

Catalogue of good practices in relation to active aging in selected countries of the European Union

Case studies

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PPH ZAPOL

The research within the framework of the *Equal opportunities in the labour market for people aged 50+* project, carried out by the Human Resource Development Centre with funds from the European Social Fund, initiated by the Department of Economic Analyses and Forecasts of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, conducted by the University of Lodz, the Project Partner. The project is carried out under Measure 1.1. "System support to labour market institutions" of the Human Capital Operational Programme.

Views and conclusions included in this publication express the opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

Publication distributed free of charge.

ISBN 978-83-936958-3-6

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University of
LODZ



MINISTRY OF LABOUR
AND SOCIAL POLICY

EUROPEAN UNION
EUROPEAN
SOCIAL FUND



Equal opportunities in the labour market for people aged 50+
Project co-financed by the European Union under the European Social Fund

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This report was prepared as part of Task 2 titled *Development of analysis of solutions to promote active aging in selected EU countries and to identify opportunities for their implementation of the Equal opportunities in the labour market for people aged 50+* project. The project is carried out by Human Resource Development Centre (Project leader) and University of Lodz (Partner) by order of Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of the Republic of Poland with funds from the European Social Fund. The main objective of the project is to promote the professional activity of women and men aged 50+ and the promotion of activities for the extension of professional activity of people in this age group.

The end product of the research carried out by the University of Lodz in the framework of Task 2 is the report titled *Active ageing measures in selected European Union countries. Final Report*, the integral part of which is this Catalogue of good practices in relation to active aging in selected countries of the European Union. As it was emphasized, the research in this Task focused on finding a deliberately chosen EU countries, i.e. in Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Spain, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Romania, Cyprus and Italy, the instruments used to promote active aging, particularly in the sphere of professional activity. One of the essential elements of the research was identification, analysis and evaluation of implementation possibilities in the Polish conditions, of the projects and other initiatives, at the meso and micro level. As part of this thread the information was collected on the interesting initiatives, undertaken in the listed countries by public and non-public entities (both private and "social" ones), taken to promote active aging and supporting equal opportunities for people aged 45/50+. It served to isolate good practices - at the meso and micro level. Some of them have already been described in the final report (Chapter XVIII), most of them however - because of the limited framework of the report - can be found only in this analysis. These projects were oriented at supporting professional activity, as well as social activity in a broad sense, of the elderly. Schematic diagram of research procedure is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Schematic diagram of project research procedure in the area of active aging



Source: Own work.

According to the *Methodology of research on solutions to promote active aging in selected EU countries*, complementing the previously approved *Concept of study on solutions to promote active aging in selected EU countries*, in the first instance the project base was compiled, carried out in the specified EU countries, aimed at elderly people (with differently defined age groups). The presented below description of the project research methodology projects that meet the criteria described above, including the principles of selection of best practices, was carried over from the internal adaptation of the Partner, entitled *Concept of selection of good practices that meet the condition of transferability into Polish environment*, prepared by P. Szukalski.

The initial project base was compiled on the basis of the existing data, gathered by the national institutions dealing with the administration of information relating to EU funded projects, or on the basis of other databases as well as other sources of information (e.g. project websites). The available databases of good practices carried out with funds from the European Social Fund (ESF) were also used as well as the good practices databases made accessible through Eurofund's website "Profit from maturity", PARP reports created under "Age positive" project and the other reports prepared within the framework of Operational Programme 'Human Resources Development' and Outline Programmes, containing the examples of good practices. Lifelong Learning Programme Compendia were also used. These sources turned out to be essential at the stage of identifying projects in the ten specified countries of the European Union, especially in the context of the fact that the database of projects funded by the European Social Fund, which can be found on the European Commission website (http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/emplweb/esf_projects/search.cfm?lang=pl), does not contain fully updated data, the result of which is the access mainly to the finished projects. In order to take into account: 1) also the projects that are being carried out, (2) other initiatives, not necessarily funded by ESF, we were making the attempt to refer to other sources of information. As a result, great part of the collected descriptions of the projects refers to actions taken outside of ESF support system, which provides greater variety of actions and actors.

Within the framework of the research carried out from April 2011, the projects database was developed, containing from 25 to 32 projects from each country (in total the data on around 300 initiatives was gathered). It should be emphasized that not always these are projects in a traditional meaning - the developed catalogue also contains actions taken by local governments in the framework of local or regional programmes, as well as less formal actions of businesses in relation to age management.

Instructions for the analysis of the actions carried out by local governments, NGOs and businesses for people aged 45+ in the selected countries included gathering information in relation to the system frame of the project (if it was co-financed with public funds), its initiator and leader, aims, necessary resources needed to carry out the project, the actions undertaken during project realisation, achieved results and cultural and institutional specificity, impeding adaptation of a given solution to Polish conditions. To ensure standardization of the projects catalogue, the information gathered was recorded in a standardized project card. Project cards chosen as good practices constitute the Annex to this Catalogue. Not all the projects are described in an equally detailed manner. Some regularity can be observed, however - differentiation of the preferred subject matter of the actions and a different range of meticulousness of the description depend on the region and the country. That is why usually - despite efforts of the team - information relating to the countries of Northern and Western Europe are more detailed than information coming from the countries in the southern and central parts of the EU.

The list of good practices was compiled on the basis of the analysis of costs, effectiveness and transferability to Polish conditions. After a pre-selection of about 4-6 examples of good practice from each country, the assessment of their transferability level was carried out again as the main criterion of them being qualified to the group of about 30 good practices, which at a later stages of the study were submitted to a thorough analysis (on the basis of secondary and primary sources, including information obtained from beneficiaries, e.g. during foreign inquiries).

Prior to the assessment, the expert who was to make a choice of good practices, had to become acquainted with the economic and legal context in which the carried out projects were evaluated. The material in this respect was included in the national reports (incorporated into the final report), and also, referring to the policy on active aging, the fragments of *Review of system solutions in the EU countries selected in Step 1 Task 2 (Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Cyprus, Italy, Spain, Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria), on the basis of secondary sources aimed at identification of actions relating to active aging* (internal project material). The role of the expert in the next stage of the study was to get acquainted with all the project cards for a given country and conduct an assessment of the individual projects.

The chosen criteria for good practices selection - costs, efficiency and transferability - have been operationalized for the purpose of the project. When speaking of the costs, it must be noted that they greatly vary within the EU due to the different salary levels in different countries, which is the main element of the project costs. Moreover, even within a single country the costs may reflect the differences between the cost of living in different regions or different intensity of the actions being carried out (e.g. different number of hours of the offered training). In the majority of projects that concurrently effectuate various forms of activity, characterized by different unit costs, there is an additional factor that distorts the comparability of data. One way of costs consideration is to calculate the average value of costs per a beneficiary of the project. The values calculated in this way, however, can only be used for comparisons within the framework of projects carried out in the same country, and only within homogeneous types, as presented in the *Report on the analysis of projects referring to active aging* (internal project material). For the purposes of this study the following assessment of costs was adopted: on the basis of expert method the person who evaluated the project, upon estimating an average cost per beneficiary, performed transformation of values given in natural units to descriptive information: "low", "moderate", "average", "high", "very high", and then assigned number of points to the project according to the following scale: "low" - 5 points, "moderate" - 4 points, "average" - 3 points, "high" - 2 points, "very high" - 1 point.

In case of effectiveness criterion, the starting point was (according to the traditional understanding of this evaluation criterion) the assessment of objectives fulfilment level, i.e. the results achieved. In the project card they are divided into 4 types ("hard", "soft", short-term, long-term). Additionally, as ancillary criteria - the strengths and weaknesses of the project were also taken into consideration. The scoring assigned to the individual assessments was as follows: "low" - 1 point, "moderate" - 2 points, "average" - 3 points, "high" - 4 points, "very high" - 5 points.

Finally, in case of third element considered, the level of transferability, an expert, while formulating the assessment focused on information contained in the project card, relating to the degree of transferability and institutional barriers. Based on this information, the expert performed the assessment, according to the methodology analogical to the one used for the effectiveness assessment.

The initial proposal referred to assigning different significance to each of the three criteria (cost - 0.2, effectiveness - 0.4 transferability - 0.4). However, during the discussion of the Council of Experts members, it was postulated not to lower the importance of costs and to use the simple unweight sum of points for these three criteria.

From a technical point of view in the project card an additional element was allowed for - a table that shows the results of expert assessment (Table 1).

Table 1. Template of projects assessment with respect to good practices selection

	Cost	Effectiveness	Transferability
In natural units			
Verbal assessment			
Number of points			
Total number of points			

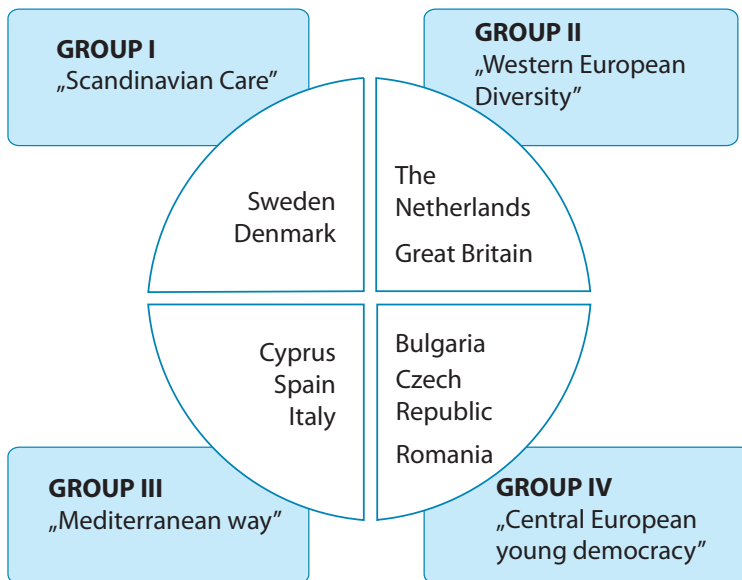
Source: P. Szukalski, *Concept of good practices selection that meet the condition of transferability to Polish conditions*, project internal materials "Equal opportunities in the labour market for people aged 50+", Lodz 2012.

The selection of good practices for further analysis with use of the above algorithm in such case is only the result of taking into consideration the ranking of projects: from each country - depending on the size of the country and the number of projects identified and described in the cards - from four to five initiatives were admitted to the next stage. Additionally, for each country it was possible to add one of the lower-ranked projects to the resulting set of projects, if - in the opinion of the expert - it showed innovativeness and original approach to the promotion and potentialization of active aging.

From among the projects identified - in line with the specific methodology - the examples of interesting initiatives were isolated, carried out at the meso and micro level, which could be implemented in Poland. Case descriptions of these particular initiatives make up this *Catalogue of best practices (with the Annex)*.

The descriptions are grouped in an identical way as in the final report, that is in line with the methodology developed during creation of *Concept of study on solutions to promote active aging in selected EU countries*, with use of the nomenclature proposed in Chapter VI of the final report (see I. Kołodziejczyk-Olczak, *Age Management - how employers can respond to demographic challenges?*). The division scheme is presented in Fig. 2.

Figure 2. Classification of the researched European Union countries



Source: Own work.

The same division of countries was used at the stage of national reports presentation (Chapters VIII-XVIII of the final report). Although this indicates the differences in relation to the examples of good practices presented in Chapter XIX, where the objectives classification of projects was used while the analysis by the countries within each of the four groups was consciously abandoned, this Catalogue has a slightly different objectives. It is intended as a coherent complementation of national reports, and therefore it also presents case studies in line with such structure. Good practices presented are marked with two-part abbreviations, with the first part containing two-or three-letter country designation used in official documents of the EU, and the other part - the next number in order of the case appearance within the country being analysed.

In order to better understand the socio-economic and legal context of the actions described, before reading this Catalogue it is worth to get acquainted with the relevant national reports (Chapters VII - XVII of the report titled *Active ageing measures in selected European Union countries. Final Report*).

Wishing you a pleasant reading, we hope that the presented case descriptions will be an inspiration for you in the process of design and programming of actions for elderly participants of the labour market and seniors - in the present, but most of all in the next financial perspective of the EU budget (2014-2020).

„Scandinavian Care“

Case description DK 1

► Name of the project

Senior Career – Active Ageing and Pre-Retirement Counselling

► Institution carrying out the project

Project leader:

Beskæftigelsesforvaltningen, Arbejdsmarkedscenter Midt, Aarhus, Denmark

Partners:

Associazione Nestore, Italy

August Horch Academy, Germany

Technological Educational Institute of Crete, Department of Nursing, Department of Social Work, Greece

Fundacja Centrum Promocji Kobiet (Centre for the Advancement of Women Foundation), Poland

► Source of project funding Lifelong Learning Programme - Grundtvig

► Value of the project 15,000 €

► Term of the project 01.09.2010 – 31.07.2012

► Project realisation area Project realisation area countries Denmark, Italy, Germany, Greece, Poland

Project type

The main objective of the project was the exchange of knowledge between the partners referring to the paths of aging in their countries and the exchange of good practices in the area of counselling for retiring persons.

Project characteristics

Within the framework of the project, the international partners shared their experiences in regards to educational and consulting measures developed in their institutions for support and promotion of active aging.

Danish project leader conveyed to the other partners involved in the project his experiences in relation to the realisation of "Senior Force", two-day courses for people of pre-retirement age. The aim of the course was to encourage the participants to reflect on the following questions: *Who am I now? What do I want? How will I achieve it? How will I make it permanent?* The aim of the course was to convince participants to seek independently for the ways of further personal development, to make these actions meaningful and to arouse participants' passion for further development.

Subject matter of the course focused on the issues that fall within the framework of the following imperatives:

- reject stereotypes connected with thinking about retirement,
- determine your key skills,
- Set your goals and arouse passion.

The results of the project were evaluated and then publicized at conferences promoting the project and its results as well as through the project website.

Effects

The course was highly rated by the participants (nearly 70% of them were very satisfied). In the evaluation survey conducted after the course had been completed, from among the total number of 92 participants:

- 53% declared to be ready to improve their contact network,
- 44% declared to be ready to do volunteer work,
- 39% declared to be ready to improve their health habits,
- 38% declared to continue working in their profession.

Participation in the course prompted the participants to change their earlier plans connected with reaching the retirement age and to realize their physical, social and mental potential.

Strengths

Practice shows the great importance of undertaking initiatives to make people in pre-retirement age realise the purposefulness and possibility of maintaining their further activity, not only professional, but also physical, mental and social one. Project experiences prove that the subject of active aging is universal and applies to different societies, regardless of their level of socio-economic development and existing cultural differences.

Recommendations

Undertaking joint projects initiatives by partners acting in different cultural contexts is a good platform for the exchange of mutual experiences and provides opportunities to develop solutions of universal and supracultural character. Realisation of such initiatives - although it cannot constitute the main axis of the support system - can be a valuable complementation of it. It is important to encourage national institutions that offer support to elderly people to engage in similar initiatives as well as to create them with the use of available funding sources, which in the current programming period are, for example, the innovative projects with a transnational component, offered within the framework of the Operational Programme Human Resources Development.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

The practice can be used in the process of formation of the active aging programme, although in the course of pilot study it would be recommended to check its adequacy to Polish reality (especially in relation to the subject matter of the course), and, if necessary, to introduce necessary modifications.

Case description DK 2

▶ Name of the project

Aalborg Hospital– age management

Livsfasepolitik

Aalborg Hospital – Age Management

▶ Institution carrying out the project

 Aalborg Hospital

▶ Source of project funding

 local government

▶ Value of the project

 no data

▶ Term of the project

 since 2006

▶ Project realisation area

 within the hospital

Project type

The main objective of the project was to delay the retirement of senior employees by developing appropriate policy of experienced staff retention in the workplace and using attractive measures to encourage stay in the labour market.

The measures were introduced because the hospital discovered that the main core of medical staff will retire in the following 10 years and decided to introduce a policy with the aim of keeping experienced staff as long as possible.

Project characteristics

The actions undertaken are a response to changes, taking place within the organization, of the employees' age structure, in relation to most of them reaching the retirement age within the following 10 years. Of significant importance for a decision on the implementation of age management policy in the organization was the fact of high rates of staff turnover persistence - about half of the persons employed at the hospital worked on the basis of temporary contracts, with concurrent high average age of the employees.

The actions carried out are a result of the decision, taken by the organization, to build the existing personnel policy on older people and to keep this way the most valuable, experienced employees by paying closer attention to their rights and to present flexible approach to their employment.

