

SELF EVALUATION PROJECT

Scientific Report



Editors: Graham Attwell, Gerald Heidegger and Wiebke Petersen
June 2005



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Scientific Report

This final Scientific Report forms the Common Report 4 and 5 on the implementation and evaluation of the modules and curricula activities developed by the Self evaluation project partners. It is based on the partners' national reports.

The hard work of the project partners in producing those reports is duly acknowledged. The authors of the reports are Romana Jezberová, Miroslav Kadlec, Pavel Petrovič, Mario Stretti, Lisbeth Højdal, Gerlad Heidegger, Wiebke Petersen, Nikitas Patiniotis, Socrates Georgoulas, Eduardo Figueira, Sandra Silva, Mihaela Chiru, Liliana Voicu, Firuta Tacea, Cristina Radu, Karen Evans and Natasha Kersh.



The project was funded by the European Commission Leonardo da Vinci programme.

<i>Introduction</i>	5
<i>About self evaluation</i>	5
<i>Empowerment</i>	11
<i>Designing curricula and curricula modules</i>	13
<i>Designing the Curriculum</i>	16
<i>Designing tools</i>	18
<i>Evaluating the curricula activities and tools</i>	19
<i>Implementing the curriculum activities in different countries</i>	21
<i>The Czech Republic</i>	21
<i>Denmark</i>	28
<i>Germany</i>	34
<i>Greece</i>	45
<i>Portugal</i>	47
<i>Romania</i>	50
<i>United Kingdom</i>	56
<i>Evaluating the curriculum - Benchmarks and SWOT Analysis</i>	64
<i>Czech Republic</i>	66
<i>Denmark</i>	70
<i>Germany</i>	75
<i>Greece</i>	81

<i>Portugal</i>	84
<i>Romania</i>	86
<i>United Kingdom</i>	89
<i>Self evaluation - implications for policy</i>	93
<i>Issues and further research</i>	98

SELF EVALUATION PROJECT

Scientific report

Edited by Graham Attwell

June 2005

Introduction

This Scientific Report documents the work of the European Commission funded Leonardo Da Vinci Self Evaluation project. The project started in 2002 and ended in May 2005. The project was coordinated by the BIAT at the University of Flensburg in Germany.

The project partners were:

- IHK Flensburg, Germany
- Centre for Higher Education Studies and Post-16 Education Centre at the University of London, UK
- Danish Institute for Educational Training of Vocational Teachers, Denmark
- Academus Consultadoria Evora, Portugal
- University of Patras, Greece
- Greek Dance theatre – Doro Stratou, Greece
- National Institute of Technical and vocational Education, Czech Republic
- Institute for Educational Sciences, Romania

This reports draws on and summarises the many different reports and outputs of the project partners. The full reports and tools produced by the project can be accessed on the project web site – <http://www.self-evlauation.org>.

About self evaluation

Throughout our life we gain new skills and competencies. Some of these are learnt in formal situations - in school, in vocational training courses, in college or university. Others we learn through our work. Many of our skills come from less formal settings - from home, from our hobbies or from social groups to which we belong.

For some of our skills and knowledge we have certificates to proof what we have learnt. References from previous employers may also provide evidence of our experience. But many of our skills and the knowledge we posses are not recorded by formal certificates.

This becomes a problem when we wish to change our jobs or if we become unemployed. It is also a barrier to entering new courses which require previous experience.

Moreover, we are not always aware of just what skills we do possess. We are not always aware that skills we have learnt in informal settings may provide a basis for new careers, for starting a new course or for using our experience in the community.

The Self Evaluation project aimed to help people to become aware of their personal competencies by the use of new methods for self-evaluation of non-formal competencies. Self-evaluation means to support people in evaluating their own possible competencies. The aim is to enable people to discover their own competencies, to make them 'visible' and to make use of them for new employment opportunities, including finding opportunities for self-employment.

To do this the self evaluation project set the objectives of:

- examining different processes and ways of recognising skills and knowledge in different countries
- developing and piloting new tools, courses and curricula for self evaluation
- researching and evaluating the results and outcomes of the courses and curricula
- producing guidelines and tools which can be used by others for self evaluation

The approach to the project

The ideas behind the Self-evaluation project were rooted in a previous project, 'Tacitkey', which focused on 'implicit' or 'tacit' knowledge and developed a theoretical and empirical analysis of 'tacit' competences based on non-formal learning.

The Self-evaluation project was designed to build on this work and to interface with the growing debate in Europe on non-formal competences.

Based on an inventory of existing or recently developed approaches for the evaluation of non-formal personal competences, the project aimed to develop methods for self-evaluation of non-formal competencies as an integrative part of Continuing Vocational Training on a transnational basis. This required an examination of common principles and existing approaches in the field of the validation of non-formal competences and the development of a synthesis in order to create a common framework for self-evaluation.

The project partners adopted a learner centred, bottom-up approach based on the principle of 'mutual learning' between members of the partnership. The approach stressed the idea that promoting personal development, particularly for those not pursuing an academic career, is a pre-condition for gaining new general and vocational qualifications. In line with this approach, the underlying understanding of competences focused not primarily on decontextualised 'transferable skills', but on a broader understanding of 'per-

sonal capabilities'. The model of competences adopted by the project comprised of five dimensions:

- content-related and practical competences
- methodical competences
- social competences
- learning competences
- competences related to attitudes and values.

This was intended as a heuristic model for analysing personal key competences. This model proved to be valuable in capturing some of the factors which underlie successful change, adaptation and personal growth, and was cable of use in different national cultures and systems. Most importantly the model matches well to an understanding of competences involving self-steering capacities, integrated social, cognitive and technological dimensions together with underlying capacities for life-long learning.

TERMINOLOGY AND UNDERSTANDINGS

A comparison of the terminology used for qualification and competence shows that the understanding of these terms varies in different countries in Europe (see Bjornavold, 2000, 2006p). The discourse around skills, qualifications, competences and other related concepts requires a common understanding of the central terms and an understanding of cultural differences in their use. This is not easy as, in addition to cultural differences, understandings change over time. Changes in the understanding of competences, performance or key-qualifications is often linked to political initiatives.

During the last few years, the discussion and the clarification of terms like competence, and qualification has become a priority for the scientific community. This is a result of the discourse on lifelong learning and an increasing recognition of the importance of a knowledge-based society. The project partners developed a common understanding of a number of key terms and themes and of their meanings in practice, as the basis for the development and testing of different approaches and tools.

MODELS OF COMPETENCE

The term key skills or key qualifications is used by most English speaking countries. The term key skills relates to individual competence in communication, teamwork, tackling numerical problems and complex issues, the analysis, synthesis and presentation of data and the ability to organise lifelong learning. "Key skills were seen as independent of context and were designed to broaden the potential for individual flexibility and for skill accumulation and transfer" (Kämäräinen, 2002, p26). Key skills are considered to be important for managing everyday life and working life. "The key skills approach was initially

introduced to broaden the narrow focus of vocational learning associated with the introduction of NVQs. The aim was to shift the emphasis from purely work-related skills – meeting the immediate needs of the labour market – to broader development goals” (Kämäräinen, 2002, p27).

The key qualifications debate in the German speaking countries is strongly linked to changes in the labour market (technology), to the modernisation of vocational qualifications and to learning cultures (curricula) in these countries (Dohmen, 1999, p54). Key qualifications have been increasingly seen as important for self-organised learning.

Key qualifications were also seen as important to the “renewal of vocational qualifications through interaction between the different structures and contexts for acquiring competence. In the German language this interaction leading to a holistic qualification was characterised as integrated microstructures of action-oriented competences (integrierte Handlungskompetenzen). The command of specialised vocational knowledge (Fachkompetenzen) was to be linked to social competences (Sozialkompetenzen) and the capacity to respond to changing work requirements (Methodenkompetenzen)” (Kämäräinen, 2002, p29).

The discussion of key qualification and key competencies should not be taken out of a broader context. Heidegger (1996) explains that the new labour market context requires a new understanding of “Beruflichkeit”, qualification and competencies. Firstly, the human dimension of work should be recognised. There is a danger, with new technologies, the new global structure of work and the dynamic processes in the ‘learning organisation’, that we ignore the heart of key competencies. The focus of key qualification is the functional dimension of doing/action/working. The term key competencies includes the ethical dimension of qualification/competence. Key competencies accentuate the ability of employees to be creative, reflexive, responsible and participative in their own workplace.

This is one aspect of key competencies. The second aspect explains the ‘systemic’ focus of the project. Lifelong learning will need a greater social dimension, social networks becomes necessary. With the increasing importance of lifelong learning in organisational settings the significance of key competencies is increasing. “Key competences develop an integrative approach to link different individual competences within organisational learning environments. These have generally been developed in the context of organisational learning initiatives and within partnership-based training and development. (...) Key competences can be used to promote an organisational learning culture and organisational innovation” (Kämäräinen, 2002, 27).

This Self Evaluation project adopted a model of competences based on work undertaken through the Leonardo da Vinci “Tacit forms of key competencies for changing employment opportunities” project which ran from 1998 – 2001. This project has developed a new understanding of competences described through the starfish model. The following passage explains the roots of the starfish model:

“The current positions in partner countries were reviewed at outset of TACIT-KEY project. None of the current formulations was found to be adequate for the Tacit-Key problem. In the English and German formulations, there is not sufficient attention to motivation, learning abilities nor the ability of people to manage their own biographies in line with personal interests and needs. The German Action Competence Square does not sufficiently recognise the non-formal dimensions of learning in its ‘Beruf’ centred training and the English formulations are too one-sided in their emphasis on occupational needs.”

The project needed to develop a model of key-competences which was more future oriented and generative in terms of peoples’ personal and professional projects, given our emphasis on interrupted occupational biographies and learning careers (allowing for a wide range of life experiences and value orientations).

The ‘Starfish Model’ was initially developed from a collective review of existing knowledge and used as a basis for heuristic investigation to meet project criteria. The model was one we could test and develop empirically through our investigation of learning and occupational biographies. The model has emphasised broad clusters of abilities coming together in ways which generate growth, movement and future development. That is why the model is not a square or a list but an organism with abilities coming together at its centre. Our evaluation has shown that the model – as elaborated through the investigations in the four partner countries – has value in capturing some of the features which underlie successful change, adaptation and personal growth in ways which transcend national boundaries. It also has good fit with wider European definitions of Cedefop in which key competences are interlinked and interdependent human actions, involving self steering capacities, integrated social cognitive and technological dimensions together with underlying capacities for life-long learning” (Evans, 2001, p27).

The tacit-key project focused on analysing a new understanding of the term competence. It explored a new structure of competence and developed an interactive model of competence. The following table does not explain this interactive structure, but is a short presentation of main elements of the five clusters of competence the project identified. More information around the idea of the interactive structure can be found in other studies (e.g. Finke, 2000, p3). The Self Evaluation project has transferred the interactive structure of competence into a new tool, the DCA method (see Kontiainen, S. (2002)). The following table is based on collaborative research undertaken by project partners from Germany, the United Kingdom, Greece and Portugal.

Dimensions of key competencies

DIMENSIONS OF KEY COMPETENCES	EXPLANATION
Methodological	<p>ability to deal with different modes of communication, different people, different aims, etc.)</p> <p>analysis of situations and decision making</p> <p>problem-solving</p> <p>self-organisation</p> <p>ability to draw on experiences in new situations (learning from the past)</p> <p>ability to interpret situations and respond to them appropriately, including micro-political awareness</p> <p>time-management</p>
social competencies	<p>ability to work with others (interpersonal)</p> <p>ability to co-operate</p> <p>self-projection (positive image of yourself)</p> <p>managing conflicts</p> <p>negotiation skills</p>
Learning competencies	<p>'learning to learn', self learning ability</p> <p>understanding controversial issues</p> <p>critical and reflective abilities</p>
Competencies related to attitudes and values	<p>acceptance of self-responsibility</p> <p>demonstrate commitment</p> <p>positive attitude towards change</p> <p>ability to foster confidence and trust</p> <p>micro-political awareness</p>
Content-related and practical competencies	<p>network development</p> <p>subject matter relevant to work tasks</p> <p>practical aspects of operating in (modern) work environments/handling multiple tasks and demands</p>

I.

Empowerment

A second underpinning idea behind the Self evaluation project was that of empowerment. Rappaport (1985, p17) put forward two approaches to empowerment. One approach is through lack or deficiency: terms such as powerlessness, learned helplessness, alienation, loss of a sense of control over one's live, describe the absence of empowerment. Terms such as self-help, to gain control over the own live, attention to resources, strengths and abilities refer to the positive side of the empowerment concept. "In the empowerment world view, the concern becomes how to collaborate with people to create, encourage, or assist them to become aware of, obtain, or create the resources they may need to make use of their competencies. However, empowerment is not limited to individual competencies. It also involves contextual or setting variables as well as social and political processes" (Rappaport, 1994, p.366). The following table overview explains the complex idea of the multilevel construct of empowerment (Rappaport 1985, 1987, 1994):

	HELPER-PERSPECTIVE	EMPOWERMENT-CONCEPT
Subject	Recipient of services, client	collaborator
Communication	Language of help	language of resources
Service	Helping profession	assisted helping
World view	Lack, weakness, deficit	power, resources
Structure	Agencies	self-help movement/ social network
Attitude	Dominance of schemes	Respectful, acknowledgment, contextual

The Self-evaluation project, considered three aspects of the nature of empowerment theory.

Empowerment theory accentuates the meaning of communities: "In the future (we) will need to study, experience, and understand ... the communities and naturally occurring helping systems that evolve in families, neighbourhoods, and social networks in which people find meaning in life and a psychological sense of community. By understanding these systems we may be able to do more to provide alternatives for those who do not 'fit in' than by trying to force such people into the existing limited options developed under professional control (Rappaport, 1977, p.viii)" (Rappaport, 1984, p.1). Developing this as-

pect further, the concept of empowerment understands learning more as a social endeavour; the focus is not centred on the individual person. So we study contexts, settings and relationships of learning processes. We look at a number of diverse local settings where adults create learning experiences rich in knowledge.

Rappaport underlines the importance of participation for empowerment processes: “Those who participate in decisions and activities that are meaningful to them are more likely to be empowered. Settings with more opportunities for participation are expected to be more likely to be empowering settings” (Rappaport, 1987, p.141). The first Self-evaluation project report by the UK partners quoted Frank Coffield in recognising the link between non-formal learning and widening participation: “One of our findings is that low levels of participation in formal education and training can simply mean that people have found that informal learning is a better way achieving the goals they set themselves.” (Coffield, 2000: p.32).

Empowerment theory envisages the opportunity of different perspectives. New perspectives give a more complete picture of the world; other perspectives motivate an unemployed person to look at resources and competencies in a new way. Therefore, an empowerment project will support “communities”, with the aim, of finding new perspectives. The first Self-evaluation project report by the Portuguese partners highlighted this aspect: “This practice’s goal is to help the individuals find out the message that the working documents might send him, ... it is essentially self-recognition and awareness. It is also the possibility to have different points of view and listening to the others, he will get enriched” (Portugal, WP 1, p.11).

The idea of empowerment recognises the importance of time and context for personal development and change. Many training programmes, especially for unemployed or socially disadvantaged people, are based on set objectives and time limited courses. Curriculum development and implementation through the Self evaluation project was intended to take into account individual needs for space and time and flexibility to meet individual needs.

MUTUAL LEARNING

The Self-evaluation project based itself on principles of mutual learning (Bjornavold, 2000, p.192). Bjornavold believes “the potential for mutual learning is much larger than actual and factual achievements”. He recommends that the goal of every project should be to provide structures and institutions to support mutual learning.

The term ‘mutual learning’ was adopted as a description for the learning dynamic of this project.

- The term refers to the involvement of participants in the project in a spiral of knowledge development – a cycle of reports, workshops and implementation to promote a continuing growth of the knowledge – both tacit and explicit.
- The term underlines that the project partners are a community of learners, practitioners and users.
- Mutual learning implies an iterative cycle of development, a discursive style and the importance of face-to-face meetings.
- The idea of mutual learning draws attention to the shared roles of professionals and members of the target groups – there is an intention for “shared competence”.
- Finally the term provides an intercultural perspective. “Out of the post-modern framework has emerged constructivism, which in practical terms is expressed as the movement toward diversity and inclusiveness, recognizing that cultural ways of being create different perceptions of the same phenomenon” (Boucouvalas/Henschke, 2002, p.134).

This section of the report has explained the ideas which underpinned the project. A longer consideration of these ideas was contained in the First Common report. The First Common Report also looked at the existing projects, programmes and systems for recognising non formal learning in the partners countries. In the next section of this report we will look at the common cornerstones, developed as a guide and baseline for curriculum development by project partners before going on to examine the different curricula and tools developed and evaluated by the partners.

Designing curricula and curricula modules

Despite having developed a common set of goals and meanings around terminology and basic concepts, the project partners recognised that this did not mean a common course, module or even pedagogic approach could be developed and implemented in the different partner countries in Europe. Education and training is heavily influenced by historical, social and cultural development. Whilst the different countries of the European Union may share common principles and aspirations the systems of education and training remain surprisingly diverse. Put quite simply, curricular programmes cannot be transferred from one country to another.

What was possible was to learn from each other through processes of mutual learning and to launch new initiatives or reforms based on an understanding of the dynamics of development in other countries. What was also possible is to pursue developments based on common principles and understandings. Whilst recognising that each country has a different system and that learners will interface with the system in different ways, the project sought to develop and test curriculum modules based on a set of common principles and understandings. The aim was not to provide a template for curriculum and pedagogic development but rather to provide a common basis and starting point for that de-

velopment. Whilst partners were free to base their curriculum modules and pedagogic approach on the traditions, cultures and systems of their own country, those modules and approaches should reflect the principles and understandings expressed within the cornerstones.

CORNERSTONE 1 – PRINCIPLES AND AIMS

The self evaluation project and the curricular models and pedagogical approaches aim to develop individuals social self reliance. The curricular modules are designed to prepare and guide people through a process of self reflection in order to evaluate their own skills and knowledge. The starting point of such a process is not the needs of the labour market but the ideas and aspirations of the participants. The self evaluation programme may be a stand alone module or may be embedded within a wider programme of learning. That programme may have as its aim labour market integration. However, one of the objectives of the self evaluation programme is to encourage individuals to explore as wide as possible the different opportunities and options for future actions. This might be progression to continuing learning, it might be to look at possibilities for self employment or voluntary work or it might be more geared towards social networking and community activities.

Therefore the curricular and pedagogic design needs to focus on the ideas and aspirations of the learners and to encourage self reflection and confidence in exploring those ideas and aspirations. It also needs to encourage participants to explore the different opportunities and resources of their communities, be they communities based on geographical proximity or communities based on practice.

CORNERSTONE 2 – PERSONAL, SOCIAL, LEARNING AND METHODOLOGICAL COMPETENCIES

The self evaluation project builds on the ideas developed through the earlier Leonardo da Vinci Tacit-Key project and outlined above.

CORNERSTONE 3 – CONTENT AND SUBJECT RELATED COMPETENCIES

As we said in the first cornerstone, the self-evaluation programme is not based on labour market needs, nor is it merely aiming at labour market integration. Having said this, obviously work based competences are important, especially as part of a process of self-reflection and self evaluation.

Firstly the self-evaluation module will encourage participants to reflect on the skills and knowledge they have acquired through formal education and training, not merely from the viewpoint of what they are occupationally qualified to do but from the view of what key qualifications and transferable skills have they acquired. Many participants may be aiming at a new career direction, either because of personal aspirations or because of

changing opportunities for employment. Secondly the self evaluation module will look at previous work practice and the possible skills and competences gained which are not formally documented and acknowledged.

The module will also encourage participants to consider ways in which they can develop their future content and subject related competencies. Once more, this may be through formal education and training but may be through work based activities. Thus future work, voluntary activity, self employment or community activities are to be seen as a learning opportunity for content based competencies.

CORNERSTONE 4 – FLEXIBILITY

The self evaluation modules are designed to focus on the needs of individual learners and to develop self reliance. This demands a flexible approach to pedagogy. A traditional systemic or didactic approach is inappropriate for such an aim.

It is important that providers are flexible in their approach.

Flexibility takes a number of forms. The timing of learning provision should be flexible to meet the needs of the participants, for instance recognising childcare responsibilities. Secondly flexibility should allow learners to pursue the programme at their own pace. Whilst some participants will require only a brief period of time to complete the self evaluation process others will require far more time to develop the confidence and skills required to undertake that process.

The project is not prescriptive in terms of pedagogy. Some partners may wish to develop computer based learning materials. Others may see the best provision as being though one to one coaching. Group work and peer group interaction may be seen as a potential learning method. It may be that some learners will wish to undertake a period of work experience as part of the self evaluation process. The self evaluation project is itself a developmental action and one aim is to evaluate the efficacy and results of different approaches. However the pedagogic approaches must take into account the needs of the learners and should encourage the development of self learning competences.

