

RECOMMENDATIONS ON METHODS TO INCREASE EMPLOYABILITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION OF YOUTH

PROJECT: Successful support for young people

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Partners:

- Fundacja Rozwoju Kompetencji i Przedsiębiorczości PROAKTYWNI, Plac gen. Władysława Sikorskiego 2, Kraków (Poland)
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The recommendations include areas for development within the established partnership between the two organizations, as well as proposed methods to be applied in the field of increasing youth employability and social inclusion. Particular attention is given to NEET youth, migrants, and young people at risk of social exclusion with fewer opportunities.

The recommendations are also intended to serve as an inspiration for all organizations and institutions that aim to develop working methods in the field of increasing the employability of young people with fewer opportunities. To all these organizations and institutions, we offer our experience from the project partnership: "Successful Support for Young People."

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Number and title of the recommendation:**1. Career activation as a Journey****Areas for development:**

- **Program structure**
- **Engagement strategies**

Recommendation description:

Many young people, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, struggle with motivation and direction in their professional journey. They often perceive employment as a distant goal rather than a step-by-step process.

Recommended approach encourages young people to see career development as a structured journey rather than a one-time decision. By breaking the process into smaller, achievable steps, they gain confidence and a sense of progress.

It also provides a sense of adventure and purpose, helping participants understand that career development is a continuous learning process rather than a fixed destination. Using metaphorical and visual elements can make the experience more immersive and relatable.

Recommended methods for implementation:

- Using storytelling techniques to showcase real-life success stories.
- Creating personalized career roadmaps with milestones.
- Organizing career counselling meetings to provide guidance at different stages.
- Setting short-term goals to maintain motivation and engagement.
- Using video-based on boarding experience, such as a metaphorical journey where participants imagine boarding a sailing ship to represent embarking on their career path.
- Encouraging participants to create illustrations that describe their imagined career journey, making the process more personal and visual.

- Implementing creative writing tasks where participants draft a "diary" of their career expedition, documenting challenges and achievements along the way.
- Facilitating group discussions where participants share their experiences and challenges as fellow "travellers" on their career path.

Number and title of the recommendation:**2. Using exercises that evoke emotions especially positive ones****Areas for development:**

- **Didactical methods**
- **Emotional and psychological Support**

Recommendation description:

Emotionally engaging exercises enhance learning, boost confidence, and create a more supportive environment. Positive emotions encourage active participation and reduce anxiety related to job searching, making professional development a more enjoyable experience. When people actively participate and engage emotionally in an activity, they remember it better. This makes the learning process more effective, as emotions strengthen memory retention and create lasting impressions.

Engaging exercises that evoke emotions, such as happiness, excitement, and a sense of achievement, can help participants retain knowledge more effectively. Creating a positive learning environment contributes to improved self-esteem and motivation, which are essential for job readiness.

Recommended methods for implementation:

- Implementing group activities that celebrate small successes and reinforce positive reinforcement techniques.
- Using role-playing exercises that foster empathy and confidence by allowing participants to step into various professional roles.
- Encouraging creative expression, such as storytelling and visual presentations, to make learning more engaging.
- Gamifying the learning experience by introducing challenges or reward systems that make skill development more interactive and enjoyable.
- Organizing reflection sessions where participants discuss their emotions, strengths, and personal growth throughout the training process.

- Conducting exercises where participants associate job-related skills with positive personal experiences to create meaningful connections between learning and emotions.
- Using interactive scenarios and simulations that immerse participants in real-world problem-solving situations to strengthen emotional engagement.
- Encouraging team collaboration activities that build trust, cooperation, and a sense of belonging, enhancing emotional investment in the learning process.

Number and title of the recommendation:

3. Developing job search skills through role reversal (playing the role of an employer instead of a candidate)

Areas for development:

- **Practical experience and simulation**
- **Didactical methods**

Recommendation description:

Many young people struggle to understand employer expectations. By switching roles and acting as recruiters, they can refine their job application strategies, develop communication skills, and gain insights into the hiring process, improving their employability. This method allows participants to gain an employer's perspective on hiring decisions, helping them to better tailor their resumes and interviews accordingly.