The project consisted of the following:

- the committee was established, consisting of managers and hospital staff, the role of which was to oversee the observance of the policy being introduced;
- the employees of over 52 years of age were offered special employment contracts, agreed upon with the participation of trade union representative, depending on the needs of the elderly and the hospital financial capacity;
- the employees over 59 were offered a possibility to work shorter time while maintaining the same rate of pay (partial funding of the salary from the retirement pension);
- regular hours of work were offered in place of a shift system and the obligation to be on duty was cancelled out in relation to older workers;
- flexible working hours were offered to facilitate better rest planning by the employees;

- the elderly employees were granted the same rights to participate in employee trainings;
- special group was created that offers assistance in returning to work after accident at work;
- subsidizing employment for people with disabilities by the state (2/3 salary) and co-financing of the addiction and civilisation diseases centre, created at the hospital (some part of financing comes from public funds).

Effects

The implemented measures bring visible benefits both for employer and employees. To the employer they provided employment stability and reduced fluctuation of the staff. Thanks to introducing more flexible forms of employment, job satisfaction and sense of security of the older employees increased. It is also worth noting that an interesting instrument was used of ensuring benefits to the public social security system (linking salaries and pensions in a way that best corresponds to the needs and capabilities of older people).

Strengths

The practice described is an example of a comprehensive action taken in the framework of the age management policy worked out within the organization. It engages the employees in the consultation process, in which the consensus is reached in relation to the age management policy in use and its tools. Responding in a best possible way to the needs of the elderly people in employment contributes to stability of the employment situation within the organization and deepens satisfaction that older people get from continuing their professional work.

Recommendations

The successful implementation of practice in the form presented is based on mutual understanding of needs and on the extended collaboration of the employer and employees. It seems that successful introduction of this practice cannot be limited only to promoting it, but it also requires carrying out an economic calculation of the profits that the employer can achieve and enriching the communication addressed to entrepreneurs with this "hard" data.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

The practice is possible to be adapted to Polish conditions, however probably not directly in full because of the wide extent of the solutions proposed; it is rather the selected elements that can be transferred.

Case description DK 3

▶ Name of the project

Senior Solidarity – Age Management

Seniorordning

Senior Solidarity – Age Management

▶ Institution carrying out the project

 Nordea Bank Danmark A/S

▶ Source of project funding

 own

▶ Value of the project

 no data

▶ Term of the project

 2006 – 2008

▶ Project realisation area

 within the company

Project type

The project was the own initiative of the company undertaken within the framework of restructuring. Nordea Bank Danmark A / S, based in Copenhagen, is the second largest bank in Denmark, which employs around 8.5 thousand employees in its 300 offices, 15% of whom are over 50 years of age and they are the group the project is addressed to.

The main objective of the project was to prevent the loss of valuable knowledge that would result from the employees retirement through developing a programme to retain in the company the employees aged 61 or more.

Project characteristics

In 1990s Nordea encouraged its employees to go into early retirement by offering them economically advantageous retirement plan to sign at the age of 58 years. However, in 2003 there was a total shift in the company's policy towards the elderly. The reason for that was that the financial sector in Denmark faced the problem of skilled employees shortage, and Nordea Bank experienced a situation when after the retirement of older workers, it was difficult for the company to find people with similar qualifications and experience to replace them. Therefore, the company decided to implement a policy aimed at preventing the retirement of employees under 64 years of age.

The programme to retain the company employees over 61 years of age involves both economic and non-financial motivation. It was developed and implemented in cooperation with a trade union. It consists of the following elements:

- 5 additional days off per year after reaching 61 years of age;
- the possibility of reducing the number of hours worked per week by 10% without loss of pay;
- additional retirement pay after reaching 62 years of age.

Developing the programme of incentives for older workers, the aim of which is to encourage them to remain in the company, does not result in these workers being treated differently than other employees because in this respect the bank acts in accordance with the strict policy of preventing age discrimination.

Effects

The effects of employee retention programme are undisputable - as compared with the year prior to the implementation of the program the company employs about 30% more people at the age of over 58. Without a doubt, of great importance were informational actions and encouragement offered by the representatives of the trade union.

The agreement signed is beneficial to both parties: the bank retains its experienced staff, and the employees receive additional benefits.

Strengths

The program has proved to be attractive for older employees who are increasingly more likely to remain in the labour market, despite reaching the retirement age. An important element of programme sustainability is the use of a consultational formula - the achieved agreement is not imposed, but it takes into account the benefits of each of the parties.

Recommendations

In order to increase effectiveness of the age management policy implementation at the company level it is recommended that the company initiates dialogue to establish solutions that take into account the needs of older workers as well as the existing limitations on part of the employer. The consensus achieved in this way will strengthen the steadiness of the system, creating favourable atmosphere in the workplace and at the same time providing sense of usefulness to the elderly.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

The program requires adaptation to Polish conditions and prior testing by way of pilot study.

Case description DK 4

▶ Name of the project

HR management of Seniors in the Private Company – Age Management

Seniorpolitik – Enemærke and Petersen A/S

HR management of Seniors in the Private Company Enemærke and Petersen A/S – Age Management

▶ Institution carrying out the project Enemærke&Petersen A/S

▶ Source of project funding own

▶ Value of the project no data

▶ Term of the project since 2002

▶ Project realisation area within the company

Project type

The project was the own initiative of a company taken within the framework of the age management policy implementation. Enemærke & Petersen company offers construction services in Denmark. It actively promotes the retention of seniors, covering 102 people out of 500 employees with its age management policy.

The main objective of the implemented project is to keep seniors in the labour market as long as possible. The target group are employees who have reached 55 years of age.

Project characteristics

Enemærke & Petersen company has identified the negative effects of the retirement of the older, experienced workers and decided to implement a policy to retain seniors. Specific rules and instruments of the age management policy within the company, designed to encourage older workers to remain in the company after reaching the retirement age, have emerged as a result of a survey conducted in 2002 among the company employees.

The company's policy in relation to the elderly is created in cooperation with the management board and with active participation of older workers. It mainly consists of:

- flexible working hours, with numerous possibilities of flexible organization of work;
- annual, two-day seminar of seniors, during which they can discuss their plans for life, share their experiences and talk with various kinds of experts;
- annual talks with seniors about their prospects for the future;
- exemption from the demanding professional tasks;
- annual medical examinations for workers over 45 years of age;
- subsidised entrance passes to wellness centres;
- development and maintenance of the Senior Club, thanks to which the retired employees are invited to company parties so that they can maintain their relationships with colleagues and share their experiences.

Effects

HR management policy aimed at seniors covers every fifth employee of Enemærke & Petersen company. The policy brings "hard" results in form of an increased willingness of seniors to stay

within the company. According to the estimates of the management board, after implementation of the new policy, the number of seniors who want to stay in the company grew by 10-20%.

Additional results of the policy implementation include: (i) adaptation of HR management policy to the needs and characteristics of older workers, (ii) greater satisfaction of employees aged 55 + with working conditions that allow for the needs of this age group, (iii) financial and non-financial benefits from the retention of experienced older workers in the company.

Strengths

The policy towards seniors, implemented by the company, was intended to attract and retain older workers, with the simultaneous optimal use of their skills and experience to the benefit of both the company and themselves. The company encourages active professional life, creating atmosphere in which the age is not a taboo.

The company implemented the policy towards older workers, being a good example for other companies, for which the company was given the 'Best Senior Practice' award in 2009 in the category of large companies, awarded by the Danish Ministry of Labour for outstanding achievements in relation to attraction and retention of older workers.

Moreover, the thing worth noting is the active participation and influence of the target group of older workers on the shape of HR management policy within the company, the aim of which is to maintain the professional activity of this group.

Recommendations

The effectiveness of age management policy in the company requires engaging older employees in the process of decision making in relation to the form of the policy and regular updating the policy in accordance with changing needs of the policy addressees. The actions directed to the elderly does need not be cost-consuming to produce satisfactory results.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

The practice is possible to be transferred after updating and adjustment of developed instruments to the specificity of the Polish labour market. It is recommended to carry out prior testing in form of pilot study.

Case description SE 1

▶ Name of the project

SSAB Tunnpåt – Occupational Health and Well-Being

SSAB Tunnpåt – Occupational Health and Well-Being

▶ Institution carrying out the project SSAB

▶ Source of project funding own

▶ Value of the project no data

▶ Term of the project since 1995

▶ Project realisation area within the company

Project type

The management of the Swedish SSAB company, having years of experience in the steel industry, had found out that due to the aging of the employees a number of measures should be implemented, aimed at the longest possible retention of their professional activity. In 1995, the company conducted a study, the results of which indicated that the health condition of employees choosing an early retirement as well as their psychophysical conditions is better than the ones of the persons who remain in employment. The company therefore decided to take action to improve the health of seniors working at SSAB.

The main objective of the implemented project was to improve the health of the employees and to strengthen their psychophysical condition through:

- improving working environment and conducting individual health examinations of the employees;
- taking into account the age of employees while organising work (this referred to shift work);
- engaging trade unions into the initiative through collective work on the strategy with regards to the older employees.

The project was SSAB's own measure and it was directed only to persons employed in the company.

Project characteristics

The main project recipients were SSAB employees who reached 50 years of age. Employees aged over 58 were covered by special, additional measures.

The set of measures implemented in the company in relation to the employees aged over 50 included solutions directly related to preventive healthcare of the employees and intended to adapt the workplace to the needs of people aged 50+:

- introduction of eye tests for the employees;
- introduction of glasses for performance of specialist work;

- implementation of improvements to prevent overstrain of muscles, joints and ligaments;
- introduction of individual medical examination package and development of rehabilitation access;
- improvement of lighting in the workplace,
- redevelopment and readjustment of workplace in order to meet the needs of hearing-impaired.

What is more, in order to better comply with expectations of the employees, the company conducted survey among all employees to check their preferences in relation to shift work. As the results revealed, older workers preferred not to work on night shifts, while the younger ones did not have objections to do few consecutive night shifts. These opinions were taken into consideration while performing reorganisation of work in the company.

In order to keep the employees aged 50 or more in the company for as long as possible, the possibility of the reduction of working hours was created for people of over 58 years of age.

Trade unions got involved in the preparation of solutions aimed at improvement of the employees' health condition and the trade unions representatives along with the representatives of the employer formed the so called union of the employees. The aim of its works was to develop strategies with regards to older employees and their work environment.

Effects

The solutions introduced proved to be very beneficial for the company. The most important results of the project include:

- adjusting organisation of work to the needs of older workers (reduction of night shift work)
- the decline in the number of employees who retire before reaching the retirement age, being a result of work reorganisation,
- improvement of workplace ergonomics,
- increase of the attention towards health thanks to providing individual medical care for the employees.

Apart from short-term results, such as better adjustment of work time to the expectations of older workers, the solutions that will bring benefits in the long run were also successfully implemented. Reorganisation of work and workplace adjustment to the needs of workers aged 50+ will result in a permanent improvement of their mental and physical condition and will decrease the proportion of people opting for an early retirement.

Strengths

The important advantage of the project presented was the involvement of employee representatives - trade unions - in development and implementation of the project. Thanks to that, the actions carried out could be well-suited to the needs of employees and therefore to be more effective.

Other fact worth mentioning is that the measures with regards to the age management, developed and successfully implemented in SSAB, had not been imposed on the company in any way (e.g. by the legislator). They were initiated by the employer, who was aware of the demographic changes taking place in the Swedish labour market and who saw the need and importance of the implementation of measures aimed at improving health condition of the employees and extending their professional activity.

Recommendations

Popularisation of age management measures (e.g. better flexibility of working time and employment forms) requires consistent promotion of this idea among employers. What seems particularly important is to emphasize the benefits for the company from having a diverse team (e.g. in respect of age), whose members have various life experiences and skills. A unique and in many ways diverse team of employees will have a better chance to develop innovative solutions. Therefore, older workers enrich the company and are not, as many employers still believe, unnecessary burden.

Showing the examples of well-known, successful companies which decided to implement the age management policy, seeing it as an opportunity for further development of the company, may encourage other organizations to make use of such solutions.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

The solutions implemented in SSAB can be successfully popularised in companies operating in Poland, especially in large organizations that follow changes in the labour market and implement long-term HR strategies. Sustainability of the project (in operation since 1995), and the benefits of its realisation make SSAB a great point of reference for Polish entrepreneurs.

It should be emphasized, however, that success of the proposed actions call for the employer to change their way of thinking about older workers. Is important to recognize their potential and abilities that are of great value from the company's point of view.

The aging of European societies, including Polish one, makes it necessary for the domestic employers to adjust to the challenges associated with this process. The solutions presented follow this path.

Case description SE 2

▶ Name of the project

Healthier Krokom

Ett friskare Krokom

Healthier Krokom

▶ Institution carrying out the project

Project leader:

Krokoms Kommun

Kommunstyrelsen

▶ Source of project funding

 European Social Fund

▶ Value of the project

 12,318,636 kr (around €1,500,000)

▶ Term of the project

 01.04.2009 – 30.09.2011

▶ Project realisation area

 Krokom municipality

Project type

The project was initiated by the Swedish Krokom municipality. The creators of the project focused on solving health problems of the region inhabitants. The analysis of statistical data revealed that Krokom municipality has the highest in Sweden number of people on sick leave. The main objective of the project then was to improve health of Krokom inhabitants and thus to decrease the number of people on sick leave. The project activities were also aimed at supporting those who, after a long break resulting from ill health, want to return to the labour market.

Development of support solutions was preceded by the diagnosis of the situation. Within the framework of it, apart from various kinds of analyses, interviews with people on sick leave were conducted. The main objective was to: learn about (through health professionals and local authorities) their opinions on the quality of patient service, access to rehabilitation as well as on the effectiveness of professional counselling and assistance in re-entering the labour market. The differences in availing of municipality resources by women and men were also noted.

Project characteristics

The project was directed to all residents of the Krokom municipality who stay on sick leave or who have problems with returning to the labour market after prolonged illness-related break. In practice it turned out that the main recipients of project measures were people over 50 years of age, representing the largest group of beneficiaries.

The solutions implemented within the framework of the program can be divided into two groups. One group consists of actions to improve health of the individuals concerned. Those mainly include special rehabilitation activities. Another group consists of tasks in support of people who want to take up professional work after returning from a prolonged sick leave. The beneficiaries of the program were offered participation in support groups and coaching. The aim of the assistance provided under the project was to develop the most personalized solutions, tailored to the needs of the beneficiaries and their current life situation. Such approach was a determining factor for the effectiveness of the action taken.

Effects

In 2010, thanks to the programme, Krokoms municipality managed to reduce sickness absence to 7% (in 2007 it reached the level of 10.5%). The project also facilitated the implementation of a number of improvements that will pay off in the future. The diagnosis of the situation which was carried out as well as monitoring of health care centres conducted within the framework of it made it possible to determine the mechanisms that are not effective enough and to improve them. The communication between municipal authorities and health care institutions operating in the region of has also significantly improved. The important result of the project was also drawing attention to the fact that prolonged illness can become a contributive factor for the exclusion from the labour market.

It was also noticed that the support solutions are offered to men and women in irregular manner. Women predominate among those on sick leave, and men are more likely to use community resources offered to people with illness.

One of the effects particularly worth mentioning in relation to the "Healthier Krokoms" project was development of an effective good practice model in areas with a high proportion of people on sick leave. In principle, it can also be implemented in other Swedish municipalities experiencing similar problems.

Strengths

Observing the situation of people on sick leave from many points of view, including the perspective of patients themselves and also of local government and healthcare centres staff, facilitated better adjustment of the solutions developed to the needs of different groups of beneficiaries. The effectiveness of the project also resulted from the involvement of many community groups into its implementation. This resulted in better understanding of problems of people with chronic diseases and in real commitment, both of municipal authorities and health professionals, into providing support to them.

Recommendations

The solutions proposed by the creators of the "Ett friskare Krokoms" have a significant influence on strengthening the role of local authorities in organising public health services in the region. They also enable better understanding of the patients' needs, which contributes to refining healthcare strategy and clarifying the priorities of actions taken by local government and healthcare institutions. The Swedish approach presented is recommendable in the areas of high sickness absence, where the cooperation between local authorities and healthcare institutions needs to be tightened.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

Virtually, the project could be popularised in Poland. However, this would require overcoming any potential institutional and mental barriers.

The first of them is related to the fact that close cooperation between authorities of municipalities and healthcare institutions is necessary. Not everywhere such cooperation can be successful. Another barrier may be reluctance of those on sick leave to participate in the project. Without learning about their opinions on some key issues, however, from the perspective of the programme, diagnosis of the situation in any Polish municipality would be almost impossible.

