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INforEX

IO5 Training for Entrepreneurs

**“Innovative ways of including low qualified
ex- offenders and ex-prisoners to labour market”**

Final Report

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I. Introduction

The INforEX Project which embraces the **”Innovative ways of including low qualified ex-offenders and ex-prisoners to labour market”** has been realised by six partners representing such countries as Cyprus, Great Britain, Italy, Lithuania, Poland and Spain. The reason for the six countries to join the Project arose from the awareness of the situation common to all the countries in the European Union and elsewhere, that is the case of the convicts and ex-convicts trying to find their place on the job market, making it possible for them to return to normal life and find their place in the community in the post-custodial reality.

What makes the situation of these people more difficult is the fact that many of them, prior to their entering the criminal path and consequently getting convicted, had very low or no vocational skills, which naturally excluded them from the job market. What is more, low qualifications and the stigma associated with the presence of the past status of these persons have made potential employers reluctant to employ them or involve in offering them vocational training.

Such predicaments significantly hinder the process of the ex-offenders’ resocialization and social integration, making their return to normal life increasingly more difficult and putting them at risk of offending again.

Hence the INforEX project involves the wide-ranging assistance to former convicts by offering the selected group an opportunity to gain practical knowledge of the particular job and appropriate skills by working with the entrepreneurs who have offered to participate in the project and train the ex-convicts on the job.

The job training will be conducted by 72 entrepreneurs who have attended the course preparing them for such an operation. Prior to the local training, trainers from each country attended the **“Train the Trainer”** workshop which had been held in Madrid and where during the 40-hour session they participated in the discussion groups, role playing, cases study and video visualization covering the following subjects:

- **“How to be an effective coach”** allowing the participants to:
 - learn the characteristics of effective coaching;

- learn the basics of communication skills in communicating with ex-offenders;
 - get the information on psychological and social factors accompanying the work with ex-offenders;
 - get some recommendations regarding the work with the low-skilled adults.
- **“How to evaluate the competences and skills”**, where the participants were inducted on the competences-based training with reference to labour competences and skills for employment.
 - **“How to develop a checklist for labour competences”** expanding on the issue of using a checklist that might be found useful by the employers with reference to training assessment.

The above mentioned training was followed by the local training courses in which 12 employers from each partner country were invited to participate in. The purpose of this training was specified in a more or less detailed way in all the reports produced by each partner on conclusion of the meetings.

What is worth mentioning, is the fact that the participants of the training course have contributed to the development of the project by offering valuable comments regarding the quality of the organization of the training and highly assessed the tutors responsible for the whole event.

II. The training of the entrepreneurs and trainers – the purpose and methodology

Each of the partners was responsible for organizing and conducting the training of 12 entrepreneurs. This stage involved the three parties, namely the training providers, the already mentioned entrepreneurs (the future trainers) and the final beneficiaries, that is the ex-offenders or ex-prisoners. With these premises in mind, all the partners organized and executed the training of the trainers, each of which included 6 sections, such as:

- Section 1 – Introduction to training of the trainers
- Section 2 – Methodology and Training of trainers programme
- Section 3 - The training activities and the way they have been performed
- Section 4 – Participants’ timesheets
- Section 5 - Courses evaluation as expressed by the participants
- Section 6 - Recommendation and suggestions.

Although the program of the training was exactly the same for each partner organization, yet its course slightly differed owing to the local circumstances and factors. All the partners specified their aims by presenting the premises of the INforEX Project, at the same time indicating its importance and the role it plays in facilitating the ex-offenders’ functioning on the job market. They also stressed the necessity to find out what the doubts and concerns of the entrepreneurs participating in the training are and how many of them have already had some experience in working with these particular trainees.

Apart from the goals set forth the national reports also included the information with reference to case studies of experiences in relation to employers working with the low-skilled ex-offenders/ex-prisoners and the prospective challenges faced by them as a result of such situations. Also, the content of the training embraced the presentation of the training model, followed by a discussion regarding its limitation and feedback. Next they focused on the role of the entrepreneur in the project, the discussion on the labour competencies and the ways of defining the position based on the required competencies. What is more the training was aimed at making it possible for the entrepreneur to learn which tools should be implemented to detect the competencies, helpful in the selection of the personnel, define the most useful skills for the given company or the sector. Finally, the proposals for improvement, facilitating the accomplishment of the objectives were put forward.