This role-reversal technique encourages critical thinking and self-assessment, allowing young job seekers to better align their applications with market expectations. It also helps in fostering problem-solving abilities as participants analyse what makes a candidate suitable for a given job.

Recommended methods for implementation:

- Guiding participants through exercises where they imagine themselves as an employer, identifying their own needs if they were to hire someone, considering aspects such as skills, attitude, and cultural fit within the company.
- Creating exercises where they review and assess resumes, identifying strengths and areas for improvement.
- Conducting mock interviews where participants play the employer's role and provide feedback to their peers.
- Encouraging participants to design their own job advertisements and interview questionnaires to deepen their understanding of the hiring process.

Number and title of the recommendation:**4. Applying meditation and relaxation techniques****Areas for development:**

- **Emotional and psychological support**
- **Staff competencies**

Recommendation description:

Stress and anxiety can hinder job readiness, especially for NEET youth and marginalized groups. Mindfulness and relaxation techniques help young people manage stress, improve focus, and increase emotional resilience, leading to better job interview performance and workplace adaptability. Developing inner calm and self-awareness through relaxation techniques can also help young individuals gain more confidence and feel more prepared for the challenges of the job market.

Applying meditation techniques provides a way for individuals to ground themselves, clear their minds, and develop a positive outlook on their professional journey. Learning how to manage stress and anxiety effectively can improve decision-making skills, focus, and overall job performance.

Recommended methods for implementation:

- Introducing short guided meditation sessions before workshops to enhance concentration and emotional balance.
- Teaching breathing exercises for stress management and emotional regulation, helping individuals to stay calm in high-pressure situations.
- Encouraging mindfulness practices, such as gratitude journaling, to foster a positive mind-set and self-awareness.
- Providing access to mental health resources and stress-relief techniques, supporting participants in maintaining emotional well-being.
- Implementing mindfulness or reflective outdoor sessions to integrate relaxation practices in a more engaging way.

Number and title of the recommendation:**5. Conducting part of the sessions outdoors****Areas for development:**

- Learning environment
- Engagement strategies

Recommendation description:

Traditional classroom settings may feel restrictive and uninspiring, especially for youth with deficit of attention or other barriers for learning. Outdoor learning encourages creativity, teamwork, and a fresh approach to job preparation. Exposure to a different environment stimulates cognitive engagement, making learning more enjoyable and impactful.

Outdoor sessions promote hands-on learning, reduce stress, and allow participants to develop problem-solving skills in a dynamic and less formal setting. Engaging with nature can also enhance emotional well-being and motivation.

Recommended methods for implementation:

- Organizing outdoor workshops with relaxation techniques.
- Conducting team-building exercises in natural settings.
- Using outdoor spaces for brainstorming and creativity sessions.
- Incorporating physical activities to enhance engagement and interaction.
- Implementing outdoor role-play scenarios where participants act out workplace situations.

Number and title of the recommendation:
6. Using digital tools to translate tasks and exercises into multiple languages
Areas for development:

- **Use of technology**
- **Individualized support**

Recommendation description:

Language barriers often prevent migrant youth from accessing employability programs. Digital translation tools can promote inclusivity and ensure equal opportunities for all participants by breaking down communication obstacles. Providing multilingual resources can help learners understand content more effectively and engage fully in training activities.

Using technology to support language accessibility also fosters greater collaboration and participation among diverse groups.

Recommended methods for implementation:

- Providing multilingual learning materials for exercises.
- Incorporating subtitles translations in educational videos.
- Integrating real-time translation tools in workshops
- Using technology-based language tools for personalized learning support

Number and title of the recommendation:**7. Combining individual support with training and workshops in groups****Areas for development:**

- Individualized support
- Program structure

Recommendation description:

A balance between individual and group-based approaches in employability training enables young participants to receive personalized guidance while benefiting from peer interaction and collaboration. Individual support, especially for disadvantaged youth (e.g. migrants, from NEET group, with disabilities, with the risk of social exclusion) allows for addressing specific challenges and barriers, setting tailored goals, and monitoring personal progress, while group workshops foster motivation, shared learning, and social inclusion.

