhere, seems to be an under-researched sector as suggested by various research articles: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1748895807072476>

Before starting the work in IO1 and IO2, we thought about which of the current knowledge about adult learning would be better and started from the following basic principles (described in detail at <https://www.wgu.edu/blog/adult-learning-theories-principles2004.html#openSubscriberModal>):

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Adults Are Self-Directing |  |
| 2. Adults Learn by Doing |  |
| 3. Adults Desire Relevance |  |
| 4. Adults Utilise Experience |  |
| 5. Adults Process with Their Senses |  |
| 6. Adults Appreciate Repetition |  |
| 7. Adults Guide Their Own Development |  |
| 8. Adults Thrive with Goal Setting |  |
| 9. Adults Learn Differently Than Children |  |
| 10. Adults Require Ownership |  |

We assumed that the prisoners are people with normal psychophysical abilities, so learning theories for adults should work. Of all ten principles, the most important one should be number 10 (A tendency to be internally motivated; rather than externally) combined with a willingness to learn when transitioning into new roles (from prisoner to free man). The most challenging Principle is number 4, as they will all tend to use their past IT experience that is weak. So every description of the course materials should somehow refer to the participants' prior background knowledge and life experiences.

Overall, focusing on the unique needs and learning principles of adults, particularly Principle 10 (internal motivation) and acknowledging their past experiences, can be instrumental in supporting the education and reintegration of the imprisoned population. By doing so, society can contribute to breaking the cycle of imprisonment and promote positive change for individuals seeking a second chance.

4. PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Problem/Need: People with disabilities face a number of obstacles when it comes to the labour market: access to education and training, prejudices about disability, discrimination, and different levels of protection in labour laws.

Solution: Employment and vocational rehabilitation is the right of a disabled person to individual services to the extent, in the manner and for the duration defined in the rehabilitation plan. Employment rehabilitation includes services that are provided with the aim of preparing a disabled person for a suitable job, getting a job, keeping a job and advancing or changing his/her professional career. The types of employment rehabilitation services can include (among others): monitoring and professional assistance in training and education.

Achievements: As it comes down to inclusion in education in general, the national strategy is aiming to an all-inclusive approach in all levels of inclusion for PWD's that include a vast amount of inclusion elements that can be described as “ensuring equal opportunities for enrolment in all educational programs and promotion of greater inclusion of people with disabilities in regular forms of education and training”. However, in adulthood and especially after 26 years of age, the inclusion in vocational training is lower. In these terms inclusion institutions and programmes are and should be operating as a mediator within the individual planning process through rehabilitation programmes and promote inclusion in VET and CVET programmes.

Recommendations that will help in acquiring new skills that contribute to full social inclusion

One of the programmes aimed at providing social inclusion is the so-called „Social inclusion programmes“ that include PwD with a current status of being unemployable. As this is a form of a disability status that is not permanent, the programmes such as the VICTORUPESI approach are an important part to build and expand existing soft and hard skills in order to find solutions to whether enrol into a CVET or VET programme, re-entering rehabilitation process or to find a suitable position in the labour market. Both Social inclusion programmes and Vocational rehabilitation processes include options for retraining and job training however wider awareness-raising efforts among employers are needed for more sensitivity to employ PwD on a wider scale. The digital era has inevitably embedded itself into all areas of learning, work and services within which such training programmes would be necessary for the future to achieve full participation in society due to the rising threat from exclusion digital divide and digital exclusion. The embedding of digital competence up-skilling needs to be connected to the real-life situation of each person to self-reliantly navigate through newly developed and/or digitalised services that help them towards better inclusion in society within the scope of work, health and leisure time activities.

5. WOMEN WITH ASPERGER'S DIAGNOSIS

TG1 in Italy includes women with high-functioning autism and Asperger's diagnosis.

Problem/Need: Women with high-functioning autism and other intellectual disabilities face double discrimination due to their gender and disability. They have often experienced suffering and exclusion

throughout their lives. There is a need for recruiters and facilitators to be adequately trained about this specific target group and how to approach and support them.

Solution: Recruitment plays a crucial role in laying the foundations for effective implementation. It is necessary to select a homogeneous target group and create a safe environment where every participant feels comfortable sharing their thoughts and questions, and acquiring new skills. To address the specific needs of women with high-functioning autism and Asperger's diagnosis, recruiters and facilitators should receive training that equips them with the knowledge and understanding of the unique challenges faced by this group. It's also necessary to sustain and help the participants along the training path. This is related to a lot of details in the planning of the training (such as physical space, available tools, days and hours of lessons...), but above all the good result of the training is due to the trainers and facilitators, who have to create the right environment and to find the key for approaching every single person in the classroom.

Achievements: By providing adequate training and support, recruiters and facilitators can make a significant difference in the lives of women with high-functioning autism and Asperger's diagnosis. Overall, the achievements revolve around creating a supportive environment, addressing specific needs, and empowering women with high-functioning autism and Asperger's diagnosis. By recognising and accommodating their unique challenges, recruiters and facilitators can contribute to their personal and professional growth, ultimately breaking down barriers and reducing discrimination.

Recommendations that will help in acquiring new skills that contribute to full social inclusion

- Increased inclusivity: Recruiting a homogeneous target group and creating a safe and supportive environment encourages inclusivity. Participants can feel valued and respected, which promotes their active participation and engagement in the training program.
- Enhanced learning outcomes: With trainers and facilitators who understand how to approach each individual in the classroom, the learning experience can be tailored to meet the specific needs of women with high-functioning autism and Asperger's diagnosis. This personalised approach can lead to improved learning outcomes and skill acquisition.
- Empowerment and self-confidence: A well-designed training program, supported by competent trainers and facilitators, can empower women with high-functioning autism and Asperger's diagnosis. By providing a safe space for expression and addressing their unique challenges, participants can develop greater self-confidence and belief in their abilities.

Improved skills: Through targeted training and support, women with high-functioning autism and Asperger's diagnosis can acquire new skills that enhance their employability. This can lead to increased opportunities for meaningful employment and greater independence in their lives.

Overall, the achievements revolve around creating a supportive environment, addressing specific needs, and empowering women with high-functioning autism and Asperger's diagnosis. By recognising and accommodating their unique challenges, recruiters and facilitators can contribute to their personal and professional growth, ultimately breaking down barriers and reducing discrimination.

6. WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS

Problem/Need: Rural women face challenges in attending (vocational) training due to their daily responsibilities, such as household chores, agricultural work or caring for family members. Hence,

difficulties may arise in managing the duration and intensity of training programs alongside these responsibilities.

Solution: Adjust the duration and schedule of vocational training programs to match rural women's needs and availability. This could include spreading the training sessions over shorter or longer periods and reducing the number of activity hours per day.

Achievements: By adjusting the training duration and schedule, rural women can more easily participate in vocational training programs, leading to increased skills and knowledge. This can, in turn, improve their confidence and overall well-being and increase their employability and income potential. Additionally, this solution may help to reduce the gender gap in employment and economic opportunities in rural areas.

Problem/Need: Women in rural areas may face limited access to the Internet and technology, including a lack of reliable Internet, inadequate technology infrastructure, weak signal and less access to equipment, such as computers or smartphones. With the increasing prevalence of digital technology in the workplace, lack of access to technology can hinder rural women's ability to participate fully in the job market. It can also limit their ability to access online training resources and connect with potential employers or mentors through digital platforms.

Solution: Access to the Internet and technology is essential for the professional development of women in rural areas. Addressing the issue of limited access in rural areas requires the implementation of infrastructure improvements, such as expanding internet access and strengthening signals. This can be achieved through the cooperation of local governments, non-governmental organisations and private companies. In addition, providing training on the use of technology and equipment can help rural women fully utilise the resources available to them.

Achievements: Improving access to the Internet and technology is critical to breaking down the barriers that prevent rural women from accessing vocational training, job opportunities, and entrepreneurship. By providing the necessary tools and infrastructure, we can empower rural women to take charge of their professional development and contribute to the economic growth of their communities.

Problem/Need: Women in rural areas face challenges accessing vocational training and work experience, starting their own businesses, and getting guidance and support in their career development.

Solution: Providing access to vocational education and training programs specifically designed for their needs and available locally, apprenticeships and internships, mentorship and networking opportunities can help rural women overcome these challenges and gain valuable hands-on vocational training, work experience, and guidance and support for their career development.

Achievements: By providing apprenticeships and internships, rural women can gain hands-on vocational training and work experience, which can increase their employability and help them start their own businesses. Mentoring and networking opportunities can provide rural women with support and guidance, connect them with potential employers, and expand their professional networks.