In the first cornerstone we stressed the aim was to encourage learners to consider the many different opportunities and potentials for further activities following their participation in the self evaluation module. It is important that they are supported and encouraged on this process, rather than the module being seen as a traditional course with a start and end date.

CORNERSTONE 5 – THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER AND TRAINER

It should be clear from the previous cornerstones that this is not a traditional course that we are developing. Furthermore, it is also clear that there is a major role in facilitating self evaluation and in supporting [participants through that process. This may be a challenge for teachers and trainers who are used to more traditional didactic and systemic course provision. It is particularly demanding in the need for flexibility.

The project is developing a guide for teachers and trainers. It is hoped that continuing professional development programmes and activities will be organised for teachers and trainers based on his guide. It is also suggested that as part of this process teachers and trainers should themselves participate in the self evaluation exercise.

Designing the Curriculum

During the first phased of the project each partner sought opportunities to introduce a curriculum module – or better put, curriculum activities – based on the common cornerstones described above, within their national and regional vocational education and training systems.

The project did not attempt to standardise the context of use. This was because the partners recognised that self evaluation activities are being systematised in different ways in different countries and under the auspices of different organisations, agencies and institutions. An aim for the project was to develop effective and sustainable developments in the use of self evaluation. For this to happen it necessarily involves reforming existing curricula. We are of the opinion that far too many European projects fail to produce lasting change because curricula and curricula designs are introduced outside existing cultures and practices of education and training, and thus, when project funding ceases, fail to be integrated in national, regional and local practice.

Furthermore, we were seeking to evaluate the potential of self evaluation approaches in different contexts and settings in vocational education and training and compare their effectiveness and impact.

The following list shows the breadth of contexts for which the curricula activities were designed:

- a. The UK curricula activities have been developed within the context of a full time programme for women lacking formal qualifications
- b. The Portuguese curricula activities have been developed within the context of a programme for unemployed women wishing to establish their own enterprise
- c. The German curricula activities have been developed within the context of courses for the long term unemployed

- d. The Greek curricula activities have been developed within the context of a continuing vocational training programme
- e. The Danish, Romanian and Czech curricula activities have been developed within the context of employment counseling organised by public and private agencies and supported by employment ministries.

Each of the partners also developed curricula tools to support the model and curriculum design. Once more, these tools vary dependent on the context of use.

- a. The UK partners have integrated a computer based DCA set of tools for self evaluation of employment and career opportunities
- b. The Portuguese partners have developed tools for identifying non formal competences for self employment
- c. The German partners have develop tools allowing participants to trial different kinds of activity as part of a process of evaluating future options and pathways
- d. The Greek partner has developed a questionnaire for identifying non formal learning for career planning and identifying future learning needs
- e. The Danish, Romanian and Czech partners have developed questionnaire-based tools for identifying non formal learning for career and job planning.

It is notable that different agencies and organisation were responsible for funding and managing the programmes in which the project curricula activities were introduced. For instance in the Danish case, the guidance programme is funded by the Ministry of Labour and managed both by the local labour offices and by private companies. In the German case the funding is provided though office for employment but the programmes are managed by a variety of different organisations – public and private. In the UK the programme is managed through the Higher Education system and funded by the Department for Education.

To ensure comparability and transparency of design each partner was asked to complete a short report utilising a common template:

1. What is the target group for the model project?
2. How many participants are there in the target group?
3. What is the social and learning background of members of the target group?
4. What are the previous qualifications of the target group (if known)
5. How many of the target group are in the following age bands:
6. Under 25
 - 25 – 40
 - 40 – 55
 - 55 +

Most partners have indicated they intend to organise the self-evaluation module as part of a wider learning or social integration programme. These questions are about this wider programme (if any).

7. What is the title of the programme?
8. What is the length of the programme?
9. What qualification can be gained through the programme (if any)?
10. What are the intended progression routes for the programme (if any)?
11. What is the name of the institution providing the programme?
12. What are the main contents of the curriculum for the programme?
13. How is the programme organised?
14. Who is providing funding for the programme?

These questions are about the design and delivery of the self-evaluation module for the model project.

15. What is the curriculum for the self-evaluation module?
16. What are the expected outcomes of self-evaluation module?
17. What is the rationale for the design of the self-evaluation module?
18. What is the mode(s) of delivery for the self-evaluation module?
19. How is learner achievement on the self-evaluation module to be assessed?
20. What is the expected (average) length of time to complete the self-evaluation module?
21. Who will deliver the self-evaluation module and what are their qualifications / experience?

The following section provides a summary of the tools developed by the project partners.

Designing tools

Each partners was also responsible for the design of tools to support the curricula processes. Once more there was no intention of standardising the tools. Firstly tools need to be appropriate for the target group, for the curricula activities and with the overall curriculum programme in which the activities were included. Secondly, one aim of the project was to test and evaluate a wide variety of different tools for supporting self evaluation.

Once more the project partners adopted a common descriptor for the tools and considerable effort has been expended in ensuring that the tools, together with the results of the evaluation, are available for others, where possible in alternative language versions.

- i. Name of product
- ii. Nature of product (e.g. curricula, guidelines, questionnaire etc.)
- iii. Intended purpose
- iv. Target group
- v. How to use it
- vi. Who they were produced by
- vii. Where to get more information
- viii. Any other information

Evaluating the curricula activities and tools

Much effort was expended in the evaluation of the curricula activities. There were a number of reasons for this:

1. Given the very different nature of the different activities in different countries it was important to gain an understanding of what work and what does not
2. For many of the partner countries self evaluation is a new activity and the evaluation of the curriculum activities will be important in providing evidence for future embedding and sustainable curriculum reform
3. The results of the evaluation are important in compiling advice for teachers and trainers on self evaluation activities.
4. The evaluation formed part of the research activities of the project. In this respect accompanying and formative evaluation should both provide evidence for research and formative feedback for iterative project development.

Nevertheless, there was some considerable barriers and constraints in developing an evaluation framework. A real study of effectiveness and impact would probably involve tracking participant progress for a period of at least three years. Equally, for employers to provide comparable data, they would need to know participants prior to the study. Within the timeframe of the project, few if any participants had progressed to full and stable employment by the time of the evaluation. Neither, within the scope of the project, was it possible to undertake comparison with a control group.

Therefore the aim was to design evaluation strategies, tools and instruments which gather as much useful data as possible to enable partners to make an initial assessment or judgement about the impact of the programme (all evaluation, at the end of the day, involves human judgement).

For evaluating learner and teacher perceptions and experiences of the curricula activities two instruments were used

- I. A semi structured interview with participants

Background questions about the participant

- Why did you go on course?
- What was your previous employment history?
- What was your previous education background?
- What qualifications do you have?

Plans for the future

- What do you plan to do in the future?

- What do hope to do in future?
- What are main barriers to you doing this?
- Would you think about doing another course – if so why – if not why not?

The self evaluation module

- What was your opinion of self evaluation module?
- What parts did you like?
- What parts did you not like?
- What could be better?
- Did you get enough support?
- Did the programme provide what you wanted to learn?
- Was the programme as you expected – what was different?
- Did you feel tutor / facilitator understood what you wanted to learn

What has changed

- What has changed for you as a result of the programme?
- What have you learnt that might be useful for you in future employment?
- What have you learnt which is useful in your everyday life?
- How have your ideas have changed as a result of the programme?

2. Semi-structured interview with trainers / employers

- Had you prior experience of teaching / mentoring on such programmes prior to this programme / module? / Have you had prior experience of employees who had participated in a self evaluation programme?
- What was your experience of the programme / module? / What is your opinion of the programme / module?
- What do you think the participants will do differently as a result of the programme / module?
- Did the module programme change the participants attitude towards themselves / work / life outside work?
- Will what they learnt help participants in their future work / career?
- Will what they learnt help participants in their future life (outside work)?

The project also undertook a benchmarking exercise and a SWOT analysis. A full report of these is given below.

Implementing the curriculum activities in different countries

In this section of the report we provide a brief account of the implementation of the curriculum activities in the different partner countries. The accounts here are an abridged version of the full national reports from each partner which are available on the Self evaluation project web site.

The Czech Republic¹

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The VET system in the Czech Republic is based on a long and well established tradition of school education including formal education for adults at schools, as well as in in-company training in a number of professions. There is not a legal framework for lifelong learning nor legal regulation for informal and non-formal education. In the early 1990s adult education began to be developed outside the formal educational system. It can be characterised as a spontaneous development lacking sufficient coordination and a systematic framework. There is no coherent policy approach to the education of socially disadvantaged people.

The education of adults, disadvantaged on the labour market, is provided by the Department of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MPSV) through the services of professional and career guidance. Labour offices (UPs), run directly by the Employment Service Authority of MPSV, develop activities in this field.

The main target group for the UPs' counselling and educational activities are the unemployed and jobseekers. There are conditions on accessing UP services including regular visits to the office and not running a business.

Special provision is provided for those with problems in entering the labour market e.g. handicapped people, women returning from maternity leave, members of ethnic minority groups, older workers.

Self-evaluation in the Czech Republic is in a development phase and a self-evaluation culture, or well established tradition, has not yet been developed.

¹ This section of the Scientific Report is based on the Final report of the Czech project partner. The full report can be downloaded from <http://www.self-evaluation.org/Results/piloting/czechfinalreport>

There is minimal promotion of systematic individual self-evaluation activities, even by HRD specialists in larger companies who are little influenced by practices in other countries. However, various self-evaluation methods and tools are used including interviews, and diagnostic and psychological tests.

T A R G E T G R O U P S

The Czech project focused on two target groups. 38 participants including long-term unemployed people, women returning to work after maternity leave and unemployed school leavers participated in a motivation course. All were registered at the UP in the Most region. The region has recorded the highest unemployment in the Czech Republic. The results of this initial course were used as the basis for developing a further pilot activity.

From November to December 2004 the implementation of the self-evaluation module and tools developed within the project was piloted and evaluated. 20 participants took part in a new motivation course organised by the Retraining Information Centre in Most.

It should be noted that participants in both pilot groups were not only unemployed but also had a low level of previous educational attainment.

The third target group was for the project was the advisors taking part in the development, implementation and evaluation of self-evaluation tools.

C U R R I C U L A R D E S I G N – A P P R O A C H , M O D U L E S A N D T O O L S U S E D F O R S E L F - E V A L U A T I O N

The self-evaluation tools were developed on the basis of a empirical research conducted in the first motivation course organised from November to December 2002.

The results of the research revealed the following:

- There was no idea of the possibility of self-evaluation as a process leading to self-knowledge and planning the future
- The need for positive motivation for self-evaluation
- The subjectivity of self-evaluation and the fear of failure
- The need for assistance in undertaking self-evaluation

Unemployed people in the Czech Republic, especially those with low educational attainment will only undertake self evaluation activities with support from experts. It is unreasonable to expect individuals to be able to carry out self-evaluation independently

Modules and tools for self-evaluation

Following analysis of the research and consultations with course advisors i.e. instructors, lecturers, psychologists, the head of the course and UP staff, the basic approach for the

implementation of self-evaluation activities of unemployed was developed. The activities should:

- i. be carried out as individual assistance to unemployed as a process of continuous consultation with advisors;
- ii. be carried out by special advisors who have sufficient experience with unemployed and previous experience in providing counseling and consultation activities;
- iii. be used exclusively for the purpose of self-knowledge and planning self-development for unemployed people and be offered as a means of improving opportunities for employment on the labour market;
- iv. result in the identification of participants real possibilities for education and employment – both on the basis of their non-formal competences and formally certified data;
- v. aim at validating the subjective self-evaluation of participants;
- vi. lead to a constructivist approach to participants' own image, identification and formulation of their individual needs and assessment of their realistic possibilities;
- vii. assist participants to make a decision (in cooperation with advisors) on individual procedures which enable them to return to work, further education or retraining;
- viii. culminate in planning a concrete procedure for return to work and further educational activities of each participant. This should be a consensus between his or her subjective ideas, personal views and the recommendations of advisors.

On the basis of this approach 2 modules for self-evaluation were developed. Both involved the use of a self evaluation questionnaire, but whilst one was a traditional paper based tool the second utilised computer based tools. The questionnaire dealt with the following areas:

- school education, professional, practical experience and foreign language knowledge,
- general abilities, skills and habits,
- personal qualities,
- work and life attitudes and experience,
- work with modern technologies,
- interest in a certain type of work,
- interest in work in various work fields,
- further skills,

- health condition,
- assessment of further plans

Detailed guidance was also produced for staff on how to support individuals in completing the questionnaire.

Completion of the questionnaire was accompanied by analysis of problems which the applicant encountered whether working independently or together with the counsellor.

This was followed by development of an individual plan for the participant, including possibilities of further assistance and intervention, opportunities for further education or for contacting potential employers.

IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

The implementation and evaluation of the modules and tools were carried out through a motivation course for unemployed and a special consulting activities of labour offices.

Implementation and evaluation in a framework of a motivation course

A working version of the self-evaluation modules and questionnaire was implemented and evaluated in November 2004 in a framework of a largest motivation course for unemployed in the Retraining Information Centre /RIC Most s.r.o./ where the self-evaluation needs of unemployed were sound out within the WP3 solution.

It was realised in a cooperation with the following target groups:

- assistants of the motivation course
- graduates of a motivation course

The course is intended for jobseekers who were long-term or repeatedly registered at the labour office and who have only basic education, if need be higher. This course is based on the active participation of employers.

The aims of the course were:

- To promote and reactivate jobseekers in their effort to find a job
- To determine the personal profile of jobseekers in compliance with the up-to-date needs of employers
- To assist in finding a suitable, topical and perspective job opportunity through cooperation and contact with employers
- To provide the knowledge and skills which jobseekers could use in a broad range of employment – including self employment.

The main focus for the course is self-recognition, self-evaluation and self-development of skills and knowledge.

The structure of the interview with assistants of the motivation course

Firstly, the assistants proposed preliminary amendments to the modules and questionnaire. Following this, each assistant tested the modules and questionnaire with five participants of the motivation course. In addition, the assistants completed an interview the aim of which was to explore their views and experience of the modules and questionnaire.

Every participant in the self-evaluation programme was interviewed before and after participation using the following evaluation questionnaire.

Questions for the client before participation:

- Why did you decide to use the self-evaluation questionnaire?
- What are your plans for the future?
- What are the main obstacles to meeting your plans?

Questions after filling in the questionnaire:

Views of clients on possible changes in questioning

- Which parts (questions) of the questionnaire seem to you unsuitable and you would not want to answer them?
- Would you propose some questions for improving the questioning?

Views of clients on benefits from questioning

- Did the questioning help you to realize your abilities and priorities?
- Did you get clear in your mind what procedure for re-entry into the work would be suitable for you?
- Did the cooperation with the counsellor during questioning helped you?
- Do you think that the counsellor was able to put himself into your place?
- Did you learn something useful during your consultations with the counsellor for:
 - your plans for re-entry into work;
 - possibility of your successful placement on the labour market;
 - your personal life in the future;
 - your plans for further education and training?
- Based on questioning have you changed your original views?

- What is your overall impression from this questioning?

The pilot and evaluation was realised also undertaken through special consulting activities through the labour offices.

Conclusions from interviews with course assistants

All assistants have experience with using the self-evaluation method gained during long-term work and consultation with the clients on the motivation courses.

They consider the self-evaluation questionnaire useful for their work; it helps them not only to make an initial picture of the clients' personality but also to understand the clients, especially how they perceive themselves.

As far as the clients' benefits from self-evaluation activities is concerned, all assistants agreed that helped make clients think rationally about their opportunities for labour market success and plans for future education and training. However, clients did not often link their labour market success with personal their life. That is why they did not think about using self-evaluation results (gained in consultations with counsellors) for career planning.

All assistants confirmed that they do not have usually such data on clients which the self-evaluation questionnaire contains; that is - personal qualities, life experience and attitudes, preferences for different types of jobs and success on the labour market. The information which clients provided here was compared with the results of traditional balance diagnostics. When assistants consulted clients' strengths and weaknesses with them they stressed, first of all the individual needs of clients and focused on strengthening their self-confidence. They brought clients' strengths to their attention and analysed their use in working and personal life.

At the end of consultation, assistants mostly agreed with clients on specific forms of help or a suitable procedure leading to a return to work.

In the following step assistants used a Module of computer aided self-evaluation. They helped their clients use an internet application, Jobtip, and consulted various possibilities of their judgment, approaches to the particular questions and truthfulness of their answers. After analytical evaluation through application they offered to each of the clients a concrete occupation and further education.

Conclusions from interviews with the participants of self-evaluating questioning

Before the self-evaluation questioning started all its clients stated that they participated in the questioning in order to ensure assistance in job seeking and further training. Their answers reflect the primary goal - to find a suitable job. They consider unsuitable conditions in the region on the labour market as a basic obstacle in finding a job. / At present this region recorded the highest average unemployment rate in the Czech Republic -

23.8%- data of MPSV from 8.9.2004/. Some of the clients stated that personal reasons were a significant obstacle in job-hunting: low qualification, qualification in the field which is damped in the region, bad health condition, taking care of children, and necessity to work in day shifts.

When clients evaluated if the questions in the questionnaire are suitable or unsuitable most clients stated that none of the questions were unsuitable. Only one client marked the field of personal qualities for unsuitable and two clients considered the questions asking about health condition statement unsuitable.

According the views of the clients assistants were able to put them selves in clients' place during mutual cooperation in filling in the questionnaire. This probably also influenced the results of self-evaluation questioning.

The bulk of the clients assessed positively the questioning and its help for realizing their personal qualification and abilities. Almost all stated that the questioning help them to get clear in their mind, especially as far as the procedure for return to work is concerned. They appreciated cooperation with assistants and most of the clients stated that they learn useful facts both for return to work and planning further education and training. As far as future personal life planning is concerned clients very often stated that consultations with assistants did not contribute to coping with this issue.

More than half of the clients consider the self-evaluation questioning very positive, one client think that questions are too personal. Two clients stated an uncertain impression and several clients did not express any opinion.

Most of them also stated that the self-evaluation questionnaire did not resulted in a change in their original views of labour market success because the unemployed rate in the region is too high. There for they readily took an opportunity to use the second module of computer aided self-evaluation. Most of the clients did not able to work with internet application individually. They needed a largest cooperation with assistants and consulted various tasks and problems. At the end of the module obtained each of them a concrete and actually offer of occupation.

Conclusions from interviews with counsellors from labour offices

Generally, counsellors think that using the self-evaluation activities in the counseling activities of the labour offices is very useful. They think that the big advantage of the modules and tools is the cooperation with the client, which enables counsellors to get to know clients better, assess their abilities, knowledge, skills and individual needs. Clients who provide here personal information can evaluate their chances for finding a job and their needs in much more realistic way and they can participate in decisions on the suitable form of assistance in job-hunting.

When making a final overall data analysis counsellors are of the opinion that it is necessary to inform truthfully clients by using a suitable form and propose them real steps to be taken to extend their chances on the labour market.

The self-evaluation activities increase the possibility to offer individual counselling services for clients which have been previously provided on the basis of formal recorded information.

Denmark²

INTRODUCTION

The tools designed for use in Denmark strive to meet the needs of both individual users and the demands from the different services who provides the framework for competence assessment in Denmark.

The primary goal has been to develop a set of tools that can be used by unemployed adults who are in the process of re-entering the labour market. Secondly the project aims at enhancing the quality of the assistance unemployed people get from guidance counsellors and/or teachers when they are to evaluate their own skills and knowledge.

For this purpose, two different tools have been developed and tested. One is a self-guided tool which consists of a number of exercises that can be integrated in an existing course - as a part of the course curriculum. Course participants can work with this tool on their own, or with assistance from a teacher or guidance counsellor. The other tool is a dialogue guide, consisting of number of recommended questions or focus areas for conducting personal interviews in the context of competence assessment.

In Denmark a number of different services offer guidance to unemployed adults and competence assessment takes place in many different settings. The self-evaluation tools must take these different contextual frames into consideration. The tools have been developed in close cooperation with practitioners on the field.

