



**It Works!**  
The Employable Youth

# SOFT SKILLS FOR EMPLOYABILITY: IT WORKS!



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PART I – ABOUT THE PROJECT

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# 1. ABOUT THE IT WORKS! PROJECT

## 1.1 Background

Unemployment is a steady concern and a challenge across Europe for the past years. Even more so as a large number of people, especially young and from migrant background, can't find a way to enter the job market. The challenge becomes more acute as the presence of immigrants and refugees in the EU countries call for measures towards integration, the most powerful one being employment. Through employment the cycle of social exclusion can be broken for EU and non-EU residents especially socially excluded youth, NEETs.

This Partnership consisting of VET and youth organizations came together in order to contribute to these challenges that all of us are facing everyday on the field. With a clear focus on Vocational Training and the need for on the job training, this project aims at the creation of tools for employability and soft skills to support the youth along with a number of job placements for youngsters. Additionally, it aims in enhancing the knowledge of the professionals (youth workers, educators, coaches and trainers) who work with NEETs through capacity building and training in order to be able to facilitate job placements for socially excluded youth.

The objective that guides this proposal stems from the partner organizations' everyday professional reality that shows a clear need for a holistic approach to facilitate the employment opportunities of socially excluded youth. According to the Horizon 2020 Framework Program for Research and Innovation, the reduction of inequality and social exclusion in Europe (80 million people at risk of poverty, 14 million young people not in education, employment or training) remains one of the biggest challenges for the future of Europe. Tackling unemployment rates of 14,9% for youngsters in 2018 (Eurostat, 2019) calls for holistic approaches in an EU level in order to properly address the problem.

## 1.2 Project Information

Therefore, the project targets two interrelated groups: the socially excluded youngsters themselves and the professionals working with them along with the professionals working in companies responsible for internships. The goal is to provide capacity building to both groups of professionals so they can cooperate and support the training and the pilot placement of disadvantaged youngsters in a comprehensive, innovative pilot approach that can then be transferred.

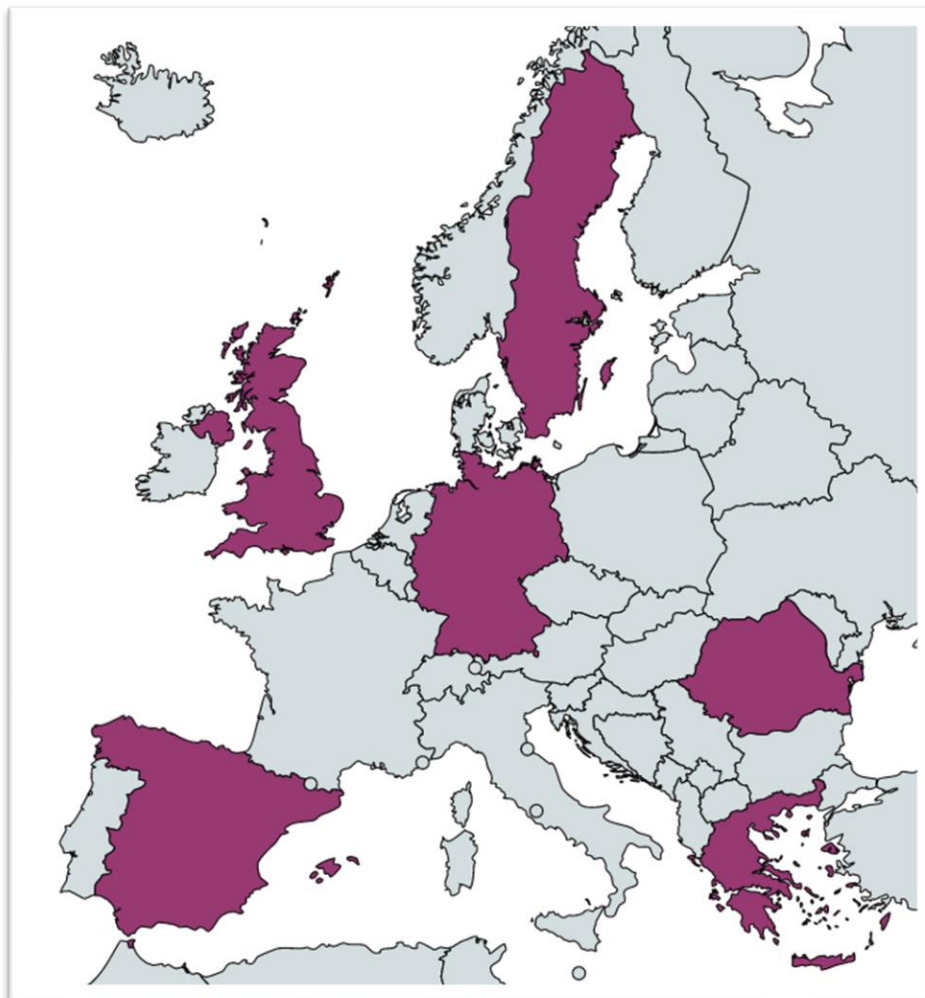
The outputs of the project that is focusing on disadvantaged youth are targeting the professionals working in the provision of services and their own upskilling by the creation of a handbook and toolbox for them specifically. The disadvantaged youth themselves will be addressed through the creation of an educational module for Employability Soft Skills that can then lead for a specific number of youngsters to a pilot intervention "Assisted Training Scheme" which will give the opportunity to around 30 disadvantaged youngsters to be allocated in traineeships. They will enhance work based learning through the mediation of youth workers/ educators/ coaches/ trainers/ counselors who serve as a guide towards improved work based learning and therefore enhancing employability opportunities. Finally, there will be guidelines showcasing how the partners worked with this target group during Covid-19.

