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empowering LTU older workers
through coaching & personal branding

EMPOWERING LTUs

Empowering long-term unemployed older workers through coaching & personal branding

Handbook on empowerment strategies and training tools to motivate and activate long-term unemployed workers back to work

(IO1)

Part 3: Recommendations for Career Advisors and Trainers on strategies, methodologies and practical tools used to empower and activate unemployed older workers.

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1. INTRODUCTION

“Empowering LTU’s older workers through coaching and personal branding” (EMPOWERING LTUs) is an ERASMUS+ strategic partnership funded by the European Union and the Spanish National Agency of the Erasmus+ Programme, with the **aim to improve the success rates of long term older unemployed placements with more focused, tailored approaches.**

EMPOWERING LTU’s partners work together towards improving counselling and training methodologies in their respective organisations and countries, as well as at EU level, in order to empower LTU adults to update their skills and competences for adapting to the changing labor market and highly competitive economy.

The project is coordinated by **FUNDACIÓN COREMSA**, a Spanish private placement agency and experienced entity in education, training and social inclusion of vulnerable people in Southern Spain working on different projects on labour market inclusion of specific groups. EMPOWERING LTUs consists of four more partners from four European countries:

- **United Kingdom: INOVA CONSULTANCY** - providing consultancy services and project work in the field of self-development and entrepreneurship.
- **Italy: STEPS** - experienced partner in research and analysis of labour needs, recognition and certification of competences and elaboration of innovative training concepts.
- **Greece: Social Enterprise Knowl** - has developed a number of innovative learning models for personal and professional development, its flagship being STARS Success Yourself©, a workshop accredited by the International Coach.
- **Spain: Acción contra el Hambre (ACH)** - a renowned NGO that has a unit on socio-labour inclusion to develop entrepreneurship programmes, especially through “Vives project”, aiming at improving employability capacities of the unemployed through training, counselling, mentoring and funding.

2. BACKGROUND AND FRAMEWORK

The Empowering LTU'S project has been designed to achieve the following specific objectives:

- To provide career advisors in each participating country with new, more effective and individualized methods and tools to support unemployed adults.
- To support and empower the long term unemployed helping to change their mind-set by discovering their strengths, skills and interests through the most appropriate training.
- To promote European networking between private and public entities dealing with unemployed adults with holistic collaboration.
- To improve the level of participation of adult learners from a lifelong learning perspective.

The main project output is the “Handbook on Empowerment strategies and Training Tools to motivate and activate Long Term Unemployed back to work” (IO1) which will include the following parts:

- a) Inventory of skills and competences needed in today's labour market + skills and competences of professionals dealing with unemployed older workers.
- b) Tailor and validate methodology based on inventory.
- c) Design of the 3 different training packs: NLP coaching; social media skills and personal branding; coaching circles technique.
- d) Implementation of the training packs at 3 levels: career advisors/trainers; Long Term Unemployed; Peer coaching .
- e) **Recommendations for career advisors and adult trainers on strategies, methodologies and practical tools used to empower and activate unemployed older workers.**

According to the statistical evidence, the long-term unemployed in the EU have about half the chance of getting back to employment compared to the short-term unemployed. Older-age (45+) LTUs require a special treatment before they move from unemployment to inactivity and give up looking for a job.

This document collects a set of recommendations for career advisors and trainers on strategies, methodologies and practical tools used to empower and activate unemployed older workers, based on the content that has been previously developed in the present handbook, which main aim is to motivate and activate Long Term Unemployed back to work.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This point presents the description of the research process. It provides information concerning the method that was used in undertaking this research as well as a justification for the use of this method. It also describes the various stages of the research, which includes the selection of participants, the data collection process and the process of data analysis.

In order to prepare the present document, we have considered as starting point, the information taken from the piloting sessions that took place in every countries of the partnership. Those piloting sessions were focus on long term unemployed adults as well as career advisors and professionals of the adults labour advising industry.