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

The theoretical and methodological approach primarily derives from the results of earlier research undertaken in the self evaluation project, which aimed at uncovering the demands one could hold against a self-evaluation tool. Additionally, the following career researchers have been the source of inspiration in the development of the tools:

² This section of the Scientific Report is based on the Final report of the Danish project partner. The full report can be downloaded from <http://www.self-evaluation.org/Results/piloting/danishreport5>

- Donald Super, who has inspired the part of the tools that has to do with the contextual understanding of the individuals vocational identity (The Life-Span, Life-Space Approach to Careers)
- Albert Bandura, whose research on how individual's self-efficacy and outcome expectations influence their personal goals and - in due course their behaviour - have given input as how to work with individuals "self-beliefs".
-
- Linda Gottfredson who's research on the impact of socialisation and it's influence on individuals career beliefs, has inspired the part of the tools that aim at re-evaluating earlier learning experiences
- Vance Peavy who has developed counselling tools to assist individuals in the process of exploring their life-space and possible futures, has inspired some of the included exercises. (socio-dynamic counselling)

Special attention has been paid to the following principles. Vocational identity and self-concept is context specific (influenced by e.g. historical, cultural and social factors) subjective, constructed and fluid and self - concept/self-efficacy beliefs guides and influences career behaviour

THE CONCEPT OF COMPETENCE ASSESSMENT

In Denmark competence assessment takes many shapes and is being influenced by a number of different stakeholders and their respective opinions about the objective of the particular assessment.

People are often not aware of their own competencies and are therefore in need of assistance to uncover these. Accordingly, competence assessment could be described as two different types of activities each with their particular goal and objective – for example:

A. To uncover individual competences (Kompetenceafklaring):

- The individuals own view on he's/her competencies
- What can I do, what do I know, what do I have experience with
- System support to the individual – to explore possible competencies
- To create consciousness/awareness; to help clarifying, discovering or uncover the individuals' possible competences

B. To assess individual competences (Kompetencevurdering):

- The individuals view on the value of own competencies
- The use and transferability

- System assessment of the individuals competencies
- Accreditation, qualification demands and entry requirements

Each of the different approaches will be reflected in the methods that the particular service choose to use in the competence assessment. Of particular relevance to self-evaluation is therefore to define the objective(s). The objective of the self-evaluation process could for example be to:

- help individuals to reconstruct self-concept/career beliefs
- expand the field of possible choices and actions, or to
- capitalise human potential

The tools that has been developed and tested in this particular project hold an individual perspective and aim at creating self-awareness through a process of re- evaluating ones own skills and competences (following definition A). In turn, this could lead to an updated or reconstructed view of the ‘self’ and to the expansion of future career options.

The self-evaluation process is likely to need a follow-up phase, where the results are being held up against/assessed in a specific context e.g. according to labour market demands. In this phase, the evaluation takes shape of an assessment of the use and transferability of the individual’s skills and competences in the context of, for example, a specific job or training course.

CURRICULAR DESIGN - THE SELF-EVALUATION TOOLS

The two different self-evaluation tools are:

- A self-guided tool aimed at the individual participant
- A dialog guide aimed at teachers and career counsellors

Both tools include questions or exercises that evolve around the following themes:

- My life-story (life-span)
- My present situation (life-space)
- My conceptions about my future (outcome expectations)
- How do I proceed? (possible career paths)
- My professional and personal competencies (vocational identity)
- My options and possible barriers

- My personal goals and plans

These seven thematically organised content areas cover what most career researchers agree are the influencing factors in the shaping of individuals vocational identity. They all seem to have an impact on how individuals interpret their options when choosing a career path.

Target groups

The self-guided tool (Tool A) is targeted towards unemployed adults who are presently in the process of re-entering the job market. The tool can be used as an integrated part of a course curriculum or as an independent component of the competence assessment process. In case of the latter, the tool can be used for individual preparation for the personal interview(s) or as an activity included in this. The exercises can be done with or without the assistance of a counsellor and aim at helping the individual to gain better self-knowledge.

The dialog guide (Tool B) is targeted towards professionals who are working with unemployed adults as counsellors, teachers or trainers and is a revised version of tool A. The tool is primarily meant to be a guide for the personal interview and can be used in cases where the adult is not enrolled in a course and in cases where the personal interview stands alone or supplements the course curriculum. The tool aim at helping the counsellor to structure and focus more on the individual's needs and aspirations and to the contextual factors that has been influencing the clients career beliefs (vocational identity).

A number of the participants in the target group were expected to have difficulties with the written language and with a solely text-based tool. Therefore, to illustrate the main idea of the tools, two drawings were developed to support the teacher's/counsellor's introduction to the participants. In future versions of the tools this part would possibly need to be strengthened.

THE MODEL PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The self-evaluation tools have been developed in close co-operation with teachers and counsellors who are working with unemployed adults in the Public Employment Office and at competence assessment courses provided by public or private services. The participating teachers and counsellors have been a valuable source of inspiration and have given many important inputs to the development of the tools and provided feedback on draft versions at meetings and through personal interviews.

The self-guided Self-evaluation tool (tool A) has been tested by unemployed adults who are presently connected to the Public Employment Office and already enrolled in a course (total: 24) and by teachers and counsellors connected to these services (total: 6). Participants impressions and opinions of the tools have been gathered through personal

and group interviews in which most of the test-group members have participated. The results of these interviews are summarised below.

Additionally, the tools has been developed according to the goals and objectives formulated by the partners of the Self-evaluation project, in the Common Cornerstones.

THE OUTCOME OF SELF-EVALUATION

Most of the participants were positive towards the idea of conducting self-evaluation and felt that in general they had learned something useful through the course. A few of the participants had tried exercises similar to those of the self-evaluation tools before. They had, to begin with, a negative attitude towards it - thinking "oh no, not again". Having done the exercises, all of the participants were very positive, and a common remark was "it was like getting a wake-up call".

The participants particularly liked the part of the tools that had to do with their life-span and space (exercise 1 and 2). Some of the common remarks were that it gave them a good overview of what they had been doing. It also helped them to discover things they had forgotten about - e.g. "I realized that I am a very independent person - I can plan and work on my own".

For the most part these exercises helped the participants to discover their strengths e.g. "I realized that I had actually managed to ...xxx", but it could also bring up facts from their life that were not so pleasant to realize e.g. "I've been drifting around and wasted a lot of time". In general it seems to help people remember what they have actually done in the course of their life time and, in many cases, help them to remember what they have learned from this.

A number of participants had difficulties with the exercises focusing on the future (exercise 3). Some had a very clear picture of what possible paths they could follow in the future -others found it very difficult. Participants coming from outside Europe and the US seemed to have particular problems with these exercises which could indicate that there could be some cultural issues to discuss about the thinking behind the tools (the individualistic approach).

For the most part, the participants had been doing the exercises on their own - without many instructions from the teacher/counsellor. Through the interview it came clear that the language issue has to be dealt with. One said - when the interview was almost over - "tell me, what does competence actually mean?" Obviously, all participants have to get the assistance they need in order to understand the meaning of the exercises.

In general, all participants seemed to have gained from working with the tools. In particular, the tools focus on strengths and not weaknesses or deficits and seem to have a positive impact on the participants' view of themselves. One comment, which could capture the general opinion, was: "I think it is a good idea. When you have been unemployed

for a long time you can very easy loose self-esteem. The tool makes you realize that you have actually managed a lot of things”.

Finally, all of the participants were very positive towards the idea of getting informal competences accredited: “adults have a lot of experiences and that should be accounted for, when applying for a job – not just what education you have”. Many thought that getting “a paper for your qualifications” could improve their job opportunities.

INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHER AND COUNSELLORS

Most of the participating counsellors and teachers were positive towards implementing self-evaluation as a tool in competence assessment, but also found it difficult and time consuming to work with individuals’ own perceptions. The tool helps to “open up” the participants which is seen as something very positive. It can also help adults to get a clearer picture of their competences and career patterns.

Only one of the participating counsellors was very sceptical towards using the tool and thought that it could actually counteract the goals put forward by the Public Employment Office. In her view, the participant was only to be assessed in the context of the specific trades presented on a specific course: “what if they find out that they want to do something totally different...that won’t work....that is not what you are paid to do”. In this perspective the aim is not competence assessment in general, but assessment according to specified requirements within a certain trade.

This emphasizes the need to discuss the context in which the self-evaluation tools are being used and, in general, what we define as the objective of competence assessment. Some services have, for example, been given a rather narrow task from the public employment office - e.g. testing the participants’ ability to get employment within a specific work area. Others have a broader perspective on competence assessment and aim at uncovering all possible competences. Obviously, this has an impact on the usefulness of the tools in different services and has to be discussed before implementation.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

The model project has shown that the participants’ voluntary participation is critical for a successful outcome to the self-evaluation process. If individuals have been more or less compelled to attend a specific course they tend to be more reluctant towards the whole idea of competence assessment. This, of course, influences their attitude towards working with the exercises when these are being integrated as part of course curriculum.

Firstly, participants outcome of the self-evaluation process seem to coalesce with the connection between individual goals (e.g. getting a job) and personal judgement of the concrete result of the assessment process (e.g. can I use this to get closer to a job). This

emphasizes the need to have an agreed follow-up procedure, which includes strategies for formal competence accreditation.

Secondarily, the contextual frame must be taken into consideration. The aim of the self-evaluation tools are to assist people in the process of uncovering all possible competences, and to create a link between personal skills and competences and possible future career paths. This could, in turn, motivate more adults for further learning and/or expand their field of options. But it also places demands on the surrounding system, and raises the question whether all services have the readiness or willingness to offer adults an opportunity (e.g. access to education) to pursue personal goals.

Finally, the model-project and the interviews undertaken have shown a need to address possible cultural variations. Personal goals are personal! Cultural factors could play a part in how we think about unemployed adults and how they are to respond to the demands of for example life-long learning. Some adults do not have specific goals for their future but rather just want to get a job.

Socialisation might have an impact on how different stakeholders interpret the relationship between the individual and society and the demands held against each individual might vary. Learning new skills and/or expanding the field of career options might not be the individual's goal or need, and it might not even be in the interest of a specific service. In turn, the fastest possible way to any vacant job could be the overall goal – overshadowing whatever needs the individual might have.

Germany

CONTEXT / BACKGROUND

The financial support and the diversity of offers for further education schemes and re-integration schemes for unemployed people or women returners have been reduced by a large extent during the running time of the Self-Evaluation project. Furthermore this process of limitation has increased since the labour market and social reforms of HARTZ IV. Since the beginning of 2005, people who have been unemployed for more than three years receive a benefit which is called Arbeitslosengeld II (ALG II). This, for a person who lives on his or her own, is €345 per month. Additionally the rent for an apartment is paid. The amount of the ALG II for the individual is not dependent on his or her qualifications or former income. It depends on the living situation of the individual. Aspects like being married or having children or living in a partnership are the relevant factors for the amount of support an individual can claim from the state.

Against this background, especially people who live in a partnership with someone who is employed are affected because their benefit will be calculated with relation to the income

of their partner. Therefore, families with one person in employment with a low income and one person who is unemployed are disadvantaged.

Regarding the support for being re-integrated in the labour market, the reforms include a central aspect which changes the situation of unemployed people who “are on ALG II”. They do not have a legal right to be supported in their endeavours to re-enter the labour market any longer. They can only ask for financial support with regard to job application costs, mobility costs, job training or vocational education.

The limited opportunities for field research for this project have to be seen against this background, which was already influencing the situation in further education institutions before coming into force in January 2005. One result of these circumstances was that all the courses with which we were in contact showed limitations in duration, quality and the self-evaluation of informal and non-formal competences. Most courses had a very rigid and overloaded structure. Most took place over a period of two weeks, full-time, and were run by private or semi institutions in the continuing education sector with funding from the labour office (Bundesagentur für Arbeit). The main subjects of the courses were job application writing and basic skills in using computers and word processing programmes.

The self-evaluation of non-formal and informal competences played at best a minor role in these courses. Whether the self-evaluation of such competences was taken up at all was dependent on the interests, qualifications and the background of the trainers for the courses. In some of our cases, the trainers were vocational pedagogy students. In these cases, self-evaluation of informal and informal competences were at least taken into account at some point. Course participants were interviewed about their former work experience as well as about their additional experiences outside of work. The trainers tried to develop future job perspectives together with the trainee through one-to-one interviews.

At the time of the project proposal and at the beginning of the project we were in contact with courses which aimed at assisting women returners to develop ideas about future possibilities for occupational employment. These courses were originally designed to take place over a period of three months. Therefore, our former ideas for the implementation of methods and models for self-evaluation had to be reduced considerably and additionally they had to be adapted to the specific circumstances of the two weeks courses. Against this background, the module presented below can only fulfill the function of an incentive for self-evaluation. It aims to make participants' access of to their own competences easier given many are not aware of them.

TARGET GROUP (OBLIGATIONS, RULES, EXPECTATIONS, CHARACTERISTICS)

The target group for the courses described above includes people between 18 and 55 years. 60% are male and 40% female. A great proportion of the learners – about 60% – have passed an apprenticeship in crafts, in administration or in retailing. Some of the young participants entered the course directly after their apprenticeship because they have not been taken on after their final exam.

The others have mainly worked in the service sector and have no qualifications. They look back on an occupational career which has been interrupted several times. Most of them have gone through long periods of unemployment and have changed their employers several times. They report that it became more and more problematic for them to find employment during the last years and that they feel very insecure with regard to their future.

In general it can be said that the main motivation for participating in the course for both groups – those with qualifications as well as those without qualifications – is to avoid the “Arbeitslosengeld II”. Most of the learners expect that the content of the course will help them to find a job within a short period of time which would then protect them from hardship. Only some are aware that completing the course successfully, e.g. through developing proper application forms, does not guarantee them employment in the near future.

The expectations to find a job soon have, to a certain extent, to be based on the unrealistic ideas of the participants but also on the promises from the counsellors at the labour office.

The title, “Informations- und BewerbungsSeminar“, and especially the flyer for the course promise a track into a job. It is pointed out that the course will provide a convincing strategy for job applications, will support the writing of meaningful applications and help people to cope with the demands of an interview.

Neither in the flyer nor in the whole course is it pointed out that there are few opportunities at present on the labour market.

The participants’ unrealistic view of the labour market situation can be interpreted as a way of dispelling the forthcoming consequences of the social reforms. Their participation in the course seemed not to be self-motivated but the last chance to avoid the new ALG II.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF THE MODULE DESIGN

Regarding the theoretical background of the module design, two main ideas need to be mentioned.

Firstly is John L. Holland 's theory of types of personality which has been developed since the 1960s in the US and which has become more and more popular in Europe during the last 15 years. Holland 's central idea is that people have specific personality structures which are related to certain abilities which finally lead them to choose jobs in a specific field. His theory divides people between six types of personality: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, conventional.

He proved his theory through factor analysis. Today there are over 20000 job profiles in the USA which are described on the basis of Holland 's theory of types of personality.

Since the 1960s Holland's idea has been developed further. It is used for job finding processes, vocational orientation (e.g. Explorix) as well as for biographical planning of occupational careers.

His theory has been developed further for instance by Linda Gottfredson who focuses on vocational choice theory. Interactive multiple choice tests for vocational choices which can be filled in online are according to our research very popular in Romania, Germany, Austria and Denmark. These tests are designed mainly for pupils in the process of vocational orientation.

These tests can be found through googling the word "Explorix". Each of them consists of three levels.

The first level asks the occupation seekers to choose from a variety of tasks which they are able to manage. The heading of this level is: What am I able to do?

At the second level they are asked to choose from a variety of tasks those for which they have a specific interest. The heading of this level is: What would I like to do?

The division between these two questions seem important to us in that the task one can manage does not mean that it also matches a person's interests. Equally one might be interested in a task although not able to manage it. Therefore these two questions were used in the second step of the German model project which is described below.

At the third level, a choice of occupations is given for each type of personality. The users are asked to choose those occupations which suit them best. In order to get the result of this test the user has to pay a small amount of money and he/she will receive the rest results by post.

While analysing this test we discovered a number of critical issues:

All occupation related to the investigative type of personality on level 3 are very close to academic endeavours.

- a) The occupations related to the realistic type of personality at level 3 and many of the tasks at level 1 and 2 are strongly related to male handicraft trades.

- b) There is a strong focus on salesmanship within the tasks and the occupations related to the enterprising type of personality
- c) The social type of personality seems to be mainly related to children's education, occupations like care of the elderly or nursing are poorly represented.

Nevertheless Holland's theory of personality seems applicable to our aim of assisting people in self-evaluating their non-formal and informal competences because his six types of personality are easy to define in a broad way so that they allow matching a variety of occupations or jobs.

We used Holland's theory as well as its adaption to practice as a starting point for the design of the German module for self-evaluation.

Secondly there is the idea of action orientation which has been a central focus in education and curriculum development in Germany during the last two decades. The idea of action orientation is based on the work of Piaget, Aebli, Vykotski and Volpert and has a central focus on the existence of complete actions.

The central characteristics of an action oriented learning context are explained below.

Process orientation. This means that the learners are allowed/are asked to construct their own approach and their own way of solving the task or the problem.

Product orientation. This means that firstly there is a final visible and presentable product at the end of the learning process. Secondly it is seen as essential that the final product of the work process has a meaning to the learners and that it is useful.

Complete action. This means that the following steps are realised and carried through in the following order within the learning process: collecting information, planning, decision making, carrying through, controlling, evaluating.

Team work: This means that learning processes should not be carried out alone but in teams because within the group information processes could be carried through, different ideas can be discussed and combined, products, solutions and the evaluation of both can be discussed and a multi-perspective, reflection process is supported. Additionally, team work makes the learning process more realistic with regard to work processes.

Activation of former experiences and skills of the individual. This means that the task should be designed in such a way that it recalls the skills of the individuals and motivates them to make use of them. This is the characteristic which is most important with regard to the "Flensburg method for Self-Evaluation"

CURRICULUM DESIGN (WHAT, TOOLS, PROCESS)

Participating in the courses and talking to the participants on an informal basis, we learned that most of them are not aware of their own skills and competences. They feel

insecure when they are interviewed about their former experience in a job and in their leisure time. This leads them to say less, or in some cases nothing, about their additional interests and skills because they do not regard them as important or they do not see their relevance with regard to new job opportunities. Against this background, which has additionally been investigated through interviews with course trainers, filling in the profiling sheets for each learner, which is an obligatory within the course, is a very difficult and demanding task for the trainers, which cannot in all cases be completed in a way that supports the participant.

To meet and overcome these difficulties and restrictions we developed a method that starts with an action oriented incentive and impulse for reflection on ones' own skills and competences and then leads the participants through a reflection processes to develop ideas regarding possible future job options.

We call this module "The Flensburg Method of Self-Evaluation". The whole module can be divided into four main stages.

The first step of the module focuses on experiencing situations and activities with different characteristics and demands which are based on Holland's theory of types of personality: Realistic (R), Investigative (I), artistic(A), social (S), enterprising (E), conventional (C). These situations and activities should be undertaken in groups of two or three participants. The situations or activities include the following:

R) realistic: building a model railway, sewing making a model ship or steam engine, repairing a bike.

I) investigative: comparing and choosing an office chair for people with a bad back, investigating a fault in a car, researching the cheapest ingredients for a meal.

A) artistic: making an object for a model railway landscape, preparing and decorating a plate with bread roles (Canapés).

S) social: role playing – intervention in a conflict.

E) enterprising: organising a political demonstration, organising the preparation of a large meal in a team with a limited budget.

C) conventional: Book keeping for a household, filling in bank transfers

Supplementary situations and activities could and should be developed either by the trainers if they do not feel that our setting is suitable for their specific target group or even by the participants themselves.

The second step in the German module is common reflection on the experiences within small groups. Assistance and support of a trainer during this reflection might be offered if necessary and/or demanded by the participants. This reflection should focus on the ques-

tions “What did I like?” and “What have I been able to do?”. It is important that the impressions of the individual and the other members of the group are compared and discussed. Through this reflection process, differences between self perceptions of ability and the perception of others should be completed to gain a realistic image as a starting point for further plans.

It depends on the participants within the group if it is crucial that a trainer is involved in this reflection process. On the one hand we regard it as important that there is the offer of assistance if the learners demand it and on the other hand it is crucial that the trainer observes and decides if a group needs assistance in reflecting on their experiences during the situations and activities. This is a very high demand regarding the professional skills of the trainer who carries through the module because he or she has to balance the role of a counsellor and that of a leader/teacher. If the trainer is involved too strongly in the reflection process he or she might hamper it but on the other hand if he or she does not assist the reflection enough the process might not start or it might not be as successful as it could be. In order to overcome this problem and in order to give the trainers a different perspective of the module we strongly suggest that they themselves go through the whole module process.

A good way to practice this might be to write down about oneself what types of personality according to Hollands’ theory someone expects to be. Then the situations and activities should be experienced and reflected in small groups and the members of one group might act as interviewers for members of another group in the interview in step 3.

Through this process the trainers may develop additional ideas for different and further situations according to the six types of personality. Secondly, the existing situations and activities might be improved.

Thirdly, the trainers will experience themselves that there are differences between their self-image and the perspective other have of their abilities. This is important because trainers sometimes have difficulty in understanding that there is such a big difference between how they regard a trainee and how the trainee regards themselves.