All of the materials that the project aims at creating will focus on promoting the possibilities of the youngsters to enter the labor market through a solid comprehensive innovative methodology stemming from diagnosed needs complemented by easy to use tools. All the tools of the project can be used separately or combined depending on the needs of the beneficiaries. All materials of the project will be easy to adapt to the different national contexts and beneficiaries and in this way to improve the sustainability of the project's results being included in the participating organizations and networks everyday activities.




The consortium consists of 7 organizations all active in the field of youth and VET provision coming from 6 countries (Germany, UK, Sweden, Spain, Greece and Romania). In that way, they form a strong partnership of different national contexts that improves the end products' quality being tested in different environment. Each partner has tested this material in their national context, counting with a European Focus Groups led by the YES Forum, which ensures its sustainability and transferability.

### 1.3 Project partners

The consortium consists of 7 organizations all active and experienced in the field of youth and VET provision coming from 6 countries (Germany, UK, Sweden, Spain, Greece and Romania).



	<p>Founded in 2002, the <b>YES Forum</b> is a European NGO of 39 organisations in 19 EU member states or programme countries working with and for young people. The network members are working with young people every day in many fields, ranging from running open youth centres to offering training, qualification and support for school drop outs and NEETs. Collectively, the network reaches over 650.000 youths across Europe. As network of organisations it acts to improve the life chances of vulnerable young people.</p>
	<p>The <b>Institute of Training &amp; Vocational Guidance (IEKEP)</b> founded in 1990, is a private non-profit organization, functioning in the region of Attica as an accredited vocational training center (No 12101107 by Greek Ministry of Employment). Since its beginning, IEKEP has been involved in a wide range of projects, programs and research in the fields of vocational guidance, adult education and social inclusion and has an extensive expertise in Vocational Guidance, vocational training programmes as well as administration, audit and management procedures.</p>
	<p><b>Centro San Viator</b> was founded in 1953 in the region of Encartaciones, in the province of Biscay, in a rural area where job opportunities usually pass through agricultural and livestock activity. Located in a mountainous area and with a rugged landscape, terrestrial communications presents not a few difficulties that accentuate the lack of opportunities for the residents of the region. It offers education to different levels: Kinder Garden, Primary, Compulsory Secondary Education, A levels (high school) and VET to meet the needs of more than 1000 students.</p>
	<p>The <b>Inclusion Network (TIN)</b> is a grass roots Community Interest Company from Liverpool, England, UK. It is based in the heart of the community and was established in January 2013 with the aim of providing youth and community services. Its youth club and associated activities programme began in early 2013, and now accommodates 240+ children and young people across our various projects. It works with disadvantaged children, particularly those of a low socio-economic background.</p>

	<p><b>Nevo Parudimos Association</b> it's a non-profit apolitical organization which was founded by a group of teachers, Roma activists and Roma students from Caras-Severin county, in the south-west of Romania in 2008. The aim of the Nevo Parudimos association is to decrease the economic, social, educational and cultural differences in the society. Its activities are split in more fields like: education, culture, social work, community development, human rights, youth work and volunteering, as well as specialized internships for students of Social Work department in Eftimie Murgu University.</p>
	<p><b>Piteå municipality</b> is situated in the north of Sweden. The Competence support is one department at the Community planning administration. The department is divided in 2 units, Adult education and Labour market. The staff consists of teachers, Labour market Counsellors and VET councillors and there are 1200 learners. It provides different services and programs at the department. A group that Piteå municipality works with is NEETS. It cooperates with the Social service, the governmental labour market office and the Upper secondary school. Summertime it provides job for youngsters 16-18 year.</p>
	<p>The <b>Federal Working Committee for Catholic Youth Social Work (BAG KJS)</b> is a union of organisations at the federal and state levels. The BAGKJS representing several hundred of catholic organisations which are active in the field of youth and social work all over Germany. It supports and counsel young people, especially the ones with fewer opportunities and those with individual problems. It assists them in developing both their personality and their talents and skills.</p>