Advice for performing — Recommendations for future projects or initiatives

Here are some recommendations for future projects or initiatives targeting similar groups and objectives:

1. Involve the target group in project planning and implementation to ensure that their needs are met and that they have ownership of the project

2. **Use a participatory approach to involve all stakeholders**, such as local businesses, educational institutions, and government agencies, in project planning and implementation
3. **Develop partnerships with local organisations**, such as community-based organisations, non-governmental organisations, and local businesses, to leverage their resources and expertise and ensure that the project is sustainable
4. **Use a holistic approach that addresses the multiple barriers faced by the target group**, including social, economic, and cultural barriers
5. **Provide comprehensive support to the target group**, including vocational training, emotional support, and coaching and mentoring
6. **Use digital technologies** to enhance the effectiveness of project implementation and to facilitate access to training and support for the target group
7. **Conduct regular monitoring and evaluation** to measure the effectiveness of project implementation, identify areas for improvement, and ensure sustainability
8. **Build capacity among local stakeholders**, including trainers, mentors, and support staff, to ensure that the project is sustainable and can be replicated in other contexts
9. **Share best practices and lessons learned** from the project with other organisations and stakeholders to promote replication and scale-up of successful interventions
10. **Develop a sustainability plan** that outlines the steps necessary to ensure the continued success of the project after the funding period ends

Chapter II – Recommendations for other institutions and practitioners

⇒ for adult education providers on how to apply the new methodology

Steps that any organisation should consider when they intend to apply for this programme - guidelines for the transferability and adoption of approaches, tools, and processes:

1. Conduct a needs assessment: Evaluate the specific needs and requirements of the target audience to determine how the new methodology can be effectively applied.
2. Customise the approach: Tailor the methodology to align with the existing resources, capabilities, and goals of the adult education provider.
3. Plan for implementation: Develop a comprehensive implementation plan that outlines the steps, timelines, and resources needed to apply the new methodology successfully.
4. Train staff and instructors: Provide training and professional development opportunities to ensure that staff and instructors are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively apply the new methodology.
5. Monitor and evaluate progress: Establish mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the application of the new methodology, collecting feedback from participants and making adjustments as needed to enhance its effectiveness.

Additional recommendations

To adapt the VICTORUPESI methodology to other organisations

SWEDEN – MIGRANT WOMEN

1. Building Strategic Partnerships: Engaging with Local Employers"

Develop partnerships and good relations with many companies and job providers in your region. This highlights the need to establish collaborations to facilitate the integration of the target group into the job market.

2. Fostering Employer Engagement: Connecting Target Group and Employers

Invite them to your events to familiarise them with your target group. This focuses on the strategy of inviting companies and job providers to events and highlights the significance of building connections and understanding between potential employers and the target group.

3. Needs Assessment through Dialogue: Identifying Job Requirements

Create a context for discussion with employers to find out what the job requests, required skills and what kind of employees they are looking for, so you know what skills your target group should develop. It is essential that you understand the employer's needs and tailor the training accordingly.

4. Skills Preparation and Certification: Bridging the Skill Gap

This emphasises the preparation process of target groups with the necessary skills based on job requests. Prepare your target group with those skills, either in your organisation or refer them to other accredited centres to give them a certification in the profession the job request exists.

5. Emotional Preparedness: Integrating Coaching Circles

Prepare your target group emotionally using the Coaching Circles. It is crucial to consider addressing emotional aspects to ensure successful integration into the workplace.

6. Technical Skill Development: Utilising VICTORUPESI Modules

Provide training for developing technical skills using the modules of the VICTORUPESI training if needed.

7. Long-Term Support: Facilitating Workplace Integration

In case a person from your target group is hired, follow the situation for at least six months and try to facilitate the process in case of any misunderstandings. It takes more time to adapt to the company culture than getting to know how to work there. As you know better the culture of the person you sent, it is easier for you to facilitate this process and play a cultural mediator role as well, to make sure the person feels valuable at the workplace.

SPAIN – LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE

1. Adaptation for Success: Tailoring the VICTORUPESI Program

This emphasises the importance of adapting the VICTORUPESI program to meet the specific needs of the users. It highlights the necessity of customisation for effective implementation and positive outcomes.

2. Optimal Group Configuration: Enhancing Effectiveness

The effectiveness and positive results of the methodology implemented depend on factors such as the homogeneity in the configuration of the group of participants in terms of personal and professional profiles (age, sex, level of education and qualification, professional profiles, and previous experience)

This homogeneity in the profile of the participants is very convenient to create a confident learning environment.

3. Flexibility for Tailored Learning: Addressing Diverse Target Groups

This highlights the significance of flexibility to adapt the learning process to the specific needs of each target group, to adapt the level of complexity and decision about training topics, the way of working on these topics with the participants, dynamics to work and supporting activities to implement.

ROMANIA – PEOPLE IN PRISON WITH LIGHT SENTENCES

1. Understanding Target Group Needs: Customising the Approach

It emphasises that different groups may require different approaches to ensure success. The first step in applying our methodology would be to assess the target groups' needs. For example, in our case, the approach of imprisoned people which is normal from a psychological point of view should be done using adult education principles. In other cases, like the Italian target group, the approach should be done using principles of communication and education for people with autism and Asperger Syndrome. Understanding the target group is the key to success in our opinion.

2. Empowering Adult Learners: Motivation and Achievable Goals

Adult education theories teach us that adults guide their own development. Working to motivate people and setting them reachable goals should be the key to success.

3. Adaptable Methodology: A Template for Real-Life Situations

This emphasises the versatility of the VICTORUPESI methodology as a template for various target groups. It suggests that while some adaptation may be necessary, the methodology can be applied to different groups with varying degrees of intervention. The VICTORUPESI project methodology is designed as a template to cover as many possible real-life situations. Adult education providers and practitioners can use it with other target groups from their area. The template needs at least a minimum of adaptation, for instance, adult disadvantaged people, but more intervention is required for other categories like deaf people.

4. Instructor's Role and Soft Skills: A Positive Impact

Besides IT competency, the instructor should also have strong soft skills. An instructor's personality might have a profound positive impact on the inmates if they will him as a role model

(We recommend the following document as a guide for the necessary teacher competencies: <https://lincs.ed.gov/publications/te/competencies.pdf>)

5. Addressing Local Social Exclusion: Providing Competent Support

Also, the teacher should know the local problems of social exclusion because the students might ask questions outside the scope of the course, and competent answers must be provided. In our case, alienation resulting from social exclusion can be connected to a person's social class, race, skin colour, religious affiliation, ethnic origin, educational status, living standards, political opinions, appearance and last but not least the former inmate status in the society.

SLOVENIA – PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

1. Applying the Methodology: Assessing Adaptability in Different Learning Environments

Check how the entire process is applicable in a specific learning and/or work environment - Any organisation applying the methodology and resources developed in VICTORUPESI training needs to firstly check how the whole process is applicable in their learning and/or working environment.

2. Unlocking Potential: Tailoring VICTORUPESI for Adult Education and Training

The adult education sector has a variety of options to adopt material according to their working focus and learning settings. The adult education sector in Slovenia is offering a variety of non-formal learning and official training, leading to certification is offered by some of them – operating as training points for primary schooling and mediators in some national qualification learning programmes. Therefore, the methodology is adaptable to a variety of target groups (adults with lower skills, migrants, older adult learners, etc.).

3. Inclusive Training: Addressing Diverse Target Groups with VICTORUPESI

This diversity within the adult education sector allows the VICTORUPESI methodology to be adaptable to various target groups. This includes adults with lower skills, migrants, older adult learners, and more. The methodology is designed to accommodate the specific needs and requirements of these diverse groups, ensuring that it can effectively cater to their learning objectives and help them acquire the necessary skills for personal and professional development.

4. Empowering through Skills: Benefits for Employment and Rehabilitation Providers

Such programmes are of great benefit within employment and vocational rehabilitation providers and Social inclusion programme providers as the work with the target group includes elements of peer support, group work, motivation and obtaining the skills that are in alignment with societal changes and challenges.

5. Motivation Matters: A Participatory Approach to Sustaining Engagement

A participatory approach for setting the learning tempo and reaching an agreement about the process is vital in order to keep the motivational factors high.

Some observations in the context of the other target group categories according to the situation in Slovenia

Such training is not offered within the official schooling system as the all-inclusive approach is implemented in practice in the country. The question of vocational education is also set through the Law on the guidance of children with special needs also includes children, minors and young adults with special needs and, exceptionally, adults over 21 up to and including 26 years of age who are continuing education in tailored vocational and professional programs with the same educational standard and professional education with an equivalent educational standard and special rehabilitation programme, as well persons in the same age as mentioned, who can be enrolled in the program of education and training for adults, that is part of a special program for children with moderate, severe and heavy intellectual disability (these are children with intellectual disabilities, blind and partially sighted children, or children with impaired visual function, deaf and hard of hearing children, children with speech and language disorders, physical handicapped, long - term sick, with learning disabilities, autism, emotional and behavioural disorders requiring personalised exercise education programs with additional professional assistance or tailored education programs and education or special education programs) (Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo).