Case description SE 3

▶ Name of the project

SpråkSam

▶ Institution carrying out the project

Project leader:

Stiftelsen Stockholms läns Äldrecentrum

▶ Source of project funding

European Social Fund

▶ Value of the project

30,652,454 kr (around €3,500,000)

▶ Term of the project

15.04.2009 – 14.04.2011

▶ Project realisation area

Stockholm region

Project type

The intention of the project was to improve the quality of care services for the elderly by increasing the powers of carers.

It has been observed in Sweden in recent years that the immigrants have been more and more interested in working in the elderly care services. Immigrants often do not speak Swedish, which to great extent impedes their contact with people that are using their services.

This situation prompted the project creators to develop language training offer directed to the group of carers of the elderly. At the same time the efforts were made to strengthen the labour market position of people who provide care services through the development of their abilities. This was related to a certificate of competence, obligatory for carers of the elderly, difficult to obtain by those who do not have good command of Swedish. In addition to learning Swedish, the carers had the opportunity to learn other languages used by their clients on a daily basis.

Many organisations were involved in the project: 21 care institutions, employers' associations, research institutions, Komvux (Swedish adult education program) as well as the entities operating under SFI (Svenska för invandrare - Sweden for immigrants) programme, directed to immigrants.

Project characteristics

The beneficiaries of the project were people (mostly coming from outside of Sweden, but also those with a low education level) who provide care services to seniors. Under the project the carers were given an opportunity to participate in professional language courses. In addition to learning Swedish, the beneficiaries could learn other languages used by their clients.

Effects

The main outcome of the program was the acquisition of language skills by the participants. Carers learnt how to communicate with their clients in Swedish and other languages. It definitely facilitated contact, improved communication and mutual understanding, and therefore increased the qualities of services provided. Improvement of the carers' language skills contributed also to broadening their knowledge of the elderly and their needs.

Moreover, the project played an important role in the long-lasting improvement of immigrant situation in the Swedish labour market through creating measures that can also be used in the future. "SpråkSam" also drew attention to the problem of poor language skills of immigrants (and people with low education) that take care of seniors and, what is most important, encouraged the management and staff of care facilities to deal with this problem.

Strengths

The project was successful in great extent due to the fact that the specific working environment of carers was taken into consideration while creating the programme of language courses. Thanks to the appropriate selection of vocabulary, the acquired language skills significantly and rapidly improved the quality of care services.

The solutions developed within the framework of the project (language courses, coursebooks) proved to be effective thanks to getting involved in the process of creating them the representatives of various organizations, both in relation to way of learning (e.g. selection of appropriate techniques for conveying knowledge) and practice, i.e. social institutions (determining necessary vocabulary, etc.). Of great significance was also the fact that the managers, employees and clients of care institutions considered the problem of poor language skills of the immigrants as vital and together committed to the process of solving it. Without accepting importance of the problem, achieving the desired results would not be possible.

Recommendations

The idea of improving language skills of the immigrants employed in the sector of social care services for seniors should definitely be popularised. The only drawback, as it seems, of the courses conducted within the framework of "SpråkSam" project was its relatively short duration. This limited further language skills development of the carers. The beneficiaries had the opportunity to master foreign languages only on a basic level. In order to increase the benefits of conducted language training, it would be advisable in the future to extend the duration of the project, so that the beneficiaries could achieve fluency in communication with their clients. It should be emphasized that without cooperation of different organisation groups and public administration support the scope of the project and its effects could be much poorer. Therefore, it is very important to get the acceptance of organizations for the initiatives of this type and to increase awareness of the problem, especially among the management of care institutions.

What is more, in the process of developing language courses for such a specific recipient group as immigrants who provide care services to elderly people, it is also advisable to offer support to tutors. This refers both to improving teaching skills of tutors, e.g. abilities to use new teaching tools (created for the purpose of the project in cooperation with scholars), as well as to providing them with knowledge in relation to cultural diversity. It should be emphasized that additional benefits can be achieved through extending the project to new beneficiary groups. In another program, implemented by the originators of "SpråkSam", language training is offered to the employees for whom Swedish language is a mother tongue, but who experience such problems as dyslexia or reading difficulties. On the one hand, participation in the project helps them to develop their own language skills, on the other hand - allows them to share their knowledge with others.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

The possibilities of popularisation of the described practice in Poland are not very extensive. Due to high ethnic homogeneity of the society, for the majority of the senior carers Polish is a mother tongue. It could be expected, however, that in the coming years, with the influx of immigrants from other parts of the world to Poland, the number of carers with poor command of Polish might increase as well as the group of clients who speak other foreign languages on a daily basis might expand. Then the Swedish experience can prove to be very helpful in overcoming language barriers that might arise between seniors and their carers. It is highly important to involve educational institutions, practitioners as well as research-and-development entities in the process of developing tools adapted to Polish conditions. The success of future language skills support programme depends also on creating in Poland the grounds for lifelong learning, including improvement of adult education system.

Case description SE 4

▶ Name of the project

AC – Development Support

AC lyftet

AC – Development Support

▶ Institution carrying out the project Lycksele Kommun

▶ Source of project funding European Social Fund

▶ Value of the project 2,935,560 kr (around € 343,000)

▶ Term of the project 09.01.2012 – 28.06.2013

▶ Project realisation area region Övre Norrland

Project type

The main objective of the project initiated by the Swedish Lycksele municipality was to increase its competitiveness by encouraging entrepreneurs to start their business in the region. Thus, the project implementation served both for the purpose of municipality development and for unemployment reduction. The creators of "AC lyftet" wanted to involve various social groups in the project: employers, public administration representatives (including employment services representatives) as well as employees and the unemployed (particularly those at risk of exclusion, e.g. people aged over 45.)

Thanks to the project the municipality could better understand the needs of companies operating in the area and the situation of the unemployed and those in employment. At the same time, the educational actions undertaken, directed to business owners and managers, were supposed to broaden the employers' knowledge of human resources in the region and to encourage them to carry out tasks related to CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility). One of the actions was to involve the companies (under local partnerships) in developing skills of the unemployed.

Project characteristics

Within the framework of the project, several training sessions, workshops and seminars for the employers were carried out. The employers have the opportunity to learn about the needs of the region and to extend their knowledge on Corporate Social Responsibility. The training offer is addressed mainly to the entrepreneurs interested in employing people aged over 45. At the same time, people aged 45+ who have difficulty in entering the labour market are included in development programmes intended for upgrading their skills and achieving competence particularly sought after by the employers.

Effects

The project has already brought measurable benefits. Investors willing to start a business in the municipality were attracted to the region. At the same time, thanks to the development programmes directed to job seekers, a decrease in the number of unemployed was observed. A particularly valuable result of project actions was the creation of a consortium - in coopera-

tion with employers, training institutions and municipal authorities - for professional training of the unemployed.

Another noteworthy result of the project, which can pay off in the following years, was the increase of employers' involvement in the affairs of the region and better understanding of their needs and problems.

Strengths

One of the greatest advantages of the approach used in the project was the involvement of various social groups in the development of the region. Incorporating employers provided significant benefits, as through better understanding of the situation in the municipality and appreciation of socially responsible activities they took an active part in developing skills of the unemployed. The fact that the project was implemented jointly by training institutions and local authorities resulted in a better adaptation of educational offer to the region specificity and the needs and capabilities of different groups of beneficiaries.

Recommendations

Implementation of similar projects in the future will require, as it might be expected, providing employers with more extensive information on the benefits they can achieve through taking action in the field of corporate social responsibility and the establishing local partnerships. Involving business owners and managers in the project may face barriers. Apart from underestimating the importance of CSR, time limitations of the employers can be also prove to be significant. They can to a great extent hinder or even preclude better extended involvement of entrepreneurs in the development programmes (training sessions, seminars, etc.).

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

Actions taken under "AC lyftet" project can be successfully implemented in Poland. This requires, however, encouraging employers to undertake the tasks in the area of CSR. The scale of Polish companies might constitute some limitation. The large majority of Polish companies are small organizations and micro-enterprises. Their owners, especially in times of economic downturn and, what goes with it, deterioration of a condition of large group of companies, may not be interested in the implementation of similar projects. What is more, the accumulation of daily tasks and time constraints of the employers can greatly limit their involvement in the project activities.

Forming local partnerships can be another challenge. In Poland the initiatives of this type are still not popular enough. This situation could be changed thanks to the informational campaigns on a large scale (initiated by public administration) which present positive experiences in that area and projects implemented locally that support various institutions in their attempts to establish and strengthen cooperation.

„Western European Diversity“

THE NETHERLANDS

Case description NL 1

▶ Name of the project

TalentPlus

▶ Institution carrying out the project

Netwerken via TalentPlus

▶ Source of project funding

own

▶ Value of the project

no data

▶ Term of the project

since 1995

▶ Project realisation area

whole country while actions are taken in various locations in the country; the groups are of local nature

Project type

The aim of TalentPlus is to support the unemployed aged over 45, with higher education degree, to look for employment.

Project characteristics

TalentPlus provides creating cooperation network (groups) for people with higher education aged 45 and more. The aim of the project is the full involvement of network (group) members and learning from each other. The beneficiaries within the groups are in a similar situation; they support and motivate each other. The aim of these groups is the assistance in finding gainful work through: employment, starting your own business or through training and internships with a guarantee of employment. The project was initiated as early as in 1995 in the southern part of the Netherlands, where unemployment is very high. The project was so good that its actions were extended to other parts of the country. Currently there are 25 branches throughout the Netherlands.

Service TalentPlus encompasses an open-access space and space for registered users only which requires registration (and paying a membership fee). Full access to the program consists of three stages, logically related to each other: (1) re-orientation and motivation (diagnosis of the beneficiary's situation), (2) presentation and concentration (what do I have to offer, to whom and why), (3) inclusion in the network and job search. In all sectors the structure is the same, which facilitates introduction of new program participants and other beneficiaries (partners, sponsors, ambassadors). Profiling, harmonized methodology, clear framework of the implementation enable easy navigation in the TalentPlus site. Specific support involves improvement of skills related to finding a job (CV writing, interview coaching, telling about professional experiences, LinkedIn profile) and meetings with employers in order to understand their expectations. The cooperation is carried out in groups of 8-18, the members of which meet once a week for about three hours.

Participation in the program cannot be longer than 16 months. Participants pay a fee: registration fee of EUR 25 and a monthly rate of EUR 10. After finishing the programme, participants

can get the status of ambassador - regardless of whether they had found employment or not (this also entails a monthly fee of 10 euros).

Effects

The number of registered users reached about 300 each year (with high dynamics of groups' composition). Currently 500 people participate in the programme. In 2012, 50% of participants found paid employment (in 2011 - 54%, in 2010 - 71%). Additionally, in 2011 145 people have taken unpaid work (172 - paid work). In 2012, 90% of participants found a job before 14 months had passed (in this sense efficiency had improved, as in 2011 this figure reached 78%, and in 2010 - 84%). Most participants of TalentPlus finds job within six months. Geographical scope of actions is also increasing - in 2012 the project encompassed 80% of the 30 macro-regions, while in 2011 - 53% and in 2010 - 47%. It is important to maintain contact with former participants who can provide information about possible vacancies in the new workplace.

Strengths

The strength of the project is the high efficiency of actions. One of the reasons for success was also the fact that the project itself is a self-help organization of unemployed people aged 45+ ("the unemployed for the unemployed"). TalentPlus encourages professional potential of participants. Most of them find a job, and after participating in the project they still remain the active users of online services, assuming the status of an ambassador or a friend and support other group members. The group dynamics achieved this way contributes to project's success. The growing interest in TalentPlus service confirms its effectiveness.

According to the implementers, decisive factor for success of the project was high motivation of participants to find a job. During meetings within the group, which constitutes a specific support group, the participants exchange their experiences of the previous week - they share their successes and failures in relation to seeking work and this way learn from each other.

Recommendations

High efficiency of the project is strengthened by the uniformity of groups looking for work, as well as creation of a forum for the exchange of knowledge and experience. Important factor for the success of the project is cooperation with municipalities, public services institutions, employers and those responsible for the recruitment in companies and acting on their behalf. Extended use of social media (networking, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.) is also crucial.

High efficiency, measured with fast (usually in less than anticipated 6 months) leaving unemployment is on the one hand an advantage, and on the other hand a threat to TalentPlus operation. Each branch appoints a chairperson, from among the participants, who oversees actions of the group. Upon finding an employment the chairperson ceases their active participation in the project, and is replaced by another unemployed person. This way the developed know-how is lost, which disrupts the continuity of actions. At present the work on the reorganization of TalentPlus is being carried out (together with central administration) with the intention to reduce the discussed problems.

As part of a long-standing operation of TalentPlus the changes were necessary to adjust the project actions to the current needs of the labour market. Unlike the early years when the focus was mainly on the preparation of application documents, more attention is now attached to

the use of social media as information carrier about the job seekers participating in the project, but also as a source of information about job vacancies. Established brand of organization, composed of highly skilled professionals, experts in their domain, increases their chances of re-employment. Considering the enormous difficulties of people approaching retirement age in finding a new job (despite their experience and extensive know-how), this action must be assessed as very useful - also in Polish conditions.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

Motto of the activities carried out: "The road to the goal is equally important as reaching the goal" points to focus on the process of mutual cooperation between participants - job seekers with higher education. As the experiences of employment agencies in Poland show, such an initiative is needed, because people aged 45/50, who has a high professional status the time when they lost their job, usually have problems with finding new job due to having high expectations of the prospective employers. What is more, the longer the time they search for work, the worse they are evaluated by employers and therefore their chances to continue professional career decrease.

Methodology of the project does not require adaptation to Polish conditions and can be implemented by interested institutions. Considering the self-financing of TalentPlus and service and commitment of volunteers in current project activities, this practice can be implemented by organizations of the third sector. At the same time, it is important to ensure the possibility of using free-of-charge venues for the group meetings (which is currently a problem of Talent-Plus, the organization based on voluntary work, which does not have suitable rooms in different parts of the country, nor the resources that could be used for renting them, which creates problems for every day operation of the organisation). The inclusion of the third sector organisation in the implementation of the project can reduce this problem if cooperation network of organisations in different parts of the country is established. In Polish conditions, however, this might be difficult. Another option could be - similarly to the Netherlands - that the entities offering support to the unemployed (in Poland - poviats or voivodship employment agencies) would provide the venues. Taking into account the planned amendment of the legislation on employment promotion and labour market institutions, which is to enable greater cooperation of these entities with the public, this solution seems to have a good chance of success in Polish conditions.

Case description NL 2

► Name of the project

Inclusion of the Elderly with Visual Deficiency by e-technology

Participatie van mensen van 55 jaar en ouder met een visuele beperking door middel van e-technologie

Inclusion of the Elderly with Visual Deficiency by e-technology

► Institution carrying out the project

National leader and project initiator:

Koninklijke Visio expertisecentrum voor slechtziende en blinde mensen Hulzen

Partnership leader:

BFW Halle – Berufsfoerderungswerk Halle (Saale) gGmbH

Other partners:

Royal National College For The Blind, Hereford, United Kingdom

National Council For The Blind Of Ireland, Dublin, Ireland

Institut Montclair, Angers, France

► Source of project funding Lifelong Learning Programme – Grundtvig

► Value of the project € 387,252

► Term of the project 01.01.2008 – 31.12.2009

► Project realisation area United Kingdom, Ireland, France, the Netherlands

Project type

The aim of the project is to actively promote keeping highest standards and developing social interactions by providing people aged 55+, who experience eyesight problems, with an easy access to information and ICT tools. This objective was realized, among others, through identifying the individual needs of the project participants - the visually impaired, assessment of abilities to use modern information technology tools, including specialized software and hardware and creating education and communication e-learning platform directed to older people with eyesight problems. All the information and means of communication in the network are adapted to the needs of people aged 55+.

The idea came up as a result of intensive cooperation between institutions specializing in the blind and visually impaired care and their experiences in relation to the elderly. Valuable experience was that of BFW Halle with regards to e-learning platform creating and hosting, acquired in the framework of the project TELEOBA – Tele-Learning Ohne project TELEOBA - Tele-learning Ohne Barrieren für Blinde und Sehbehinderte, funded with funds from EQUAL (platform created www.bfwvirtuell.de is still active).

The project is also aimed at promoting at the local, national and European level, the IT network as a communication tool that encourages developing opportunities of better participation in social life.