Fourthly, going through the interview process as an interviewer and as the person to be interviewed might help them to develop their questions more precise and more careful.

All three levels and to a certain extent also the six dimensions are interrelated. At each level questions are asked which stimulate the self-reflection of the user and which have to be answered in relation to their personal situation and life circumstances. It is important to mention that the questions are formulated in a way that there is no option for short answers with “Yes” or “No”. This is, from our perspective, the central difference and the main obvious advantage compared to the profiling sheets of the labour office (Bundesanstalt für Arbeit). The reflection processes initiated through step two is much more in-depth.

As a third step, possible, future job opportunities for the participant should be developed. They should be assisted in this by a third person which has not been involved in the first two steps. This should be a trainer within the course or it might also be a person from the careers office. Before starting the interview the participant should inform the interviewer which of the situations and activities were most suitable for him or her according to step one and two. Then it is the task of the trainer to build a connection between the results of the participant's experiences in step one and two and central features of influence in the life of the individual. The aim of the interview is that the participant and the trainer come to a conclusion which contains possible job opportunities for the participant which match with his personal life circumstances. In some cases a solution might also be that it is more suitable for the participant to look for fields of activity which are outside gainful employment because his life circumstances do not allow him to start a job.

This interview is a very demanding task for the person who carries it through. Therefore it is crucial that the trainer is supported by a structure which helps him to take different aspects into account and to address the participant and his situation as a whole.

Therefore we propose the following structure which points out four central fields of content for the interview.

The historical field refers to former learning contexts of the participants.

The actual field refers to the competences of the individual as well as to his interests and wishes. This information should be combined with the actual individual life circumstances.

The field of present experiences and life circumstances refers to the actual living situation and combines these with the experiences which the participant has gained during the situation and activities in the first step.

Finally future options for employment are discussed in the fourth field of "possible future activities" of the interview.

The fields are explained in more detail below.

The historical field refers to former learning contexts. The term learning contexts has to be understood in a very wide sense because it takes into account formal learning contexts like school and workplace but it focusses more on other more informal learning contexts like one's family or one's sports club. Additionally it refers to non-formal learning contexts which might be the social context within one's apprenticeship or one's work.

The actual field refers to the individual competences of the participants. The division in this field is based on Heinrich Roth's distinction between subject related competence, social competence and self-competence. In this context, questions about occupational, social and personal competences should be asked.

The field of present experiences and life circumstances draws attention to the specific life circumstances which might hinder the trainees from working in the fields of their interests and wishes. This should be avoided if at all possible because any kind of disappointment can destabilise the participant. This part of the interview is a preliminary stage of the following field in which future job opportunities should be developed. Central questions which should be discussed with the trainee in this third field are questions like:

“Do the identified abilities, interests and wishes fit well with former jobs or are they contradictory?”, “Has the participant known about these abilities, interests and wishes before?”, “Is it possible to combine the own interests with family responsibilities like child care?”, “Is it at all possible to realise the abilities, interests and wishes identified through the situations and activities in the world of work?”, “Might it be easier to realise their abilities, interests and wishes in other contexts?” or “What context might be suitable for the realisation of the discovered abilities, interests and wishes?”.

The fourth field “possible future job options” is the most difficult part of the interview because, as we found out in interviews with the target group, the trainee expects the trainer to make proposals for possible future occupational fields. The trainer has not only to be an expert in a wide range of occupational fields but also must point out ways of finding a suitable job in the local labour market.

The trainer can only be an assistant in finding suitable occupational perspectives but the search process is the responsibility of the participant. It might be useful if the trainer and trainee use materials like lists of professions, descriptions of different occupations or even interactive IT based instrument in the search process.

IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

The first phase of implementing the module took place in a training center in Schleswig. The module was implemented in a two week course focused on writing job applications.

Two groups were identified within the participants on this course. The first was people with vocational qualifications. Most of them had recently lost their job. There was only one young man in his thirties who had lost his job three years previously and who had worked and lived on a farm which was a private animal home since then. According to his explanation, he was stressed by his job as a social insurance officer before and, because he had saved a lot of money during former times, there was no need to search for work before. Furthermore, there were a few very young people in this group who had become unemployed directly after completing their apprenticeship in the dual system. Most members of this group were highly motivated to participate in this course and they expected to gain employment again within a short period of time.

The second group were people who had been unemployed during the last years. A large proportion of the individuals in the second group had no formal vocational qualifications. Many of this group were women returners around the age of fifty. They were looking for employment after their children had left home. Most of them had worked part time in cleaning or retailing for some short periods in the past but they were insecure regarding their skills.

One remarkable member of this group was a man who had worked on different show grounds in the past. He had, according to his own explanation, difficulties with writing and calculating but he could offer lots of practical skills.

Both groups were sceptical about participating in the self-evaluation module at first. They feared being judged critically. Therefore, the person who carried out the self-evaluation module took part actively in the the first week of the course. After building a relation of trust and after becoming member of the group, she implemented the module during the second week. The participation in the module was optional and about 70% of the trainees agreed to try it.

Altogether, members of the group of learners with vocational qualifications were more willing to participate in the self-evaluation module. Some of them were curious regarding the possibility of developing new ideas and different perspectives for new fields of employment.

The second phase of implementation was carried through at a training center in Flensburg which is specialised in the education of unemployed people between the ages of 18 and 35 without formal vocational qualifications.

Most of the participants have experienced long periods of unemployment and they have gone through different schemes which aimed at reintegrating them in the labour market. Their perspectives on schemes for re-entry are critical because they feel that these schemes promise them a work place and fail to deliver. In contrast to other schemes for unemployed people, this specific measure is in favour because it can offer the trainees half a years support. Additionally, the training provider is well established in the local labour market and is allowed to produce wood and metal products for public use like fences, wardrobes, chairs and doors. The provider owns two large workshops, one for metal and one for woodwork in which the learners can gain experience.

Additionally, the provider offers a variety of artistic activities of which the trainees are allowed to choose.

Once a month, participants have the chance to choose, plan and cook a meal which is then offered to all trainees and trainers in the centre. In general this is a very popular activity.

Because of the difficult situation on the labour market a considerable proportion of the learners will not get a job and the pedagogic approach of the trainers within the centre aims at assisting the trainees in developing personal and social competences. Additionally, they regard it as their central task to assist their trainees in managing their situation in order to make life easier.

Against this background, it is obvious that the facilities and the approach of the training centre are very suitable for the implementation of the German model project for self-evaluation because:

- a) The amount of time which can be provided for the self-evaluation module is much greater because the learners stay in the centre for up to six months.
 - b) The facilities provided are suitable for the carrying through of activities and situations of step one of the module. In some cases existing activities can be used for step one of the module.
 - c) The pedagogic approach of the training provider matches well with the idea of the self-evaluation module.
- Conclusion

In practice the German Self-Evaluation Module “the Flensburg-Method for Self-Evaluation” proved to be useful and supportive for the participants of the respective courses. Especially the activating aspect included in the module through the action oriented situations is one of the central strength of the proposed method. Although the participants hesitated in the first moment of being asked to carry through the situations they were then engaged in all three steps of the module.

Nevertheless the module has some weaknesses which should not be faded out.

The implementation of the module into the two-weeks courses was a difficult task although the different situations and activities were used as incentives on different days. Furthermore the fact that the participant had to be motivated to act at the beginning of the module appeared to be a problem because some of the learners did not see a meaning in doing so at the beginning. The demand of being active themselves seemed to be a contradiction to their expectations regarding the content and the process of the course. Perhaps based on their former experiences in school they expected to be taught and to be told the right way into a job instead of being asked to produce something and to reflect their own abilities, interests and wishes. Against this background it has to be mentioned that a central task of the trainer was to break participant’s passivity and to make them curious to learn about themselves.

Greece³

STATE OF ART

Self-Evaluation as an organized societal or labor market related institution does not exist in Greece. There is nothing similar to the French “balance de compétences”, which was one of the sources of the overall project bases. That’s why from the very beginning in our Laboratory we regarded the “Self-evaluation” project as an opportunity to investigate some new, for our country, but very interesting topics, such as the identification of the possibilities of teaching someone the way to reach a point so as to be able to acknowledge his/ her own competences, skills and capabilities and act in compliance with them.

Evaluation policies are not something new for the Greek reality. Experiences up to now, but also our research findings, reveal the incomplete and unorganized character of these policies especially concerning education. This fact is influenced by the negative experiences arising from the specific use of assessment, and evaluation, during the former absolutistic political period. The situation changed in the last decades. We have been experiencing 30 years of well functioning democratic system, the market is now open to competitiveness, and the education is more and more considered to be an economic factor. Socioeconomic and pedagogic institutions, structures and outcomes are (or should be) evaluated, very often according to economic criteria or ones which concern all kinds of productivity and quality.

An outcome of this change is the expression of the need to redesign the systems of evaluation and to upgrade the concept of evaluation as a process of control from the bottom to the top, as an answer to the continuously increasing problems, which have been recorded so far in the operation of the different socioeconomic systems.

OUR PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH SELF-EVALUATION AS A SOCIETAL INSTITUTION

Self-evaluation, as opposed to external evaluation, should be done on the initiative of the evaluated person, when he/ she feel the need to evaluate his/ her competences, skills and capabilities.

Self-evaluation can be realized in two ways: a) either individually, so that the evaluated person could choose the time and the place to evaluate his/her competences, or b) provided he/ she is supported by specialists so as to be self-evaluated, but only when he/she feels the need to be self-evaluated. In our final report we are referring to these two occasions in more detail.

³This section of the Scientific Report is based on the Final report of the Greek project partner. The full report can be downloaded from <http://www.self-evaluation.org/Results/piloting/Greekfinalreport>

This process of evaluation with the prevailing role of inner- and external self-evaluation takes place without absolute and non-judicious criteria or values. Self-evaluation, which will not legitimize intentions for a policy, nor will it be a disguised self-control but it could operate supportively, in order to imprint the social identity of the working people thus, operating towards the direction of redefining the labor market, with the ultimate purpose of making it friendly to the working man in Greece.

OUR PROJECT DESIGN

The research design is organized as follows.

Our first task was to identify the past of evaluation as an institution in our country and analyze linguistically the terms used to express the variant meanings of evaluation and self-evaluation in different time periods. In the same work package we described not only different important accreditation systems but also their structure, functioning and influence in Greece.

Our second task was the recording of requirements regarding self-evaluation methods. We held interviews with groups of participants - trainees in CVT programs and with experts respectively (top executives of agencies, which elaborate CVT programs and owners or senior administrative executives of private or public agencies, employers who have hired in their business people who have successfully completed CVT). This task was carried out in Athens. This work was partly repeated in Lesvos, an island with different socioeconomic characteristics in comparison to Athens.

Our third task was the development of self-evaluation methods for curricular methods, and the realization of model-projects-intervention. This intervention was in fact the implementation of our proposal for self evaluation held in a seminar "Self-evaluation in the workplace" conducted in Lesvos, using the concept of job analysis, as a first step to any effort of self-evaluation. Job Analysis is a method for describing jobs and the human attributes necessary to perform them. It can serve many purposes and among other things it can be used as an important tool for self-evaluation

Our final task was the evaluation of the effects of this intervention- with the use of a self evaluation tool produced by our team. We have organized the results from the evaluation of our self-evaluation program (using the questionnaire, our tool) into three stages.

The first stage concerns the comparison between all trainees before and after the implementation of the process of empowerment of self-esteem. In this particular stage we exported certain conclusions concerning the corresponding research that we had conducted in Athens.

The second stage concerns the comparison before and after our intervention into two groups of trainees. The first group is the individuals that participated in the intervention and had supplemented the questionnaire before and after this intervention. The second

group (control group) is consisting from the individuals that did not participate in our intervention, but had supplemented both times the questionnaire - tool of self-evaluation.

The third stage of comparison concerns an in-depth analysis of the answers on the self evaluation tool from each of individuals that participated in the three stages of our intervention (participated in intervention and supplemented the questionnaire before and after).

Self-evaluation tool was developed in accordance with the starfish model-constituted by tacit key competences. The benefits of tacit competences can be stated with respect to the improving abilities of managing one's own biography. Therefore, the experience of competences can be considered to be a crucial condition for a new perspective of one's own life context.

R E S U L T S

The project resulted in a series of important research findings. Concerning the use of our "Self-Evaluation" tool we have come up, among others, with the following findings.

1. Trainees in Lesvos present higher self-esteem and evaluate themselves more positively comparing to trainees in Athens, probably due to the different composition (and the different socioeconomic characteristics) of the trainees' groups in the two different regions.
2. We recorded very high levels of self esteem, which in most cases is maintained after the "Self-Evaluation" intervention. In some cases, the result of our intervention is the "correction" of this self-esteem. However, this correction leads to low self-esteem. On the contrary, in all the cases we recorded low self-esteem, this leads to higher self-esteem after the intervention.

Portugal⁴

C O N T E X T A N D B A C K G R O U N D

"The issue of the recognition of the competences developed in non-formal and/or informal context of training is on the agenda, especially in the frame of the new educative paradigm of lifelong learning". Just as all over Europe, in Portugal, the issue of the Recognition and Validation of Competences acquired through non-formal ways has become an area of growing interest, since there are strong deficiencies as far as schooling and vo-

⁴ This section of the Scientific Report is based on the Final report of the Portuguese project partner. The full report can be downloaded from <http://www.self-evaluation.org/Results/piloting/portugalfinalreport>

cational training are concerned. For this reason, some innovating experiences have been stressed and developed, mostly associated to European programs and initiatives aiming at overcome that problem. The trial and assessment of these projects stressed out the huge potential of practices for identification and validation of competences of adults with rich life experiences, promoting by this way their (re)investment in school and professionally qualifying routes.

In Portugal, the growing interest for mechanisms of recognition, validation and certification of competences (RVCC) lies essentially in today's still weak situation concerning the level of qualification of a large number of workers and in the need to find suitable answers to implement the certification of non formal learning. Taking into consideration that situation, some innovating experiences concerning recognition, validation and certification of competences acquired via non-formal ways have been developed in Portugal since the beginning of the 90's.

In Portugal, the process for one's recognition, validation and certification of competences is conducted by two different public entities, according with the profile of the competences to be recognised. The Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP) conducts the process towards one's certification of professional competences within the legal frame of the National System of Professional Certification (created in 1992). The General Direction for Vocational Training (DGFV), the former National Agency for Education and Training of Adults (ANEFA), conducts the process towards one's Recognition, Validation and Certification of his/her scholar competencies acquired via non-formal ways. That process is conducted through a network of Recognition, Validation, and Certification of Competences (RVCC) Centres functioning in the whole country.

The mechanisms for self-evaluation of competences used in Portugal, whether in the certification process of non-formal scholar competences (done in the RVCC Centres and in IEFP, through the National System for Vocational Certification or by adult education and training courses – EFA (and also in the other training offers of IEFP although without following a specific model) have assumed a considerable importance once, on the one hand, they allow an individual to come to know his/her competencies and, on the other, they encourage the identification of potential competences to be developed.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

In Portugal, the first steps for the recognition, validation and certification of non-formal competencies have started few years ago. Development of the Self-Evaluation project was very important because not only it has made possible to get an overview of the existing systems, but also, it has suggested a new approach for recognition of competences.

ANALYSIS OF THE EXISTING ACCREDITATION SYSTEMS IN PORTUGAL

The first step for the Portuguese research team was to study and analyse the accreditation process of non-formal competencies in Portugal and elaborate an overview of the two systems. After a deep analysis of the Portuguese's recognition, validation and accreditation systems, the Portuguese team has made a comparative analysis between the accreditation systems existing in Portugal and the starfish model of competences.

As it has been said above, in Portugal, the recognition, validation and certification of non-formal competencies is conducted by two bodies according to the nature of the competences that are to be identified. Thus, the Direcção Geral de Formação Vocacional – DGFV (the former Agência Nacional de Educação e Formação – ANEFA) conducts the process through a network of centres for the recognition, validation and certification of non-formal competencies (RVCC) that are spread throughout the country. Those Centres conduct a process in order to facilitate people to be able to recognise their own competences, and helps them to get an equivalence to a schooling level (until now only to maximum of 9th year of schooling). The Instituto de Emprego e Formação Profissional (IEFP – the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training) is responsible for the recognition, validation and certification of vocational competencies, through the national system of vocational certification.

CURRICULA DESIGN

After a deep analysis of the validation and accreditation systems in Portugal and a comparison between those systems and the starfish model of competences, a curricula module was designed in order to satisfy a special target group's needs who was in a very difficult situation: unemployed women in rural marginal areas.

Having in attention that the module of self-evaluation of non-formal competencies was integrated in a training course for creation micro-enterprises, the main goal of the self-evaluation module was to promote and reinforce the self-evaluation of non-formal competencies of people that intent to create their own business.

The self-evaluation module was structured into four parts:

- in the first part – The Route of Life – the trainees are invited to reflect about their route of life (reflecting about their scholar and professional training, professional route and the activities they have already been involved);
- in the second part – My own Competences – the trainees reflect about what are competences and what are the most important competences that they should have to develop their business idea;
- in the third part – My Business Idea – is related with a reflection about the main aspects of trainees' business idea;

- finally, in the fourth part, the trainees are invited to imagine what they will be in the future and to perspective their future activities as well as establish a compromise with themselves about the aspects and competences they need to develop.

IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

After designing, the curricular module was tested in a training course for creation of micro-enterprises. Testing this module was very important since it allow to make some adjustments to it and also to understand that it could be adapted, with a minor change, to other type of training courses not related with business ideas.

In addition to the trainer's comments, remarks and suggestions, the training module was also evaluated by the trainees in order to understand their perception of the importance of this kind of tools for their self-recognition and self-evaluation of their competences and self-esteem and further development of their competences as well.

Romania⁵

CONTEXT AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In Romania, the conditions for implementing the Self-evaluation ideas were and continue to be particularly difficult, although our team found the philosophy of the project to be particularly interesting and this kind of approach has been considered a necessary and welcome development in the counselling work. The tremendous changes occurred since 1990 and especially the accelerated reform in the last years brought important modifications in the structure of the economy (therefore in the employment figures and breakdown), a high level of societal dynamics and a switch in the axiological system. In such an unstable context, people may experience difficulties in finding references for defining themselves and designing a valid life strategy. More so in a culture where “trade is a gold bracelet” used to be an axiom, where modesty is one of the highest virtues, and where relating to others remains confined within archetypal behavioural stereotypes, one of the causes for this being the shining aura that diplomas bear in this country. To introduce measures meant for individual use, for raising self-esteem by means of positive self-evaluation of one's own capacities, valuing non-formal competencies seems quite a challenge.

Under such circumstances, it was obvious that the methods and tools to be developed could only have a limited impact. However, it was important to offer practitioners tools and methodological directions for usage in their day-to-day work, whenever appropriate,

⁵ This section of the Scientific Report is based on the Final report of the Portuguese project partner. The full report can be downloaded from <http://www.self-evaluation.org/Results/piloting/Romaniafinalreport>

the available provision being rather limited. The effects of such an effort, bearing subsidiary ambitions to anchor/support a mentality change, and to connect Romanian professionals to the European models, are to be estimated by future developments.

Significant features of the Romanian labour market context are having direct consequences over the education and training systems, and also on the personal development of the people involved:

- Accelerated reform, alongside important modifications in the economy structure, therefore in the employment figures and breakdown.
- High level of societal dynamics, between the two extreme categories of the wealth scale.
- Switch in the axiological system of the training providers and beneficiaries.
- Unstable legal system concerning the entrepreneurship and the SME.

Addressing one pedagogical message to different training groups was not the uniform task for the national partners, as mentioned in the cornerstone no. 4 – Flexibility. Centre of the curriculum-based approach agreed by the Romanian project team consisted of the operational /instrumental meaning that could be attached to the theoretical concepts used in education and training and in particular in this formative program. The training seminar for the different target group aims to valorise the following concepts: competence, categories of competences – the starfish model, ways of self-assessment (individually, in pairs, group), self-awareness, personal profile, image of self, personal development.

The concepts that are subject to further analysis and are of psychological and/or pedagogical origin have been adapted to the training purposes of our curriculum module.

Two stages were notable in the formulation of the work definitions:

- i. Identification and definition of the specific notions, as fundamental in curriculum development theoretical meaning;
- ii. Applying the notions in the actual training program - explicitly or implicitly- as tools for the target group to identify the own general developmental needs, and to start the reflection process over the own potential instrumental meaning.

CURRICULUM DESIGN

The Romanian team aimed to offer specialists in training and counselling methods and tools with a limited extension, meant to support adults with employment difficulties to broaden their self-image and improve their self-esteem, by means of a positive self-evaluation of non formal competencies, based on the starfish model.

The main products are:

- The training portfolio, to be used as described next.
- The guide for using the DCA-based tool in self-evaluation.