(2020). Retrieved from: <https://www.zrssi.si/o-nas/usmerjanje-otrok-s-pp>). Therefore, such training is very useful in the above-mentioned rehabilitation processes as the programme allows evaluation of the working skills and adaption to labour market challenges.

Instead of a conclusion:

- Beyond Official Schooling: Vocational Education for Special Needs and Ensuring Equal Opportunities
- Bridging the Gap: Integrating Special Needs Individuals into the Labor Market

ITALY – WOMEN WITH ASPERGER'S DIAGNOSIS

1. Flexibility in Action: Adapting Training to People and Context

The most important recommendation is: „adapt the training to the people and the context“. The VICTORUPESI methodology is really flexible since it has been developed to be used for supporting different disadvantaged target groups. Consequently, it is not only possible, but also essential, to develop the programme focusing on a specific target, and after having gained enough knowledge and experience about it. This highlights the need to understand what is transferable to the new target, and then, how to transfer it. It is possible only if the training designer is aware of the needs of the specific target, and has adequate knowledge and experience about it.

2. Targeted Focus: Tailoring the VICTORUPESI Training Program to Specific Objectives

Every organisation needs to focus on some aspects of the training path, depending on the specific target and learning context.

Who is the target of the training course? What is the objective? Which working environment the participants are going to be addressed to or prepared to?

3. Continuous Support: Facilitators as Teachers and Mentors

Another important point is that the participants need continuous support during all the phases of the implementation. Facilitators/Trainers are not only teachers but also mentors. Their role goes far beyond the transferral of notions and includes a personal relationship with the participant, providing ongoing guidance and support.

4. Customised Approach: Fostering a One-to-One Learning Experience

In Italy, it was necessary to carefully adapt the programme and the approach to a very specific target, to provide the best experience to the participants. Adaptation is key in implementing the VICTORUPESI training programme, which is really flexible to be used to support different kinds of beneficiaries.

However, facilitators had to adapt their approach and training style not only to a general target but also to every single participant, because this target group needs a one-to-one approach more than other groups.

SERBIA – WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS

1. Understanding Vocational Training Needs: Conducting a Comprehensive Assessment

Conduct a thorough assessment to understand the specific needs and aspirations of women in rural areas for vocational training. Consider factors such as their existing skills, local industry demands, and the unique challenges or circumstances they may face. This highlights the importance of addressing needs and

developing programs tailored to women in rural areas that focus on providing training in high-demand fields, including IT skills.

2. Flexibility for Success: Designing Accessible Training Programs

Design and develop vocational training programs flexible in terms of timing, location, and duration to accommodate the responsibilities and constraints faced by women in rural areas, such as caregiving and agricultural duties. It focuses on creating accessibility by ensuring that training fits into their busy lives.

3. Guidance for Success: Establishing Mentorship and Role Models

Provide mentorship programs and role models. This highlights the importance of establishing mentorship programs that connect women in rural areas with successful women professionals in their desired fields. It emphasises the role of guidance, motivation, and support in helping women navigate career pathways.

4. Building Bridges: Creating Networking Opportunities

Foster networking opportunities such as networking events and forums where women in rural areas can connect with each other, share experiences, and build supportive professional relationships. This can create a sense of community and enhance their access to opportunities.

5. Pathway to Achievement: Providing Career Counseling and Guidance

Offer career counselling and guidance by providing personalised career counselling services to help women in rural areas identify their skills, interests, and potential career paths. Support them in setting achievable goals and developing realistic action plans.

6. Empowering Through Technology: Addressing Digital Literacy and Access

Recognise and bridge the digital divide by offering digital literacy training and ensuring access to technology and internet resources. Equip women with essential IT skills required in today's job market. Another aspect is leveraging technology and innovative delivery methods for training. This can include online courses, video conferencing, and other distance learning tools, which adult education providers can use to provide training, ensuring that women in rural areas have access to high-quality training resources regardless of their location.

7. Partnerships for Success: Collaborating with Local Businesses and Employers

Establish partnerships with local businesses and employers to align vocational training programs with the needs of the local job market. Create opportunities for internships, apprenticeships, and job placement. This can help increase the likelihood that women in rural areas will be able to find employment opportunities after completing their training.

8. Inclusive Learning Environment: Addressing Cultural and Social Barriers

This underscores the importance of recognising and addressing cultural and social barriers that may hinder women's participation in vocational training. Implement strategies that foster a supportive and inclusive learning environment, respecting cultural norms and values.

9. Continuous Improvement: Evaluating and Adapting the Methodology

Continuously evaluate the effectiveness and relevance of the vocational education methodology for women in rural areas. Collect feedback from participants and stakeholders to make necessary adjustments, enhancing program outcomes and impact over time.

10. Unleashing Entrepreneurial Spirit: Developing Entrepreneurship Training

Upgrade the VICTORUPESI vocational program by incorporating modules dealing with the development of entrepreneurial skills. Consider offering a more comprehensive training program that provides support in business planning, financing, and marketing and empowers women in rural areas to start their own businesses or engage in self-employment ventures.

These recommendations aim to address the specificities and challenges faced by women in rural areas. By tailoring vocational education programs to their needs and circumstances, adult education providers can empower women to pursue fulfilling careers, contribute to local economies, and enhance their overall well-being.

Chapter III – Short Life Stories and Lessons Learned

Within this section, studies of real-life cases are presented as experiences from the implementation of pilot training in six countries and as testimonials about project activities.

Short Life Stories

Encouraged by the idea of the power of storytelling, the project partners resorted to this form to convey the atmosphere and results of piloting the VICTORUPESI training. These stories stand before you as inspiring testimonials of the transformative power of learning and the limitless possibilities that await those who dare to embrace this VET journey. They have been collected and jointly titled "Transforming Lives Through Vocational Education: A Journey of Personal Growth", but each of them brings impressions from a different country and focuses on a different target group, and serve as a testament to the power of learning and the strength found in unity in diversity.

Transforming Lives Through Vocational Education: A Journey of Personal Growth

⇒ Stories to Inspire - testimonials about project activities

The pilot program in six countries provided an inspiring testament to the remarkable impact that vocational education can have on individuals, empowering them to embrace their true potential. They recognised the value of this learning experience and uncovered their openness to new experiences and perspectives. Realising that personal growth thrives on embracing change, their newfound understanding propelled them forward, helping them navigate future challenges with resilience.

SWEDEN – MIGRANT WOMEN

Navigating New Horizons: A Journey of Self-Discovery and Growth for Migrant Women as a Path to Professional Success

The pilot vocational education program targeting migrant women equipped them with the skills, knowledge and confidence needed to navigate the Swedish labour market.

Key Points: During their time in the program, participants discovered a newfound understanding of their abilities, learned to reflect their strengths in their CVs, and received tools to assess their competencies.

A transformative pilot vocational training program has been unfolded in Sweden, bringing together a group of determined migrant women. This initiative aimed to provide them with the skills, knowledge, and confidence needed to navigate the Swedish job market. Through dedicated vocational education, the participants embarked on a journey of self-discovery and empowerment, uncovering new horizons and crafting their own pathways to success. Through the guidance of skilled trainers and carefully designed modules, a diverse



group of migrant women, each with their own dreams and aspirations, found clarity in their career goals. The training provided them with actionable steps, turning their ambitions into a well-defined plan for success. The supportive environment and comprehensive vocational education had nurtured their self-belief. During pilot training, migrant women found a space where self-discovery was embraced, and the Coaching Circles helped them understand themselves better. Through introspective conversations and mentorship, they peeled back the layers of self-doubt and insecurity. This newfound understanding of their strengths and values propelled them towards targeted job opportunities that resonated with their authentic self. Additionally, amidst the digital landscape, many of them have realised the importance of LinkedIn. With the guidance of the training, they harnessed the platform power to connect with potential employers, expand their professional network, and stay updated with industry trends. For many of them, the concept of Personal Branding emerged as a tool they will now use to create their CV. With guidance from trainers, they learned to craft a unique narrative that compellingly showcases their skills and experiences. And now, their revamped CV reflects their individuality, helping them stand out in a competitive job market. Thus, pilot training not only equipped them with tangible skills but ignited a spark in each of them, propelling them towards a brighter future. Armed with newfound confidence, they tackled their job search with renewed energy and undeterred by challenges and rejections, knowing that success was within reach.

These migrant women's stories illuminate the power of tailored guidance, supportive networks and unwavering determination to succeed, and their experiences serve as a testament to the potential that lies within every individual, waiting to be unlocked through learning and empowerment.



As testimonials, we noted down the statements of the participants, and below are some clues:

“This training helped me to understand more clearly what are my next steps to get a job in Sweden.”

“I feel more confident in continuing to search for a job now”

“The Coaching Circles helped me understand myself better”

“Personal Branding is a tool that I ‘ll use now to create better my CV”

“I understand now the importance of having a LinkedIn profile in Sweden.”

SPAIN – LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE

Unearthing Potential: Empowering Long-Term Unemployed in Spain



The vocational education pilot program targeting long-term unemployed individuals set the stage for finding renewed hope and purpose through this unique learning experience. In general, all participants expressed a very positive opinion about their participation in training and coaching activities.