Integrating both approaches enhances greatly the effectiveness of the training and allows for more responsive and holistic development of young individuals.

Recommended methods for implementation:

- Scheduling regular one-on-one mentoring or tutoring sessions alongside group-based workshops.
- Developing Individual Plan of Development (personalized action plan) and combining them with shared learning experiences.
- Offering follow-up and progress check-ins tailored to each participant's goals.
- Creating group support and training to complement individual support.

Number and title of the recommendation:**8. Using Individual Plan of Development****Areas for development:**

- **Individualized support**
- **Program structure**
- **Monitoring and evaluation**

Recommendation description:

An individual plan of development is a strategic tool that helps young people take ownership of their career and personal growth. By defining personal goals, identifying skills to be developed, and establishing a clear action path, participants can track their progress and stay focused on their long-term aspirations. This plan supports self-awareness, planning abilities, and accountability, which are essential for effective career development.

Tailoring support to individual needs also increases motivation and ensures that interventions are relevant and achievable. Having a documented and revisited plan enhances continuity and helps facilitators monitor advancement and provide timely guidance.

Recommended methods for implementation:

- Introducing templates and digital tools for drafting personal development plans.
- Facilitating guided sessions to help participants reflect on strengths, needs, and future goals.
- Incorporating regular reviews and updates of the plan during the training process.
- Using the plan as a foundation for mentoring discussions.
- Encouraging participants to set SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound) goals.



- Regular adjustment of the plan to the changing circumstances and update with learning or progress outcomes for a comprehensive view of personal achievements.



Number and title of the recommendation:
9. Prioritizing the development of key and social competences valued by employers
Areas for development:

- **Didactical methods**
- **Program content**
- **Employer engagement**

Recommendation description:

Key competences such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, digital literacy, and adaptability are increasingly valued by employers across sectors. Social competences - including emotional intelligence, responsibility, conflict resolution, and intercultural awareness - are essential not only for effective collaboration but also for long-term career success and social inclusion.

Prioritising the development of these competences within youth training and employability programmes ensures that participants are better prepared for the real demands of the labour market. This requires a shift from purely technical training to a more holistic approach that combines hard and soft skills development in meaningful, experiential ways. Collaboration with employers to identify relevant skills and adapt training accordingly enhances the relevance and impact of such efforts.

Recommended methods for implementation:

- Embedding key and social competences explicitly within training curricula and learning outcomes.
- Using project-based learning and real-world tasks that require teamwork, initiative, and communication.
- Integrating employer feedback and labour market trends to regularly update the competences taught.

- Providing workshops focused on soft skills such as communication, assertiveness, empathy, and collaboration.
- Simulating workplace challenges and social dynamics through role-plays and group tasks.
- Offering interdisciplinary activities that promote creativity, critical thinking, and adaptability.
- Collaborating with local businesses to gain first-hand insight into the key competences and social skills that are most relevant in their specific industries.

Number and title of the recommendation:**10. Promoting early individual and group career counselling****Areas for development:**

- **Early intervention**
- **Institutional collaboration**

Recommendation description:

Introducing career counselling and employability guidance early in the school system increases awareness of professional pathways and builds foundational skills over time. This approach ensures that young people are better informed and prepared for career planning before they enter the job market.

Early guidance also helps to minimise the number of poor or misinformed career decisions made by young people, which in turn reduces the time and financial resources invested on inappropriate or mismatched educational pathways. Starting career counselling early fosters self-awareness and realistic goal setting, enabling more efficient transitions from school to employment or further education.

Combining individual counselling with group-based sessions in schools allows for broad awareness while identifying specific needs and aspirations.

Recommended methods for implementation:

- Partnering with schools, municipal and regional institutions in order to integrate career guidance into educational curricula.
- Organizing regular career workshops, industry talks, and skill-building sessions within school programs.
- Providing access to trained youth counsellors for personalized support.
- Promote interactive tools and platforms to help students explore career interests and set goals from an early age.