Project characteristics

To adjust the platform to the needs of the beneficiaries in a best possible way, at the beginning the need survey of future platform users was conducted in the partner countries. 54 people

participated in the study (28 women and 26 men), who expressed their potential interest in the project. Additionally, the results of survey carried out in 2006-2008 by the Leader of the project were also included (to the total number of 200 people). E-learning platform was created within the framework of the project, addressed to people aged 55+ with eyesight problems. The platform contains tips for people in the target group in relation to dealing with everyday life activities. „MyVision“ platform consisted of 4 main modules:

- Understanding Vision: anatomy of the eye, the vision process, eye diseases and their consequences, the aging of the eye, methods of compensation;
- Daily Living Skills: communication, adapting the environment to the needs of the visually impaired, preparing meals, household chores, financial management (e.g. how to recognize coins and notes with touch), safe movement, psychological support;
- Computer Skills: enlarging font, colour and keyboard adjustment, screen reading;
- Internet: browser, instant messengers, social networking, e-government, use of e-mail, chat, tax returns, banking, shopping on the web.

The platform also enables participation in the discussion forum.

The platform is available in the following languages: English, Flemish, German and French.

E-learning platform was tested in each of the partner countries. The test involved 60 visually impaired people aged 55+.

International meetings and workshops were organized (also with institutions from outside the project team). The creation of networks on local, national and European level was promoted, e.g. through participation in the BFW Halle Open Days (2009), Sight Village exhibition in Birmingham (2009), the ICEVI-Conference in Dublin (2009), Elba International Science Conference (2009), newsletters, articles, final report.

Effects

The most important product of the project is MyVision platform for e-learning and communication of the visually impaired (www.vision55plus.net), the structure of which is based on WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines). The "soft" effects of the project include development of abilities to use new technology tools with regards to people aged 55+ with eyesight problems and increase of integration level of the elderly with vision problems in society. Using the platform enabled acquiring knowledge needed for everyday functioning by people who have eyesight problems because of their age. This allowed them to overcome psychological barriers and opened them to new experiences.

The project made it also possible to establish cooperation with the entities of various character, dealing with the visually impaired and operating in different countries (e.g. NGO Federation for the Blind Saxony-Anhalt (Germany), public entities - the University of Dublin (Ireland), City of Halle (Germany), international consortia (ICEVI, ENVITER & Sight City).

Strengths

The implementation of the project was preceded by expectation survey of people aged 55+, which made it possible to adjust the content of "MyVision" e-learning platform to the needs of people aged over 55, while taking into account the limited capabilities of visually-impaired . The aim of the project was to provide access to "MyVision" platform for three years after the completion of the project, and currently (2013) it is still active.

This platform has allowed to overcome psychological barriers by the elderly, who are usually pushed to the margins of society because of their progressive impairment of vision. Online contacts, support in the form of specific, useful tips for everyday life, contributed to social activation of the beneficiaries. Unfortunately, there is no information on the possible professional activation of the project participants.

Recommendations

The products developed under the project have been implemented by its partners in its current operation, which contributes to sustainability of project results, also after completion of the project.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

A platform for the visually impaired and the blind can successfully operate in Poland. Currently there are a few of them - for example the Tyfloświat platform (<http://www.tyfloswiat.pl/>), created as part of a project funded by PFRON and still maintained by the Institute for Regional Development Foundation. Considering the fact that in the case of older people (especially seniors) dysfunctions resulting from the eyesight problems are accompanied by typical age-related health problems as well as lower ICT skills, it is advisable to adapt such a platform, including in it additional e-learning modules or creating subpage dedicated to the visually impaired and the blind aged 50+. It is crucial to ensure easy navigation and using vocabulary adapted to the capabilities of the elderly.

Case description NL 3

▶ Name of the project

Internal activity undertaken by the company in relation to the employees

▶ **Institution carrying out the project** Gering Hout en Beton B.V.

▶ **Source of project funding** own

▶ **Value of the project** no data

▶ **Term of the project** since 1995

▶ **Project realisation area** within the company

Project type

This initiative was not a structured project. It was own initiative of the private-owned company dealing with supply and installation of fences, garages, sheds, summerhouses and log cabins. The company, representing SME (in 2006 it employed 28 people, mostly men), has been operating in the construction market for 40 years and it particularly values older workers because of their experience. With development of the company, new types of products and services were introduced that required great physical strength of the employees. The need to protect older workers came up.

The actions can be related to age management and involve for example intergenerational transfer of knowledge, flexible methods of work and ergonomics.

Project characteristics

The range of activities was very limited, only 2 persons participated. The company introduced HR policy which allows for diversity in relation to age. Activities in this respect involve for example age differentiation of teams while planning daily tasks. Older, more experienced employees perform more challenging tasks, while the young are delegated to tasks that require more physical effort. The team assembling fences usually consists of 2-3 people, and the older, more experienced employee is responsible for supervising work, contacts with customers, lighter physical work.

As for the solutions in relation to ergonomics, since 1998 the company has been using a new type of concrete that is 25% lighter than the conventional one. Thanks to that, the pain complaints of workers decreased.

Effects

The implemented solutions helped to keep older, more experienced employees in the company, and at the same time enabled the intergenerational transfer of knowledge, which in the long run can provide successors for key positions. What is more, sick absenteeism of the employees decreased.

The added value is the improvement of the relationship between employees and employers and increase of job satisfaction. The owner of the company is seen as a "patron", taking into account the individual needs of his employees.

The long-term effect of the actions is a policy change in relation to employment of people aged 40+.

Strengths

The strength of the activities is a strong personal commitment of the director and the owner of the company, who adheres to the principle that a good employer should take care of his employees, if they have an adequate commitment to work, take interest in their situation and timely implement corrective measures needed. The owner on his own, on a regular basis, considers the individual capabilities of workers and in case of sickness absenteeism - visits the sick. This contributes to the reduction of absenteeism. Measures of this type are, however, possible only in smaller organizations.

The solution does not generate additional costs and it may raise the level of productivity and loyalty of the employees.

Recommendations

Activities suitable for small businesses, available models of age management implementation for such companies are very scarce at present.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

Practice shows that age management elements can be introduced also in small entities, where physical work is required. It is important because in Polish reality the companies of this type poorly identify the age management and generally do not see the possibility of implementing it. This is confirmed by the experience of some test projects, which the construction companies usually withdrew from during the process of implementation.

Thanks to their simplicity, the solutions proposed can be implemented without major modifications in Polish conditions.

Case description NL 4

► Name of the project

Ethical Frameworks for Telecare Technologies for Older People at Home

Ethische kaders voor technologieën van telefonische zorg voor ouderen thuis
Ethical Frameworks for Telecare Technologies for Older People at Home (EFORTT)

► Institution carrying out the project

Leader:

Lancaster University, Department of Sociology and Lancaster Medical School

Partners:

Universitat Autònoma De Barcelona, Bellaterra, Spain

Diakonhjemmetts Hogskole, Oslo, Norway

Academisch Medisch Centrum Bij de Universiteit van Amsterdam, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

► Source of project funding

7th Outline Programme

► Value of the project

€1,015,871

► Term of the project

01.03.2008 – 28.02.2011

► Project realisation area

the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Spain, Norway

Project type

The research project, involving carrying out a research on ethical, social and gender dimensions of using modern information and communication technologies in the elderly care. The detailed objectives were defined as follows: 1) the development of qualitative (ethnographic) approach for better understand and assessment of telecare practices, (2) the development of dialogue in order to establish a remote health policy at the European level by organizing citizens' panels in order to generate foresight of new telecare technologies and cooperation in this field, with the use of ethnographic studies, (3) development of "empirical ethics" in the evolution and future of telecare technology with the use of data from ethnographic research and civil dialogue, (4) the application of the developed methods to ensure adequate ethical framework for the development and implementation of telecare technology.

Project characteristics

The research under the project was carried out in two axes: ethnographic research and citizens' panels. Under the first axis partners gathered original data during extended, complex field research on telecare, including documentation review, observation (including participant observation), interviews with the elderly (service users) and carers (service givers), as well as people from the service users' environment, representatives of the third sector, practitioners, managers, volunteers, and commercial companies providing telecare services. Under the second axis two rounds of the citizens' panel were organized (with an interval of approximately 18 months) - in each of the partner countries. The panels were attended by the elderly and those providing services to them (the latter did not participate in the earlier phase of the project). During the first round, the participants discussed the problems of telecare for the elderly at homes, and the second meeting served to discuss the findings of ethnographic research. The idea of panels had foreseen them as a political forum rather than user forum, which enabled a critical look at the elderly care, telecare and their future.

The third stage of the project involved development of ethical principles of telecare. It was composed of the "Data Clinic" (Rondane, Norway, February 2010) and "Participative Conference" titled "Ageing with Technologies: a participative conference on care in Europe" (Barcelona, Spain, September 2010). The purpose of "Data clinic" was to bring together the results of four ethnographic studies (from four partner countries), which enabled the development of the meritorious principles of Barcelona conference. The data collected gave answers to the following research problems: (1) detection of dangers in relation the elderly care at home, (2) survey of opinions on receiving services with use of ICT services by customers and suppliers, (3) identification of the way in which modern technologies affect the provision of care services. This resulted in the development of telecare ethical frames (available on the website http://www.lanacs.ac.uk/efortt/documents/ethical_framework_for_telecare.pdf).

Effects

The measurable effects of the project include: (1) 22 meeting - discussion panels (13 in the first round, 9 - in the second round), which were attended by a total of 166 people; (2) an international conference summarizing the project and presenting the research results, attended by 118 people from all over the world (the presentations are available at http://psicologiasocial.uab.es/efortt_conference/Efortt/Outcomes.html, and the abstracts at <http://www.lanacs.ac.uk/efortt/documents/W%205%20Conference.pdf>); (3) final report presenting the research results (available at <http://www.lanacs.ac.uk/efortt/documents/Deliverable%207%20Final%20Research%20report.pdf>); (4) brochure (available at <http://www.lanacs.ac.uk/efortt/documents/EFORTT%208pp%20booklet2go.pdf>). The results of the project were also promoted during conferences and meetings and in numerous scientific articles.

The actions of the project contributed to the raise of awareness of the ethical implications of new technologies use in the elderly care.

Strengths

The project combines the system of ethical standards with the possibilities of using new technologies in the area of the elderly care. It was one of the first attempts to assess the feasibility of telecare implementation in relation to the elderly. Multistage nature of the activities carried out - starting from a discussion panel that indicates the direction of research and then evaluation of research results carried out with the participants of the panel - ensured better usefulness of developed products.

Recommendations

Telecare consists in use of modern technologies that provide "remote care" to the elderly in their homes through the round-the-clock contact with call centre and/or other medical services staff via phone or computer. For example, it involves the use of such devices as personal alarms that can be worn around the neck, motion detectors, equipment that monitors health parameters (weight, blood pressure, etc.), GPS devices for people with memory loss, webcams. Telecare therefore improves the safety and quality of seniors' life, especially those living alone, the number of who increases in the older age groups. It is therefore an important, but unfortunately expensive, direction for the development of care services.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

Analogical ethnographic research could be carried out in Poland, which makes the practice itself - a research project in the field of telecare - to the great extent possible to be applied to Polish conditions. However - as it seems - telecare services for the elderly are such a pioneering solution that widespread implementation of them in Poland now appears highly unlikely. IT infrastructure needs to be adapted; this however should not be an obstacle. With the progressive aging of Polish population, the development of care services of this type will certainly take place. *Silver economy* is one of the most important development directions of the economies, which enables treating the aging of society not in terms of dangers but chances. The interest of private entities in the provision of such services will be certainly increasing. Considering the financial situation of the majority of seniors, not many could afford such solution without public support. The state should participate in the cost of such solutions.

Case description UK 1

▶ Name of the project

Experience Counts 50+ (New Challenge)

Experience Counts 50+ (New Challenge)

▶ Institution carrying out the project

Project leader:

New Challenge

Partner:

College of North West London

▶ Source of project funding

European Social Fund

London Councils

▶ Value of the project £232,700 (around €275,500)

▶ Term of the project 01.04.2010 – 31.03.2012

▶ Project realisation area London, boroughs: Brent and Harrow

Project type

The project of New Challenge organization originated in 1997, when the experts of the organisation noticed the problem of high unemployment prevalent among those representing ethnic minorities living in Harlesden, a part of London borough of Brent. It was decided to create innovative solutions to enhance the professional activation of this social group. A pilot programme was conducted, involving the long-term unemployed older black men and the representatives of ethnic minorities. Brent Council, encouraged by the programme's success (many participants of which returned to the labour market) decided to continue providing financial support for this initiative in the following years, until 2010. The main objective of the actions carried out for over a decade was to enable the return to the labour market of people aged 50, coming from ethnic minorities and affected by disability.

Project characteristics

The beneficiaries of the program were those at risk of social exclusion, long-term unemployed residents of London's boroughs of Brent and Harrow. Among them were representatives of ethnic minorities, Blacks and the disabled. Each participant was subject to an individual support. The programme participants started their work with specialists from filling out tests that were to provide information on their skills deficiencies. The main areas of assessment were writing, reading and numeracy skills as well as abilities to use communication technologies (ICT).

The next step was to conduct at least 6-hours interview with each participant to assess the level of their employability and to develop a plan for their professional career development and individual action programme (including development programme).

People who needed to develop their competencies were sent to training courses. The courses concentrated mainly on improving abilities to use information and communication technologies (21-hour training), but also developing other professional competences with regards to employment opportunities.

The project was based on one-to-one method of work (one coach worked with one participant). This enabled full customization of solutions to support the individual needs of each person covered by the program.

Those programme participants who managed to take up an employment, could avail of additional specialist support for the following six months (counselling, psychological training, etc.).

Effects

The most significant advantage of the program carried out by the New Challenge was change in perception of project participants towards themselves, their skills and their position in the labour market. Thanks to acquired skills and detailed professional career development plans the participants managed to overcome majority of the barriers (including mental ones) that made it difficult for them to find their own place in the British labour market. The approach used made it possible to reduce the number of long-term unemployed in two London boroughs.

The project success is best reflected in the following statistics:

- 100 participants took part in six-hour workshops aimed at understanding their strengths and weaknesses and developing a plan of action for the following months,
- 30 persons continued education after completion of the project,
- 18 participants took up employment within 6 weeks after programme completion,
- 11 participants got employed for the period of at least 6 months.

A lasting result of the program is acquisition and expansion of participants' skills in relation to:

- using computer (using e-mail and the Internet, Word and Excel, etc.)
- writing CVs and cover letters,
- presenting personal abilities and strengths during job interview.

Thus, the chances of the programme participants of finding employment significantly increased.

Strengths

The greatest strength of the program initiated by the New Challenge was the involvement of many organizations. This enabled providing the participants with comprehensive, specialist and on-going support. One of the most valuable initiatives was establishing cooperation with employers. They had a chance to explore the potential of older long-term unemployed people covered by the program. In eleven cases, the contact resulted in employing the project participants for a longer period.

Without a doubt, one of the decisive factors of the programme's success was the implemented "one to one" method, which facilitated personal selection of content and adjustment of workshops and courses to the individual needs of participants.

Recommendations

The success of the *Experience Counts 50+* encourages to continue the programme and to expand it by other recipient groups. The particularly valuable element, that should be popularised, is an individual approach to each of the persons supported, in accordance with the principle of one-to-one work. This is very important especially for customers who are in an exceptionally difficult position and who in addition to old age have a disability or low skills. Restrictions in relation to popularisation of the program might involve relatively high costs of implementation and a considerable time-consumingness.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

Solutions implemented in *New Challenge* can, and even should be, popularised in Poland. Their effectiveness for the activation of the long-term unemployed may become a great example of public employment services (PES), which in this case should work closely with JOPS. The barrier that significantly hinders their wider use in the Polish conditions is high cost of implemented actions. What is more, individual approach to each of the project participants requires time and properly trained staff (trainers, career advisors). It seems, therefore, that establishing cooperation of PES with NGOs, in the framework of jointly implemented projects, would contribute to popularisation of British solutions (e.g. with support of the EU funds). The current organization of PES, their financial resources, tools available to career advisors and staff limitations make the full transition of *New Challenge* experiences to Polish reality can be exceptionally challenging.

Case description UK 2

▶ Name of the project

Unlocking the Potential of People over 50

Unlocking the Potential of People over 50

▶ Institution carrying out the project

Project leader:

PISCES Group, United Kingdom (Pisces West Midlands)

Partners:

The West Midlands Leaders Board

Skills Funding Agency West Midlands

Black Country Learning Academy (BCLA)

Prince's Initiative for Mature Enterprise (PRIME)

UK Online Centres

Electroville

▶ Source of project funding

European Social Fund

West Midlands Leaders Board

Skills Funding Agency

▶ Value of the project £ 9,000 (around € 10,700)

▶ Term of the project 30.10.2009 – 30.04.2010

▶ Project realisation area regions: West Midlands; Dudley, Sandwell, Wolverhampton, Walsall

Project type

Piscis West Midlands is one of the fastest growing and innovative social enterprises in the region. In 2011, it carried out projects in cooperation with 27 partners from 15 countries. The “Unlocking the potential of people over 50” initiative emerged from the analysis of the disturbing trends taking place in the local labour market. In 2009, from among the economically active population of West Midlands, aged 50 or more, nearly 80% people were unemployed. Due to the high cost of living and limited possibilities of commuting to cities (poorly developed public transport) the inhabitants of rural areas were in a particularly difficult situation.