Key Points: During their time in the program, participants discovered a newfound understanding of their abilities, learned to reflect their strengths in their CVs, and received tools to assess their competencies.

In Spain, the vocational education pilot program was for long-term unemployed people (LTU), providing them with an opportunity to grow and discover their true potential, and

participants expressed overwhelming positivity about these learning experiences. They discovered the power of reflecting on their personal abilities and incorporating them into their CVs. They learned valuable tools for self-assessment of competencies, accessing resources, and gaining information to accredit their professional experiences. This newfound knowledge empowered them to sell themselves confidently, aware of their strengths and areas for improvement. The exchange of experiences and practical exercises fostered a supportive community, inspiring each individual to overcome challenges and set personal development goals. Sharing stories among the participants created a supportive environment, inspiring and motivating each other to overcome professional and personal challenges. Their individual triumphs served as a beacon for the entire group. For the teachers, mentors, and facilitators involved in the program, the testimonials from the participants were very positive and enriching. Understanding each individual's unique circumstances has become a pivotal aspect of providing personalised training, and recognising that standard training methods do not fit all, they embraced the importance of tailoring content to suit each participant's needs.

The impact of the program extended beyond just the training period. Although it takes time for the results to fully manifest, participants immediately expressed a sense of improvement in their self-esteem, self-awareness, motivation, and understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses. Armed with this knowledge, they set their sights on future personal development objectives, eagerly embracing new possibilities.



As testimonials, we noted down the statements of the participants, and below are some clues:

"I learned what is personal skills, how to include them in my CV, and what are my strengths and weaknesses."

Trainers' comments: *"...Knowing the personal circumstances of each participant is a key first step to focusing the training contents from a more individualised perspective. Behind each participant is a person with specific needs, and standard training does not work."*

Some participants pointed out the most positive things about the training course:

- ✓ How to reflect my personal abilities in my CV
- ✓ Tools for self-assessment of competencies, resources and information provided and information for accrediting professional experience.
- ✓ To get to know myself better, sell myself better and know what skills I need to improve.
- ✓ How to evaluate my competencies.
- ✓ The exchange of experiences among the participants, the practical exercises and the tools provided



A few key takeaways:

- ➔ The individual experiences of some participants about how they overcome professional or even personal difficulties at some points in their lives were very inspiring and motivating for the group.
- ➔ Even though the results of this kind of intervention are visible over the long term, the participants expressed a feeling of improvement in self-esteem, self-awareness, motivation and knowledge of their own reality, strengths, and weaknesses, which will allow them to set future personal development objectives.
- ➔ The testimonials were also very positive and enriching for teachers, mentors and facilitators involved in the different editions of the Victorupesi program implemented.

ROMANIA – PEOPLE IN PRISON WITH LIGHT SENTENCES

Inclusive Pathways: Transforming Lives of Prisoners through the Power of Vocational Education

A remarkable journey unfolded in a pilot vocational training program in Romania, breaking down societal prejudices and fostering hope for those often overlooked - individuals in prison.

Key Points: Participants from the prison system displayed remarkable dedication during the vocational education program, eager to reintegrate into society and lead fulfilling lives after their sentences. The project not only empowered them with valuable skills but also helped some of them overcome their pasts and seek new opportunities.

As the project team encountered these individuals and delved deeper into uncovering the complexities and nuances of each person's story, they discovered a profound determination among them to reintegrate into society and build a better future. Here is an inspiring story from a member of the Romanian pilot implementation team:

During the project implementation, I met several people about whom society has prejudices: those in prison. Usually, free people consider those in prison to be people to avoid because they have committed acts incompatible with the status of a free man. But we have had people in our work groups with prisoners who ended up in prison not because they wanted to break the law but because they were in inappropriate contexts. For example, several prisoners were imprisoned because they caused traffic accidents in which even their loved ones died (spouses, children, parents). It is obvious that they did not want this to happen to them, and only a certain complex of factors made this happen. Such people involved in our project (Pilot 1 and Pilot 2) were the most serious, the most involved, and the most willing to return to a normal life after serving their sentence. They actively participated in the lessons, asked questions, paid attention to the explanations and conscientiously did their exercises.

Several of them have submitted their files to participate in employment contests, and according to our information, two have been hired. We know the case of a masseur who, following a car accident caused by him, his wife died, and his little girl was seriously injured. Despite the hardships, he approached the vocational education program with determination. He attended our courses, was very involved, and after his release, he submitted his documents to participate in the employment competition. Using the information he received during the course, he managed to win the competition and got a job at a medical clinic. We thus managed to socially integrate this person who was apparently excluded from society because he was in prison.



A few key takeaways:

- ↳ Among the participants from the prison system, the team encountered individuals whose lives had been altered tragically by unforeseen circumstances. They had not intended to break the law but found themselves in inappropriate contexts that led to their incarceration. For instance, some had caused accidents resulting in the loss of their loved ones.
- ↳ Despite their pasts, these prisoners proved to be the most serious and engaged participants in the vocational education program. They attended lessons with utmost dedication, seeking knowledge and skills that could help them rebuild their lives after their sentences were served. Throughout the courses, they actively participated, asked insightful questions, and diligently completed their exercises.
- ↳ As the program progressed, the prisoners' transformation became evident. Several of them gathered the courage to submit their applications for employment contests. It was a brave step towards reintegrating into society and leaving their pasts behind. Remarkably, two of them succeeded in securing employment opportunities, proving that they were capable of rebuilding their lives.

SLOVENIA – PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Embracing Abilities: A Transformative Journey of Self-discovery, Empowerment and Growth



The vocational education pilot program in Slovenia was a transformative experience for the participants and a testament to the remarkable impact that vocational education can have on individuals with disabilities.

Key Points: During the pilot program, participants experienced profound changes that transcended their initial expectations. They discovered the true power of learning and how it can enrich their lives.

The pilot implementation took place in the premises of the OZARA d.o.o. unit in the cities of Maribor and Murska Sobota. This initiative was dedicated to supporting individuals with disabilities by providing them with essential skills and knowledge for personal and professional growth, with the aim of developing and maintaining their work abilities while addressing the challenges associated with their unique circumstances. Through open communication, personalised assessment, meticulous preparation, and tailored evaluation methods, participants embarked on a transformative journey of self-discovery and empowerment.

They, perhaps initially fearful, embraced the program with enthusiasm. They quickly realised that their fears were unwarranted, and participating in the workshops allowed them to overcome their self-doubt. Encouraged to step out of their comfort zones and fully engage in the learning process, their experience became a catalyst for personal growth empowering them to tackle future challenges with confidence.

Through carefully structured training, participants enhanced their social networks, realised their growth potential and broke through personal barriers. As the program unfolded, they discovered the vast potential of digital communication tools. Some, who believed they were proficient in everyday internet use, realised that there were countless aspects they had yet to explore. They learned to search for information efficiently, uncovering tricks within email communication and discovering the power of social media platforms beyond their surface-level use. Their expanded digital literacy equipped them with the skills to communicate effectively, share visual stories, and tailor their message to suit different contexts. Through the program, fostering resilience and empowering them to embrace their unique abilities, they honed their active listening skills, learned to express their opinions confidently, and developed effective conflict-resolution strategies. They also gained a deeper understanding of personal integration within their social surroundings, fostering a stronger sense of community involvement. The journey of self-discovery and empowerment has equipped them with the tools to thrive in their personal and professional endeavours and demonstrated the importance of inclusive vocational education, enabling individuals to unlock their true potential. And above all, participants realised the significance of continuous self-improvement, recognising the transformative power of investing in themselves.



As testimonials, we noted down the statements of the participants, and below are some clues:

“I feel... like I have been more kept to myself, more reserved, I have managed to relax and follow the goals of workshops...”

“I did not join the workshops with fear, so I expected to participate successfully, and I think I managed that...”

“I joined these workshops with joy; however, I feel that I am very deserved, a little bit frightened, mistrustful... This workshop experience will help me also in the future...”

“I figured out I am an open person.”

“I learnt that I am insufficiently independent, however, I realised that some things are easily achievable if we cooperate with each other”

The following assessments have also been given:

- ✓ Improvement of listening to others, personality development, not to control oneself
- ✓ Exercising in expressing one own opinion, how to react in a conflict
- ✓ Understanding of personal integration in the social surrounding, community, and improvement of community involvement
- ✓ understanding of how important it is to work on oneself



A few key takeaways:

- It is possible to enhance social networks, knowing more web pages to search for people and institutions.
- Growing feeling of motivation.



- ➔ Looking up for emails, organising and improving communication through emails – some thought they already manage the everyday use and internet tools as well, but there are many more details (looking up for information, tricks within email communication, webpage use and specifics...).
- ➔ Social media like FB, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and others have been perceived as of managing them in everyday use, but participants got to know a different side to it – safe communication, the potential of visual stories and digital storytelling, adopting the way how and what we need/want to communicate.