As it was stated previously, the assumption was that the objectives of the training were uniform since the training was supposed to produce the same results and allow the participating employers to get the necessary knowledge to be able to conduct the on-the-job training with at least 2 trainees (ex-offenders/ex-prisoners).

With the view to achieving comparable results and making the training similar throughout the project, each partner organization conducted their training strictly according to the points contained in table below.

Table 1. Annex no 1. National report

Section 1: Introduction to the Training of trainers	
Purpose: <i>(Aim of Training Courses, Objectives, achieved goals during Training Courses)</i>	
Local Context <i>(Ways of participant selection to training of trainers, organization details, etc.)</i>	
Preparation <i>(Engaging with participants etc.)</i>	
Issues/constraints	
Section 2: Methodology and Training of trainers programme	
Design of the Training of trainers <i>(National training of trainers programs, etc.)</i>	
Date of training <i>(Start and finish)</i>	
Meetings between tutors and entrepreneurs (trainers) <i>(Number of meetings with trainers, etc.)</i>	
Purpose <i>(Main reasons and discussed points during meetings, etc.)</i>	
Details of venues <i>(Where meetings were held? Placement addresses, etc.)</i>	

<p>Lists of participants <i>(Name, Surname, e-mail address, address of organizations, employment sector)</i></p>	
<p>Details of participants <i>(Participants employment sectors, experience in case work with low qualified people- ex prisoners and ex offenders etc.)</i></p>	
<p>Resources <i>(Description of trainers, equipment, particular materials, power point presentations, documents which you used during the training etc.)</i></p>	
<p>Issues/Constraints</p>	
<p>Section 3: The training activities and the way they have been performed</p>	
<p>Activities <i>(What has been undertaken during the Training of trainers; meetings, evaluation, etc.)</i></p>	
<p>Strategy <i>(Particular ways of performed activities, etc.)</i></p>	
<p>Benefit/Impact <i>(What was achieved during particular activities, how it has influenced participants, etc.)</i></p>	
<p>Issues/Constraints <i>(Any problems or special cases met during the training of trainers regarding training activities, etc.)</i></p>	
<p>Section 4: Participants Timesheets</p>	
<p>Please, attach scanned copies of all Your participants timesheets (annex no 4)</p>	
<p>Issues/Constraints</p>	

<i>(Any problems or special cases met during Training of trainers regarding timesheets completing, etc.)</i>	
Section 5: Courses evaluation as expressed by participants	
<i>(Summaries of evaluation questionnaires)</i>	
Section 6: Recommendations and suggestions	
Training of trainers organization <i>(Feedback and suggestions)</i>	
Improvement <i>Suggestions for the amelioration of the training course for adult trainers and the certification system</i>	

National reports as presented by partners

1. Spain

The Spanish partner organized its training in two cities. The first which was held in Madrid, lasted from 18/12/2017 to 22/12/2017; while the other one conducted in Almeria, started on 2/01/2018 and finished on 8/01/2018.

The entrepreneurs invited to the training represented those who had already collaborated with the GINSO entity in terms of introducing young offenders into the labour market and the ones who begin their cooperation in social projects. Since they represented a wide spectrum of job sectors (hostelry, gardening, agri-food, printing, service) and had various work responsibilities, it was necessary to demonstrate flexibility with the meetings schedule.

Methodology and Training of trainers programme

During the meetings between the tutors and the employers different strategies demonstrating the behaviour in various situations connected with the workplace were implemented. These were aimed at showing how to handle conflict situations

between colleagues and customers. Also, the tutors showed what tools should be used to determine the skills necessary for a particular job position, how to evaluate the trainee accordingly, how to motivate him and how to formulate the expectations adjusted to a particular person.

The resources introduced during the meetings, such as using the power point, presentations, documents, tools and finally the technique of role play complemented the conducted training.

The training activities and the way they have been performed

In the course of the training the participants held discussion groups, used the technique of brainstorming, shared their experiences, used evaluation tools and role-playing, learned about the importance of individualizing the objectives and planning with the view to completing the task by the trainee, giving weekly feedback on job performance and emphasizing the role of the tutor in the trainee's learning and social integration process.