## 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE HANDBOOK

### 2.1 What is it and why to use it?

- This educational module on Soft Skills for Employability is designed for disadvantaged youngsters aiming to enhance their knowledge and the opportunities, boost their employability and serve as a basis for the preparation of the "Assisted Training Scheme".
- In an attempt to deal with the lack of methodologies and modules addressing low skilled, out of education and away of formal education beneficiaries, it is designed to be used by counsellors/ educators/ trainers/ youth professionals and VET providers to provide better services to disadvantaged youth.
- Inspired by EQF for low skilled out of education groups for employability soft skills, this modules takes into account the needs of the different partner countries and their contexts.
- The innovative aspect of the module is that the target group can easily follow without prerequisites in a quick way according to the non-formal education methodologies and experiential learning that provides the necessary set of skills towards employability.
- It can be easily adapted to different national contexts and for different target groups.



As a consortium with partners active in the field of VET provision, we are well aware of the tools and materials that exist for employability soft skills.

The aim of this project is to provide a coherent and easy to use methodology. The presented solutions are based on the identified needs in the context of the partners. In the first phase of the project lifetime, the partners had extensive discussions and reflexions on which skills the target group needs for finding and maintaining a job.

In this “Soft Skills for Employability: It Works” each partner organisation selected the most successful material in their daily work with young people.

The innovative aspect of the end result is a compilation of learning units that can be easily applied with the target group according to the non-formal education methodologies and experiential learning that can provide the necessary set of skills towards employability.

Having tested this material in all the partner contexts (through focus groups), we have diagnosed that its content can be easily adapted to different national contexts and for different target groups. This educational module consisting of 6 units referring to soft skills for employability has been compiled in the context of the project aiming to provide low skilled out of education groups with employability soft skills taking into account the needs as are defined at the moment in Europe.

## 2.2 How to use this handbook

The objectives of this handbook are to:

- Provide youth workers/trainers/counsellors, in particular those new in the work field, with a compilation of inspiring educational material to facilitate teaching young people who are out of employment and out of education the skills needed to improve their employability capacities.
- Contribute to improvements in quality and innovation in the field of lifelong learning especially for groups coming from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Incorporate innovative learning activities and methodologies capitalizing on the knowledge, expertise and experience of organizations working in the field in different countries.

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This handbook has four main features:

- Employability skills educational resources that the young worker/trainer/counsellor can use with end-users.
- General guidelines for effective delivery of sessions.
- Specific employability skills for enhancement of skill development.
- Supplementary resources in the form of additional activities, video links and useful websites

# 3. GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS / TRAINERS / COUNSELLORS

## 3.1 Planning the learning activities

When planning the learning activities, youth worker/trainers/counsellors should:

- Adapt the content to accommodate individual needs and preferences.
- Become familiar with the content.
- Consider the time and resources needed for the activities.
- Plan the scheme of work.

## 3.2 Guiding Learners Strategies

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### **Build a relationship of trust**

- Identify the motivation and the passions of the young person: do not focus on deficits, instead identify existing potential.
- Be aware of the differences between you and the learner. You are not trying to change the learner but to accommodate their learning style(s) in order to complete the tasks. You may do this by adjusting, adapting or finding alternative ways.
- Be open and honest: As a youth worker/trainer/counsellor you must be open and honest with your learners in order to lead by example. Build a mutually reinforcing relationship that will ensure productivity.
- Ask about learners' feelings after each activity and during the course. It is important acknowledge their feedback.
- Don't be afraid to reveal that you don't know something: You can refer the learner to more sources. You can also take the opportunity to learn and bring back the answers, demonstrating that you are in a learning process as well.

## Model positive employability behaviour

- Be patient about the learner developing their own working schedule.
- Use questions to enhance their problem-solving skills.
- Make sure the learner knows it is safe to not succeed at first. Show them that learning is a process that usually involves unsuccessful attempts, but that through the process of elimination the options towards success are revealed.
- Give positive feedback, encouraging vocabulary that reinforces effort even in minor accomplishments.

## Correspond to individual differences

- Ensure variety in the types of activities undertaken in order to meet individual needs and learning styles.
- Develop variety in the mode of working, i.e. individual, pairs, groups.
- Make sure that activities complement or reinforce learning acquired through tasks in other sections.
- Implement different styles of learning to accommodate individual's different learning styles

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## Imprint:

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