

PRINCIPLES AND OPERATIONAL ADVICE

Foreword

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

Involvement and activation of the individual;

Holistic approach;

Development of competencies and skills;

Practical and theoretical learning;

Recognizing different ways of learning;

Talent Management.

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

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

ADVICE 1

Involvement and Activation of the individual

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ADVICE 2

Integrated/Holistic approach

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ADVICE 3

Development of competencies and skills

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ADVICE 4

Practical and theoretical learning and accessibility of integrated tools

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ADVICE 5

Recognizing different ways of learning

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ADVICE 6

Talent Management and Recognition of Competencies

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

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

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

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

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

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

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