ITALY – WOMEN WITH ASPERGER'S DIAGNOSIS

Building Bridges of Support: The Impact of Coaching Circles

The vocational education pilot program in Italy included women with high-functioning autism and Asperger's diagnosis, and the participants discovered not only new skills but also a profound self-awareness.

Key Point: The coaching circles created a sense of safety and inclusivity, guiding the implementation of other training modules. Module 3, which covered workers' rights, sparked deep interest and fostered a newfound self-awareness.

The pilot was held at the offices of BES Cooperativa Sociale (Milan), in a well-equipped classroom with computers, a Wi-Fi connection, a whiteboard and a projector.



During the thoughtfully led training, participants were very interested in all the topics and acquired a new awareness of themselves in addition to hard skills in the digital field, and socio-relational skills. Within this, coaching circles emerged as a vital component, providing a haven for individuals to share their experiences. Participants felt a sense of safety and belonging, they found solace in sharing their past painful experiences and building connections with others who had faced similar challenges. Often wounded by discrimination and exclusion, these individuals had endured painful journeys. The specialised psychologists' awareness of this history allowed them to create a space where they could find shared understanding. As the training progressed, the insights gained from the coaching circles informed and directed the implementation of other modules. It was evident that these circles played a pivotal role in shaping the participants' journey. The newfound sense of safety and inclusion translated into greater engagement and receptiveness, enhancing the overall learning experience. A particularly impactful was Module 3 (Rights and Duties of Workers), which included many topics which were very interesting to the participants (such as the rights and duties of female workers and anti-discrimination rules). This topic resonated deeply with the participants, as they explored their rights and responsibilities as workers, they found a sense of empowerment, understanding the importance of advocating for themselves and others in the workplace.



A few key takeaways:

- ➔ Coaching circles have been essential in the Italian piloting of the training, for a lot of reasons:

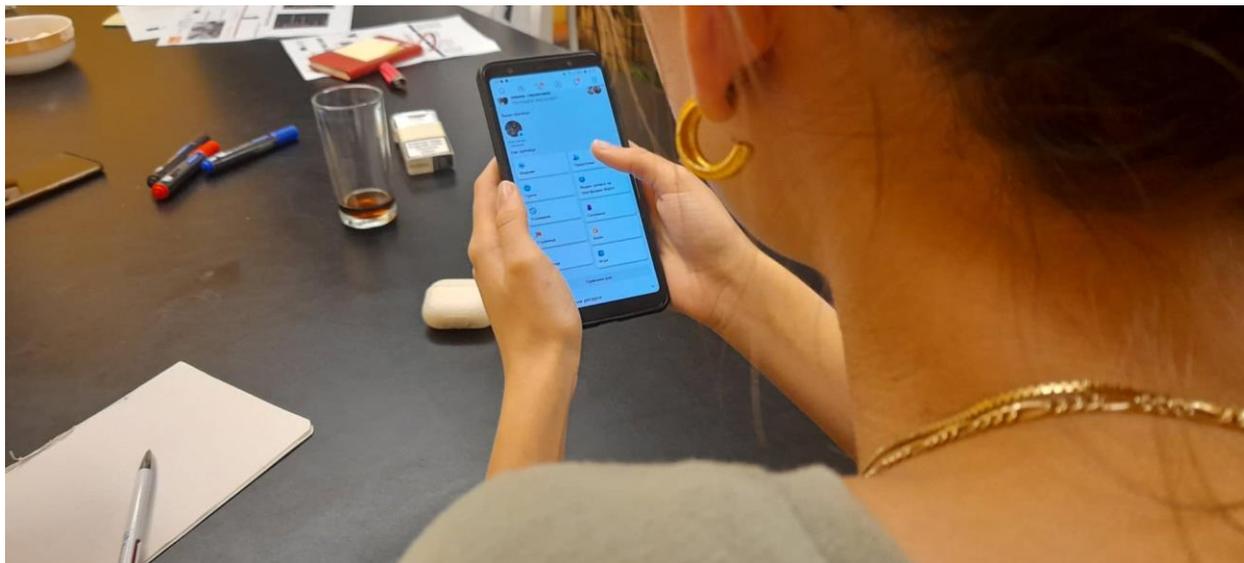
- people feel safe and included
 - the results of the coaching circles directed and facilitated the implementation of the other modules
- ↳ Coaching circles need to be implemented by a specialised psychologist. During the coaching circles emerged the previous painful experiences of the participants. In this regard, it's important that the facilitators have an awareness of the past experiences of the participants, which are often full of pain, due to discrimination and exclusion (at school or in the access to the job market). It's also essential that the facilitators create a space which is perceived as safe and protected, shared with people with a similar background.

SERBIA – WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS

Empowering Journeys: Unleashing Potential through Vocational Education

The vocational education experience in Serbia ignited rural women's ambition, bringing forth a revelation that success could be achieved along diverse paths and showcasing the possibilities that await them with the right skills and mindset.

Key Points: During the pilot, participants recognised that the knowledge gained through the program could not only improve their lives, but also have a positive impact on those around them. They gained a deeper understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, a knowledge that could prove valuable in their job search and gratefully embraced the chance to create meaningful change.



Pilot implementation was carried out in Novi Bečej for women coming from rural areas.

In a comfortable room, participants sat together, eager to learn and grow. The group setting fostered a supportive environment, allowing them to share experiences and offer each other support. The coaching circles introduced an additional layer of support to the program. In these groups, participants shared experiences, challenges, and successes. It became a safe space where they received guidance and encouragement, strengthening their resolve to overcome obstacles. It was especially beneficial for the women, who found solace in connecting with others facing similar situations. For some participants, this

program became a beacon of hope. Often feeling left behind in the rapidly evolving world of technology, they found themselves empowered and ready to compete in the job market. The training deepened their understanding of digital tools, equipping them with skills relevant to work and job hunting. This newfound knowledge empowered them to navigate the digital landscape with confidence. On the other hand, some believed that they were adept at using email and social media platforms. However, they discovered a different dimension to these tools. They learned the intricacies of effective communication, the potential of visual storytelling, and the importance of safe online interactions. Their newfound knowledge transformed their approach to digital communication, enabling them to express themselves more effectively.

The facilitators made each session engaging and applicable to the participants' lives. Through hands-on activities and practical exercises, the attendees could put their newly acquired skills and newfound confidence into practice. Interactive sessions and thought-provoking discussions kept them motivated throughout, serving as a reminder that they too possess the skills necessary to succeed. They felt excited and, no longer held back by self-doubt, eagerly embraced the learning opportunities that lay ahead. The program instilled within them a sense of confidence and the belief that they could reshape their future. They pursued their goals with newfound confidence, and their interactions with others became more meaningful and purposeful as they applied their acquired skills and knowledge.



As testimonials, we noted down the statements of the participants, and below are some clues:

↳ (participant feedback given during the reflection sessions – part of the evaluation survey conducted verbally with the trainer recording answers)

"The group setting was really beneficial as it allowed us to share our experiences and support each other. It was especially helpful to learn from other women in similar situations. This training really helped me because it gave me a better understanding of digital tools and how to use them for work or job hunting."

"The facilitators were great at making the material engaging and relevant to our lives. I enjoyed the hands-on activities and the chance to practice new skills. Now, I feel more confident in my digital skills and am excited to use what I have learned in my future career."

"It was great to have the opportunity to learn about job opportunities and ways to improve our career prospects. I really appreciated the opportunity to learn new skills and knowledge that I can use to improve my job prospects."

"I was pleasantly surprised by how engaging and interactive the program was. The activities and discussions kept me interested and motivated throughout. As someone from a rural area, I often feel left behind when it comes to digital skills and employment opportunities. This program gave me a sense of empowerment and confidence that I can compete in the job market."

"I can confidently say that this training program exceeded my expectations. The interactive sessions and group activities allowed me to apply my learning in real-life scenarios, which boosted my confidence in using these skills in my personal and professional life. I now have a better understanding of the employment laws and regulations that govern the job market,

which will help me make better decisions when applying for jobs. I feel more confident in my job search and am better equipped with the skills needed to succeed in the job market."

"The coaching circles were a great addition to the program. It was nice to have a supportive group to discuss our experiences and challenges with."

"This vocational education has shown me that there are many paths to success and that I can achieve my goals with the right skills and attitude. I have found that applying what I learned can improve not just my personal life but also the lives of those around me, and I am grateful for the opportunity to put these results to meaningful use."

"This vocational education helped me understand my strengths and weaknesses, which will be invaluable in finding the right job. New skills and knowledge have allowed me to be more confident in pursuing my goals and interacting with others."

"It equipped me with practical skills and knowledge, giving me the confidence to pursue my goals and aspirations."