Participants' feedback of the training

All the persons who have joined the training have expressed their satisfaction with the course. What is interesting, the majority of them agreed that for the employer the technical knowledge of a worker is less important than his attitude and motivation for work as the latter ones are vital in certain professions where social skills are highly valued and respected.

Recommendations and suggestions

There were no recommendations offered since the participants expressed their satisfaction with the content of the training and the way it was handled.

2. Lithuania

The Lithuanian partner held the training in two sessions: the first was conducted on 15/11/2017 and the last one on 11/01/2018. There were 12 participants representing the diversified employment sector, all of whom participated in 4 group sessions, however quite a significant number of individual meetings with particular employers

were also held. This scheme of meetings was the result of the employers' lack of time due to their job responsibilities and consequently the 40-hour training had to be adapted to the needs and capacity of the participants. That meant that the whole training course was expanded over the period of 3 months.

The employers were recruited from a group of those who had already worked with the low-skilled persons and ex-offenders, hence the main focus of the training was placed not on the psychological and social aspects of dealing with such trainees but the documents that had to be filled out.

Methodology and Training of trainers programme

Since the aim of the training was to provide the employers with the information and materials which would be helpful in the pilot training with the low-skilled ex-offenders, the following aspects were realized:

- The INforEX project was demonstrated as a whole;
- The INforEX methodology was discussed;
- The issue of filling in the project documentation and the presentation of the website for project materials were covered;
- The job description was worked out.

During the training which consisted of group sessions and individual meetings, the entrepreneurs discussed the issue of involving the ex-offenders in the jobs requiring physical strength more due to their lack of appropriate skills; their inability to deal with documentation, the problems related to the proper description of the responsibilities based on skills, knowledge and competences. They also raised the question of the need to recognize the certification obtained by the ex-offenders, as a proof of the gained skills.

The training activities and the way they have been performed

The core of the activities involved the presentation of the project, analysis of the methodology and the prepared documents, as well as a job description activity. The main materials came from the project website as this offered the easiest access to the necessary data. During the activities the participants were encouraged to ask

questions, share their experience with other participants, especially that which concerned their previous work with the low-skilled ex-offenders.

Participants' feedback of the training

The comments regarding the offered training ranged from “good” to “excellent”. The participants found it highly satisfactory, informative and very well organized. They also appreciated the fact that the organizers demonstrated a lot of flexibility in adapting to the tight schedule of some of the employers who could not participate in the training and who were offered a possibility of having individual meetings. Also, the concept of issuing the certificates to the trainees was seen as an advantage on their CVs.

There were, however some comments regarding the documentation which the participants (employers) found too complicated and time-consuming. They suggested that these should be filled out by the training organizers following the phone or the face-to-face talk. Other comments concerned the issue of working out the job definition with reference to skills, knowledge and competences. It was suggested that it could be replaced with the already existing in the organizations job position descriptions, prepared for the specific job place.

Recommendations and suggestions

The overall opinion about the training was highly positive and seen as necessary, yet the length of the course was viewed as too excessive as the employers cannot devote so much time for that sort of event. Moreover, they would like to learn what the benefits of using this methodology are in terms of its usefulness for the employer. Still, they emphasized the benefits of the certificates issued to the trainees after finishing job training as they noted that for the low-skilled ex-offenders describing their skills would pose a problem.

They also indicated that the full-time monitoring of the person on the job training cannot be conducted without a suitable incentive for a designated employer's representative. Furthermore, some ways to motivate the employers themselves to accept the final beneficiaries for the job training should be worked out. Another argument which was raised concerned the documentation of the project and it was postulated that it should be simplified for the benefit of the low-skilled trainees who

have problems with filling it out. The last suggestion regarded increasing the number of hours devoted to the initial training of the target group which would take place before the actual job training.

3. Poland

The Polish partner organized the training at its office (Collegium Balticum, 61 C Mieszka I St, Szczecin) as well as the premises of the companies or organizations participating in the training which was held from December 2017 until February 2018. The organizers used various measures to reach the potential training participants

The 10 persons who joined the course had been contacted via phone calls/Skype/e-mail or personally by the partner. All of them represented various companies or organizations which have medium or relevant experience in social work or working with the socially excluded or those that expressed willingness to work with these people.