People engaged in various forms of education and training, no matter their group characteristics, motivation, specific goals, knowledge and experience are supported to turn towards themselves as to a reliable, available, complex and fresh personality resource. The gain from having done that is foreseen to be an improved self-reliance, sense of confidence, pleasure of giving a name to the things they did/do often for practical purposes. The acquisitions made on personal expenses will be eventually integrated in the new way to handle life situations, however beyond an explicit or formal learning process.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PEDAGOGICAL MODULE FOR SELF-EVALUATION

One coherent body of forms have been brought together, gradually complex in the philosophy of the training program, and following one unifying structure:

- Purpose of utilization
- Source
- Description
- Utilization proceedings
- Results

However in this abridged report we can provide only a summary of each tool.

EVOLUTION OF COMPETENCIES

Evolution of Competencies is a tool inspired and built in analogy to the biographic method in career counselling. by using it, we aim contributing to reaching the following targets:

- Configuration of a generative image of formal and non-formal competencies.
- Identification of the favourable environment to getting and exercising the competencies.
- Pointing out to essential moments in personal development that have helped preparing the one's own professional evolution in a certain way.
- Understanding the role of formal and non-formal competencies in assuring success perceived as such in the given field of specialty/ of personal aspiration.

LACUNAR STARFISH

This tool values the categories of competences defined in accessible terms for participants, as terms of reference for generative awareness and verbalization of their acquired competencies which can be used in various contexts, different from the ones in which they were acquired or usually expressed.

INFLUENCES BETWEEN COMPETENCIES

Influences between Competencies is an individual standardised exercise built on previous free talks about the formal and non-formal competencies. It comprises elements of exercises proposed normally in activities of group counselling, and targeting the generic profile of the practitioner in a given specialty.

MY UNIQUE WHEEL

My Unique Wheel is a tool for boosting self-awareness. It aims identification of a personal scheme of internal and external factors that make the ground for manifestation and dynamic articulation of individual opportunities by rapport to elements of reference in professional and non-professional development. We recommend this tool in activity with adults proving introspection and verbal skills.

CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

The training portfolio for self-evaluation of the non-formal competencies is meant to advance methods and tools targeted to experts in guidance and counselling working with adults who experience employment difficulties. In other words, to help the former professional group put together a strategy for improving the social insertion of the latter through the valorization of their non-formal competencies.

Based on the biographic method – based on the idea that a person is better adjusted in dealing with life problems, especially the employment-related ones, if is more aware of his/her unique potential – the Romanian team in the Self-evaluation project has adopted a training model that allows learners/trainees to clarify and improve their image of self by way of both identifying their own non-formal competencies and utilizing them in the career development process.

Given the selected target group and the application context, the training/guidance expert can choose the modules/tools to use in the concrete situation. At the centre of the activity stays the self-assessment questionnaire built on the Starfish model of non-formal competencies. The models can be extended or limited, while they contain training modules built on the tools in the portfolio. The description of the individual utilization recommended to each and every tool comes with the next paragraph. This means that the preparation and the carrying out of the self-evaluation exercise guided by the Starfish model will be either more brief or detailed, and the consequences of having one certain profile of competencies analyzed will be more rapid or deepened. All these three stages

must be present in the training or counselling program, even be it in a compressed form, otherwise the results cannot be but superficial.

Given the participants' needs and the available resources, these activities can be supplemented by traditional counselling assistance or with a more in-depth analysis of the links between one's own competencies, with the help of the informatics application associated with the DCA method.

After analysing existing procedures and methods related to the evaluation of competencies, and after assessing the openness of the Romanian general public to the Self-evaluation approach based on the Tacit-key model of competencies ("starfish"), a series of modules were developed, in the format of a training portfolio, destined to be flexibly used by insertion in courses for adults with employment difficulties, or by supporting individual counselling activities. The training portfolio is build around a self-evaluation questionnaire, and it includes activities to be undertaken individually or in pairs, within a course or in a client-counsellor situation.

Other methods were associated in this approach, meant to be used exclusively in individual contexts in order to provide a more in-depth analysis of one's own potential and interests: the self-evaluation of influences between personal competences, using the DCA based tool, and a complementary offer of direct assistance in a more traditional career guidance approach.

The decision upon the concrete use of the different modules and instruments is to be taken by the practitioners themselves.

The discussions with the ADO SAH ROM professionals involved in the specialized training of counselling skills in the city of Busteni (17 March 2004) revealed that they are open to using the self-evaluation training curriculum, with the mention that the exercise should be leveled with the capacity of understanding, motivation for work, prior learning experience of the target groups. With reference to the DCA-based too, the clients enjoy being tested, being asked for opinion and the foreseen impact of this tool is high. Time constraint is important however and the short version of the questionnaire should stay within the limits of 10 items, maybe even less. The suggestion came that the two ends of the answering scale to be reversed and to give the learners / participants the possibility of choosing their own 2 relevant items under each competence. Also, suggestions have been made around changing the language in some formulations: "I respect myself" has more than one reading, and it should hit from basic to more sophisticated activities one does, or be removed.

CURRICULUM EVALUATION

The information collected during the curriculum implementation stages show that the readiness and opening towards self-evaluation is well present, especially in some catego-

ries of public with a higher level of verbalization competencies. The effects are definitely felt in cases where a more extended model can be introduced, a model comprising several portfolio-like activities, including the supplementary offer (individual counseling). Self-evaluation is therefore better prepared and its consequences on the personal strategy design are more profound.

T A R G E T G R O U P S

The final target group in this approach was intended to be mature adults with low level of competencies having insertion difficulties. Nevertheless, the tools developed have a wide scale of potential application, depending on the specificity of the concrete situation, the decision being left with the specialist.

C O N C L U S I O N S

The people involved in the implementation and refining work of the modular curriculum training have proved complete understanding of the fact that the traditional approach to education and training of both adults and youngsters suffers from a paradigmatic inclination to testing and measurement. In order to help changing that according to the principles of lifelong learning, the advanced training concept developed around the Starfish model promotes individual involvement within the career development and marketing of ones own unique combination of qualities, talents, skills and knowledge gained throughout formative programs.

To a lesser degree the participants enrolled in formal training modules can be enabled to look up for community resources and openings. The main message comes from the inside, as sign of self-confidence and satisfaction with what the person has achieved so far, capable of selling the individual competencies because they serve at the same time a formal requirement from the establishments in education, training, or work and an optimal valorization of self within the process.

The fact that the training curriculum heads more to the mapping of past competencies than to the attainment of new ones, qualifies for a basis in further self-evaluation exercises that are ought to be tailored to the specific needs of the target groups. The trainers/ counsellors themselves can be this way part of the learning processes that assumes mutual changes in the mental and procedural setting of the agents involved.

United Kingdom⁶

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Fieldwork carried out in colleges of adult education enabled us to develop our method and to evaluate the effects of experiences with self-evaluation methods while taking into account challenges and limitations encountered within the previous stages of this research.

Within this context, our objectives include the following: (a) to provide an account of the realisation of model projects; (b) to uncover potential effects of experiences with self-evaluation methods; (c) to analyse the transferability of self-evaluated competences in the views of individuals, tutors and employers; (d) to identify dimensions of key competences in college and workplace contexts; and (e) to draw on special effects of self-evaluation with respect to employability, motivation to work and readiness for further learning.

To address these issues we continue to collaborate with selected colleges of further education in London for testing and further development of self-evaluation methods. Interviews with employers and individual employees have also been carried out to draw on the issues of recognition and evaluation of personal/tacit skills and competences in the context of the workplace. Our fieldwork aimed to investigate the following relevant issues:

- Tutors'/learners'/employers' reactions and interpretations of the self-evaluation methods and techniques;
- Challenges of the practical application of the self-evaluation methods in colleges of further education;
- Relevance of the self-evaluation methods to specific courses in adult education.

TARGET GROUPS

Our target groups include learners with interrupted occupational or learning careers who embark on various courses in colleges of further education with the purpose of returning to work or learning. Our findings from previous research (Evans et al, 2004) support the view that for such target groups self-evaluation and self-recognition of their personal skills and competences could be crucial to their learning success and learning outcomes. Learners who have experienced career breaks sometimes record low levels of confidence and skills recognition. They often do not value their personal or tacit skills and competences that they have acquired from various life experiences because they feel that these skills are not recognised by others, e.g. by their prospective or current employers. Our

⁶ This section of the Scientific Report is based on the Final report of the UK project partner. The full report can be downloaded from <http://www.self-evaluation.org/Results/piloting/UKfinalreport>

research indicates that both recognition and self-recognition of learners' tacit skills may facilitate their confidence and involvement and improve their learning success. As noted by one tutor:

“One of the problems that you have with the students in our college is that they are disadvantaged in one way or another [...] some of them are operating in a culture that is not their own [...], they have substantial career interruptions [...] they are also women and women tend to undervalue their personal skill -, they tend to think that they [their personal skills] just come naturally and, therefore, they are not worth anything. And since most of the motivation for coming here is that they looking at improving their personal lot, often through potential job opportunities, then, obviously it would be better if we were more consciously looking at those kinds of soft skills during the courses.”

Self-recognition and self-evaluation of the learners' personal skills and competences may also encourage them to deploy and demonstrate their skills in various kinds of situations in order to make them visible to both themselves and to others. The importance of demonstrating and making the skills visible has also been emphasized by tutors:

“It's not only about self-evaluating of their skills. It's actually about being able to talk about them [learners' skills and competences] in terms that make it clear to other people that they [learners' skills and competences] are valuable. “

Making their tacit skills visible facilitates learners' motivation and readiness for learning. In addition, it may improve their employability as the learners maintain that self-recognition of their own skills makes it easier to demonstrate and present them to their prospective employers.

SELF-EVALUATION METHODS, TECHNIQUES AND APPROACHES

Within our previous work packages we discussed a number of issues related to the process of implementation of self-evaluation methods of personal skills and competences in further education (FE) colleges. Our data support our findings that tutors, learners and employers regard self-evaluation as a positive activity that may facilitate recognition and deployment of learners' personal skills and competences. The two methods we considered within our previous report have been developed to support learners in moving towards intentional evaluation of their personal competences. The first method, the questionnaire method, is a first step that may encourage learners to:

- To evaluate their own personal skills and competences;
- To reflect upon the usefulness of the competences;

- To reflect upon how (through what activities/experience) they have been able to develop certain skills.

The second method, the DCA method (see report on Work package 3-4 for description of the method), aims to support the learners:

- to assess their own personal competences;
- to explore links and interrelationships between their skills and competences.

As we have commented in our previous report (Work package 3-4), the DCA method presents a very flexible approach to the self-evaluation of personal competences. Concepts (competences) can be selected depending on learners' individual needs and requirements, their occupational or learning backgrounds, college or workplace settings or their self-evaluation objectives (or those of their college or workplace).

Lessons learned from the first round of testing the two self-evaluation methods

In the course of our pilot fieldwork we attempted to test our two methods: the questionnaire method and the DCA modeling method (Kontinen, 2002). Both the Self-Evaluation Questionnaire and the Self-Evaluation Form 1 for DCA Analysis have been developed as a result of discussions and interviews with learners and tutors. The DCA concepts (or competences to be self-evaluated and modeled) have been selected on the basis of learners' viewpoints, attitudes and approaches to the personal competences. Initial testing of the DCA self-evaluation method indicated that the major limitation of our pilot fieldwork had to do with the fact that the same ten concepts were offered to a number of learners from different colleges for self-evaluation of their personal skills and competences and for further modeling. Although the learners have described the ten concepts that we selected for the DCA Self-Evaluation Form as 'significant', our further fieldwork data have indicated that the degree of significance may vary from case to case depending on learners' attitudes, dispositions, experiences or their current situations. Further analysis, as well as feedback from learners, indicated that the self-evaluation methods and techniques could also be developed as more individualised and contextually specific approaches aiming to respond to individual needs, requirements and goals of learners. As noted by Bjornavold (2001, p.30):

"The highly contextual and (partly) tacit character of non-formal learning complicates the quest for validity. There is an acute danger of measuring something other than what is intended. The main thing is to avoid a distorted picture of the candidate and the domain and to strive for authenticity. Methodologies have to reflect the complexity of the task at hand; methodologies must be able to capture what is individually and contextually specific."

In addition, it is also important to take into account specific needs and objectives of the courses or training undertaken in a variety of educational or workplace settings.

Further practical tests of self-evaluation methods: analysing data from interviews and self-evaluation questionnaires

An important objective of our approaches to the development of self-evaluation methods within further stages of our fieldwork has been to ensure that the process of self-evaluation fits well around learners' individual requirements, personal experiences as well as their objectives and goals. The flexibility of the DCA method allows us to easily change or replace the concepts (or competences), taking into account individual priorities and goals of the learners. While introducing our method to the learners we have aimed to encourage the learners to reflect upon their own skills and competences acquired from different life experiences and to help them to uncover their tacit skills. To facilitate this process we used the following techniques:

- Conducting semi-structured interviews/focus groups with learners aiming to help them to elicit their tacit skills and competences;
- Offering the learners the chance to complete the Self-Evaluation Questionnaire with the purpose of helping them to reflect further upon their personal skills and competences.

Both the questionnaire and the interview data provided us with very useful information on the learners' attitudes towards the importance, recognition as well as self-recognition of their tacit skills and competences. Within the course of interviews we attempted to investigate the issues of (1) how the learners perceive the personal skills, which fall into five groups of personal competences (Starfish model); (2) whether they think that these competences are important in their current college or workplace settings; and (3) how (or under what conditions) such skills could be acquired, deployed and further developed. The questionnaire and interview responses summarised the attitudes of learners, tutors and employers and provided us with additional data on their views, approaches and goals. Both questionnaires and interviews aimed to draw learners' attention to the issues of importance, acquisition and deployment of their skills by asking them to reflect upon and to indicate (1) relative importance of personal skills and competences; (2) skills they gained in the college course; and (3) importance of the skills for their success in the college course. The idea behind introducing this method is to support learners in moving towards evaluating and recognising their personal skills. The following section will give a brief account of our primary findings that have arisen from analysing the interviews' and questionnaires' data.

DIMENSIONS OF KEY COMPETENCES IN COLLEGE AND WORKPLACE CONTEXTS

The interviews and questionnaire data supported our preliminary findings that the learners and employees consider the five dimensions of personal competences (see below) to be of crucial importance to their learning success, although as we noted above, the degree

of importance in relation to a particular competence may vary from learner to learner, depending on their current priorities and learning situations.

Interviews with tutors and employers have also shown that they recognise the importance of these transferable skills that could be acquired from a variety of experiences. In the workplace settings employers consider their employees' generic skills to be as significant as their professional competences. An interview with one employer (Mental Health Group) has indicated that she is looking for generic or transferable skills in prospective employees right from the job interview:

“They [prospective employees] need to have [...] good communication skills, listening, giving feedback, building good relationships with the client [...] organisational skills, planning. For me it's really important [...] the way they can act, the way they treat people as well as their caring and understanding [...] being tolerant [...] being motivated.”

One of the tasks included in the job interview process involves asking an applicant to solve a problem (or deal with a situation) and specify which skills (including personal and tacit skills) would be employed to solve a specific problem. This example shows the employers' willingness to incorporate self-evaluation approaches of personal competences in the recruitment process.

Our interview data have revealed that personal skills and competences that are significant in both workplace and college settings could be grouped into five groups of personal skill and competences that we define as the Starfish model within this research. The following section will provide a brief overview* of the five groups of competences encompassing the views of individual learners, tutors and employers that have been uncovered within our fieldwork.

METHODOLOGICAL COMPETENCES

College settings

Although learners recognise methodological competences as important types of skills, aspects of their personal perception of these competences often depend on their individual dispositions, experiences and situations. For example, our fieldwork data indicated that learners who have multiple responsibilities and commitments (e.g. those who look after children, work and study at the same time) attribute a higher degree of importance to such competences as time-management or decision-making. Within the dimension of methodological competences, tutors have particularly stressed that the competences such as ability to interpret situations and to respond to them appropriately and ability to follow written and verbal instructions need to be developed by every student. Other methodological competences, such as decision-making and time-management are also considered to be essential skills within college settings.

Workplace settings

Our interviews with employers have also shown that methodological competences are taking an important place in the list of skills and competences that employers are looking for in prospective applicants. Employers generally agree that there are various links and interrelationships among the personal skills and competences (e.g. better decision-making facilitates more efficient time-management), and that the recognition and self-evaluation of the employees' personal competences may encourage them to develop their skills further.

S O C I A L C O M P E T E N C E S

College settings

Learners feel that their social skills and competences play an important role in college settings. Skills such as social interaction, ability to work with others and involvement have been identified as 'everyday skills' that are constantly employed in both workplace and college settings. At the same time the learners maintain that their social skills are being developed continuously in all kinds of settings and situations, such as college, workplace or family settings. Our discussions with tutors have shown, for example, that in the settings where tutors encourage and facilitate teamwork, learners are able to recognise and develop to a higher extent such skills as ability to work with others, social interaction and involvement.

Workplace settings

The importance of social competences has been emphasised by both learners and employers, although it has been stressed that the degree of importance is situation-specific. For example, in workplace environments that encourage active collaboration among employees and employers or that involve frequent contacts with customers or clients, skills such as communication, ability to work with others or negotiation skills are valued and recognised by both employees and employers. Different kinds of workplace environments may highlight the importance of other types of personal skills and competences (e.g. methodological or attitudes and values). For example, as stressed by employers and employees, some workplace situations may require workers to work independently and autonomously, rather than as a part of a team. In such contexts other types of skills such as self-organisation, independence, time management and decision-making would be of crucial importance.

A T T I T U D E S A N D V A L U E S

College settings

Our interview data indicate that skills such as confidence, self-responsibility or motivation are being recognised as important in college settings. However, as stressed by both

tutors and learners, evaluation and self-evaluation of these skills should be treated carefully, taking into account the specific experience, attitudes and disposition of individual learners. For example, it should not be assumed that a high level of confidence would necessarily facilitate a learner's achievements. In some cases, over-confidence may actually affect negatively the learning processes of learners as they may wrongly assume that they 'know enough and do not need to develop their skills further'. Conversely, as suggested by our data, lower levels of confidence may actually motivate learners to develop and acquire both personal and professional skills and facilitate their positive learning outcomes.

Workplace settings

Both employees and employers stressed the importance of attitudes and values within the workplaces. However, our data indicated that the importance of such skills is situation-specific. For example, some workplaces involve working with vulnerable people (e.g. disabled people or mental health patients). In such a workplace employers would expect their employees to demonstrate such personal or tacit skills as patience, caring and compassion as well as ability to foster confidence and trust.

LEARNING COMPETENCES

College settings

Both self-learning abilities and critical thinking abilities have been recognised as important competences in the educational setting. Both tutors and learners argue that self-learning and critical thinking abilities could be – and in most cases are – developed in college environments. There are many activities that may stimulate learners' self-learning abilities, such as feedback, teamwork, individual and group tutorials. Our interview data indicate that developing self-learning and critical thinking skills enhances learners' confidence and motivation to further learning.

Workplace settings

Our fieldwork has indicated that whether learners/employees recognise the importance of these competences in workplace settings, largely depends on the type of workplace environment. Expansive and stimulating workplace environments that provide the learners with opportunities for workplace training may facilitate the development of self-learning and critical thinking abilities. On the contrary, restrictive and non-stimulating types of environments do not encourage the acquisition of these types of skills. However, our research has shown that the learner's own initiative may actually change the type of learning environment from restrictive to expansive and therefore, may result in the development and growth of skills.

CONTENT-RELATED COMPETENCIES

College settings and workplace settings

Subject matter skills and competences that are relevant to work tasks have been recognised by learners as skills that are important in both workplace and educational settings and environments. The success in the development of this type of skill could be facilitated and enhanced by other skills and competences such as motivation, self-learning and critical abilities and confidence. Our research indicates that subject matter skills and competence have often been associated with the learners'/employees' learning outcomes in various kinds of settings.

FURTHER PRACTICAL TESTS OF SELF-EVALUATION METHODS: DEVELOPMENT OF MORE INDIVIDUALISED SELF-EVALUATION METHODS

For this project we are aiming to develop an approach towards self-evaluation of personal skill and competences (Starfish model of competences) through modelling of learning processes of adult learners and employees. The Dynamic Concept Analysis (DCA) method allows us to model the learning experience of adult learners to facilitate the self-evaluation of their personal skills and competences by exploring links and interrelationships among the concepts. In our previous report (Workpackage 3-4) we described the DCA method and discussed its potential as a method of self-evaluation of personal competences that could support learners in moving towards an intentional evaluation of their own personal skills and competences.