The aim of theses workshops were to implement, as a testing, the content that was developed as part of the Handbook (IO1). Some of the contents that were compulsory to implement was:

- Neuro Linguistic Programming and Peer Coaching Circles
- Personal Branding
- Social Media

As additional contents, which were optional to implement, two modules were developed:

- Competences, Soft Skills, Team Working and Self-Confident
- The entrepreneur mindset

From these practical workshops, we have followed a “quantitative” research methodology since during the workshops three kind of tools were applied:

- Evaluation questionnaires filled by long term unemployed adults
- Evaluation questionnaires filled by career advisors
- Outcomes and results report that were created by every partner of the project

With the information that came out from these three tools, we have created a list of Recommendations below. In addition, some of research studies and reports mentioned in the very last page of this document have been taken as references.

4. LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION	DESCRIPTION	TOPIC	LOCAL SOURCES
1	Self-awareness	Neuro-Linguistics Programming & Peer Coaching Circles	<p><i>What is NLP- Bandler:</i> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8vlcsFJyEXQ</p> <p><i>Peer Circles:</i> www.inovacircles.org.uk</p>

Self-Awareness is defined as “the accurate appraisal and understanding of one’s own abilities and preferences and their implications for their behaviour and their impact on others.” It can be seen as a reality-testing against the facts of life.

It is imperative that CA and Adult Trainers work consistently to raise Self-Awareness and battle skills atrophy. Forgetting old skills, combined with a failure to acquire new on-the-job skills, quickly results in further removing LTUs away from current workforce requirements and developments, resulting in complete vocational and social marginalisation. Also the Circles Methodology assists learners on this issue, as the Circles make people realise they are not only in the situation of unemployment and the feedback from peers that they receive empowers them to integrate themselves back into the labour market. Further it can also be stressed that the Personal Branding and Social Media modules are meant to help older LTUs reintegrate into modern day society by giving them tools and tips on how to use social media in a professional way and brand themselves with the use of recent technologies.

During the pilots, this issue was addressed through the NLP methodology. NLP procedures referred to and practiced in the exercises can be included under the umbrella-term “Positive Thinking”. For example that NLP helps resolve this issue as it helps someone reflect on their own skills and past achievements, as well as on the way a person communicates with other and how you can build rapport with others.

<p>2</p>	<p>Positive thinking: Focusing on the LTUs' past strengths, competences, abilities, successes</p>	<p>The Entrepreneur Mindset & Neuro-Linguistics Programming</p>	<p><i>Benefits of Strengths based approach:</i> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5FY4xj84NU</p> <p><i>Want to bring out the best in people- start with strengths:</i> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MtduVS9BSxw</p>
<p>Focusing on the strengths, competences, abilities, successes LTUs have demonstrated throughout their personal and professional life so far helps them improve and take themselves to the next level.</p> <p>Therefore, by helping themselves change in positive directions, they are getting closer to our goals and aspirations. An example of this would be how NLP supports positive thinking and how people perceive events and interactions. In the case of LTUs, that is to re-enter the demanding labour market with competence, confidence, aspiration and safety and stay competitive.</p>			

3	<p>Market research: Build methodologies of fruitful everyday research so that LTUs can spot potential employers and companies and build networking</p>	<p>Competences, Soft Skills, Team working and self-confidence & Personal Branding Social Media & Peer Coaching Circles</p>	<p>Networking: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E5xTbn6OnAA</p> <p>Powerful personal branding: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hcr3MshYe3g</p> <p>The personal brand of you: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGbsb6aXbzc</p> <p>The skills of self-confidence: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-HYZv6HzAs</p>
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The first practical rule for the re-activation of LTUs was “set a clear schedule for job search”. In alignment with what was discussed in the Personal Branding exercises, this essentially means pursuing constant and meticulous Market Research. CA and Trainers need to identify and insist on pertinent methodologies of fruitful everyday research so that LTUs can spot potential employers and companies (build networking); spot areas where their personal skills and qualifications are not on par with market requirements (and seek skills improvement); and fully realise their true advantages and limitations compared to others in similar age, past experience and current employment status (complete self-awareness).