Prior to contacting the course participants, the training organizers put the information and the promotion poster of the INforEX project on the Internet, next got in touch with the Regional Inspectorate of the Prison Service in Szczecin and the Prison in Choszczno to help them identify the institutions or companies that would be willing to cooperate with the low-skilled ex-offenders/ex-prisoners.

There were 10 participants of the training as other contacted employers were not interested in joining the course due to lack of time, stating that the 40-hour stationary training is too long. Taking this fact into consideration, the organizers prepared the didactic materials in the electronic and individual form which corresponded to the 40 hours of the training and covering the same topics as the stationary course. Other employers, however were unwilling to participate in the training due to their poor experience in cooperation the ex-offenders or simply lack of financial resources related to the employment of the socially excluded persons.

The purpose of the training offered to entrepreneurs was aimed at allowing them to obtain the skills related to working with the low-skilled ex-offenders/ex-prisoners and becoming their trainers; provide them with the information on the aspects of working with criminals and former criminals; teach the entrepreneurs the specific skills, knowledge and competences for the job positions; creating job descriptions together with the employers and conduct discussions regarding working with the socially excluded people.

Methodology and Training of trainers programme

During the meetings the participants were familiarized with the INforEX project, discussed the legal and psycho-social situation of the final beneficiaries as well as talked about the effective and efficient organization and management of working with them. They also focused on the challenges and benefits of employing these people as seen from the employer's perspective, their training needs and the ways of assessing their competences (knowledge, skills, attitudes).

During the training the employers were informed about the certification methodology, they participated in the activities connected with creating the job descriptions for the final beneficiaries, developing and evaluating the checklists with reference to the professional competences for individual job positions. Furthermore, the participants focused on the issue of such checklists with reference to employers so as to properly assess the achieved effects of the training for the ex-offenders. Finally, the challenges and the ways how to deal with the potential problems that the employers may face during the training of the final beneficiaries were discussed.

The training activities and the way they have been performed

The training was conducted with the use of video presentation, performing group and individual work, observation and discussion, all of which made it possible for the employers to understand the purpose of the project and consequently lead to their starting the activities connected with the ex-offenders/ex-prisoners employment.

Participants' feedback of the training

From the start of the training it was difficult for the organizers to gather all the participants at the same time and place owing to their lack of time and work commitments. Hence this issue was raised in the training course assessment where the employers expressed their unwillingness to participate in such lengthy stationary training. However, they found the training itself very interesting, the teaching materials were highly evaluated as understandable and tailored to their needs and consistent with the purpose of the programme. They also positively assessed the tutors for their theoretical and practical knowledge, competence and openness. The very well equipped training room with all the necessary teaching aids, together with the programme made the course viewed as innovative and worthy of interest.

Recommendations and suggestions

Since the 40-hour training was of no interest to the participants they proposed a 4-hour stationary training, 32-hour e-learning training, 4h-meeting for the summary, evaluation and preparation of work positions. They also pointed out unanimously that the non-stationary form would certainly make the programme more popular and, consequently the attendance of employers willing to employ convicts / ex-offenders might increase.

4. Italy

The training for the employers organized by the Italian partner was conducted in four sessions from 05/02/2018 till 05/03.2018. The meetings were held in Naples, in a training room at the premises of the Banco Napoli Foundation.

The 12 participants representing 12 different organizations were recruited from various employment sectors, such as hostelry, cooking, agri-food, printing and service and some of them have already had certain experience of working with the ex-offenders.

Methodology and Training of trainers programme

The purpose of the training was to better prepare the employers to become the trainers of the low-skilled ex-offenders and consequently make it possible for them to enter the work environment. The whole content of the training was to serve this purpose by making it possible for the participants to get acquainted with the INforEX project, its methodology, aims and objectives through the materials provided during the training; define the role of the entrepreneur in the project, describe the job competences and learn how to define the job position based on the necessary competences as well as the profiles by job skills.