At this stage of our research we are aiming to develop this method further by taking into account lessons learned from our pilot fieldwork. As discussed above, one finding that has arisen from our pilot fieldwork is related to the issue of developing more individualised and contextually-specific self-evaluation approaches for individual learners or a selected group of learners depending on their experiences, current situations, or objectives. The starting point or basis for developing a more individualised self-evaluation method could arise from the following:

- Data from the interviews/focus groups with a learner/learners;
- Data from the questionnaires;
- Discussions with tutors/employers regarding the learner's (or learners') goals and objectives.

As our next step, we will select and define a number of competences (concepts), taking into account learners'/tutors'/employers' views on what personal or tacit skills they considered to be the most important within the workplace or learning environment. Within our pilot fieldwork we aimed to select a certain number of competences from each of our Starfish categories. As we are now moving towards developing a more individualised self-

evaluation approach, we are attempting to select those concepts (competences) that fit better around learners' individual experiences, goals and objectives. Our interview and questionnaire data help us to highlight the importance of certain competences in individual case(s). Interviews with tutors and employers may also assist in identifying relevant competences that would correspond to course or workplace objectives and requirements. For example, within some cases where the development and acquisition of social competences was considered to be of utmost importance in the context of the course settings, only the concepts from the category of social competences were chosen for the self-evaluation. Other courses or workplace settings, or learners' personal experiences or priorities may suggest different categories or combinations of categories for self-evaluation, for example methodological or attitudes and values, etc.

MODELING OF SELF-EVALUATION OF PERSONAL COMPETENCES

In the course of our fieldwork we asked a number of learners to evaluate their own skills and abilities within their learning environment. The examples below will demonstrate the experiences with our self-evaluation methods within a group of students in one college. We interviewed a group of learners undertaking a short-term (two-weeks) course 'Ready for Job' in a college of further education. The course involves intensive training in CV, application form and interview techniques. The purpose of this course is to prepare adult learners for the challenges of 'job hunting'. Most of the learners undertaking this course are unemployed and have had some kind of break in their occupational and learning careers.

An important objective of this course is to help the learners to recognise and evaluate their own skills and abilities in order to 'sell' these skills on the job market. Although the course does not lead to a nationally recognised qualification, the learners maintain that they acquire and develop a number of valuable skills and competences, e.g. working as part of a team, communication skills, time-management skills and others. Another important ability that they hope to develop within this training is related to being able to present, demonstrate and make visible their skills to prospective employers. The issue of initial self-recognition and self-evaluation of their personal skills and competences takes an important place in the context of improving the learners' employability as well as their motivation towards further learning and skills acquisition.

Evaluating the curriculum - Benchmarks and SWOT Analysis

BENCHMARKS

We were concerned to evaluate the curriculum activities against the goals set out in the common cornerstones. For this purpose we designed the following benchmarks.

- Activities are focused on needs of individual participants
- Activities encourage self reflection
- Activities develop participant's self confidence
- Activities encourage participants to explore different opportunities for future actions
- Activities encourage participants to explore opportunities and resources in their communities
- Activities develop methodological competencies
- Activities develop social competencies
- Activities develop learning competencies
- Activities develop competences related to attitudes and values
- Activities encourage participants to reflect on skills and knowledge they have acquired through formal education and training
- Activities encourage participants to identify skills and competencies which are not formally documented or acknowledged
- Activities encourage participants to consider ways in which they can develop their future content and subject related competences
- Activities encourage participants to consider the different contexts in which they can gain new competencies and knowledge
- Timing of activities is flexible
- Participants can pursue activities at own pace
- There are alternative pedagogic approaches according to learner needs and styles
- Teachers and trainers receive training before supporting self evaluation activities•
Teachers and trainers themselves undertake self evaluation activities prior to supporting others

Each partner was asked to analyse their own activities providing a score of between 1 and 5 for each benchmark. These scores were then reported and explained in a workshop and where necessary modified. The point was not to compare or rate the value of different activities, but to allow partners to develop an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their curricula activities, as part of a formative development process. We have chosen not to print the raw scores in this report as we feel that could be misleading. However we do present the partners' comments on their performance against the benchmarks

SWOT ANALYSIS

The final evaluation tool adopted by the project was a SWOT analysis. Partners were asked to identify and comment on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for their project.

The following section provides the results of the partners benchmarking and SWOT analysis. Once more it should be stressed that these are seen as formative and not judgemental results. The major point is to understand the strengths and weaknesses of our work both as a guide for further development and also to appreciate when and in what contexts the different tools and instruments can best be used.

Czech Republic

BENCHMARKS

The modules for self-evaluation and the self-evaluation questionnaire consist in the mutual cooperation and consultation between participant and counsellor. Every body of participants executes these self evaluation activities in a close touch with a counsellor (career) in a labour office. The main aim of these activities is to help to the unemployed people through the first contact with the career in the labour office to identify their basic capacities in the fields of formal and non-formal competencies. The counsellor could be able to suggest to the participant an appropriate process for re-entry to labour market in relation to the results of these preliminary self-evaluation activities.

Therefore the benchmarks were made on the point of view if self-evaluation activities are oriented on the introspection, self-examination and basic orientation in the job-opportunity for each of participants.

Activities are focused on needs of individual participants

Activities enable each of participants to make in a cooperation with a counsellor (career) the basic decision about his/or her own process for re-entry to labour market. They are focused on needs of individual participants from the target group of unemployed, because every body of them has cardinal interest: to gain an occupation.

Activities encourage self-reflection

Activities include fields in which each of participant judges and consults his/or her own non- formal competencies (more general skills, personal qualities, work and life experience and attitudes). Through consultations with the counsellor the participant obtains self- reflection.

Activities develop participant's self confidence

The counsellor has a number of instructions for effective realisation of self-evaluation activities. The instructions also contain some recommendations how facilitate the self confidence of participants during the self-evaluation (for example what they should avoid if formulate conclusions etc.).

Activities encourage participants to explore different opportunities for future actions

In the end of activities the counsellor gives consideration to the participant's own opportunities for future actions.

Activities encourage participants to explore opportunities and resources in their communities

The counsellor in a broader framework of activities consults with the participant also about his/or her own social and family conditions and economic factors.

Activities develop methodological competencies

The participant judges his/or her methodological competencies through a set of questions in the field "work and life experience and attitudes" and consults about these competencies with the counsellor.

Activities develop social competencies

The mutual cooperation and consultation between participant and counsellor develops also social competences both of them.

Activities develop learning competencies

The participant obtains recommendations for his/or her future education as a result of a broader view to his/or her own capacity. It means that the activities support education planning in the whole although they don't include any specific field of education.

Activities develop competences related to attitudes and values

The participant make decision about his/or her own process for re-entry to labour market.

Activities encourage participants to reflect on skills and knowledge they have acquired through formal education and training

The participant presents all information about his/or her acquirement of formal education and vocational qualification (include various kinds of courses and certificates). Together with the counsellor these information systematize and reflect on their using on the labour market.

Activities encourage participants to identify skills and competencies which are not formally documented or acknowledged

The participant identify and judges his/or her own non- formal competencies through a set of questions together with the counsellor.

Activities encourage participants to consider ways in which they can develop their future content and subject related competences

The counsellor in the end supposes to the participant real possibilities of his/or her future retraining or real ways leading up to the acquirement of some vocational qualification.

Activities encourage participants to consider the different contexts in which they can gain new competencies and knowledge

The counsellor in the end offers to the participant that is possible to make an individually action plan for his self-personnel development in these fields where were identified some problems.

Timing of activities is flexible

The time of the activities is really delimited by the counsellor's possibilities. But the counsellor works with respect to needs of individual participants.

Participants can pursue activities at own pace

The module of computer aided self-evaluation the participants can use at own pace.

There are alternative pedagogic approaches according to leaner needs and styles

All of activities are produce in a direct mutual interaction between the counsellor and the participant. The counsellor observes the reactions of the participant and adapts the process of self-evaluation to his/or her needs.

Teachers and trainers receive training before supporting self evaluation activities

The counsellor follows instructions for the realisation of self-evaluation activities. These include ethical and professional aspects of self-evaluation. Additionally counsellors usually have good professional skills, knowledge and experience from the work with unemployed people.

Teachers and trainers themselves undertake self evaluation activities prior to supporting others

Before the realisation of the activities we will offer to provide self evaluation activities for counsellors.

S W O T A N A L Y S I S

Strengths

- Using self-evaluation methods at labour offices improves the quality of their services provided for job seekers as well as develops self-evaluation culture of unemployed. It enables them to address the issue of labour market success from the viewpoint of their personal prerequisites and chances.
- The application of proposed modules and tools is based on partnership between counsellors and labour office clients. Labour offices care for each client individually.
- Clients, besides their formally certified previous education and jobs also state and assess their work and life experience, personal qualities, needs, interests and future wishes and expectations.
- Mutual cooperation between clients and counsellors during self-evaluation enables clients to acquire basic self-reflection and self-assessment. Clients get a coherent idea about general requirements of employers for employees and specific recommendations as well as about the best way of meeting them.
- The results of self-evaluation are used when labour offices search a job for the client and plan client's further education and personal development.
- Counsellors can use methodological instructions aiming at the motivation, ethic and psychological aspects of self-evaluation.

Weaknesses

- Real work conditions at labour offices are defined by the time limitation of counsellors who provide self-evaluation services for clients.
- Counsellors' training for performance of their profession does not include deeper knowledge of self-evaluation. That can complicate successful dissemination of self-evaluation in career counselling and guidance.
- The application of self evaluation modules can be crowned with success if relations between clients and counsellors are close and open.
- Clients can perceive that some parts of modules focused on work habits, life experience and personal qualities can violate the right to their privacy.
- The self-evaluation process focuses on carrying out a deep screening of client's personality, first of all based on his or her subjective answers. Counsellors at labour offices cannot assess real competences of clients which they would possess if they performed work.

Opportunities

- Some parts of self-evaluation modules can be used in a broad context of professional orientation. Adults can use the Jobtip if they change a job; pupils when choosing their career or further professional training.
- More extensive application of self-evaluation at labour offices would demand training of counsellors in self-evaluation methods. This requirement should be involved in counsellors' training. We can expect development of educational activities in this field.
- Using self-evaluation when determining non-formal competences corresponds to development trends focussed on the recognition of non-formal and informal education results in the Czech Republic.

Threats

- A high unemployment rate in some Czech regions downgrades real possibility of clients to use self-evaluation results and concrete recommendations for return to work.
- Though the results of self-evaluation revealed the need of further development of clients' non-formal competences, they mostly do not allow clients to develop them. Cost-free education for unemployed focuses narrowly on acquiring a vocational qualification.
- Education of adults aimed at e.g. development of communication skills and social competences is mostly provided by private facilities and is rather expensive.
- Self-evaluation methods are not currently used within formal education in the CR. They should be involved systematically in education of each citizen as a part of unemployment prevention.

Denmark

BENCHMARKS

Activities are focused on needs of the individual participants

The tools hold an individual perspective but do not entirely focus on the individual's needs and aspirations. The tools also address contextual issues and possible barriers within the surrounding society

Activities encourage self-reflection

The whole idea of the tools is to stimulate self-reflection. Not only with regards to the understanding of own competences but also to the understanding of the context in which these are being understood.

Activities develop participant's self confidence

The activities stimulate reflection and (re-) evaluation of all of the individual's earlier learning experiences and could empower the individual to a new (positive) view on own competences. On the other hand, could the individual's reflections (life-span and space) might uncover activities or career patterns which he don't find re-assuring, which potentially could counteract the aim of empowerment

Activities encourage participants to explore different opportunities for future actions

The activities suggested in exercise no. 3 and 5 are directly aimed at the individual's exploration of possible future career opportunities and connected actions. One of the major goals is to stimulate reflection about possible futures and to widen the individuals perspective/fields of options

Activities encourage participants to explore opportunities and resources in their community

The tools are not directly aimed at exploring concrete opportunities. The objective is to discover "what needs to be explored" and the focus is to uncover personal competences and possible futures. The work with the self-evaluation must be followed up with a phase where available options are being explored

Activities develop methodological competencies

The development of specific competences is not one of the specified goals – which is to uncover competences. Thus, the activities might develop methodological competencies regarding self-assessment and individual planning, but these are not automatically transferable to other areas.

Activities develop social competencies

Like the above. Thus, the activities might, in general, make the individual realize patterns of social behaviour and/or values

Activities develop learning competencies

Like the above. Thus, the activities potentially stimulates learning through supporting reflection and active engagement

Activities develop competencies related to attitude and values

Like the above. Thus, the participants are being encouraged to reflect on their priorities through evaluation of e.g. important life-roles and themes

Activities encourage participants to reflect on skills and knowledge they have acquired through formal education and training

The activities included in the exercises aim directly at (re-) evaluation of earlier learning experiences. Formal education and training is included in exercise 5

Activities encourage participants to identify skills and competencies which are not formally documented or acknowledged

A particular goal of the tools is to assist the individual in the process of uncovering all possible competences acquired through learning processes that has taken place in- or outside the formal education and training system.

Activities encourage participants to consider ways in which they can develop their future content and subject related competencies

The tool is mostly focused on how the participant can make use of already acquired competencies but could, in turn stimulate to further learning through the process of stimulating reflections between individual goals, opportunities and barriers and already acquired competences

Activities encourage participants to consider the different contexts in which they can gain new competencies and knowledge

The exercises emphasises the possibility of making use of different learning arenas, through the process of uncovering competences gained outside the formal education and training system

Timing of activities is flexible

The exercises can be done in a flexible pace but are presumed to be most beneficial to the individual as early as possible in their unemployment period

Participants can pursue activities at own pace

For the most part, unemployed people in Denmark is obligated to make choices at a specific time (e.g. according to an activation scheme) and counsellors will often have limited time available to the individual participant

There are alternative pedagogic approaches according to learner needs and styles

Two different tools have been developed and that gives the teacher/counsellor some flexibility. Thus, the approach is theory-based and depending on the reliability of the theoretical constructs (e.g. about the individuals vocational identity) and basic assumptions deriving from these (e.g. about individual career behaviour).

Teacher and trainer receive training before supporting self evaluation activities

The participants in the Danish model project have very different (educational) backgrounds and only some of them are trained counsellors. Preparatory meetings have been held with all participating teachers and trainers where the overall idea and main focus of the project has been presented

Teacher and trainer themselves undertake self evaluation activities prior to supporting others

It has not been possible to integrate training of teachers and counsellors in the Danish model project.

SWOT ANALYSIS

The Danish model project takes into account several dimensions in the analysis of individual competences and how self-evaluation can play a part in the process of uncovering and describing these – for example:

- The individual dimension and how the individual biography and self-concept/self-efficacy beliefs influences vocational identity (understanding of competences).
- The contextual dimension and how many interrelating factors influences both the individual's and the counsellors understanding of competences
- The service-provision and how different stakeholders understand, plan and organise competence assessment activities and how the individual assessments are being used (ownership)

In order to meet the need of the service providers, two different self-evaluation tools are:

- A. A curricular module, which is a self-guided tool that can be integrated in an existing course as part of the curriculum
- B. A dialog guide aimed at teachers and career counsellors who work with the personal interview as the primary method in competence assessment.

Both tools withhold questions or exercises that evolve around the following headlines:

- My life-story (life-span)
- My present situation (life-space)
- My conceptions about my future (outcome expectations)
- How do I proceed? (possible career paths)
- My professional and personal competencies (vocational identity)
- My options and possible barriers
- My personal goals and plans

Strengths (related to content and specific focus of the tools)

The exercises take a starting point in the individual biography (1) and present life-space (2) without being biased by a certain view on “relevant” competences and/or issues of importance to the individual's career planning. The exercises help the individual to remember: Where have I been? What have I done? – And what could I possibly have learned

from that? They also stimulate the individual to reflect on how career decisions are and have been interwoven in the individual life-span and connecting life-space(-s)

Working with both the past (1), the present (2) and the future (3) helps the individual to update and contextualise her view on competences and to view these in connection with personal priorities, goals and out-come expectations

The exercises encourage the participant to explore multiple possible futures (3) and various paths to pursue individual goals (4) - and to prioritise and choose among these. This stimulates reflective thought and awareness of individual priorities and possible restraints.

The individual are being encouraged to review earlier learning experiences (1, 5) and to (re-) evaluate these in a new context (personal goals). Thos approach motivates the individual to pursue their goals and engage themselves in formal competence assessment and/or further learning

On the basis of the individuals “updated” view on her self (vocational identity), her priorities, goals and aspirations (1-5) The individual are being stimulated to act on their goals through personal plans (7) that are being based on an analysis of possible options and barriers (6)

Weaknesses (in the implementation of the tools)

Individual ownership is crucial in order to motivate the individual to work with earlier learning experiences, aspirations and future goals. Personal goals (e.g. a desire to learn new skills) might not coalesce with society goals (e.g. fastest way to a vacant job)

The outcome of the self-evaluation process depends on the individual’s perception of the gains from it. Follow-up procedures – like formal competence assessment and/or accreditation must be provided and made visible to the individual

The tools are built on the assumption that an individual goal is a strong motivator for personal growth and/or change (life-long learning). Current activation schemes might counteract the counsellors/trainers willingness to take the results from self-evaluations seriously and/or limit the persons options for individual choices

Opportunities (how the tools can enhance the quality of competence assessment)

Self-evaluation, in connection with future planning potentially has a motivating effect on individuals desire to engage themselves in future learning activities and/or to pursue new career paths

The individual perspective means that the tools can be integrated in both existing competence assessment activities and/or in the visitation processes used by these and could enhance the likelihood of producing more realistic personal plans.

Self-evaluation as a starting point for formal competence assessments form the basis of a more comprehensive and fair picture of the individual's competences and possible future career paths.

Threats (what could counteract a successful implementation of the tools)

The results from the self-evaluation process must be taken seriously and into account in following career counselling and/or competence assessment activities. If not, the individual might not be able to see the point in participating in this activity.

The surrounding system might not be ready to take the individuals interests, desires and goals into consideration when providing competence assessment and/or career options

Self evaluation is based on the individual's interpretation and understanding of e.g. the personal output of a specific event. This might limit individuals with low self-esteem in the process of uncovering or discovering of competences and might counteract the aim of empowerment through reflections upon learning experiences.

Germany

BENCHMARKS

Activities are focused on needs of individual participants

Although a variety of activities and situations is provided in step I there is the opportunity that this offer does not suit the needs of some individuals. The module tries to reduce this aspect through giving the opportunity to trainers and or trainees to develop additional situations and activities. Nevertheless it has to be admitted that the module addresses mainly disadvantaged people or people in precarious work conditions. For other individuals who are well prepared and know about their own interests and abilities the module might not be as suitable as to the individuals mentioned above. Activities encourage self-reflection

The group reflection in step II aims at encouraging the reflection of own abilities, interests and wishes. Nevertheless the extent and the profundity of the self-reflection depends on the trust and the positive atmosphere within the group and on the ability and the willingness of the individual to let others participate in his self-reflection process. In order to improve the aspect of self-reflection within the module alternative methods for self-reflection could be offered.

In order to ensure the profundity of the self-reflection process step III has a specific focus on the self-reflection process. This process is assisted through the trainer who carries through the interview in general and who should have experience in counselling. Additionally the trainer is assisted through the structure of the interview fields in detail.

Activities develop participant's self confidence

Again this aspect is very much depending on the group of participants which surrounds the individual in step I and II. Nevertheless we expect that in most cases the self-confidence of the individual will be strengthened through the feedback he/she receives during the activities in step I and the group reflection in step II. Additionally it is the task of the trainer to support the reflection process in step III a and b in such a way that the trainee discovers his own strengths more deeply and that he/she uses these strengths as a starting point for the development of self-confidence.

Activities encourage participants to explore different opportunities for future actions

Because there is only a very loose connection between the provided activities and future job opportunities the activities provided in step I might not lead each individual to explore possible future job options. But activities like buying ingredients for a meal for a large group with a limited budget encourage them to discover opportunities for shaping their private life more active and with a focus on social contacts. Additionally step III b has a specific focus on the appraisal of new opportunities for the future. In this process the trainee is supported by a trainer who should have a great knowledge about possible fields of work and who should be able to draw a relation between the reflections the trainee expresses according to his experiences before the course, during step I and II of the module, his/her specific life circumstances and the fields of work.

Activities encourage participants to explore opportunities and resources in their communities

This is an aspect which is mainly supported in field IV b of the reflection session between trainee and trainer in step III. It is clearly pointed out in the explanations for the trainers who use the interview matrix that the aim of the self-evaluation module is not only to assist participants in thinking out possible occupational fields but also reflect about options for activities outside gainful employment. Within the structure of the interview there is a special focus on encouraging people to build networks or if suitable to engage in activities which include citizenship aspects.

Activities develop methodological competencies

The module in its actual setting is very short, therefore it is not expectable that the trainees develop sustainable methodical competences.