4	Vulnerabilities: Battle skills atrophy, negativity, indifference and marginalisation	Competences, Soft Skills, Team working and self-confidence & Peer Coaching Circles	Getting stuck in the negatives: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7XFLTDQ4JMk&vl=en
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The general “phases scheme” adopted for LTUs permits CA and Trainers to adopt different approaches as deemed necessary to combat specific vulnerabilities found on each phase. Perhaps the most prevalent symptom is negativity, which keeps growing with time out of employment, essentially marginalising the LTU. This stance might even hinder calls to skills improvement and re-networking (through the use of, e.g. Social Media as part of a Personal Branding strategy).

5	<p>Daily physical activity and Volunteering: Physical activity is extremely beneficial for general health; positive mental framework; leads LTUs to a more optimistic stance. Volunteerism (preferably in social/welfare causes) maintains an active skills array.</p>	<p>The Entrepreneur Mindset & Personal Branding & Social Media & Peer Coaching Circles & Neuro-Linguistic Programming</p>	<p><i>Reinventing healthy living:</i> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z7iWZ24NXQQ</p> <p><i>Be selfish and volunteer:</i> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V3L5oNQHylg</p>
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We have seen in the pilots that both **Daily Physical Activity and Volunteering** provide good opportunities to dispose of the general negativity of 45+ LTUs. Daily Physical Activity, besides being extremely beneficial for general health, is a major factor for a more positive mental framework and leads LTUs to a more optimistic stance regarding their prospects and abilities. On the other hand, Volunteerism (preferably in social/welfare causes) maintains an active skills array and also provides a viewpoint of comparison with less fortunate groups, causing the LTUs to continue feeling both active and productive.

6	<p>Part-time and Practicum opportunities: Coordinated effort needed to ensure that 45+ LTUs are not “boxed” as “second-best”.</p>	<p>Personal Branding & Social Media & Peer Coaching Circles</p>	<p><i>The science of stereotypes:</i> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FySM-xiFef4</p> <p><i>Changing your mindsets:</i> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0tqq66zwa7q</p>
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In general, these approaches to interim employment are not appreciated by LTUs longing to return to a full-time position as they are associated with inferior payment schemes and lower quality of work. It is imperative that CA and Trainers work with state authorities and employers to press for and ensure that 45+ LTUs are not “boxed” as “second-best”.

7	Entrepreneurship: Acquisition of the corresponding mindset.	The Entrepreneur Mindset & Peer Coaching Circles & Personal Branding & Social Media	<p><i>How I became an entrepreneur at 66:</i> https://www.ted.com/talks/paul_tasner</p> <p><i>The Art of self-promotion- entrepreneurship:</i> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQaGDTkyrJk</p>
<p>While it was generally accepted that a good percentage of 45+LTUs lack modern skills because their previous careers had menial requirements, there is also a significant percentage of skilled LTUs. This group is particularly competent as entrepreneurs, given the acquisition of the corresponding mindset. As seen in the relevant Empowerment topic, CA and Trainers need to be particularly aware that the skillset required is different and requires extra motivation, flexibility, teamwork and planning/organizational skills.</p>			

8	Confidence and Inspiration: Set goals & tracking mechanisms (logs, mind maps, peer-group meetings)	Peer coaching circles & Neuro-Linguistics Programming	<i>Talks about goal setting:</i> http://amaconferencecentersspeak.com/ted-talks-goal-setting-achievement/
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Older LTUs need to be continuously inspired so their confidence levels remain higher than “normal”. The “Appreciative Interview” is indeed a very effective tool for coaches and CA towards this direction. However, while the role of CA and Trainers is crucial, it is understandable that they cannot physically be with LTUs 24/7. Setting (S.M.A.R.T.) goals and tracking mechanisms (e.g. keeping journals/logs, adjust mind maps, convene in smaller peer-groups for casual exchange of progress) is essential and guarantees the continuation of positive processes initiated during formal coaching or seminar meetings.

https://www.ted.com/talks/tim_ferriss_why_you_should_define_your_fears_instead_of_your_goals

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