A few key takeaways:

- ↳ Many rural women often feel left behind in the digital world, and now they have discovered their ability to compete in the job market.
- ↳ The training opened participants' minds to the potential of digital tools, equipping them with the skills needed for work and job hunting.
- ↳ The group setting created an environment where experiences were shared and support was abundant.
- ↳ Interactive sessions and stimulating discussions kept rural women motivated throughout the program, giving them the confidence to embrace opportunities.
- ↳ The coaching circles proved to be a significant addition to the program. In these supportive groups, participants had the opportunity to share their experiences, challenges, and victories. It became a safe space where they received guidance and encouragement, bolstering their determination to overcome obstacles that came their way.
- ↳ Participants pursued their goals with newfound confidence and interacted more effectively with others.

A final thought – about the transformative power of vocational education

The transformative power of VICTORUPESI vocational education cannot be understated. The inspiring life stories demonstrate the immense impact of a supportive learning environment. Through shared experiences, practical skills, and newfound confidence, these individuals emerged ready to seize opportunities. And as they embarked on the next chapter of their lives, they took with them a profound sense of gratitude for the opportunity to grow, learn and unleash their true potential.

The project also demonstrated the potential of education and support in breaking the cycle of societal exclusion for those in prison. The VICTORUPESI vocational education programme paved the way for social integration and transformation by providing these individuals with the tools to rewrite their narratives. It can serve as a powerful reminder that everyone deserves a chance to rebuild their lives, and with compassion and support, individuals can overcome their pasts and embrace a future filled with hope and possibilities.

► VICTORUPESI experience more...

- a concrete example of an applied VET programme outside the VICTORUPESI project

In December 2022, FETICO (Spain) organised an LTT activity in the framework of the Erasmus+ Her project "Strengthening socioeconomic integration of mothers with a migrant background" in the line of strategic partnership for the exchange of good practices in adult education.

FETICO organised a learning activity with migrant women and social workers and decided to use all the material developed in the VICTORUPESI project to check them with the participants. The materials, presentations and practical exercises were very well received by both profiles: migrant women and social workers.

Some comments of participants:

Mutindi Maithya and Esther Mukuhi, two Kenyan women currently living in Palermo (Italy): *"...it has certainly been an incredible opportunity, what we have been able to share during these days, the challenges we have gone through as migrant women are common, even though we have very different realities. It has been very encouraging to be able to share our stories and to know that we are not alone and that more women have gone through this. Knowing the stories of other women entrepreneurs, of social workers from Spanish NGOs has been really inspiring."*

Esther Mukuhi: *"Now we feel more empowered, we are also more aware that we have to improve some of our personal skills and abilities to face our challenges better."*

Jasim Sukaina Abeer, of Iraqi nationality, currently living in Bucharest (Romania) and is president of an association for the social integration of migrants: *"...I am happy to participate in this training programme. I have learned a lot of things, which I will have to put into practice. I think this type of training for migrant women should be developed more often."*

Özgür Yaşar Akyar, head of the NGO Renaissance, which cares for migrants in Turkey: *"...hearing the real stories, the difficulties that these women face in all countries, such as access to financial resources, the problems, for example, in opening a bank account, has been very interesting and inspiring for me in my future work in the organisation I lead. The need to develop transversal skills for employment, to know tools to self-assess these competencies and to promote programs on entrepreneurship addressed to these women are issues that we have to work on in our future projects in the NGO."*

Social workers from Greece who provide voluntary services: Eleni Derventzi, Theodora Poimenidou and Danai Panou: *"...We are very grateful to be here, it has been really interesting, we are students and we have not had the same experiences as these women, but we have learned a lot about the emotions and difficulties these women go through and about their expectations and hopes."*

Lessons Learned

For professionals working with disadvantaged individuals, the results of the training sessions can provide important information on effective training methods and strategies. The pilot programs that were conducted can serve as models for future training programs, and the lessons learned from the pilot programs can inform the professional development of practitioners in the field. By applying these lessons learned, adult education providers can enhance the effectiveness and impact of the VICTORUPESI

vocational training program, effectively engaging the target group and providing a supportive learning environment that addresses their specific needs.

SWEDEN – MIGRANT WOMEN

In Sweden, the experience of IKF Malmö, of working with foreign-born women, underlined that the best approach to working with this target group is to take the situation of each individual and adapt our method of intervention according to that person's context and conditions. Within the framework of the VICTORUPESI project, our organisation played the role of creating the bridge between the vocational centres, which are accredited to provide certification in Sweden and our target groups, which lacked technical knowledge, such as the Swedish language and digital skills, to be ready entering a Swedish vocational centre, such as Hermods, to be able to develop vocational skills and enter the job market. Besides the technical knowledge, we also provide support in acquiring soft skills, such as stress management and overcoming emotional blockages. The Coaching Circles, part of the VICTORUPESI training played a crucial role in preparing the foreign-born women to be ready for showing up to an interview and present themselves there in time. In Sweden, it is really important to show up in time for an interview and show that you trust in yourself but at the same time have the openness and humbleness of admitting your limits and show flexibility in adapting your individual culture to the work culture of the company you are applying to. Being socially excluded for a long time represents a trauma and that needs to be addressed. This is why the way we provide our training is using the method of the study circles, which has one facilitator in the middle which encourages all the participants to have a voice and express their opinions, providing a safe, nonjudgmental space. There we discuss in terms of questions and reflections, not problems and solutions, to change the perspective towards critical thinking, which implies having more ways to see a situation than the right or wrong approach given by the approach of problem and solution.

SPAIN – LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE

- The need to adapt the training contents and supporting materials: videos, practical exercises, dynamics..., to the specific needs of each user, which require flexibility in the methodology applied.
- Convenience of organising the program with a reduced number of participants (not more than 5) with homogeneous personal profiles to generate a confident environment.
- The need to involve different profiles of professionals: teachers' experts in each topic, mentors/coaches, experts in employment and labour issues, professional job counsellors, etc.

SLOVENIA – PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

- Throughout the piloting implementation, we noticed the different levels of knowledge and skills within the group so each of the modules was adapted in terms of exercises – also based on knowing our participants, the piloting was structured as a daily event i.e., like one whole learning day(s) and we have communicated additional peer-supported group work with support from mentors on additional hours during the week.
- Due to the fact that a lot of evaluation was introduced within the piloting, we have left room for this process to be done with more time, working together with participants and helping them within the evaluation – to distinguish their view through personal experience, putting it in the context of their usual everyday activities and individual needs within the inclusion in the regular activities in our organisation.

ITALY – WOMEN WITH ASPERGER’S DIAGNOSIS

- ↳ The class group needs to be formed by a proper number of participants (not too many, not too few) and be characterised by an adequate level of homogeneity/heterogeneity. These proportions can vary based on different factors, such as the target group itself, the level of training, the main contents, the number and/or profile of trainers, etc.
- ↳ Assigning participants some homework from time to time could be a good way to keep them active and reflective outside the meeting, especially if meetings are only a couple of times a week.
- ↳ If social interaction is difficult for the target group (e.g., people on the autism spectrum, as it was for the Italian pilot), it might be useful to involve them in activities and tasks in pairs and small groups.
- ↳ Having enough time for reflection and group discussion is very important.
- ↳ Dedicate sufficient space to explore the topic of self-esteem (for Italian participants this was crucial).

SERBIA – WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS

- ↳ It is essential to understand each rural area's unique needs and opportunities.
- ↳ Utilise community outreach efforts, including word-of-mouth referrals, local community centres, rural organisations, and women's groups, to effectively reach the target group. Additionally, leverage advertising channels such as flyers and social media to ensure accessibility and awareness of the training program.
- ↳ Clearly articulate the benefits of the training program, emphasising how it can enhance participants' employability and improve their daily lives. This communication should highlight how the program addresses their specific needs and helps them gain new skills.
- ↳ Take into account participants' existing knowledge and exposure to digital technology, as some may have limited familiarity. Create mixed groups consisting of participants of similar age ranges but varying levels of digital knowledge and technology experience. This diversity allows more experienced participants to assist those with less skill, fostering a supportive learning environment where participants can learn from each other and collaborate effectively.
- ↳ Find the optimal number of participants for training sessions, which in this case was determined to be five individuals. This group size ensures manageability, encourages a sense of community and cooperation among participants, and allows trainers to provide individual attention and support to each participant.

Chapter IV – Recommendations for policy-makers

⇒ a set of recommendations and policy proposals targeting public decision-makers, describing the model and supporting its implementation in different contexts

SWEDEN – MIGRANT WOMEN

1. Dynamic Job Markets: Aligning Training and Job Matching

This highlights the need to address the dynamic nature of job markets and the mismatch between individual skills and market demands. It suggests focusing on up-to-date training and effective job-matching strategies.

2. Navigating Multigenerational and Multicultural Environments

This emphasises the importance of considering the multigenerational and multicultural aspects of modern workplaces. It highlights the need for cultural intelligence and diversity management, both in team integration and team-building processes.