The project presented was designed to enable older people (50+) to return to the labour market through improving their skills or retraining.

Project characteristics

The beneficiaries of the project were 144 unemployed aged over 50 from West Midlands region. They were involved in special training programmes. In collaboration with NGOs, a series of two-day workshops and seminars was carried where participants could develop their skills in relation to using the computer, reading, writing and CVs preparation according to the expectations of potential employers. In addition, those involved in the program had the opportunity to learn about methods of stress relief (relaxation techniques) and the concept of healthy eating. During individual conversations with experts, the project beneficiaries could also determine their professional potential and plan their further career path.

Effects

The most important results of the project involve the improvement of chances of the unemployed aged over 50 years to re-enter the labour market. This was achieved through development of basic competences (reading, writing, CV creation) and providing the opportunities to acquire new skills during twelve two-day workshops, conducted in six villages and towns (in the region of Wolverhampton and Black Country). The participants were also involved in professional counselling which enabled defining strengths and weaknesses of each of them individually.

Strengths

The success of the project was based on establishing extensive collaboration of Pisces West Midlands with local NGOs and other partners. Effectiveness of the implemented solutions and good adaptation of them to the needs of beneficiaries was greatly supported by the fact that the project leader had great knowledge of the situation on the local labour market. This enabled providing quick assistance to those who needed it most.

Another advantage of the project was to continuous monitoring of its implementation. Systematic assessments of the project targets fulfilment made it possible to immediately respond to potentially emerging difficulties.

Recommendations

The success of initiatives such as the West Midlands Pisces is highly dependent on media support. The described solutions have been widely presented both in the local press and in the nationwide media (BBC channel on TV). Another important factor of the success of similar projects is combining them with national programmes on the labour market and preventive care. For this purpose, it seems necessary to establish cooperation of project implementers with public administration.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

Presented British solutions are worth popularisation in Poland. Possibility of popularising them, however, to a great extent depends on the effectiveness of domestic social economy institutions, which still is not fully satisfactory. It seems necessary, therefore, to continue supporting these organizations (especially in terms of competences) and to encourage local cooperation. As the experience of Pisces West Midlands show, only collaboration of different institutions in order to increase professional activity of older people can bring significant and lasting benefits.

Case description UK 3

▶ Name of the project

WorkAge – Extending Working Lives

WorkAge – Extending Working Lives

▶ Institution carrying out the project

Project leader:

York College

Partners in United Kingdom:

Older Workers Employment Network (OWEN)

Prince's Initiative for Mature Enterprise (PRIME)

Age UK

Bavidge Consulting Ltd.

Future Years

The Back To Work Company

Foreign partners:

E-Quality Foundation, Hungary

Investor – Training Services, Poland

▶ Source of project funding

 European Social Fund

▶ Value of the project

 £497,954 (around € 590,000)

▶ Term of the project

 01.06.2009 – 31.05.2012

▶ Project realisation area

 region: Humberside, North and West Yorkshire

Project type

The project was based on an innovative approach aimed at increasing and maintaining economic activity of people aged over 50 (especially those who are unemployed or at risk of redundancy) in Humberside as well as North and West Yorkshire regions. The worked out solutions served to promote the idea of age management among employers and to encourage them to retaining older, experienced workers within the company for as long as possible. This requires a commitment from both the entrepreneurs and the older staff. Employers need to change the approach to the employment of older people, to recognize their potential and create the conditions necessary for the effective performance of tasks (solutions in the field of ergonomics, courses and trainings for the employees aged 50+). From the elderly, on the other hand, it can be expected that they will commit to the process of lifelong learning, be open to new challenges and ready to adopt a pro-active stance.

Project characteristics

The main beneficiaries of the project were 315 people aged over 50, both the unemployed and the economically inactive as well as those in employment but at potential risk of redundancy. The participants could take part in workshops, prepared according to their needs, during which they had the opportunity to:

- gain practical skills needed in job search (creating a resume in line with the expectations of an employer, mastering the skills of self-presentation, etc.);

- assess their skills with respect to their usefulness in the job market,
- acquire team work skills,
- to learn about the rules in relation to starting your own business.

Promotion of the idea of age management in the group of employers was greatly supported by the commitment in the project of 43 entrepreneurs from the region, representing various industries. They had the opportunity to carry out an audit in their companies to assess the potential of human resources, taking into account the age of the employees. Guides and bank of good practices in relation to the age management were created for the employers, the aim of which was to become tools that can be used in everyday work. They were to be a source of inspiration and provide new solutions that enable transformation of the existing human resources strategy, in the context of the situation on the local labour market. Employers could take part in courses on specific areas of human resources management with the elements of age management, namely:

- recruitment and selection,
- training, development and promotion,
- flexible time and forms of work,
- adaptation of the workplace to the needs of older workers (ergonomics),
- shaping and changing the attitudes of employees,
- assessment,
- age management strategy.

Effects

Within the framework of the project, among others, Hungarian tools useful in the process of recruitment and evaluation of competencies were adapted to British needs and they are currently being used by many companies from Humberside, North and West Yorkshire regions. What is more, the tools of human resources assessment were developed in terms of their potential in relation to age. Moreover, the employers also can avail of a practical guide on how to build trust in the company and how to implement age management strategies as well as a good practices database that they can use in their work in the following years.

Older unemployed or those at risk of losing their jobs, in addition to the extended support provided to them in order to help them develop their skills, were also offered an opportunity to take part in the programme to facilitate setting up and running their own business. The approach used in the project contributed to the improvement of the situation of people aged 50+ in the local labour market and changed the way older workers are perceived by employers.

Strengths

One of the main strengths of the project was involvement of various groups in the process of implementation. Apart from the representatives of scientific world, also the NGOs and, what should be emphasized, the employers, joined in the project activities. That allowed to increase the interest of entrepreneurs in the idea of age management and contributed to breaking stereotypes in relation to older workers, through providing convincing scientific arguments. Moreover, thanks to the project, the employers received a set of practical tools for age management.

Support for older jobseekers and the unemployed, while simultaneously increasing knowledge of the employers on the benefits of age management, helped to bring about real changes in the local labour market.

Recommendations

An example of the "WorkAge" project indicates that on a European scale it is beneficial to strengthen cooperation between countries of different traditions and cultures. In addition to the most popular transfer of knowledge - from the west to the east of the continent, the benefits can be achieved through the over-standard approach that takes into account the opposite direction. Hungarian tool to support the recruitment and the assessment of competence proved to be useful in daily operation of many British businesses and is still gaining in popularity.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

Initiatives under the project fully deserve to be popularised in Poland. However, there are a number of barriers that may hinder fast popularisation.

It seems that the project should be particularly interesting for the public employment services. Full implementation of the project requires, however, a more individualized training offer, considering the age of the unemployed and those at risk of losing their job. Due to the high costs of proposed solutions, it is advisable to acquire European funds for the development and implementation of training programmes of this kind. The same also applies to the development offer another determinant of success of popularisation activities seems to derive from establishing and strengthening cooperation between different environments (education and research institutions, non-governmental organizations, public administration and employers), both on the national and international level.

Case description UK 4

▶ Name of the project

Human Resource Policy for All Ages at Barclays'

Human Resource Policy for All Ages at Barclays'

▶ Institution carrying out the project

Barclays PLC

▶ Source of project funding

own

▶ Value of the project

no data

▶ Term of the project

no data

▶ Project realisation area

within the company

Project type

Barclay's company is an international financial institution. In 1990s the British branch of the corporation had to face the problem of key skills and knowledge resources loss because of manpower reduction, which mostly affected older employees. The management of the company, trying to avoid similar mistakes in the future, decided to create a proprietary program aimed at efficient age management. The aim was to create a team of workers that is diverse in terms of age and competence teams. A balance between the different age groups of employees was to be achieved. For this purpose a system of incentives was implemented, directed to senior staff members, the aim of which was to extend professional activity of seniors (also beyond retirement age).

The company also strived to build the image of the organization that appreciates all employees, regardless of their age.

Project characteristics

The main beneficiaries of the project were employees aged over 50. In order to better adjust the age management strategy that was being developed to the needs of older staff members, the company conducted a "Working to 70" survey. The aim of the survey was to understand the expectations of this group of workers and the factors affecting their motivation to stay in business despite advancement in years. The attempts were made to determine the main problems the older workers struggle with. To identify them, an opinion survey was conducted among the employees, in the form of an anonymous questionnaire.

Another component of the project was to carry out the review, evaluation and analysis of the company's human resources policy, including the ways it affects workers from different age groups.

The company management has taken a number of initiatives (e.g. providing information through the company's Intranet), meant to increase awareness of the benefits resulting from age diversity of work teams among those responsible for recruiting as well as other employees of the company.

Some of the company's divisions were reorganised, e.g. in Barclays call-centre, with mostly young staff so far, older people were also employed. Additionally, members of corporate teams responsible for recruiting were joined by those aged over 60.

The company wanted to be perceived as an employer who is friendly towards all persons, regardless of their age. For this purpose, "No age barriers" advertising campaign was conducted in order to encourage people aged over 50 to work at Barclays.

Pay system was also rebuilt so that senior staff members could combine their remuneration with retirement pay.

Effects

Thanks to complex solutions carried out, the company achieved its planned goal - it managed to create a team made up of different generations of workers. As a result of the changes, number of people aged over 50 employed by the company exceeded number of younger workers aged below 21. Within two years of project implementation, the organization hired 400 people aged over 55 (some of them were over 60), and 61% of the employees who had reached retirement age (60 years), decided to continue employment.

A major advantage of Barclay's approach was overcoming mental barriers of older workers who now want to remain professionally active for as long as possible and have stronger motivation and job satisfaction.

Strengths

The factors that distinguish the described project from others are its scale and complexity. Many different forms of actual implementation of age management solutions within the company were used. Information about the actions taken and their significance was conveyed not only to the employees of the company, but also outside the company, which allows to include this initiative in a group of socially responsible projects.

Finally, a great advantage of the solutions implemented at Barclays was that they were preceded by meticulous analysis and research, which made it possible to assess if the changes about to be introduced are needed and to adapt them to the needs of the company and its staff.

Recommendations

The experiences of Barclays to the large extent can be used by those organizations that recognize the importance of age management, or in a broader context, of diversity management. Getting through with the information on the benefits of orienting human capital management (HCM) strategies and organizational culture to the promotion of diversity and knowledge sharing requires taking up education and popularisation actions in relation to entrepreneurs.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

The project presented deserves to be popularized in Poland; however, due to relatively high costs of its implementation in a form chosen by Barclays, it would be easier to be implemented by large enterprises. Small and medium companies can consider it a source of inspiration and implement the chosen solutions in a slightly lesser extent.

Popularisation of solutions for the creation of a staff teams, made up by representatives of different generations, will be possible only when the Polish employers will grasp the idea of age management. Such examples as the one quoted, indicating negative consequences of ne-

glecting this factor, which might lead even to destabilization of the entire company, may be an important argument in the discourse on the significance of age management. Popularisation of knowledge on the benefits of creating staff teams which are diverse in terms of age, ways of work reorganisation and reconstruction of HCM and organisation culture strategy should be supported by employers' organizations and public administration.

Case description UK 5

▶ Name of the project

Flexible Routeways

Flexible Routeways

▶ Institution carrying out the project

Project leader:

Working Links organisation from Sheffield, United Kingdom (Working Links Sheffield)

Project partners in United Kingdom:

Critical Skills

BEST

Mansfield & Ashfield YWCA: Mansfield & Sutton Delivery

FRWs Human Resources

Kamyabi

AWP/Steps Training

Nottingham Training Enterprise

Unique Social Enterprises

Nottingham Women's Centre

In Training, Renewal Trust

Getting Into Work

ODEF

Bestwood Directions

Meadows Partnership Trust

Co-operative Community Action

Enable: Learning Champions

Mansfield CVS

▶ **Source of project funding** European Social Fund

▶ **Value of the project** £ 5,600,000 (around € 6,600,000)

▶ **Term of the project** 23.06.2008 – 23.06.2011

▶ **Project realisation area** East Midlands region, county Nottinghamshire

Project type

Working Links is one of the UK British implementers of the government Work Programme in England, Scotland and Wales. The organization aims at life quality improvement of the community through supporting employment, carrying out training sessions and developing skills. East Midlands is a region inhabited by a community representing many cultures. More than 30 different languages are used there on a daily basis. The region is also affected by high unemployment, often spreading over few generations within one family. What is more, for years East Midlands is placed in high position in the inglorious rankings of criminal activity.

The aim of Flexible Routeways project was to change the face of the region by providing assistance aimed at professional activation of different groups of the unemployed.

The scale and scope of planned actions needed to involve many local institutions in the implementation of the project, particularly non-governmental organizations from the area of Nottinghamshire, which are familiar with problems of the region.

Project characteristics

The project was directed to the unemployed, those who are professionally inactive and those at risk of redundancy. Particular care was applied to those at risk of social exclusion:

- inhabitants aged over 50.
- offenders and those who served time in jail,
- those with low skills,
- the long-term unemployed.

19,000 people in total received support, 4,500 of whom were expected to enter the labour market even before the end of the project.

Flexible Routeways participants were provided with individualised assistance, consisting in participation in workshops carried out on one-to-one basis (one participant and one coach), which provided advice on how to overcome difficulties in the labour market. It is worth noting that among the coaches there were people aged over 50, who could better understand the needs of their peers as well as experts familiar with culture and languages of the Asian countries. During training sessions, the participant had the opportunity to evaluate their skill potential and develop a plan of action, including realistic goals for themselves that consider the specificity of the local labour market. The big challenge was to convince the long-term unemployed that, especially those coming from families which did have a paid employment for few generations, finding a job is very important, and being an active participant in the labour market is beneficial. This group of project beneficiaries were offered training aimed at increasing their self-confidence and motivation to seek work.

Flexible Routeways participants gained also the skills, which are very useful when applying for a job, namely ability to prepare a resume and cover letters, or to present one's strengths during job interviews.

Local entrepreneurs were also involved in the project, which led to a better mutual understanding of needs by the employers and the jobseekers.

Those who took up employment during the programme could avail of further support in the workplace.

The team working within the framework of "Employment Solutions Team" programme was to obtain suitable job offers and to create a database of potential customers. Advisors working in the team were in constant contact (by phone or directly, depending on customer needs) both with the employer and the participants of the project, even if the participant had found an employment.

Effects

Among the most important results of the project are: professional activation of those community members who are in a particularly difficult situation in the labour market, being at risk of social exclusion. Thanks to the support received, some of the programme participants found jobs, and most of them had the opportunity to evaluate and develop their skills and create a realistic job search plan that takes into account the needs of employers and the person's personal situation. The project also contributed to changing the way in which the employers perceive those residents of the region who are at risk of marginalization.

In addition, the network of contacts, established under the programme between different organizations, made it possible to obtain reliable information on the most urgent problems of the

region and on effective solutions to these. This enabled the beneficiaries to access the services in offer - the institutions involved in the project had a number of smaller organisational units in the region.

It can be expected that the established cooperation will bring about in the future similarly effective initiatives as "Flexible Routeways".

Strengths

The element that distinguishes the project from other initiatives for the unemployed is the fact that it concentrates on those whose position in the labour market is particularly difficult, i.e. the elderly, immigrants, people who had conflicts with law, long-term unemployed, including those coming from the families in which lack of work had been experienced for several generations. The individualisation of the training offer and involvement of the coaches aged over 50, who have a broad knowledge of different cultures and traditions specific to them, is strength of the project presented.

It was also important to incorporate employers, for whom it was an opportunity to revise their views about the people representing the disfavoured groups.

Recommendations

The project included a number of initiatives, the particularly valuable and worth popularisation of which was providing support to people returning to the labour market in the first month after they had found a job. The initial period of work for person who had experienced long-term unemployment is particularly difficult. Providing specialist support to such people helps them to adjust to new environment and makes it more likely that the person will stay in employment for longer time.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

As with many other initiatives carried out in the UK, also in this project a strong emphasis was put on individualized offer for the beneficiaries. Although this approach, being the most effective, should be popularised in Poland, it should be noted that the implementation costs of such solutions are very high. Difficulties in obtaining funds can be a significant barrier to the implementation of projects modelled on the "Flexible Routeways" programme.