Activities develop social competencies

Through the fact that step I and step II of the module are group based the participants are forced to work in a team which is a great demand taking into account that a lot of them do not participate regularly in group activities. Solving problems together, managing a common task like preparing and decorating a plate with bread roles together supports team-building which is crucial in step II where the individual is asked to listen to the feedback of others and to explore his self-perception to others.

Activities develop learning competencies

In its actual setting the module is too short to support the development of learning competencies. In order to fulfill this standard it would be necessary to provide a module which is carried through over a longer period of time.

Activities develop competences related to attitudes and values

Some of the activities are designed in such a way that they might support the changing of attitudes and values. In general it can be said that the activating moment in step I is an incentive for such a development. The activities and situations in their actual setting can support and encourage the participants in dealing with their life in a more active way and to find meaningful tasks (even outside gainful employment again).

Activities encourage participants to reflect on skills and knowledge they have acquired through formal education and training

It is the task of the trainer in step III a to assist in this reflection process on knowledge gained with in formal education. However it is difficult in the cases where participants do not have any formal vocational qualifications or even no formal qualifications from school.

Activities encourage participants to identify skills and competencies which are not formally documented or acknowledged

This aspect is especially taken into account in the one-to-one reflection session in step III

Here the participant will be assisted through a practitioner from the course which has the task to draw connections between former learning contexts, social, personal and occupational competencies and actual experiences (through the activities in step I).

Activities encourage participants to consider ways in which they can develop their future content and subject related competences

The activities and situations in step I are incentives for developing new ideas for activities, interests and wishes because a variety of fields is presented. From this variety of fields the participant can choose. Nevertheless the options are limited with regard to time.

The trainer who carries through the interview has a special responsibility to support this development further.

Activities encourage participants to consider the different contexts in which they can gain new competencies and knowledge

Because at least some of the situations and activities which are offered in step I of the module are new or not common to the participants they might function as incentives for fields of potential new activities. E.g. After carrying through the artistic activity “building an objective for the model railway landscape” some individuals might be motivated to extend their artistic activities further during their leisure time maybe in a different context. Against this background it can be said that in such a case the activities foster the development of new competences and knowledge. In step III b the trainer who carries through the interview has a special responsibility to support this development further not only with regard to employment options but also with regard to leisure activities and networking.

Timing of activities is flexible

The German model project can be implemented into existing courses in a flexible manner. It is not crucial that the activities and situations in step I and the group reflection process are carried through in a specific order. It is possible to carry through the situations and activities for two types of personality on the first day and the other four on two other days. Therefore it is not demanded that a specific day or week is reserved especially for the self-evaluation activities. Nevertheless it is possible to carry through the whole module in one flow.

The situations and activities in step I are designed in such a way that they allow to be carried through in a limited period of time, e.g. 15 minutes. Nevertheless it is possible to change the activities as well as all the other steps so that they demand / allow more time. It might also occur that some individuals need more time to carry through the self-evaluation module, in this case a adequate period of time should be provided.

Participants can pursue activities at own pace

As explained above the activities are designed in such a way that they can be carried through at the own pace of the participant.

Nevertheless the timetable of the 2-weeks course put pressure on the participants to cope with the tasks within the expected time.

For the future the institution which is providing the self-evaluation module is asked to offer an adequate amount of time for the self-evaluation module which suits the individual needs of the participants.

There are alternative pedagogic approaches according to learner needs and styles

In general it can be said that the module in its actual setting provides a completely new approach to self-evaluation. The progressive feature is the idea that interests and competences should be discovered through activities. Additionally the approach still includes the conventional approach to discover interests and competences through interviews and reflection. In step I of the module there are at least three activities and situations for each type of personality on offer from which the individual can choose one that seems attractive to him/her. Regarding this step there are at least choices for the individual. Additionally there is the opportunity to leave the situations and activities in step I out and to decide to focus only on the one-to-one session of step III of the module if the participants prefer this reduction of the module. Nevertheless it should be recommended by the organisation to participate in all steps of the module.

Teachers and trainers receive training before supporting self evaluation activities

Within the courses in which we have implemented the German self-evaluation module the teachers and trainers did not receive training.

Teachers and trainers themselves undertake self evaluation activities prior to supporting others

Within the courses in which we have implemented the German self-evaluation module the teachers and trainers have not worked through the self-evaluation module themselves.

S W O T A N A L Y S I S

The German model project takes into account three stages of the process of personal development:

- experiences through formal, non-formal and informal learning before the self-evaluation phase
- module as an incentive for self-evaluation using the starfish model
- further self-development of the personality with respect to
 - occupational competences
 - social competences
 - personal competences (self-competences)

The design of the module includes the following four steps:

1. Experiencing activities with different characteristics/demands based on Holland 's theory of types of personality
2. Common reflection in groups (possibly with support) paying attention to their emotions, not only to their thinking. Central questions:

- What am I able to do?
 - What would I like to do?
3. Reflection in one-to-one sessions with a trainer, a teacher or a career counsellor supported through a proposed matrix of content
 4. Creative thinking out new possible fields of occupation (and even „recreation“ – for the long-term unemployed)

Strengths (interpreted as related to the actual setting of our self-evaluation module)

- Experiencing the activities (I) is a broadened approach and an alternative to the existing conventional interview methods.
- The participants are activated and motivated through the activities and situations in step one.
- The activities (I) and the common reflection (II) are group based and support the development of social competencies.
- For each type of personality there are different activities on offer from which the participants can choose the most suitable.
- The common reflection (II) gives the opportunity to balance self- image and the outer perception of the self.
- Situations and activities can also be used as incentives for leisure or citizenship activities.
- The matrix(III a) assists the trainer in including the whole life situation of the participant as well as additional circumstances in the reflection within the one-to-one session.

Weaknesses (interpreted as related to the actual setting of our self-evaluation module)

- The activities and situations can not be matched directly with potential job opportunities.
- Although there is a variety of activities and situations on offer the provided choice might not be suitable to the abilities, interests and wishes of each participant.
- Some participants might regard the provided activities and situations as inadequate to their age and status. (too similar to playthings)
- In its actual setting the module is too short with regard to time to allow for making experiences which lead to really new ideas.
- The success of the common reflection (II) is very much dependent on the engagement of all group members.

- The success of the one-to-one reflection session depends to a great extent on a positive and open relation between the participant and the trainer.
- There are no processes included which aim at providing objective criteria.
- In step IIIb a great knowledge of occupational opportunities is demanded from the trainer.

Opportunities (interpreted as related to alternative and future possibilities for using the module)

- Activities and situations can be changed or added by the trainers (and the trainees) according to the needs of the target group.
- The module can be adapted to a wide variety of contexts, e.g. vocational orientation in schools.
- The approach could also be used for thinking out options for a meaningful life outside gainful employment.

Threats (interpreted as related to the limits of further implementation of the module)

- In order to ensure a meaningful self-evaluation result which leads directly into a concrete occupational direction huge efforts and endeavours need to be undertaken, e.g. organisation of one to two days work placements in companies.
- The realisation of the module in a great part of the existing schemes of the labour office is hindered through the shortage of financial support.
- This is especially true because the realisation of the module in a sensible way requires a considerable amount of time as compared to semi-structured interviews and using questionnaires.
- The actual labour market situation reduces the opportunity that the results gained in the self-evaluation module alleviate the situation of the participant with regard to finding an appropriate job.
- The activities might mislead the participants in developing unrealistic expectations regarding future working conditions, e.g. working in a bakery does not mean to carry through decoration activities all day.

Greece

BENCHMARKS

Our benchmarking is in accordance with the general theoretical approach we used. This approach constitutes in the axiom that social structures determine the free and ungoverned space of an individual's action. More concretely we believe that in a specific time

and space we may observe insufficient self-determination or even hetero determination. This means that the possibility of free expression which benchmarks presuppose is limited.

Such structural problems that are connected with the labor market concern the following benchmarks:

- Activities encourage participants to explore different opportunities for future actions
- Activities encourage participants to explore opportunities and resources in their communities
- Activities encourage participants to consider the different contexts in which they can gain new competencies and knowledge

On the contrary the following benchmarks concern actions that are not so closely connected with social structure and functioning. High marking on these are indicative for our intervention's success.

- Activities are focused on needs of individual participants
- Activities encourage self-reflection
- Activities develop participant's self confidence
- Activities develop methodological competencies
- Activities develop social competencies
- Activities develop learning competencies
- Activities develop competences related to attitudes and values
- Activities encourage participants to reflect on skills and knowledge they have acquired through formal education and training
- Activities encourage participants to identify skills and competencies which are not formally documented or acknowledged
- There are alternative pedagogic approaches according to learner needs and styles

The following benchmarks are indicative for the problems that we faced at the application of our intervention concerning the structure and the operation of CVT in Greece.

- Activities encourage participants to consider ways in which they can develop their future content and subject related competences
- Timing of activities is flexible
- Participants can pursue activities at own pace

- Teachers and trainers receive training before supporting self evaluation activities
- Teachers and trainers themselves undertake self evaluation activities prior to supporting others

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

- The preoccupation with an innovative issue is so far as Greece is concerned, which is potentially very important and subservient for Greek citizens, as it is more that apparent from the research carried out. In fact through the specific project a new research topic has been brought forward in our country.
- The theory based creation of the self-evaluation tool, its validity confirmation (by all the rules of social research) and consequently its implementation, which came up with very interesting results.
- It is crucial the given possibility to combine self-evaluation method with other methods in the ascertainment of an adult's actual state, skills and competences.
- We had the opportunity to implement our intervention in two different social contexts (CVT in Athens, CVT in Lesvos Island)
- The findings are based on an empirical survey in accordance with methodology rules of social science (selection of sample, control group, use of SPSS statistical package, and statistical significance in results)

Weaknesses

- Our intervention was implemented into a small group of trainees. Therefore it would be wise to reiterated with trainees, which exhibit different socioeconomic features.
- Self-evaluation is not a familiar process. Consequently, it does not exist in Greece either as a means of practice or as a scientific topic for discussion.

Opportunities

- The preoccupation and the commencement of a public debate on self-evaluation. Along with the publications emerging from the research and the dissemination procedures of its results, which has already come off, it is anticipated that the debate on self-evaluation will be strengthened and will eventually become a focal point of scientific discussion in Greece.
- Our results are indicative that our self-evaluation tool has worked. It helped people to evaluate themselves in more positive and realistic way than before. We could use it to different cases and contexts

- It is important the possibility to combine self-evaluation with accreditation systems of prior learning, which have become acceptable not only in the public debate but the occupational policy as well.
- Through intervention in training seminars, which would aim at self-evaluation sensitization these seminars, would become more appealing to the trainees.
- The overall Self-Evaluation project came up with many different, however interesting models, which could urge the in-cooperation institutions to mutual learning.

Threats

- If the tool is not used on the initiative of the evaluated person, when he/ she feel the need to evaluate his/ her competences may operate as an apologetic mechanism of authority, and to legitimize changes, which have already been accepted as necessary, but have not been applied yet. It may not be a liberating force but an internal control mechanism or tool.
- It is more than doubtful whether there will be [a] financial means, [b] a satisfying number of people who will be able to support self-evaluation in a valid way and [c] the organizational structures demanded for the expanded implementation of self-evaluation model.
- It is possible that the self-evaluation process will be insipid for the trainees (either meaningless or even a waste of time) if they fail to recognize it as a supportive tool; towards the realization of either own positive and problematic sides, competences and skills. Such a thing would be feasible if they manage to realize it as another means of becoming part of the occupation field.

Portugal

B E N C H M A R K S

Activities are focused on needs about individual participants

The different activities are suitable to the needs of the individual participants. Each participant do the activities according with their individual perception and needs

Activities encourage self reflection

All the activities where designed to promote self reflection. Their will be moments of brainstorming and group reflection, but in the end of each part it is a moment for self-reflection.

Activities develop participant's self-confidence

As well as the self-reflection is valorised stimulate the self-confidence it is also a goal of this instrument

Activities encourage participants to explore different opportunities for future actions

Through the reflection about the activities developed and the ones that should be developed in the future the participants reflect about their future actions.

Activities encourage participants to explore opportunities and resources in their communities

The instrument encourage participants to explore the resources in their community and in participant's relation groups.

Social Competencies

Because the activities are made with a first part of team discussion and brainstorming it contribute for the development of social and relational competencies

Learning Competencies

The activities have more in attention the capacity of self reflection and not so much learning capacities

Attitudes and Values

The activities promote the development of a different attitude for life, mainly because gives more self-confidence to the participants

Activities encourage participants to reflect on skills and knowledge they have acquired through formal education and training

In the first part of the activities the participants reflect about their scholar and professional route as well as them professional training route.

Activities encourage participants to identify skills and competencies which are not formally documented or acknowledged

The development of the application of the instrument encourage since the beginning the identification of skills and competencies which are not formally documented

Activities encourage participants to consider ways in which they can develop their future content and subject related competences

In the last part of the activities participants are encourage to made an agreement with themselves in order to develop competencies that they consider important for their future

Activities encourage participants to consider the different contexts in which they can gain new competencies and knowledge

Although this is made during the development of the activities there is not a special attention to this question

Timing of activities is flexible

The timing flexibility is flexible and the activities can be done in a sequential way or separately

There are alternative pedagogic approach according to learner needs and styles

This issue is not clear in the instrument and depends on the facilitator or training sensibility

Teachers get training for self-evaluation

It is strictly recommended that the trainers have a previous training about application of the instruments and development of Self-Evaluation activities

Teachers and trainers themselves undertake self-evaluation activities prior to support others

It is strictly recommended that trainers undertake themselves the self-evaluation activities.

Romania

BENCHMARKS

Activities are focused on needs of individual participants

Being partially conceived as a training offer, the common tasks cannot be better focused on individual needs

Activities encourage self-reflection

each activity is designed to provide food for thought on one's own personality dimensions; according to personal skills and history of self-assessment, participants can go through a positive reviewing of their own capacities and experiences

Activities develop participant's self confidence

the nature of the tasks are meant to facilitate self-disclosure as a premise for improvement of self-esteem and self-confidence; however, the group setting of activities limit to a certain extent participant's availability to reveal themselves to others;

Activities encourage participants to explore different opportunities for future actions

part of exercises are more than observatory/descriptive with regard to competences; moreover they are explorative and probing to participants, creating pathways between past present and future.

Activities encourage participants to explore opportunities and resources in their communities

most of our activities are designed as exploratory but they are centred on individuals as psychological entities and less as members of a social group

Activities develop methodological competencies

participants are put in contexts encouraging them to develop methodological competencies, though more in an implicit way

Activities develop social competencies

composed more of self-reflective exercises, meant to strengthen individual potential, the tools are less social oriented, although improving participant's awareness of their social skills, and in some cases also awareness of the utility of these skills

Activities develop learning competencies

training situations created stimulate a specific learning approach: learning from the past, learning from one's own experience, learning to self-evaluate

Activities develop competences related to attitudes and values

activities are meant to develop a coherent and comprehensive attitude towards oneself, to increase awareness of the personal set of values, to help appreciate it and to promote it in different social contexts

Activities encourage participants to reflect on skills and knowledge they have acquired through formal education and training

activities encourage participants to reflect on their skills and knowledge, stressing on how they are articulated and how functional they are as a whole

Activities encourage participants to identify skills and competencies which are not formally documented or acknowledged

in encouraging participants to self-reflect on skills and knowledge the main focus was on competences acquired in non formal way, usually less acknowledged and praised by the main target group

Activities encourage participants to consider ways in which they can develop their future content and subject related competences

activities were not constructed on explicit mapping the content and subject related competencies, yet on the operational links between them, considering that participants usually turn naturally towards formally proved competences when approaching life decisions

Activities encourage participants to consider the different contexts in which they can gain new competencies and knowledge

activities are designed to help participants to rather use the existing competencies in different contexts than to strive for acquiring new ones

Timing of activities is flexible

the overall flexibility is high, the trainer/counselor being free to decide on what activities are appropriate to the target group;

Participants can pursue activities at own pace

we have different type of activities; the individual and the self-reflective activities are pursued at the participants' own pace; the group activities have a time frame, but offer a large freedom to different paces

There are alternative pedagogic approaches according to learner needs and styles

the modular structure of the curriculum allows the trainer/counsellor to choose between suitable activities, according to learners needs, but no alternative provision is available for different learner styles

Teachers and trainers receive training before supporting self evaluation activities

the curricular package does not come along with a ToT programme; however, the specific background of the trainers and especially of the counsellors include the core elements needed for a successful application

Teachers and trainers themselves undertake self evaluation activities prior to supporting others

this aspect was not intended in the Romanian curricular package

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

- The Self-evaluation philosophy corresponds to newly identified needs, which are not covered by other existing initiative
- The participants in training environments were pleased to be in a situation to reflect upon themselves - unusual task in the normal training approach in Romania
- The dissemination of this approach is a contribution to the promotion of the person based culture in work environments
- The tools in the training portfolio are designed to meet needs of a wide range of target groups
- The modular structure of the training portfolio involves a high degree of flexibility, with respect to the target group and to the context of the application

- The complementary offer allows responses to particular needs and interests of the participants

Weaknesses

- Time constraints in application of the training portfolio – in order to go in depth, more time is needed, but it is not easy to find available time in existing courses
- A successful application of the training portfolio needs a minimum level of verbal skills
- The categories in the starfish model have a certain ambiguity embedded in them, which makes it difficult for trainers to discriminate between appropriate indicators, especially between social competencies and competencies regarding attitudes and values
- The lack of a trainers training offer within the package could limit the successful dissemination

Opportunities

- There are possibilities to identify similar elements in the existing training and career guidance practices
- Recent developments of the Romanian system promote validation/accreditation of prior learning, consistent with the ‘self-evaluation’ approach
- Increased interest in the wide use of the training portfolio can bring the need to continue developments towards the design of a trainers training curriculum

Threats

- It is possible that participants perceive the self-evaluation process as an externally validated evaluation, expecting a formal sanction that may increase their employment chances on the labour market
- Insertion of the module in existing courses may not be accepted by the beneficiaries, as it reduces the time allocated to the main objectives of the courses.
- This experience may be considered unrealistic and unproductive, the general attitude being superficial and ‘polite’ towards the trainer/counsellor.
- There is a discontinuity in the approach of the modules proposed in self-evaluation in comparison with other evaluation processes - in learning, training, or work.
- A new attempt to standardise in a unified formula the competencies acquired in a deeply personal, non-formal way.

United Kingdom

BENCHMARKS

Activities are focused on the needs of individual participants

The self-evaluation module aims to respond to the needs and requirements of individual learners or a group of learners. Competences/questions to be evaluated could be chosen and later substituted depending on the needs and requirements of individual learners or a group of learners.

Activities encourage self-reflection

The module aims to encourage self-reflection. Our methods, including interviews as well as questionnaire and modeling methods, facilitate the learners into reflecting upon their own achievements and outcomes.

Activities develop participant's self-confidence

Developing the learners' confidence and self-assurance through recognition of their personal competences is considered to be one of the most important goals of the self-evaluation activities. Our research has shown that supporting the learners into recognising their competences enhances their confidence.

Activities encourage participants to explore different opportunities for future actions

The self-evaluation activities aim to demonstrate to learners the potential importance of their tacit skills and competences for their future actions. For example, as noted by one learner, recognition and self-evaluation of her personal competences encouraged her to apply for (and later get) a promotion at her workplace.

Activities encourage participants to explore opportunities and resources in their communities

The module does not aim specifically to encourage the learners to explore opportunities and resources in their communities. This would depend on the learners' individual priorities and goals.

Activities develop methodological competencies

The module encourages the learners to evaluate their methodological competences thus facilitating the recognition and potential deployment of such competences in a variety of learning situations and settings.

Activities develop social competences

The module encourages the learners to evaluate their social competences thus facilitating the recognition and potential deployment of such competences in a variety of learning situations and settings.

Activities develop learning competences

The module encourages the learners to evaluate their learning competences thus facilitating the recognition and potential deployment of such competences in a variety of learning situations and settings.

Activities develop competences related to attitudes and values

The module encourages the learners to evaluate their competences related to attitudes and values thus facilitating the recognition and potential deployment of such competences in a variety of learning situations and settings.

Activities encourage participants to reflect on the skills and knowledge they have acquired through formal education and training

This is included in the module, as some of the skills the learners have been asked to reflect upon may have been developed through formal education and training.

Activities encourage participants to identify skills and competences which are not formally documented or acknowledged

This issue comes up in our preliminary interviews/discussions with participants prior to their participation in the module.

Activities encourage participants to consider ways in which they can develop their future content- and subject-related competences

There are no explicit self-evaluation questions regarding the development of their future content- and subject-related competences. However, it is likely that the self-evaluation module will motivate the learners to consider ways in which they can develop their future content- and subject-related competences.