The training activities and the way they have been performed

The organizers adopted a non-formal approach to the training hence the participants were encouraged to take part in discussion groups, share their experience, hold interviews and get involved in role-playing. The tutors were satisfied with the result of the training and they noticed that despite the fact that some of the entrepreneurs had been involved in working with vulnerable groups, yet they had no idea how to work with the convicted persons.

Participants' feedback of the training

The participants were very positive about the training, both with its content, the organization of the training room and the materials. They also appreciated the trainers who conducted the course and also the way they handled the group work activities. They pointed out the practical aspect of the examples provided by the trainers as a result of their having worked with the inmates.

Recommendations

The training was found to be successful both by the trainers and the participants, yet the latter ones suggested that the training be extended to their employees as well which would help to change the stereotypes concerning working with ex-offenders. They also indicated that introducing online training would be a very attractive form of training for many employers in view of their work commitments and lack of flexibility.

5. Cyprus

The Cypriote partner organized the employers training from 02/02/2018 to 08/02/2018 and conducted it in 4 sessions in the training room of the Europe Plaza in Nicosia (Address: Alakiou 13, 2404, Egkomi Nicosia).

The participants represented a wide spectrum of entities including such employment sectors as trading, education, delivery and messenger services and retail trade. In order to recruit the prospective participants of the training the partner contacted the companies and employers that are known for their social corporate responsibility values as well as those who are already involved in working with ex-offenders or ex-prisoners.

Prior to contacting the afore-mentioned entities, the lists of potential companies, entrepreneurs and employers who might be interested in the training, had been made. Next the whole procedure of attracting those people's attention was involved by means of sending informational e-mails explaining the purpose of the training, follow-up calls, and finally organizing personal meetings with the interested parties. Apart from these measures, the partner organization created a Google form where the prospective participants could sign up for the course and also published an online article promoting the course and providing the Google form link.

Despite the obvious need of such a training the organizers experienced difficulties in attracting participants which was partly explained by their lack of time to devote it to the full-time course and also lack of interest in the event, possibly due to their misunderstanding the purpose of the training.

The purpose of the training was specified in a concise form and the aims and objectives were as follows:

- Presenting the INforEX Project, its methodology, aims and objectives;
- Training the employers and managers to become trainers of ex-offenders or the disadvantaged persons in their workplace;
- Explaining the role of the trainers in the piloting sessions (O6).

Methodology and training of trainers programme

The programme of the training with some minute modifications was based on the “**Train the Trainer**” session which had been held in Madrid in October 2017. During the training the participants were presented with various media, equipment and materials such as power point presentations, flipcharts, etc. Moreover, they used the INforEX documents, ie. the work based training programme for ex-offenders (A handbook for Employers and Training Providers) and also the Workbook for Trainees.

The training activities and the way they have been performed

The training focused on the following subjects:

- “How to be an affective coach”
- Pedagogic techniques for working with adults
- Communication skills: how to communicate with ex-offenders
- Psychological and social factors while working with ex-offenders
- How to detect the ex-offenders’ training needs
- “How to evaluate competences and skills”

The material was realized adopting a more interactive and non-formal methodology by means of discussion groups, activities with the participants, power point presentations and role-playing activities. This approach was appreciated by the majority of the participants who admitted that it had a significant impact on the way they manage some situations, especially when ex-offenders and other vulnerable groups are concerned.

Participants’ feedback of the training

Generally the training was evaluated positively and most of the participants appreciated the contents of the workshops, the organization and the materials provided and all of them declared that they would not change anything with reference to the training materials. Still, as one of the participants suggested it might be useful to incorporate some practical elements into the training, placing it in the actual work environment, together with the ex-offenders / employees.

The trainer was valued very positively, all the participants emphasized that the way the material was presented was clear and very effectively delivered. The work group activities were found to be interesting and educational as the tutor used the everyday life examples to explain the training material.

Finally, in the opinion of the participants, everyone involved in working with ex-offenders or disadvantaged groups should attend such training in order to improve and be able to work more effectively with the persons coming from vulnerable groups.

Recommendations

The participants suggested that the course be more comprehensive and shorter to address the needs of the employers. Moreover, the participants would like to see more of a blended course with the use of the e-learning platform which might be viewed at any time convenient to the participants.