The success of such initiatives, so greatly needed in our country, to a great extent depends on the cooperation between various institutions and social groups. In Poland, however, such cooperation is not very common. In order to deal with this factor, which limits the possibility of implementing presented solutions, efforts should be made to encourage public administration, NGOs, entrepreneurs and academic groups to carry out together the activities aimed at improving the situation of those who are marginalized in the labour market.

„Mediterranean way“

Case description IT 1

▶ **Name of the project**

Recruitment and Flexible Work Practices. Age management

Reclutamento e modalità di lavoro flessibili. Gestione dell'età in azienda

Recruitment and Flexible Work Practices. Age Management

▶ **Institution carrying out the project** Coop Adriatica Scrl

▶ **Source of project funding** own

▶ **Value of the project** no data

▶ **Term of the project** no data

▶ **Project realisation area** within the company

Project type

Project implemented by Coop Adriatica - one of the largest Italian cooperative associations that incorporate businesses operating in the field of retail trade - is an example of effective solutions for the activation of people who are at risk of social exclusion (women aged over 45). Majority of workers in cooperative associations, operating in four Italian regions (Emilia Romagna, Veneto, Marche and Abruzzo), are women. The management of Coop Adriatica found out, however, that those employed under permanent contracts are mostly young people. The company, with a wish to develop, and at the same time without large training budget, was looking for people who already have professional experience. Bearing this in mind, in 1995 the organization decided to undertake a training program called *Retravaille*, co-financed by the ESF, addressed to 15 women who had left the labour market before reaching the retirement age. From the group of 15 programme participants, 8 got employed in Coop Adriatica, and some of them were aged over 45.

The success of the project resulted in it being continued and expanded with new initiatives in the following years.

Project characteristics

The first of the programs carried out changed the way in which older workers were perceived by the management of the cooperative association. Their potential and high skills were noticed. As a result, the successive initiatives undertaken by the company were directed to a group of women aged over 45.

Coop Adriatica decided to rebuild its human resources management strategy, which previously favoured younger workers. The changes related both to the recruitment processes as well as promotion and rewards. In 1999, the Coop Adriatica company implemented new rules for the promotion of workers, which were not based on age. During 2001 a pilot project was carried out to increase the flexibility of working time. Not only company's expectations were taken into consideration but also the ones of the employees. Thanks to the project, the staff (checkout

operators) of the cooperative association had the opportunity to create their own work plan for a period of five weeks, better suited to their needs. This initiative was highly appreciated by the workers, especially older ones, because it enabled them to reconcile their professional and family lives.

Effects

The most important result of the first project of the cooperative association is the complete change of the management's stance towards recruit people aged over 45. In the following years after completion of the project, the company consistently took on older women - between 1996 and 2004, the Coop Adriatica gave jobs (on permanent or short-term contracts) to 124 people aged over 45.

Further initiatives aimed at adopting a flexible working time allowed the organization to reduce overtime and increase the number of staff who will stay with the company for longer, employed on permanent contracts. In addition, the implemented solutions, thanks to the way they enabled older workers to reconcile work and family life, contributed to a significant increase in workers' commitment and job satisfaction.

The success of actions directed to older workers encouraged the cooperative association to continue the programme in the future. The company wishes to focus mainly on the implementation of new instruments of improving the employees' motivation.

Strengths

The advantage of the implemented solutions is the fact that the changes introduced did not result from imposed requirements (e.g. in relation to the modification of existing legislation). The management of Coop Adriatica recognized themselves the potential of older workers and decided that reconstruction of human resources management system is necessary. An important advantage of the presented project was also the increase in motivation of employees aged over 45, thanks to taking into consideration the needs of the employees in modified HRM system. Finally, the actions carried out locally contributed to the increase in professional activity of women, who despite the fact that they had not yet reached retirement age, had problems with finding their place in the labour market.

Recommendations

The experiences of Coop Adriatica can serve as an example for other cooperative associations, including those operating in Poland. The success of such initiatives, however, depends largely on changing the management's approach towards older workers. Therefore, it is necessary to consistently carry out informational and educational actions in order to break stereotypes in relation to workers aged over 45.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

The project presented can be successfully implemented in Poland. This initiative is all the more valuable so that also in the Polish cooperative associations the considerable percentage of workers is older people, especially women. However, the initiative can also be implemented in other organizations with similar age structure of staff. The most important barrier to the popularisation of the practice may result from the reluctance of employers to introduce

changes. It can be caused both by the fact that the potential of older workers is not appreciated as well as from the necessity of carrying out the in-depth analyses of the situation within the company, its competence needs and available resources. Although it should consequently lead to creation of a long-term strategy of the company, some companies, especially small, withdraw from taking such attempts because of time and financial limitations.

Case description IT 2

▶ Name of the project

Retirement Policy, Redeployment. Age management

Politica pensionistica, riorganizzazione del lavoro. Gestione dell'età in azienda

Retirement Policy, Redeployment. Age Management

▶ Institution carrying out the project Michelin Italy SpA

▶ Source of project funding own

▶ Value of the project no data

▶ Term of the project 2004 – 2005

▶ Project realisation area within the company

Project type

In 1991, Michelin Italy, in view of the need to reduce employment, created remedial programme directed to all affected workers, regardless of their age or sex. In the framework of the programme a number of measures were introduced to retain workers (especially older ones) in the labour market - including the possibility of finding employment in the companies that are part of Michelin group. The employees who had been made redundant could also avail of special development and programmes and counselling services.

The aim of this initiative was to reduce employment without disturbing the working environment and to maintain a positive image of the company as a socially responsible employer.

Project characteristics

The solutions developed years ago are, with the emerging business needs, expanded by new activities. For example, in 2004 the company was forced to cease production at its plant in Trento. As a result of this decision, 85 employees of the company were to lose their jobs. For that reason, the management of Michelin Italy began to create a new social plan, addressed to a group of workers at risk of unemployment. At the end of 2004, in the presence of trade union representatives and industry institutions, the company signed an agreement with the works council under which the company, at his own expense, was to facilitate the transition of affected workers to other companies operating within the Michelin group and beyond. The accepted social plan was to:

- alleviate social impact of ceasing employment in the company,
- facilitate transition of workers to new positions and other divisions of Michelin group by means of organising and bearing the full cost of the transfer (relocation costs and assistance in finding new accommodation),
- help employees to find new jobs by gaining new skills thanks to the training offered by Michelin,
- encourage employees to become freelancers and help them find their way in a new professional role.

In the adopted social plan special support was offered to older workers for whom staying in the labour market could be especially difficult. They were given additional guidance and op-

portunity to participate in a training program. The companies that decided to take on (either for an indefinite period of time or until the employee reaches the retirement age) older persons, dismissed by Michelin, could avail of economic incentive system.

Moreover, the older workers at pre-retirement age got financial support. They also were given the opportunity to get a loan on favourable terms (for three years, interest-free, without financial guarantee requirement).

Effects

Thanks to the social plan of 2004, 71 of 85 employees of Michelin Italy were successfully transferred. Most of them remained in the same industry and found jobs in the local production companies. Some underwent a retraining and took a job in service industry. The company, however, failed to protect against unemployment 14 women affected by redundancies.

In total, in the period observed, 385 employees of Michelin group affected by staff reduction found other jobs. 120 people aged 55 or more remained in the work force until retirement age.

Strengths

The solutions implemented by Michelin made it possible for the company to maintain the image of a good, socially responsible employer, despite necessary staff reductions. The support, given by the company to its employees, not only made it possible to significantly reduce stress experienced by staff because of company's reorganization, but also allowed to avoid a significant increase in unemployment in the region.

Recommendations

Despite many advantages of the approach presented by Michelin, the practice adopted by the company is not commonly used by other organizations. It seems that this situation could be significantly improved if a greater group of entrepreneurs appreciated benefits of carrying out actions that are socially responsible. Popularisation of information on good practices in this respect, especially those implemented in the acclaimed recognizable companies, could lead to increase of entrepreneurs' interest in the idea of CSR (*Corporate Social Responsibility*).

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

The model of manpower reduction, used by Michelin, is worth popularisation among Polish companies that face similar problems. It enables the organisation to maintain a relationship with highly competent individuals. Moreover, despite necessary reductions, the position of a company as a good employer was not weakened. Solution presented, due to their high costs and requirement for the company to have extended network of contacts with other companies (in this case, within Michelin Group and beyond), can rather be implemented in large organizations. Smaller companies, particularly micro and small businesses, usually opt for staff reduction only in extreme situations, when the functioning of the whole business is in danger. Concern for the fate of the employees who had been made redundant in such situation is not a common attitude of the owners and management of the companies.

Case description IT 3

▶ Name of the project

Case Study on Training and Development. Age management

Formazione e sviluppo – studio di un caso. Gestione dell'età in azienda

Case Study on Training and Development. Age Management

▶ Institution carrying out the project

 API Raffinera di Ancona SpA

▶ Source of project funding

 own

▶ Value of the project

 no data

▶ Term of the project

 2004 – 2009

▶ Project realisation area

 within the company

Project type

Occupational career model at the API refinery was the same for years. The company employed young workers who stayed with it for years, often until they reached retirement age. Significant percentage of the staff were people aged over 45. Older workers were therefore respected for their experience, which was perceived by the management as crucial due to the nature of API operations. The company is strongly hierarchical, where usually older workers with years of experience hold positions that require greater responsibility. This approach results in continuous self-improvement and development of older workers. First training project were implemented by the company already in 1990s.

With raising the retirement age in Italy (in years 2004-2007) the refinery management decided to involve the senior staff members in special training programs. This way API placed emphasis on lifelong learning, in order to prevent potential discrimination against people aged over 45 the knowledge of whom could have got outdated.

Project characteristics

All employees of the company, regardless of their age and sex, have equal access to training. Lifelong learning programs include topic related to:

- technical problems and those specific to a given profession - courses on safety and environment protection as well as training session on how to use new tools and equipment;
- acquisition of "soft" competencies, including administration and team management, human relations, communication, team building, etc.

Employees can participate in one or more training modules. Each employee in every three months has to undergo a technical and professional training as well as training on safety and environmental protection.

The group of training programme's recipients was expanded by managers who initially were not involved in the programme.

Effects

Positive results encouraged API to annually increase its training budget. Training programmes initiated in the 1990s have now become part of professional life of each API employee. Older

staff members appreciate the company's approach and treat the courses offered as an opportunity to expand their skill reserve and to consciously build their further occupational career. Training opportunities provided by the company led to an increase in workers' skills and prepared them to cope in crisis situations in relation to safety and environmental protection. For the company, these skills are particularly valuable because of industry specificity. On the other hand, courses on soft skills significantly contributed to making the organizational climate friendlier by improving the relationship between colleagues as well as between superiors and subordinates.

Strengths

The success of the training programmes in API is largely determined by friendly attitude of the company's management towards this initiative. Now it is a standard in the refinery that all its employees are included in the development programmes. What's more, the company strives to constantly expand training offer by new topics.

To involve trade union representatives in the process of programme planning was of great importance for the success of the programme. Thanks to that, the offered training is not only accepted easier by the employees, but also better suited to their needs.

Recommendations

In 2004, the company's management found out that the employees were much more interested in participating in courses on safety and environmental protection as well as the ones that improve technical and professional skills, rather than in those aimed at soft skills development. It might be advisable to hold informational meetings prior to the implementation of similar programs in order to explain to the employees the importance of issues discussed the advantages of participation in a given training and its objectives.

In situation of raising the retirement age, solutions presented might be useful for the oldest part of the staff for whom working on the night shift is already becoming too burdensome. An employer wishing to retain within the company the employees with unique competences, for as long as possible, can avail of a range of solutions. As the example of API shows, to increase complexity of the measures implemented, it is recommended to expand them by those in relation to work time flexibility. The company had already noticed that problem. For that reason, it was decided that people approaching retirement age will not be working on night shifts or will be delegated to other less demanding tasks.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

The solutions implemented by API can be successfully transferred to Polish conditions. To make it possible, however, the awareness of the employers should be improved in relation to the benefits of staff lifelong learning and age management. Due to relatively high costs of organizational changes implementation and of providing all workers with access to an extended training package, it seems that API example can be followed mainly by large organizations. The practices presented, in view of their nature, might be of greater interest of the businesses that put emphasis on employment stability and retaining an employee within the company for as long as possible the longest possible (when a significant proportion of staff has a long length of service in the organization).

Due to the progressive aging of the population, the promotion of lifelong learning in Poland is a significant challenge, worth to be supported. Expansion of the group of people aged over 50, who are likely to remain professionally active for many years to come, requires constant adjustment of their powers to changing market conditions. The Italian solutions presented follow this path.

Case description IT 4

▶ Name of the project

Health and Well-Being, and Active Retirement Policy

Salute e benessere, politica pensionistica attiva.

Health and Well-Being, and Active Retirement Policy

▶ Institution carrying out the project Ferrero SpA

▶ Source of project funding own

▶ Value of the project no data

▶ Term of the project no data

▶ Project realisation area within the company

Project type

The project presented in the case study was own initiative of the Italian Ferrero company. For years the company has done all its best to maintain good relations with employees and to create friendly, almost family-like atmosphere in the workplace. The management of Ferrero appreciates older workers with long years of service within the organization. At one of its factories (Alba), which employs 3,900 staff (49% of whom were women; 25% of the staff were aged 45 or more), the company implemented solutions to improve health of the employees and to increase attention to their well-being. The services offer provided by the employer was available to all employees, regardless of their age and gender. At the same time, the company put great emphasis to caring for the welfare of workers at every stage of their professional life until they reach retirement age. For the sake of older workers Ferrero Foundation was created by the company, with an extended offer of cultural events, available both to current employees and the retired members of staff.

Project characteristics

The initial initiatives, aimed at improving the well-being of the employees, were undertaken by the company many years before. They focused mainly on caring for health of the staff. Ferrero made it possible for older workers to access health services in the workplace. The staff of the factory has 24-hour access to doctor and nurses who work on site and perform simple, free-of-charge laboratory services and vaccinations. The costs of more complex treatments were also initially borne by the employer. Over time, the offer was extended to all the employees and therefore the total expenditure for this purpose was so high that it was decided to limit the reimbursement of treatment to exceptionally serious cases. All the staff, especially its senior members, willingly avails of the company's medical coffer. What is more, the company implemented solutions to maintain contact with retired employees who had stayed in the company for at least 25 years. And mainly to them, to a large extent, the initiatives of Ferrero Foundation, created in 1983, are addressed. They belong to the range of actions with regards to corporate social responsibility and building the image of a good employer. The management of the Foundation is mostly composed of retired employees.

The oldest factory workers are also covered by special training programmes designed to prepare them for a smooth completion of professional career in view of retirement. During the training, those ceasing their careers got acquainted with new areas of activity available to the elderly. These activities include cultural programmes and the projects undertaken by Ferrero Foundation, related to art and social work. Retired employees are therefore encouraged to remain active through involvement in activities of the Foundation.

Effects

Actions taken by Ferrero made the company a recognizable employer, who cares for its employees, not only when they are professionally active, but also after they reach retirement age. Thanks to such image, the company is attracting new employees who share its values and can count on the commitment and loyalty of the staff. Staff turnover at the factory has been low for many years.

Also the number of people who avail of cultural offer of the Foundation is impressive. About 1500 of retired Ferrero employees regularly participate in artistic activities undertaken by the company and actively join them. Thus, the company significantly improves the well-being of the retired employees, supporting their activity in other fields than professional life. On the other hand, the concerns of those members of the staff who are approaching retirement age are lessened. Fear of the unknown was significantly reduced among the employees as they are aware of the existence of interesting alternatives to professional work.

The success of activities directed to retired employees encouraged Ferrero to make attempts to extend the offer of the Foundation to the group of people that are still professionally active, and had stayed within the company for at least 25 years. The company plans to put this idea into practice in the nearest future.

Strengths

The advantage of the solution introduced by Ferrero is the increase of employees' commitment by providing them with additional benefits package. Strong motivation to work in a company can result in higher efficiency of individual work and consequently the whole company. An important advantage of the described practice is not only to carry out actions aimed at improving physical health of employees, but also to ensure their well-being. This approach helps to keep employees in the company despite their advanced age. At the same time, cultural and social activity of the foundation operating at the company strengthens the position of Ferrero in the region and motivates more people to take up employment in the company.