3. Empowering Diversity Management: Instruments and Tools

This underscores the role of VICTORUPESI in providing instruments and tools for effective diversity management at the workplace. It also emphasises incorporating legal rights and obligations in managing diverse teams.

4. Fostering Social Integration: Common Ground for Vulnerable Groups

This focuses on the project's goal of facilitating social integration and enhancing employability for vulnerable groups. It highlights the effort to find common ground among diverse groups to ensure their successful integration into the job market.

5. Empathy and Equity for Migrant Women: Recommendations for Authorities

This centres on the specific recommendation for working with migrant women. It emphasises the need for authorities to apply empathy and equity principles, considering both the vulnerability of being a migrant and the valuable contributions these individuals can bring to the workforce.

Keeping in mind that the job markets are in a continuously developing and dynamic process, the current situation, in terms of training, and job matching is not up to date, considering the instruments an individual has, and the requests on the market. Another aspect to be considered is the multigenerational and multicultural environments that exist now. The cultural intelligence aspect is not taken into consideration when integrating a new member into a team or even in the team-building processes. VICTORUPESI provides instruments and tools to manage diversity at the workplace, alongside the rights and obligations from the legal point of view. When we developed this project, we tried to include as many vulnerable groups as possible and find common ground to facilitate the process of social integration and increase the level of employability. As a result, the recommendation from the perspective of working with migrant women is for the authorities to apply empathy to the vulnerability of not being in your context, being a migrant, but at the same time apply equity principles, taking into consideration personal needs, and the added value that person can bring.

SPAIN – LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE (LTU)

- to improve the employability of LTU

1. Promoting Equal Opportunities: Supportive Programs for Training and Employment

Support programs, projects, and activities to promote equal opportunities and non-discrimination in access to training and employment. Raising awareness and implementing anti-discrimination measures within the labour market can help level the playing field for LTUs, ensuring that they are not excluded based on age, gender, cultural background, or other factors.

2. Preventive Approaches to Unemployment: Individualised Attention for Employability

Adopt a preventive approach to unemployment, especially long-term, providing individualised attention to the unemployed through active employment policies that improve their employability. Implementing active labour market policies, such as job matching services, career counselling, and mentorship programs,

can help bridge the gap between job seekers and employers, increasing the chances of successful reintegration into the labour market.

3. Enhancing Labour Integration: Measures for Marginalised Groups

Ensure adequate labour integration measures aimed at those groups with the most sumptuous difficulties in access or reintegration to employment, especially youth, women, people with disabilities, long-term unemployed, people over 45 years old, and migrants.

4. Fighting Structural Unemployment: Targeted and Proactive Strategies

- Provide individual guidance and support measures in access to training and employment programs. Investing in employment and social services that specifically target the long-term unemployed is crucial. These services should be tailored to address the unique challenges faced by this group and offer comprehensive support throughout their job search journey. Providing psychosocial support and counselling to job seekers can help combat the erosion of skills, motivation, and confidence during extended unemployment periods. Addressing mental health and well-being concerns can break the vicious cycle of long-term unemployment negatively impacting individuals.
- Provide the unemployed with training opportunities to improve or update their skills and to prevent skill obsolescence in a changing labour market. Providing access to relevant information and training opportunities can help LTUs acquire the skills needed in the current job market. Upskilling and reskilling programs should be tailored to the target group's specific needs to enhance their employability.
- Support incentives to companies to implement work-based programs, hire workers from disadvantaged groups and promote diversity measures in the workplace. Encouraging investment in job creation and promoting a responsive labour market can create more opportunities for LTU. Encouraging businesses to hire and support this population can lead to reduced long-term unemployment rates.

SLOVENIA – PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

1. Empowering Vulnerable Groups: Addressing Vocational Training for Adults with Intellectual Disabilities and Mental Health Issues

Adult persons with intellectual disabilities and mental health problems are one of the most vulnerable target groups when it comes down to retraining in the vocational field and employment. Inclusion in the labour market represents one of the most important prerequisites for independent living and inclusion in the wider social surrounding. In that sense, vocational training is connected to the field of adult section and both sectors should strive to complement each other as much as possible. The focus is on the strengthening potential of collaboration between vocational training and the adult services sector, emphasising the importance of working together to maximise opportunities and outcomes for individuals with intellectual disabilities and mental health problems.

2. Towards Comprehensive Support: Fostering Synergy between Vocational Training and Adult Services

It is meaningful to seek to connect the dots regarding the interdependence of vocational training and adult services, considering the importance of striving for complementary and coordinated efforts between the vocational training and adult services sectors to provide comprehensive support for individuals with disabilities. This underlines the interconnection between vocational training and the adult services sector, emphasising the need for collaboration and mutual support to enhance outcomes for individuals in these areas.

3. Education for a Cohesive and Resilient Europe: Linking Vocational Training and the European Education Area

This looks at the connection between vocational training and the goals outlined in the EU Council resolution, emphasising the importance of education and training for societal and economic development. In the Council of the European Union’s Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030), it is emphasised that “Education and training have a vital role to play when it comes to shaping the future of Europe, at a time when it is imperative that its society and economy become more cohesive, inclusive, digital, sustainable, green and resilient, and for citizens to find personal fulfilment and well-being, to be prepared to adapt and perform on a changing labour market and to engage in active and responsible citizenship.” (<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/b004d247-77d4-11eb-9ac9-01aa75ed71a1>)

4. Holistic Approach: Integrating Different Education Formats for Enhanced Learning

A holistic approach between different formats of education/training/learning and digital environments is seen as important. This emphasises the need for collaboration and synergy between various education formats, including digital environments, to create a comprehensive learning experience.

5. Strengthening Cooperation for Practical-oriented Environments: Facilitating Training and Rehabilitation

Considering this target group, it is important to strengthen cooperation between different sectors and in the end also services to provide a functioning and practical-oriented environment that would encourage training, rehabilitation and flexible paths for re-entering the labour market.

SERBIA – WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS

1. Bridging the Digital Divide: Expanding Technology and Internet Access

Policymakers can support infrastructure development to increase access to technology and the Internet in rural areas. This can help ensure that women in rural areas have access to the resources they need to develop their IT skills and pursue IT-related employment opportunities.

2. Tailored Training for Women in Rural Areas: Enhancing Accessibility and Flexibility

Invest in vocational training programs tailored to the needs of women in rural areas, and ensure that they are accessible and flexible. Policymakers can support the development of such vocational education and training programs in rural areas. These programs should be available locally and should provide training in high-demand fields. This highlights the importance of investing in vocational training programs specifically designed to meet the needs of women in rural areas, emphasising the need for accessibility and flexibility in program delivery.

3. Empowering Women in Rural Areas: Investing in IT-Focused Training Programs

Provide funding and resources to support the development of IT-focused training programs for women in rural areas.

This emphasises the significance of providing funding and resources to support the development of training programs focused on IT skills for women in rural areas.

4. Bridging the Distance: Leveraging Technology for Training in Rural Areas

Encourage the use of technology to deliver training resources to women in rural areas, ensuring they have access to high-quality educational materials regardless of their geographical location.

5. Empowering Vocational Training: Enhancing Access through Financial Support

Policymakers can provide financial support for vocational training programs, including scholarships, loans, and grants. This can help ensure that women in rural areas have access to the resources they need to develop their vocational skills.

6. Building Networks of Support: Mentorship and Networking for Women in Rural Areas

Policymakers can create mentorship and networking opportunities for women in rural areas. This can help connect women with role models, mentors and peers who can feed guidance and support in their career development, including in the IT sector.

7. Cultivating IT Innovation: Fostering IT-Related Industries in Rural Areas

This underscores the significance of promoting the development of IT-related industries in rural areas. This can include providing incentives for businesses to locate in rural areas, creating and supporting the development of technology parks or incubators, and tax incentives for IT-related enterprises.

8. Nurturing Entrepreneurship: Stimulating Small Business Development

Policymakers can encourage the development of small businesses in rural areas, particularly those leveraging IT skills. This may include providing support for entrepreneurship training, incubators, and financial assistance to foster the growth of startups.

9. Unlocking Opportunities: Career Counseling and Job Placement for Rural Women

Promote career counselling and job placement services to help women in rural areas identify and pursue employment opportunities that align with their skills and interests.

Chapter V – Stakeholder Mapping

It is essential to collaborate with local stakeholders to ensure the project's continuity. Such stakeholders can help provide ongoing support, resources, and funding to sustain the project beyond its initial implementation phase. By engaging the local community, working with industry associations, technology companies, NGOs, public institutions, and each other, vocational training providers can better align their programs with workforce needs and support the success of the target group of unemployed individuals. By leveraging these partnerships or collaborations, adult education providers can support the success of target groups and can help connect them with employment opportunities after training is completed. When it comes to cooperation or partnering with local institutions, businesses and organisations to support the development of vocational skills and employment opportunities for target groups, there are several options to consider. Here are some suggestions:

Chambers of Commerce can be valuable partners, as they can help connect them with local businesses and organisations. They often have networks of companies and can help facilitate partnerships and collaborations.