Activities encourage participants to consider the different contexts in which they can gain new competences and knowledge

Our self-evaluation methods and approaches aim to demonstrate how tacit skills could be acquired, deployed and developed in a variety of contexts and situations and/or be transferred from one situation to another, thereby encouraging the learners to ponder on these issues.

Timing of activities is flexible

The timing of activities is flexible, depending on the timetable and priorities of the main course.

Participants can pursue activities at their own pace

Participants can pursue activities at their own pace, or a tutor can suggest a suitable pace for each participant.

There are alternative pedagogic approaches according to learner needs and styles

The tutor would suggest if an alternative pedagogic approach would need to be employed in certain cases.

Teachers and trainers receive training before supporting self-evaluation activities

It is intended to arrange a session with tutors at a later stage.

Teachers and trainers themselves undertake self-evaluation activities prior to supporting others

This could be included in the session with tutors (see above) at a later stage.

S W O T A N A L Y S I S

The methods we have considered aim to support learners in moving towards intentional evaluating of their personal competences and to reflect upon links and interrelations between the competences. Self-evaluation of personal skills and competences in the context of the classroom activities and exercises is associated with a number of practical benefits for the learners. Apart from enabling the learners to reflect upon their skills and competences, it also provides them with the ideas of how (through what activities/tasks/exercises) they can develop their skills further. At the same time, self-evaluation of their personal skills in the context of their classroom activities may help the learners to understand better what particular skills and competences could be employed successfully to help them to succeed in a specific classroom activity or a task. By demonstrating transferability and flexibility of the skills acquired from a variety of experiences, such an approach towards skills' self-evaluation facilitates the learners into recognition of their tacit skills and competences.

For tutors and practitioners this could also be potentially beneficial in terms of planning and implementing changes into the course programmes. Clearly defined links between personal skills and certain classroom activities indicate which of the classroom tasks are especially efficient for the development of a number of valuable skills. The self-evaluation module would also allow the tutors to address learners' specific requirements and needs in terms of their skills development and acquisition. As our research indicates tutors and practitioners generally recognise the importance of tacit skills and competences for the learning success of their students. The self-evaluation module would aim to assist the tutors and practitioners in the planning and implementing of various classroom activities and tasks with regard to the learners' skills' acquisition, development, and deployment.

As very flexible approach, the DCA method has a potential as a method for self-evaluation of personal competences and exploring links and relations among the compe-

tences. The strengths of the method as a tool for practitioners include those of availability, flexibility, adaptability and clear graphical representation:

The computer program is available on a website and can be downloaded free of charge.

The method is flexible enough to accept those concepts for analysis/evaluation that are considered to be relevant in the context of the demands of a course or training programme or the requirements of an individual learner. The computer program also allows for replacing or changing concepts at a later stage, depending on changes in course priorities.

The DCA analysis can be adapted easily to the aims, goals and requirements of the course. The examples we considered have demonstrated how these methods could be employed for different self-evaluation goals.

Graphical representation of the self-evaluation of personal skills provides a clear illustration of learners' levels of skills' deployment, recognition and development, indicating links between various skills and thus suggesting how (through what activities) learners may potentially develop their skills.

However, there are certain weaknesses associated with the use of the tool, as follows:

Before practitioners can start using the method they need to invest some time in mastering the basics of the DCA computer program, which could involve additional expenses.

In order to keep models simple and straightforward the number of concepts should not exceed eight to ten; thus, the practitioners may have to leave out some concepts.

The models produced by the program may appear complex initially and may have to be simplified (re-graphed) by practitioners in order to provide clearer graphical representation and make them more accessible to learners.

Potential opportunities for the tool are seen in a possible wider interest in the program among practitioners that may result in the incorporation of the self-evaluation tool across various courses or training programmes. Establishing training courses for a group of practitioners on how to use the method may assist practitioners in mastering the computer program and facilitate further interest and publicity for the tool. Potential threats are associated with factors such as extremely tight course schedules that would not allow time for implementation or even trying out the self-evaluation method and tool.

Self evaluation - implications for policy

The project adapted a common grid for analysing policy. The grid identified eleven key indicators for the development for self evaluation:

1. Training of teachers and trainers
2. Selection of trainers / counsellors (or other appropriate professionals) for supporting self evaluation activities
3. Flexibility for providers and for participants
4. Pedagogic approaches
5. Future learning contexts and methods (e.g. job placements)
6. Recognition of non formal and informal skills and competences (as opposed to formal)
7. Starfish model:
 - Competences related to attitudes and values
 - Learning competences
 - social competences
 - methodological competences
8. Opportunities and resources in community
9. Opportunities for future actions
10. Self confidence; Self reflection
11. Ethical considerations

Each of these dimensions was analysed at three different levels:

- Macro - Political / socio-economic
- Meso - Self evaluation activities
- Micro - Experiences of participants

The 'simplified' policy grid printed underneath served as a template for partners to develop their own policy analysis. The individual national policy analyses can be accessed on the project web site.

	MACRO - POLITICAL / SOCIO-ECONOMIC	MESO - SELF EVALUATION ACTIVITIES	MICRO - EXPERIENCES OF PARTICIPANTS
Training of teachers and trainers	<p>Supporting self-evaluation initiatives:</p> <p>Providing opportunities for appropriate training for teacher/trainers;</p> <p>Encouraging teachers/trainers to share relevant experiences (e.g. by organising self-evaluation workshops/seminars).</p> <p>Facilitating involvement of potential employers</p>	<p>Priorities/ goals of individual institutions have to be taken into account while developing training programmes for teachers/trainers;</p> <p>Specific training programmes need to be developed in collaboration with individual institutions (involving teachers/trainers).</p>	<p>Individual needs of participants need to be taken into account;</p> <p>Feedback/suggestions from learners need to be taken into account.</p> <p>Interviews /focus group discussions with learners have it be conducted.</p>
Selection of trainers / counsellors (or other appropriate professionals) for supporting self evaluation activities	<p>Setting standards for selecting teachers/trainers;</p>	<p>Selecting trainers/ counsellors to be involved in specific self-evaluation activities;</p> <p>Liaising (developing co-operation) with potential employers or other appropriate professionals</p>	<p>Feedback from participants should be used to facilitate the process of the selection of trainers/ counsellors.</p>
Flexibility for providers and for participants	<p>All self-evaluation initiatives/activities/ methods should be flexible enough to allow both providers and participants to tackle specific self-evaluation needs.</p>	<p>Specific self-evaluation needs need to be identified within individual institutions;</p> <p>The timing of self-evaluation activities should be flexible, depending on the timetable and priorities of the main course</p> <p>Self-evaluation approaches/modules need to be flexible and adaptable the institutions'/courses' priorities.</p>	<p>Specific self-evaluation needs should be identified;</p> <p>Self-evaluation approaches/modules need to be flexible and adaptable to participants' individual priorities and learning goals.</p>

	MACRO - POLITICAL / SOCIO-ECONOMIC	MESO - SELF EVALUATION ACTIVITIES	MICRO - EXPERIENCES OF PARTICIPANTS
Pedagogic approaches	Individual institutions should be provided with necessary recourses.	<p>All approaches need to be developed in collaboration with practitioners/ course leaders/trainers/ trainers.</p> <p>In the course of the implementation of the self-evaluation module we developed approach that would help the learners to assess their personal skills and competences through their participation in and evaluation of specific classroom activities. The methods include:</p> <p>The questionnaire method</p> <p>The DCA modelling method.</p>	Feedback from participants is important in the context of developing the self-evaluation methods and approaches
Future learning contexts and methods (e.g. job placements)	Encouraging links with potential employers, employment agencies or other relevant organisations.	Institutions should be encouraged to take to establish co-operation with potential employers etc.	Participants should be encouraged to deploy and/or self-evaluate their skills in various learning contexts (e.g job placements).

	MACRO - POLITICAL / SOCIO-ECONOMIC	MESO - SELF EVALUATION ACTIVITIES	MICRO - EXPERIENCES OF PARTICIPANTS
Recognition of non formal and informal skills and competences (as opposed to formal)	The main objective of all self-evaluation initiatives is to support participants into recognition of their informal skills and competences.	Institutions should encourage participants to recognise their skills through various activities and exercises (e.g. classrooms activities) including self-evaluation activities.	<p>The methods will encourage participants:</p> <p>To evaluate their own personal skills and competences;</p> <p>To reflect upon the usefulness of the competences;</p> <p>To reflect upon how (through what activities/ experience) they have been able to develop certain skills.</p> <p>To explore links and inter-relationships between their skills, competences, activities and experiences</p>
Starfish model: Competences related to attitudes and values Learning competences Social competences Methodological competences	<p>The primary aim of the self-evaluation activities is to help learners to explore the extent of their own skills and abilities on the basis of the Starfish model. The main challenge of this stage of the self-evaluation process is to facilitate students' initial insights into their own competences that are often tacit in nature. By reflecting upon their own skills, learners could contribute greatly to the process of making their skills more <i>explicit</i> or <i>visible</i>, maybe initially just to themselves, and later – to others</p>		
Opportunities and resources in community	<p>Encouraging collaboration with community organisations/ potential employers etc.</p> <p>Embedding individual institutions into community networks</p>	Establishing links with community networks;	Participants should be provided with relevant information and/or encouraged to take on available opportunities/ resources within community networks.

	MACRO - POLITICAL / SOCIO-ECONOMIC	MESO - SELF EVALUATION ACTIVITIES	MICRO - EXPERIENCES OF PARTICIPANTS
Opportunities for future actions	<p>Potential opportunities for future actions are seen in a possible wider interest in the self-evaluation activities among practitioners /employers / institutions etc.</p> <p>Institutions should be provided with necessary resources that would allow to establish training courses for a group of practitioners on how to use self-evaluation methods and tools</p>	<p>Wider interest in the self-evaluation methods within one institution;</p> <p>Incorporation of the self-evaluation tool across all courses or training programmes</p>	<p>Participants should be encouraged to take on different self-evaluation activities and exercises</p>
Self confidence; Self reflection	One of the main objectives of the self-evaluation activities is to help learners to develop their self-confidence and self-reflection.		
Ethical considerations	Setting ethical standards, that would ensure that the self-evaluation exercise is not a compulsory activity.	Individual institutions should encourage (not force) participants to undertake the self-evaluation exercises.	Participants should be provided with relevant information about their rights (e.g. not to discuss/reveal any sensitive or private information;).

Issues and further research

The self evaluation project has raised a number of important issues, relating to policy, institutional management and curriculum and pedagogy. Many of these issues are not unique to the self evaluation approach, but are rather issues facing education and training as a whole.

EDUCATION OR THE LABOUR MARKET?

Prime amongst these is the (at Best) tension between education and the labour market. With the spread of liberal economic policies in Europe in the past decade there has been increasing attention paid to how to support (or coerce) unemployed people into returning to the labour market.

Guidance and counselling is one part of this strategy, other actions include withdrawal or reduction of state benefits, the creation of (often low paid) jobs and tax cuts and benefits for those accepting employment in low wage jobs.

Whilst there has been increased interest in identifying competences gained from non formal learning, this has been largely within the context of matching individual competences to labour market opportunities or to prerequisites for entry into full or part time education and training.

The self evaluation project aimed to develop individuals' social self reliance. The curricular modules were designed to prepare and guide people through a process of self reflection in order to evaluate their own skills and knowledge. The starting point of that process was seen as not the needs of the labour market but the ideas and aspirations of the participants. Whilst it was recognised that the wider programmes in which the self evaluation activities were embedded might have as their aim labour market integration, the objective of the self evaluation programme was to encourage individuals to explore as widely as possible the different opportunities and options for future actions. This might be progression to continuing learning, it might be to look at possibilities for self employment or voluntary work or it might be more geared towards social networking and community activities.

There are tensions between the educational objectives of encouraging individuals to explore widely their previous learning and possible future options, and the aims of employment services in integrating unemployed people in the labour market. This is not to say that the tensions cannot be overcome – indeed one of the more interesting outcomes of the project has been to encourage reflection amongst employment office staff on the aims and methodologies of their work.

It should also be noted that many of the unemployed people who have participated in the self evaluation activities were themselves seeking a speedy return to the labour market and questioned the point of the more reflective approach advocated by the project partners.

ETHICAL ISSUES

The self evaluation approach also raises ethical issues. The first is the efficacy of encouraging individuals to explore widely personal choices and options when there is little or no chance of employment or of progression in the areas chosen. This may be because of high qualification requirements or simply because of the lack of jobs. The second is the issue of whether it is right to initiate a process of self reflection, whilst lacking the resources and infrastructure to support individuals following the generally short duration of the self evaluation activities supported by the project.

COMPULSION

All of the project partners were opposed to compulsion to participate in self evaluation activities. Opposition is on two grounds: firstly that compulsion is politically wrong, and secondly that participants who have been forced to take part in a course are far less likely

to be highly motivated in their participation than those voluntarily attending. However, in reality in most countries compulsion does take place, through threat of withdrawal of welfare benefits for non attendees.

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Interestingly the tension between educational and labour market goals for activities for the unemployed is reflected organisationally in a general lack of clarity as to which government agencies and institutions should be responsible for this service. Different partners in the self evaluation project worked with both employment services or labour offices and various educational and training institutions. To some extent this reflects the different emphasises and contexts in which the self evaluation activities were developed. But our experiences would suggest the need for at least better coordination between the different agencies and organisations.

A further recent trend in many European countries has been the outsourcing of counselling and guidance and employment services. Whilst this may be seen as a more cost effective way of delivering client services, we believe this may be at the cost of quality. Quite simply managers of private providers of subcontracted or outsourced services have as their prime goal the pursuit of profit through reducing the cost of service provision. This ethos is at odds with the aim of providing support to unemployed people.

FLEXIBILITY

In our cornerstones document, which set out the design principles underpinning our curriculum development, we said it is important that providers are flexible in their approach.

Flexibility, we said, takes a number of forms. The timing of learning provision should be flexible to meet the needs of the participants, for instance recognising childcare responsibilities. Secondly flexibility should allow learners to pursue the programme at their own pace. Whilst some participants will require only a brief period of time to complete the self evaluation process others will require far more time to develop the confidence and skills required to undertake that process.

In reflection of this emphasis, flexibility formed one of the benchmarks with which the project partners evaluated their activities.

FUNDING

In reality, in nearly every partner country, we were unable to meet this objective. Even where the aim is understood, present education and counselling and guidance provision is bound by institutional organisation. Funding effectively limits the time available for course based delivery.

Funding – or whether the lack of it – is a general issue in most countries. Furthermore it is interesting to note that although there are obviously different funding mechanisms, in not one of the partner states was this based on the needs of the clients. Rather it might be for core staffing or institutions or for course of a certain length or for delivering services to a set number of clients.

COMPETENCE

The project adopted and built on the Starfish model of competence, developed under the earlier Leonardo da Vinci Tacit Key project. Research showed that most countries are moving towards a competence based model of education and training and indeed the identification of occupational competences is part of the European Qualification framework. However, in practice it is still difficult to describe, identify and assess Competences in the more affective learning domains – for instance ‘social competences’. Despite this the model starfish model proved of considerable use as a design tool for curricula and curricular activities. It may be that models of competences should be seen in this way, rather than primarily a tool for assessment.

ACCREDITING NON FORMAL LEARNING

The self evaluation project saw the recognition of non formal learning as primarily a developmental activity, in order to assist participants in determining future career or education and training options. Therefore we were not concerned with the accreditation of non formal learning. Our evaluation would suggest that learners are interested gaining accreditation for their prior learning, especially learners with low levels of initial qualifications. The research undertaken through the project shows that although there is interest in accrediting non formal learning in most countries, in practice there are few mechanisms or systems by which this can take place. At best what appears to happen is that individuals may be allowed to miss certain modules or course components. Even in the UK, where the NVQ system has officially supported the accreditation of prior learning for many years, it is relatively rare.

If non formal learning is to be accredited, it will require the development of tools and mechanisms within the different systems of education and training. However it would probably also require additional time to be allocated to self evaluation activities.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

It is apparent that the curricula activities developed through the self evaluation project differ quite radically from the traditional curriculum for unemployed people. The curricular and pedagogic design focuses on the ideas and aspirations of the learners and encourages self reflection and confidence in exploring those ideas and aspirations, rather than providing an objectives or input model. This may be a challenge for teachers and trainers who are used to more traditional didactic and systemic course provision. The role of the

teacher or trainer is refocused towards more facilitation and individual support, rather than traditional teaching.

It was notable that in the different partner countries a wide range of different professionals had responsibility for supporting unemployed people. These professionals had differing educational backgrounds, although a significant number had studied psychology. Other research (Attwell and Brown) has suggested that increasing number of people in different situations and contexts are assuming some responsibilities for education and training. However, they also drew attention to the lack of systematic training and support for these people. It was apparent that many of those professionals supporting the delivery of programmes associated with the self evaluation project had received no proper training for the work they were undertaking, neither was there any comprehensive or adequate system for continuing professional development. This is a major issue if this type of provision is to be extended in the future.

MUTUAL LEARNING

In the cornerstones document, we said that the project partners had come together because of a common understanding both of the needs of learners and the potential for meeting those needs. That did not mean, however, that a common course, module or even pedagogic approach could be developed and implemented in the different partner countries in Europe. Education and training is heavily influenced by historical, social and cultural development. Whilst the different countries of the European Union may share common principles and aspirations the systems of education and training remain surprisingly diverse. Put quite simply, curricular programmes cannot be transferred from one country to another.

What is possible, we said, was to learn from each other through processes of mutual learning and to launch new initiatives or reforms based on an understanding of the dynamics of development in other countries. What is also possible is to pursue developments based on common principles and understandings. Whilst recognising that each country has a different system and that learners will interface with the system in different ways, the project sought to develop and test curriculum modules based on a set of common principles and understandings.

We would maintain that this success has proved extremely successful. Given a common understanding of ideas and intent, it has provided remarkably easy to adapt curricula designs and activities from one country to another, despite the fact that programmes and institutional contexts may vary greatly. We believe the approach to mutual learning is a valuable one and is worthy of further consideration as a method for collaboration between education and training researchers and developers in Europe.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aebli,

Albert Bandura

Bjornavold, Jens: Making learning visible. Identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal learning in Europe, Thessaloniki 2000

Boucoulas, Marcie/Henschke, John A.: Reflections on International Cooperation and New Partnerships in the "Age of Globalization", p. 133-142 in: Adult Education and Development 58/2002

Coffield, 2000

Dohmen, Günther (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung – Hg.): Weiterbildungsinstitutionen, Medien, Lernumwelten. Rahmenbedingungen und Entwicklungshilfen für das selbstgesteuerte Lernen, Bonn 1999

Donald Super

Evans et al, 2000
Evans, Karen: Key competences and development of the 'starfish' - model as a basis for heuristic investigation of biographical experiences, p. 24-31 in: Heidegger/Hendrich (ed.), 2001

Finke, Wolfgang F.: Lifelong Learning in the Information Age. Organizing Net-Based Learning and Teaching Systems, Bären 2000

First Common report,

Heidegger, Gerald: Von Schlüsselqualifikationen zu Schlüsselkompetenzen, p. 101-106 in: Gonon (Hg.), 1996

John L. Holland

Kämäräinen, Pekka: Exploring key qualifications: context, theory and practice in Europe, 2002

Konttinen, 2002

Linda Gottfredson

Piaget,

Portugal, WP 1

Rappaport Empowerment as Guide to Doing Research: Diversity as a Positive Value, p. 359-382 in: Trickett/Watts/Birman (Eds.), 1994

Rappaport Terms of Empowerment/Exemplars of Prevention: Toward a Theory for Community Psychology, p. 121-148 in: American Journal of Community Psychology, Vol. 15, No. 2, 1987

Rappaport The Art of Social Change. Community Narratives as Resources for Individual and Collective Identity, p. 225-246 in: Arriaga/Oskamp (Eds.), 1998

Rappaport The Power of Empowerment Language, p. 15-21 in: FALL 1985

Rappaport, Julian: Seeking Justice in the Real World: A Further Explication of Value Contexts, p. 208-216 in: Journal of Community Psychology, Vol. 12, July, 1984a

Rappaport./Swift, C./Hess, R. (Eds.): Studies in Empowerment: Steps Toward Understanding and Action, New York 1984

Rappaport.: Studies in Empowerment: Introduction to the Issue, p. 1-7 in: Rappaport/Swift/Hess (Eds.), 1984b

Rappaport: Community Narratives: Tales of Terror and Joy, p. 1-24 in: American Journal of Community Psychology, Vol. 28, No. 1, 2000

Rappaport: Empowerment Meets Narrative: Listening to Stories and Creating Settings, p. 795-807 in: American Journal of Community Psychology, Vol. 23, No. 5, 1995

Vance Peavy

Volpert

Vykotski