Recommendations

Ferrero's experiences highlight the importance of investing in health and welfare of employees. Age management programs need to consider, apart from medical services they offer, the instruments to support cultural and social development as well as social and civic activity of the employees.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

The project presented was very beneficial for the company. It should be noted, however, that its implementation incurred significant costs to be borne by the organization. For this reason,

although there are no institutional and cultural barriers to the potential implementation of described practices in Poland, the possibility of their popularisation in domestic enterprises raises many doubts. The full implementation of the solutions used successfully in Ferrero will be affordable only to the largest and wealthiest companies. For organizations in the SME sector, especially small companies, this task may be too costly. It seems, however, that in a smaller version, for example, limited to providing funding of health services and cultural activities, the presented solutions are likely to get accepted by a larger group of Polish companies.

Case description IT 5

▶ Name of the project

Job Recruitment and Flexible Work Practices. Age management

Reclutamento e modalità di lavoro flessibili. Gestione dell'età in azienda

Job Recruitment and Flexible Work Practices. Age Management

▶ Institution carrying out the project L'Incontro Cooperative

▶ Source of project funding own

▶ Value of the project no data

▶ Term of the project since 1992

▶ Project realisation area Castelfranco Veneto

Project type

Founded in 1991, L'Incontro social cooperative manages 11 institutions created to rehabilitate people with mental disorders and those at risk of social exclusion. The offer includes care services (home care for the elderly and those who suffer from mental illness) and occupational therapy workshops. The cooperative also runs a business in the field of installation of electrical and electronic equipment and the production, processing and marketing of local agricultural products.

Apart from members of the cooperative, the institution employs teachers-therapists who conduct art classes. In 1992, the management board of L'Incontro was looking for employees with relevant skills needed to carry out occupational therapy and provided health services. Due to financial constraints, attracting young workers, who could choose from a greater choice of jobs, was almost impossible. For this reason, members of the cooperative decided to start recruiting highly qualified people at retirement age. This made it possible to improve the quality of services provided by the cooperative and prevented the deactivation of older people in the region.

Project characteristics

Initially, recruiting was mainly applied to candidates aged over 45 with medical education. In 1992, 20 professional nurses were employed who had exercised the option of early retirement. In the following year, the program was extended to the elderly, with professional experience in production companies and skills to perform their work as an art teacher (the person involved in the rehabilitation of people with psychosocial problems through conducting artistic classes). The newly employed people were offered flexible working hours to facilitate adjusting timetables to individual needs and abilities of an employee. The cooperative uses the model of part-time work in the form of contracts and diverse working shifts; also, daily and weekly rosters are prepared.

Effects

Within the decade, L'Incontro increased the number of art teachers from 20 to 130 people. The average age of art teachers is 63-64 years, and the staff-members of the cooperative - 43 years. The recruitment of highly qualified people at the retirement age has brought many benefits to the cooperative. It contributed to a significant improvement of quality of services and allowed to extend the offer of the cooperative, thanks to knowledge and unique skills of new employees. It was also possible to expand the cooperative's business and strengthen its co-operation with other companies.

In addition, L'Incontro gained people who were strongly committed, seeking to maintain economic activity despite reaching retirement age.

The project's success encouraged the cooperative to go on with it. The rules of recruiting people at the retirement age are still observed at L'Incontro. Thanks to that, on the one hand, it was possible to activate people who, as it seemed, had finished their professional careers, on the other hand, highly skilled older workers, using their knowledge and skills, were able to provide professional support to people at risk of social exclusion.

Strengths

The strategy of L'Incontro allowed to win round people with unique competences on a very limited budget that the company had at its disposal for this purpose. The project has helped to improve the quality of services provided by the cooperative and expand their scope. It also contributed to the increase of activity of the elderly, and thanks to satisfaction they felt because of that, their psychophysical condition improved as well.

Recommendations

The changing environment of the cooperative requires meeting new challenges. This means that the existing recruitment strategy, which enables the employment of people with wide competences, had stopped being useful. The cooperative will have to focus on the candidates specialized in specific, narrow areas.

At the same time, the fact a portion of the cooperative employees that have been working for the company for years reached 70 years of age (especially in the group of art teachers), forced the management to look for even more flexible forms of employment and working time. Another challenge is knowledge management in L'Incontro. In order to avoid the loss of knowledge it is necessary to create teams composed of older and younger workers of the cooperative. Only then they will share knowledge with each other and the employees who are leaving will be naturally replaced by the ones that learnt from them.

It may be helpful to develop for each region a list of occupations that are not common and not popular among young people. This could contribute to minimization or even avoidance of such problems as those faced by L'Incontro.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

The solution adopted by the cooperative can be successfully implemented in Poland. Due to the nature of institutions such as L'Incontro, it cannot be expected that this approach become widespread among all companies. However, it can be treated as an example worth imitating by some of the social economy entities operating in the area of unpopular social services. The

initiative of the Italian organization should spread especially among cooperatives operating in Poland, centres and associations of social integration and non-governmental organizations dealing with the labour market. In these institutions, the potential of L'Incontro's solutions can be fully availed of.

Case description ES 1

- ▶ **Name of the project** Plan 45 Plus
- ▶ **Institution carrying out the project** Servicio Andaluz de Empleo
- ▶ **Source of project funding** Europejski Fundusz Społeczny
- ▶ **Value of the project** €104,000 per annum
- ▶ **Term of the project** 2010 – 2013, decree signed in April 2011
- ▶ **Project realisation area** Andalusia region

Project type

The activities were in a form of a programme approved by the royal decree. It is a comprehensive employment program for people aged over 45 in Andalusia, responding to the high unemployment rate of people aged 45+ in the region. The aim was to overcome the difficulties such persons face when they want to enter the labour market. Increasing the chances of this group in the labour market was achieved by offering opportunity to use various forms of training in order to retrain and match skills to the labour market needs.

Project characteristics

Support was offered to people aged over 45, while the preferential conditions related to job-seekers and the long-term unemployed.

The first group of activities carried out consisted in transferring knowledge on the labour market to persons aged 45+ and defining their position in it. Availability of workplaces was assessed. The system of preventing unemployment in Andalusia was created. What is more, this group of actions took into consideration the development of individualized action plans for the beneficiaries. The tools of communication for the improvement of the employment rate were developed.

The second group - training in view of employment - was to prepare for employment through promoting acquisition of knowledge and skills and through forming attitudes that help in individualized action plan implementation. Flexible training was offered, tailored to the real needs - of participants but also of the job market. Participants of the training obtained support in the form of workshops on entrepreneurship, and about 20% places at the courses were left for the unemployed. Training activities were directed to persons aged 45+ only. Each participant received a training grant in the amount not exceeding 75% of IPREM (minimum wage). Participants were also granted the reimbursement of the costs of travel, accommodation and meals. The aim of the workshop was to strengthen entrepreneurship. The role of the workshop was to support the acquisition of knowledge and strategies for self-employment, the topics covered also the issue of corporate social responsibility.

The third group of activities - the promotion of mobility - consisted in providing knowledge, skills and attitudes that facilitate regional, interregional and transnational mobility of people aged 45+.

The fourth group of activities - the promotion of employment - was to encourage and stimulate the labour market and enable changes of professional career direction through acquisitions of new experience. This was achieved by providing the financial resources needed for hiring employees on indefinite period contracts, for projects and public social services, as well as for the employment of people aged 45+ in the field of R & D.

As for the fifth group - the promotion of entrepreneurship - a program offered support for starting own business by people aged 45+ through training and counselling, individual tutoring, and in the form of grants of up to 4,500 euros per person - provided that the newly formed company will act in the emerging sectors or within the framework of so called sustainable economy and will employ at least one person (the maximum amount of funding - 5500 euro, for the projects created by people aged 45+ who create workplaces for women that ensure the reconciliation of work and family roles). The so-called promoter of the project was designated, whose task was to analyse the situation of people aged 45+ in the local labour market.

Effects

It was planned that the program will cover 65,000 unemployed people aged 45+. Since the reporting of public employment services is not carried out separately for targeted programs (including the 45 Plus Plan), it is difficult to perform the quantitative assessment of programme implementation.

The "soft" results include strengthening the entrepreneurial attitudes of people aged 45 + and adapting their skills to the needs of the Andalusia labour market.

Strengths

The strength of the program is its comprehensiveness. Combining training support, counselling, start your own business grants with activities of promotional, disseminating, diagnostic and informational nature increases the chances of employment for those of the specified age group.

Recommendations

The 45 Plus Plan proposes a comprehensive set of actions targeted at people aged 45+. It is carried out concurrently with the program directed to young people in difficult position in the labour market (Plan Motiva). It contains not only the guidelines of a strategic nature, but also the specific operational solutions.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

This program can serve as an inspiration for the Polish government. Taking into account the significant shift of competences in the field of labour market policy at regional and local levels, planned for the period 2014-2020, making use of such solutions, tested in other regions of the EU, is increasingly important. It is important to remember at the same time to ensure the transparency in the allocation of funds under the program, since its absence in case of the practice discussed is considered a serious drawback.

Case description ES 2

▶ Name of the project

EMPLEO SENIOR – Employment of 45-year old

EMPLEO SENIOR – Empleo para mayores de 45 años

EMPLEO SENIOR – Employment of 45-year old

▶ Institution carrying out the project

 La Asociación Empleos Senior, Trabajo y Productividad

▶ Source of project funding

 own

▶ Value of the project

action is not carried out within any specific schedule or budget

▶ Term of the project

 since 2008

▶ Project realisation area

 whole country

Project type

Since 2008, the Empleo Senior association have been conducting activities aimed at combating age discrimination in the labour market.

Project characteristics

The initiative was an innovative project (in 2008 in Spain there were no activities targeted at combating age discrimination). The online platform "Yacimientos de Empleo" ("Work resources") was launched under the project, being a job forum, which is used mainly by the unemployed, but also by those who wish to change their place of work or are at risk of redundancy. Another element was the use and implementation of the Strategic Plan, which included a Communication Plan. Implementers of the initiatives emphasize the importance of co-branding strategies.

Effects

The online platform enables potential creation of more than 120,000 jobs a year.

From the point of view of an individual, a direct result of implemented activities is the ability to re-find their own way into the labour market and to improve the quality of life. At the microeconomic level, the long-term outcome of the project is the increase of revenues to the Social Insurance Company and tax revenues, as well as the fulfilment of the provisions of the existing Constitution of Spain. People aged over 45 years contribute significant experience to companies as well as efficiency and they train young people in their first job, which brings direct benefits to the employers.

Strengths

The strength of the project is the involvement of volunteers, which, with very limited response from public authorities, and thus - the lack of financial support, has enabled providing the free of charge services for the unemployed (neither the founders nor present volunteers do not receive any remuneration for their support and actions taken).

Prestigious organization www.n-economia.com (<http://www.n-economia.com/>) in 2011 awarded a certificate of good practice to the Association.

The initiative got 4 points in PageRank Google rating (quality assessment method of the indexed websites).

Recommendations

Experiences of EmpleoSenior indicate the need to include the evaluation criterion for the employment of people aged over 45 in actions relating to the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), and the company that dismisses and/or does not employ older participants of the labour market should be seen as a “deficient” with regards to its CSR plans. Without eliminating age discrimination it is difficult to talk about the increase of professional activity of older labour market participants. It is therefore important to promote the employment of people aged over 45 among employers, pointing out to their strengths, especially the experience and high efficiency that are the basis of modern organizations development. Breaking stereotypes is necessary to ensure that the company do not laid off people aged 45 +, but do just the opposite, being open to new employees from this age group.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

The described practice can be implemented in Polish conditions. In Poland, there are many labour exchange websites, but rarely are they dedicated to specific target groups. Job offers for people aged 45 or more are presented for example at <http://aktywni45plus.eu> or <http://www.senior.pl>. With regards to preventing discrimination - e.g. against age - it seems that a separate job portal for senior citizens should not be created. There is a lot said about omitting information about the age in job classifieds, but also in the recruitment questionnaires and CVs of the applicants. On the other hand, however, communities representing different groups are eager to use dedicated websites, as they are suitably profiles and better adapted to the needs of a particular group. Similar situation refers to job sites for the elderly in the labour market.

Case description ES 3

▶ Name of the project

People 3.0

Gente 3.0

People 3.0

▶ Institution carrying out the project

Project leader:

Fundación „la Caixa“

Partners:

Xunta de Galicia

Consejería de Asuntos Sociales

▶ Source of project funding own

▶ Value of the project around € 24,000,000

▶ Term of the project since 2010

▶ Project realisation area whole country

Project type

The aim of the project is to promote volunteer work among seniors. The specific objectives of the project consist in strengthening the self-esteem of seniors, preventing social exclusion, promoting social inclusion and a sense and prestige to this stage of life.

Project characteristics

A pioneering program for seniors was introduced, which is being carried out at present (in 2013) in 607 own centres in cooperation with various public institutions. The centres are meeting places of seniors, enabling them to meet other older people, socialize, learn how to take care of their body and mind; they also create the opportunity for transfer of knowledge.

Among the activities carried out there is "Computing and Communication for All" programme, which in 2012, through 598 CiberCaixa centres opened the door to the world of computers and the Internet for elderly. Within the framework of Gente 3.0 project there are computer courses organized that cover such topics as using of the keyboard and mouse, word processing, Internet, software for editing photos and video. The course is carried out in small groups at two-hour sessions twice a week for about 12 weeks.

The Foundation also conducts awareness-raising activities, through organizing conferences, a wide range of courses (including classes at the gym, yoga, healthy eating, digital photography, language courses), reading workshops ("Grandes Lectores" - Great Readers), film forum. In cooperation with RNE and "Together, step by step" the Foundation is organizing a competition for seniors on texts that reflect their view of the world (in 2012 the fifth edition took place), which are circulated in form of publications and radio plays ("Historias de Vida" - Life Stories). "Respiro Familiar" (Respite), is a network of volunteers who provide support to caregivers and families of people affected by neurological disorders. This provides respite to those who care for ill family members, and in the meantime, volunteers offer to their wards a variety of classes (e.g. memory training, reading workshops). "Acción Local" (Local Action) aims to promote vol-

unteering through a network of cooperation with local NGOs. "Proyectos intergeneracionales" (Intergenerational Projects) promote intergenerational relationships through participation and active involvement of seniors in working with children and young people as volunteer work. Within the framework of "CiberCaixa en Centros Penitenciarios" (CiberCaixa in Prisons) seniors volunteers teach young prisoners how to use a computer.

The Foundation's activities also focus on maintaining independence of seniors for as long as possible through workshops, stimulation exercises, etc. Classes are held that aimed at maintaining mental activity - exercise focusing on six areas of cognition, i.e. attention and concentration, memory, visual processing, auditory processing, language, cognitive functions ("ActivaLaMente" - Active Mind). The Foundation also provides transportation services for seniors with limited mobility, enabling the group to participate in the workshop.

The Foundation carries out a programme "Vivienda Aseguible", which aims to promote building of affordable housing for people aged 65+ with the lowest income, however this action is not an element of the project discussed.

Effects

607 "CiberCaixa" centres were created, which are transformed into spaces of social participation of seniors. In 2012, the Foundation activities have benefited more than 630,000 seniors. The project contributes to the improvement of communication, building social relationships preventing isolation and loneliness. It also teaches seniors how to use their memory.

An important result of implemented activities is the development of seniors' volunteer activity. In 2010, senior volunteers support was given to 346 prisoners from six prisons.

Strengths

Seniors, who gained their first experience with computers in "CiberCaixa" courses, get involved as volunteers into the courses on ICT conducted by the Foundation, directed to people with disabilities, immigrants, prisoners and other seniors. They also play the role of animators. The organization uses its extensive experience - it has been carrying out the activities targeted to seniors since 1997 in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection. Seniors are one of the target groups of the activities carried out by the organization. Involving seniors volunteering activates them socially, by supporting at the same time the activities for other disadvantaged groups (children with mental disabilities, migrants, prisoners). Through collaboration with other institutions, including local and central government units, the presence of seniors in the community is promoted. Centres are intended to play integrational role and serve to create "community open space."