Local Community Organisations such as faith-based organisations, career centres, community centres, and youth organisations can help identify and engage unemployed individuals in the community. These

organisations can help spread awareness of services and training programs offered and encourage participation.

Non-Profit Organisations (NGOs) often focus on community development and may be able to provide resources and support. They can also assist with outreach and recruitment efforts, helping to connect VET providers with target groups who could benefit from training programs or helping to connect target groups with employment opportunities.

Government Agencies can be valuable partners and be able to provide funding or other resources to support training programs and can help connect VET providers with local businesses and organisations. These agencies can also provide information on funding opportunities and other resources.

⇒ Work with local government agencies such as employment centres, labour departments, and social services to help connect unemployed individuals with training and support services

Public Institutions, such as research institutes, can collaborate with VET providers to develop new training programs and identify new opportunities for target groups.

Educational Institutions, such as vocational schools, universities or community colleges, may have programs or resources that can be leveraged to support the development of vocational skills, including IT skills. Partner with them to offer training programs and guidance activities. These institutions can also provide resources and support to help individuals gain the skills and knowledge needed for employment.

Technology Companies can provide resources and expertise to support the development of IT skills training programs. They can also provide access to technology, such as hardware and software, to support training delivery.

Industry Associations in order to align training programs with industry needs, and they can also provide access to resources such as mentorship programs, job shadowing opportunities, and internships.

Public-Private Partnerships can help bring together resources and expertise from multiple stakeholders to support the development of vocational skills for target groups. These partnerships, among others, can involve government agencies, industry associations, technology companies, and NGOs.

Local Employers (consider directly partnering); this can enclose a variety of companies, including IT-related industries. Adult education providers can work with employers to develop training programs that meet their workforce needs and can help facilitate job placement after training is completed.

SWEDEN – MIGRANT WOMEN

The VICTORUPESI training could be helpful for the unemployment agencies in each country, as it works with a wide variety of different disadvantaged groups, succeeding to cover the perspective of social, economic, educational, mental and physical divergences needs, common ground for defining people at risk of social exclusion.

In our country (Sweden), besides the local authorities, the companies could use the VICTORUPESI diversity management component to understand better how to deal with the social integration of migrant women, taking them out from the mindset of them being social beneficiaries into contributing members and active citizens, bringing in their knowledge and skills that can enrich the company and the work environment, in practice, not just on paper.

SPAIN – LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE (LTU)

FETICO is deeply involved in the activation of the labour market in Spain. We are accredited as Employment Agency by the Spanish Public Employment Service. This means we collaborate with the National Employment Services in the activity of placement of unemployed people in the labour market. The materials developed will be applied in our employment inclusion programmes and training activities at the national and European levels.

We disseminate project results among our stakeholders: training providers, companies, NGOs and private/public organisations working in the field of training and employment of vulnerable groups.

- Fetico has collaborative agreements with some NGO's as the Red Cross or Red-Acoge to promote labour integration of vulnerable groups.
- Fetico participates together with other unions and NGOs in the working group of the "Sensibiliza Project: raising awareness of cultural diversity in the work environments". This working group is a place to meet and exchange ideas, visions and proposals on issues related to diversity, inclusion, and equal opportunities in the work environment, with special reference to the need to promote access to employment for people belonging to vulnerable groups and to fight against discrimination.
- Fetico is also a member of the Spanish Charter of Diversity, which reinforces its commitment towards people in work environments, pledging to promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace among the companies in which our union is represented.

ROMANIA – PEOPLE IN PRISON WITH LIGHT SENTENCES

The material developed within the project can be used in all penitentiary institutions in Romania because it is based on real work situations existing in prison. Activities and ways of working with prisoners can be improved and adapted to each institution, but they can form the basis of a constant learning process for prisoners.

SLOVENIA – PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

From the perspective of our target group, the material developed could be applied to any type of social inclusion programme and employment/vocational rehabilitation services. This applies to organisations active as public or private organisations, however, the training always needs to be adapted to working procedures and paths established for a quality measurement within the supporting services provided and with a clear agreement between the training provider and training user.

Strategy for building partnerships between business entities and project partners

Building partnerships between business entities and project partners is critical to project success and can help ensure the long-term sustainability of project outcomes. In this regard, it is recommended to partner with local employers to develop job opportunities and help individuals gain work experience through internships, apprenticeships, and job shadowing. Local employers can also provide valuable insight into the skills and knowledge required for jobs in the area, which can help guide training programs. It requires creating mutually beneficial relationships that advance the goals while meeting the needs of the business entities, a collaborative approach and a shared commitment to achieving goals.

The strategy for building a partnership between the business entities and project partners involves several steps, including:

Identifying potential business partners interested in supporting the project goals and objectives: this could involve researching companies that operate in relevant industries and have a track record of supporting social and community development initiatives.

Developing a partnership proposal that outlines the benefits of working together and how the partnership will contribute to achieving the goals: this should be clear, concise, and compelling, highlighting the potential benefits for both parties.

Engaging with potential partners and initiating discussions around the proposed partnership: this could include sending the proposal to relevant stakeholders within the business organisation and arranging meetings to discuss the proposal in more detail.

Establishing the terms of the partnership (once both parties are in agreement): this may involve negotiating the scope of the partnership, the roles and responsibilities of each party, and the expected outcomes.

Developing a joint action plan: it should include clear timelines, milestones, and targets and outline specific actions and activities that will be undertaken to achieve the partnership objectives.

Monitoring and evaluating progress: for the partnership to be successful, project partners and business entities should regularly monitor and evaluate progress against the joint action plan. This will help identify any issues or challenges and enable adjustments to be made as needed to ensure the partnership is delivering the desired outcomes.

Here are some examples of activities that could be included in the strategy for building partnerships between business entities and project partners:

Organise networking events: that bring together business entities and project partners to create networking opportunities, learn about each other's work and explore potential collaborations.

Hold joint training sessions: develop and deliver joint training sessions for the target group, which could be tailored to meet the specific needs and requirements of the business entities. This will create a platform for sharing knowledge and expertise.

Establish a mentoring program: for the target group, which pairs participants with experienced professionals from the business entities. Mentors can provide guidance, support, and career advice.

Host job fairs or career expos: where the target group can interact with potential employers and learn about available job opportunities. This could also be an opportunity for business entities to showcase their corporate social responsibility efforts and attract top talent.

Develop internships or apprenticeship programs with business entities which provide hands-on training and work experience: this could help the target group gain relevant skills and increase their employability.

Collaborate on research and development projects relevant to business entities and the target group: this could allow the target group to gain valuable experience and learn new skills while contributing to the growth of the business entities.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the VICTORUPESI project has developed a range of tools and implemented activities that are designed to improve the vocational skills of disadvantaged individuals and help them integrate into the labour market. These tools and activities include the Mapping of the existing practices, training sessions of two pilots with a complementary report, Digital Toolkit, Diversity management toolkit, Methodology guide, and Sustainability Guidelines. These tools and activities are innovative, evidence-based, and designed to address the unique needs and challenges faced by target groups of the VICTORUPESI project. The project's focus on sustainability and long-term impact is commendable, and the Sustainability Guidelines are a valuable resource for organisations and individuals who wish to build on the project's successes and ensure that its impact is sustained over time.

Ultimately, the sustainability of the VICTORUPESI project and the results achieved will depend on the commitment and engagement of all partner organisations involved. By implementing the Sustainability Guidelines, partner organisations can ensure that the project's activities and outcomes continue beyond their duration and that the target group benefits from sustainable solutions to socio-labour exclusion.

Additional materials / further reading

UNECE (May 2022). Approaches to Measuring Social Exclusion. Available from:

<https://unece.org/statistics/publications/approaches-measuring-social-exclusion>

PhD Njoku Chimezie (2020). Teacher's personality traits and their teaching effectiveness: important factors for student's success. European Journal of Research and Reflection in Educational Sciences. Available from:

<https://www.idpublications.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Full-Paper-TEACHER%E2%80%99S-PERSONALITY-TRAITS-AND-THEIR-TEACHING-EFFECTIVENESS-IMPORTANT-FACTORS.pdf>

The recommended movie:

“El Lute: Run for Your Life” - for imprisoned people as an example of a personal struggle to succeed in life.

Available from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/El_Lute:_Run_for_Your_Life

References and literature

Official Journal of the European Union (26.02.2021). Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030); (2021/C 66/01). Retrieved from: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/b004d247-77d4-11eb-9ac9-01aa75ed71a1>

Western Governors University (WGU): 10 Simple Principles of Adult Learning. Available from: <https://www.wgu.edu/blog/adult-learning-theories-principles2004.html#openSubscriberModal>

The Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS); Promoting Teacher Effectiveness: Adult Education Teacher Competencies. Available from: <https://lincs.ed.gov/publications/te/competencies.pdf>