6. Great Britain

The training was delivered in February 2018 and was attended by 10 persons, 7 of whom were working at St Giles Trust, the foundation specializing in supporting ex-offenders into the labour market. The participants embraced various employment sectors, such as:

- Education, training and skills sector;
- Careers advice and guidance;
- Housing sector and construction.

All of them had significant experience in working with ex-offenders and low-skilled workers.

The training was provided at the premises of St Giles Trust and the schedule of meeting had to be very flexible owing to the work commitments of the participants. Consequently, the meetings were arranged over a shorter period of time being held on:

- 9/02/2018 St Giles Trust, Camberwell;
- 20/02/2018 St Giles Trust, Camberwell;
- 18/03/2018 in Huntingdon, Nuffield Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire.

The purpose of the training was to present the INforEX project to the participants, emphasizing the vital role of the tutors and raise awareness regarding the importance of training and job placement in standardized environments. Other issues involved in the project regarded the definition of the entrepreneur, the key labour competences and the question of how to describe the position for the job based on the necessary competences. Also the tools to detect competences which can be helpful in the selection of personnel and the most valued job skills for the company/programme and the sector in which the employers work were to be discussed.

Methodology and Training of trainers programme

The training was condensed due to the participants' time limitations and was held in the form of face to face sessions, interviews and telephone discussions conducted individually with each trainer on a one-to-one basis.

The programme consisted of a 12 session classroom based training, followed by a practical on the job training.

The training included discussions on the following issues:

- How to establish a relationship with the users – the first impressions and how to relate;
- Getting over barriers and personal views in judging ex-offenders;
- Role playing with the view to demonstrating how to act in various work situations;
- Filling out the first interview protocol;
- How to motivate the coach users based on their personal situation;
- Recognizing that all people have their worries and concerns;
- Needs assessment in order to identify the trainees' individualized programme/work schedule.

During the training power point presentations, documents and tools, interviews and case study work were used to make the training more informative and yet practical as well.

The training activities and the way they have been performed

Throughout the course of the training the participants were encouraged to work in discussion groups, share experience related to their work, hold interviews, and participate in observations. The culmination of the training was visiting the workplace. The methodology involved raising open questions leading to a discussion and working together in handling various tasks.

Participants' feedback of the training

After the course all the participants were asked to fill out the questionnaires and provide the feedback on the quality of the conducted training. As it turned all of them found the meetings very satisfactory with reference to the content of the workshops, the way they were organized and delivered.

Recommendations

As it has already been stated, the response to the training was highly positive, yet the participants suggested some improvements to be introduced to upgrade the course. The suggestions related to the administration and methodology which they thought should be simplified to correspond better with the existing practice. They also proposed to make the course and training more flexible since each participant has different needs and the rigorous framework is not appreciated. Consequently a basic framework which could be adapted to their needs and allowing them to create their own schedule of work to be done would guarantee more success.

Finally, the length of the course was considered a major problem for all the entrepreneurs and participants, which led to a conclusion that the course could be delivered in modules, online, in webinars or on video which would definitely increase attendance and interest in such training.

III. Post-training analysis - conclusions and recommendations

All the training courses conducted by the partners have turned out to be a significant success. They were all realized according to the same scheme and the premises underlying the INforEX Project. Each training course was carried out according to the agreed framework including six sections, each of which was designed to embrace a different aspect of the training. The content of the training has been demonstrated in the table included in part II, preceding the summaries of the national reports.

All partners have organized and carried out training for entrepreneurs with the view to teaching them appropriate skills necessary in their future work with ex-offenders/ex convicts. The program implemented during the training was based on the workshops “Train the Trainer” which had taken place in Madrid in October 2017.

Some partners indicated in their reports that they had made some adjustments to their programme, which is understandable as this means that by listening to the comments and suggestions of prospective participants during the preliminary stage before the actual training started, they proved their flexibility in adapting their program to the needs of the entrepreneurs.

As it was explained at the beginning of the report, the partners had to deliver a 40-hours training which was meticulously recorded in the provided national reports. The form filled out by the tutors of each partner organization reveals the complexity of the training and a number of elements involved. The training programme, as reflected in the already demonstrated table, was very intensive, hence requiring utmost commitment from each participant. Consequently, this issue was raised most often by the persons who had taken part in the course.

At the end of the course the participants were requested to give their comments regarding the quality of the provided training, including their opinions on the organization of the course, the materials provided and the way they were presented to them by the tutors. The same form encouraged them to offer their suggestions of possible amendments to the content and organization of the training with the view to improving their quality for the sake of future courses.

7. Do you feel ready to relate all this information to the trainees?

1

2

3

4

5

Very satisfied

Not satisfied

If not, what is the reason of not feeling ready to train trainees and what would you suggest could make you more prepared?

8. What is your overall assessment of the workshop?

1

2

3

4

5

Very satisfied

Not satisfied

9. What did you like the most during the Workshop?

10. Which materials presented during the training of trainers will you use in the training course in the future?

11. What issues are important in adult training?

12. How can we certify competences of low-qualified trainees?

13. Do you have any other suggestions and /or thoughts that you would wish to discuss before conclusion of the meeting?

Thank you for your cooperation!

Since the original questionnaire allowed the participants the space to provide their comments and suggestions many of them used that opportunity to come forward with some proposals of how to improve the organization and management of the training course.

Feedback and recommendations from training participants - summary

- **Feedback**

The response to the training was highly positive. As results from the questionnaires, all the persons who have joined the training were satisfied with both the content and material provided by the tutors as well as the way they held the classes, their

perfectionism, theoretical and practical knowledge, openness and flexibility in accepting some requests regarding certain minor changes to the content of the course. This fact was emphasized by the participants who had underlined that in this way their suggestions were respected and taken into consideration. Naturally, such requests did not appear in all the training courses, yet the fact that they were treated with understanding, proves that the tutors' attitude and their commitment to the training was noted and appreciated.

The participants have pointed out that the tutors' and organizers' willingness to adapt to the needs of those participants whose tight work schedule and commitments made it impossible for them to attend the full 40-hour course, and consequently have individual meetings with them was viewed very positively.

All participants raised the issue of the practical aspect of the tutoring, where in most cases they were extremely satisfied with this element of the course, while some persons would like to see more of that during the training.

Apart from the above positive comments regarding the training course, there were other interesting conclusions noted, namely those reflected in the opinion of some employers who admitted that they were not willing to accept any ex-offenders in their workplaces and offer them training.

Others, on the contrary, stated that every entrepreneur who would like to offer job training to the ex-offenders should participate in the discussed training course.

- **Recommendations**

The generally positive feedback from the participants was complemented by their recommendations to introduce some elements or slightly change the others, so as to improve the quality and enhance the positive aspects of the training, thus attracting other employers to participate in it.

Some of the participants were so glad with the overall organization and the teaching content of the workshops that they did not offer any recommendations, seeing it as a perfect event, with no need to change anything.

Others, however were more critical, which should be seen by the organizers as a positive sign since making some amendments to the organization of the course would certainly be beneficial for it.

The suggestions included some changes to the length of the course, as 40 hours were in the opinion of the participants too demanding and consequently excluded some entrepreneurs from participating in it. Many of them explained that work commitments do not go in line with such a lengthy training event. They suggested that the training course should be reduced, with more emphasis placed on the practical aspects of working with ex-offenders and also that part of the training should be available online, with access to webinars and other forms of online teaching. This in their opinion should attract more employers as training of this kind is very useful and necessary. Some participants suggested working out such a framework of the meetings that would enable them to adapt the modules of the training to their needs, allowing them to create their own schedule of work, which in turn would attract more employers to this form of training.

Another point raised by the participants was the training documentation which they considered too complicated and thus difficult for the trainee (ex-offender/ex-prisoner) to complete owing to their lack of skills and appropriate knowledge. Also it would be beneficial for the sake of the future courses to be organized to make the administration and methodology simpler and align better with the existing practice.

Finally, the training was regarded by all the participants as highly informative, very well organized, though naturally there is room for some improvements, and extremely necessary in view of the need to cope with the problem of introducing the ex-offenders/ex-convicts into the working environment, thus helping them get back to the community. There must be some procedures worked out that would enable the employers to see the sense of such work and offer them some motivation for the time and effort spent on training the mentioned trainees.