Recommendations

Better social involvement of older people - both as beneficiaries of educational activities and as teachers (mentors) of other seniors - brings significant benefits to all sectors of society, organizations and the elderly. It is important to overcome the barriers associated with the digital exclusion of seniors as this is the first step to further activation measures.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

The practice presents a high degree of transferability - the only problem is the issue of applying the activities to the country with large territory, which generates high costs (approximately 24 million euro). Creating from scratch the centres that provide a full range of services for seniors, considering the weakness of the third sector in Poland, would be expensive and it seems that at this stage of development - very difficult. According to the results of the study *Diagnosis of the current situation of women and men aged 50+ on the labour market in Poland*, carried out under "Equal opportunities in the labour market for people aged 50+" project, NGOs rarely focus their activities on this age group (usually diversify range of their actions), offering care or integration support seniors rather than activating them socially. The voluntary commitment of Poles aged 45+ is also poor (among people aged 49-69, only 1.7% got involved in volunteering over the last 24 months, and among people of retirement age, this percentage amounts to around 1.5% for both genders, although it should be noted that interest in volunteering of men is increasing and decreasing in case of women, after reaching the age of 60/65). Also the involvement in social activities is poor (it is presented only by 3.4% of people aged 45-69, including about 4% of men and 2% of women aged 60/65 +). The potential for implementation is large, and in view of the growing interest of seniors in the universities of the third age, it is recommended to attempt to develop, basing on them, the "be-to-be" volunteering (senior volunteers, who have necessary skills, teach other seniors how to use computer, conduct reading workshops and memory training). Such action will not be on such a large scale as those carried out in the presented good practice, however, their applicability may be equally high. The actions of this type may also be initiated and promoted as part of the social franchise. An alternative would be to create the institution of an "umbrella" nature, supporting the already existing local organizations of seniors.

Case description ES 4

▶ Name of the project

Employment – Innova

Empleo – Innova

Employment – Innova

▶ Institution carrying out the project

Concejalía de Educación, Consumo y Empleo, Ayuntamiento de Granada

▶ Source of project funding

European Social Fund

▶ Value of the project

€ 162,000

▶ Term of the project

10.01.2010 – 31.03.2012

▶ Project realisation area

Granada

Project type

The aim of the project was the analysis, development and transfer of interventions, as well as the preparation of strategies and tools to facilitate the re-training of unemployed people aged over 45. As it is indicated by the ambiguous title of the project (Employment - from the start / Employment - innovation(s)), it consists in the use of new methods of navigating in the labour market.

Project characteristics

An evaluation of intervention practices was conducted during trainings, in order to better encourage and motivate people to adapt to changes in the labour market. Verification was performed of the instruments and tools that allow to identify, analyse and define the necessary technical skills of the beneficiaries. New methods and tools for retraining and mobilization of women aged over 45 were developed. Tools necessary to increase the employability of people aged over 45 were designed and implemented. The knowledge gained during the project was used for formulating the objectives of labour market policy, carried out in the area of Andalusia.

Tool Box was designed, implemented and assessed under the project, which is a website containing:

- Actions leading to the development of personal skills in relation to vocational training;
- Tools for performing diagnosis of e-portfolio Empleo-Innova skills level, which through the use of new information technologies allow enable to examine the actual professional competences of an employee;
- Expert discussions conducted in order to analyse the process of implementation and the possibility of transferring developed methodologies and tools to active labour market policies;
- spreading and transfer of the acquired intervention strategies that facilitate involvement in establishing cooperation networks.

Effects

The main results of the project include:

- model of detection and recording professional skills of persons aged 45+,
- *Tool Box* website.

Developed solutions have been used in labour market policy implemented in the area of Andalusia.

Strengths

The main strengths of the project include:

- The project introduces new elements in relation to methodology and design of tools that enhance employment opportunities for people aged 45+.
- A dynamic network of partners consisting of national and international entities.
- Creation of *Tool Box* website which enables sharing of resources, free communication and exchange of experience with regards to project management and networking.
- Creating a quality management plan with use of the virtual platform.
- Creating an Internet community that allows to build cooperation and learn through spreading information and constant evaluation of all activities.

Recommendations

The inclusion of the developed solutions into current regional policy was possible thanks to dialogue with institutions involved in the creation of the regional labour market policy.

Creating a web-based platform that enables practical, easily accessible use of the model developed under the project increases the chance for wider popularisation of the project results. The drawback, however, is the poor hosting of the project site: www.emploeinnova.pl. Just one year after completion of the project (as of 25 May 2013) the website is not available.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

The solutions developed can be popularised in Poland. The cost of the project is not large, and its effectiveness is high.

Case description ES 5

▶ Name of the project

Your Experience Adds

Tu experiencia suma

Your Experience Adds

▶ Institution carrying out the project

 Fundación Adecco

▶ Source of project funding

 own

▶ Value of the project

 no data

▶ Term of the project

 01.12.2011 – 30.11.2012

▶ Project realisation area

 whole country

Project type

Adecco Foundation is a leader in the field of human resources management. Its main purpose is assistance in finding job offered to people with disabilities, long-term unemployed aged 45+, victims of domestic violence and other people at risk of social exclusion. The project was a response to the gradual aging of the population; it was noticed that it is necessary to introduce changes which are important from the perspective of human resources management policy and relevant programs were developed in order to promote employment of people aged over 45. Main objectives included the provision of free professional counselling, access to workshops as well as trainings that increase skills and qualifications level of people aged 45+.

Project characteristics

Together with JP Morgan Asset Management, the Adecco Foundation carried out actions, addressed to 20 men and women aged 45+, including training and workshops aimed at increasing the skills and abilities of the participants. Activation training included CV writing and participating in interviews, a support of job advisor was also provided. Training sessions and workshops were available free of charge.

Effects

20 people aged 45+ were trained, and they also took part in career counselling and availed of work placement services.

The added value of the project is overcoming stereotypes associated with age - experience should be an added value as it is followed by maturity, responsibility, emotional balance.

Strengths

Among the strengths of the project, the implementer's strong points are the most significant. That is because the Adecco Foundation has a great experience in helping people aged 45+ in the labour market. It is one of the main groups at risk of exclusion to which the Foundation directs its actions within the framework of its statutory activity. Adecco is involved in a variety of activities to promote economic activity of the experienced participants in the labour market, e.g. Goldenworkers (under FP7), the project of the European Year for Active Ageing and Soli-

darity between Generations. In 2011, the agreement was signed with Navarro de Empleo (equivalent to Polish Job Office) for the implementation of support targeted to unemployed people aged 45+. This project was addressed to 60 people who are looking for work, and included activation support (identification of strengths and weaknesses, help with writing CV, preparing for job interviews) and training sessions. The Foundation also conducts its own research on the situation of people aged 45+ in the labour market (the study "Mayores de 45 años en el mundo laboral", conducted on a sample of 3500 people aged 45+ who are looking for a job), offering advice for jobseekers of this age group as well as for the labour market policy (Informe mayores de 45 años en el mundo laboral; http://www.fundacionadecco.es/_data/SalaPrensa/SalaPrensa/Pdf/529.pdf).

Recommendations

The involvement of the JP Morgan Asset Management in actions of Adecco shows the image-related impact of such activities for the organization ["For our organization, involvement in the project is a great opportunity to show our support and commitment in relation to social integration of people at a higher risk of exclusion due to age. Cooperation with the Adecco Foundation, which has rich experience in this field, is a guarantee of its success" - said Javier Dorado, the managing director of JP Morgan Asset Management in Spain and Portugal]. CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) is becoming increasingly important in the PR activities of Spanish companies. Therefore, the involvement of commercial entities in such activities brings tangible benefits not only to the beneficiaries of the programs, but also to supporting institutions.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

Type of support implemented by the Foundation is typical and is already being implemented in practice of Polish NGOs. The possibilities of implementations are therefore very high. Analysis of the practice points to the image-related importance of projects of this type, which also in Polish conditions should be used by non-governmental organizations at the stage of obtaining business partners. Measures to increase employment of people aged 45+ should also be taken into account in the competitions relating to CSR (corporate social responsibility).

Case description CY 1

▶ Name of the project

Training Older Persons – Pioneer Model Usable for Older Adult Trainers TOP +
Training Older Persons – Pioneer Model Usable for Older Adult Trainers TOP +

▶ Institution carrying out the project

Project leader:

Escola Profissional de Economia Social Academia Jose Moreira da Silva)

Partners:

Cyprus Adult Education Association, Cyprus

Magellan Partners, Belgium

Tallinn University, Estonia

Arbeit und Leben Düsseldorf, Germany

CTV „SBJE“ Centre Of Vocational Training, Greece

GS Italia, Italy

International Research Institute of Stavanger AS (IRIS), Norway

Uniwersytet Ekonomiczny we Wrocławiu (University of Economics in Wrocław), Poland

Byweb Formacao e Informatica Unipessoal, Lda, Portugal

Philean Consult, Romania

Swedish TelePedagogic Knowledge Center (STPKC), Sweden

▶ Source of project funding Lifelong Learning Programme – Leonardo da Vinci

▶ Value of the project € 463,915

▶ Term of the project 01.11.2007 – 31.12.2009

▶ Project realisation area Partner countries: Cyprus, Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Italy

Project type

The project is a response to identified unsatisfactory range of training offered to older workers as well as the trainers and counsellors working with this group, and also to the attempt to develop teaching methods tailored to the capabilities and needs of the elderly (flexible learning, recognition of skills previously acquired in an informal way, greater attractiveness of training). Justification of project implementation is based on the opinion that a small participation of older people in the European lifelong learning means a loss of potential opportunities for the individual, and for the economy - of reducing the level of productivity and economic potential.

The main objectives are: to increase the participation of older people in lifelong learning, to improve the professional skills of older people as well as their trainers and teachers, to encourage older people to remain active in the labour market and to identify the skills and competencies of professional trainer of the elderly.

Project characteristics

The works conducted within the framework of TOP+ project included:

- creating an innovative multimedia compendium available in all official languages of the EU (22) and Norwegian, including the content of multimedia database collected from all EU countries;
- identification of best and worst practices in lifelong education aimed at older people;
- conducting comparative studies to create the foundation of knowledge on education of older persons;
- analysis of training needs of trainers of the elderly and comparing the analyses carried out by the countries participating in the project;
- defining expert profile, clarifying necessary competencies and skills, in vocational training for older persons;
- designing the content of training (training program and innovative training tools) addressed to trainers and advisers of the elderly.

To diagnose the needs and capabilities of target groups, a survey was conducted among the elderly, trainers and training institutions as well as individual in-depth interviews with trainers and teachers of older people.

Effects

The project helped to support changes in the education systems and curricula addressed to the elderly at the European level. In this context, an important achievement was to define factors of the effectiveness of the elderly participation in lifelong learning.

The following products were worked out within the framework of the project:

- multimedia compendium in 23 languages,
- comparative study relating to lifelong education of the elderly,
- collection of best and worst practices of lifelong vocational training of the elderly,
- catalogue of competences and skills of a trainer of the elderly,
- training program for trainers of the elderly,
- project website: <http://www.trainingolderpeople.eu>.

Moreover, increase of professional qualifications of trainers of the elderly, trained during a pilot stage, can be considered a "soft" result of the project.

Strengths

Products developed in the project are the result of cooperation between institutions from 10 European countries which makes them versatile and trans-national. High potential of popularisation throughout Europe, which is supported by the main product availability in all official EU languages, should be considered strength.

Recommendations

The products developed and solutions described should be evaluated. The evaluation is likely to increase the usefulness and relevance of proposed solutions, which in turn will enable adjusting them better to the needs and capabilities of target groups.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

Implementation of the results worked up in the project will be possible after prior valorisation of them and adapting those to domestic conditions.

Case description CY 2

▶ Name of the project

SIGOLD – Turning the Silver Challenge into the Golden Opportunity

SIGOLD – Turning the Silver Challenge into the Golden Opportunity

▶ Institution carrying out the project

Project leader:

Technická Univerzita v Košiciach

Partners:

University of Nicosia, Cyprus,

University of Piraeus, Greece

ASTRA, Slovakia

Institut für Gesellschaftswissenschaftliche Forschung, Bildung & Information, Austria

Inova Consultancy Ltd., United Kingdom

▶ Source of project funding Lifelong Learning Programme – Grundtvig

▶ Value of the project € 405,930

▶ Term of the project 10.2010 – 03.2013

▶ Project realisation area countries Cyprus, Greece, Austria, Slovakia, United Kingdom

Project type

The project involved support for creation of the age-integrated society and help for workers aged 50+ in their active aging.

The main objective of the project was to develop and improve the knowledge, competencies and skills of the three main target groups: (i) workers aged 50 +, (2) HR managers, (3) trainers and advisers.

An important role was also assigned to increasing awareness of the European society of the issues in relation to activation in a broad sense of those aged 50+.

Project characteristics

The works conducted within the framework of TOP+ project included:

- a study of people aged 50 +, HR managers and trainers of people from a specific age group in the partner countries;
- performing analysis of the age-management strategies used by companies in partner countries;
- content development (syllabus and materials) for three courses conducted with the use of blended learning method, being a combination of traditional teaching methods and online methods;
- organizing pilot training, checking correctness and effectiveness of the developed courses;
- holding conference summarising the project;
- promotional campaigns on the activation of people aged 50+.

In order to carry out the study, questionnaires were prepared for each of the groups covered, and after completion of the study and analysis of the results, a report was compiled, analysing the situation of people aged 50+ in the partner countries.

The courses to be conducted in the project were tested in the pilot training. Partner in Cyprus conducted pilot training in relation to two courses covering eight three-hour meetings ("Active aging, aging well", "How to educate and train persons 50+"), which were attended by 10 people each.

Effects

Under the project, content of three courses was developed (and tested in a pilot training on a sample of 135 participants in total). The courses were conducted with use of the blended learning method and were addressed to people aged 50+, HR managers working with people of this age and trainers of these persons in the following languages: Slovak, Greek, English and German. As a result, the project is to improve the skills of people aged 50 + and those who work with them (HR managers and trainers).

The relative sustainability of the project should be ensured by operating project website:<http://www.sigold.net/>.

Strengths

The project introduces modern educational methods into the process of teaching the elderly. The methods include using IT tools and thus overcome the concerns of the elderly associated with the use of modern technologies. The project demonstrates and tests the ways of possible application of modern educational methods. Highly evaluated by the training participants, the project shows the great potential of using modern solutions in the education of the elderly.

In addition, involvement of employers in the educational process can be considered strength as they are able to formulate their expectations towards older people in this respect.

Recommendations

The project points to the real possibility of broad possibilities of incorporating modern educational methods and tools in the education of the elderly. When creating education support policy in relation to the elderly it should be consider whether the programs that use public support should not be a mandatory part of the educational process. This could ensure regular adjustment of educational offer addressed to older people by various institutions to changes in the methodology of teaching.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

The results developed in the project could be transferred to Polish reality after prior valuation of Polish conditions.

Case description CY 3

▶ Name of the project

Guiding for Independence: Establishing a Health-Promoting Educational Program for Adults (50+) and Elderly People through Physical Activity

Guiding for Independence: Establishing a Health-Promoting Educational Program for Adults (50+) and Elderly People through Physical Activity

▶ Institution carrying out the project Το Ευρωπαϊκό Πανεπιστήμιο Κύπρου

▶ Source of project funding Lifelong Learning Programme – Leonardo da Vinci

▶ Value of the project no data

▶ Term of the project 08.2011 – 07. 2013

▶ Project realisation area partner countries

Project type

The main objective of the project is to promote integration through physical activity of social groups (the elderly) neglected in terms of such activity, as well as efforts to improve the health and physical activity of the elderly.

The project activities involve: (i) exchange of ideas, suggestions and practices for final clarification of project actions, (ii) holding conferences to present different support models in place in different countries along with specific instruments used, (iii) modification and adaptation of actions performed by partners to situation of each country.

Project characteristics

The project is to entail (i) transfer, testing and fine-tuning of the educational program in relation to physical activity of adults (55+) or older, (ii) a study of the practices used in Europe, where physical activity is a tool to improve health of adults and the elderly, and (iii) building European network for the development of physical activity in programmes focused on groups of people neglected in terms of this type of activity. Such network may consist in sharing of knowledge, exchange of participants in order to gain experience, proper training and education preparing for self-training.

Effects

The main result of the project is to creating in each of the involved countries a well-planned, integrated health promotion programme in the form adapted to the specificities of each country. An important element of ensuring the sustainability of the results is to create a network between the participating countries, which will contribute to:

- at partner institutions level - to ensure a regular exchange of good practices in the field covered by the project and promoting integration of socially neglected groups in terms of physical activity (especially of the elderly),
- at the level of project participants - to create an international forum for exchange of knowledge and individual experience on physical activity.

Strengths

The strength of the project is its international character, giving the opportunity to learn from cultural differences between the countries involved. The project refers to non-economic aspects of aging, which, however, to a large extent affect the quality of life of the elderly.

Recommendations

Solutions under the health promotion programme, developed in an international environment, require testing and adaptation to Polish conditions in order to increase their usefulness and accuracy.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

Implementation of the results worked up by the project will be possible after prior valorisation of them and adapting those to domestic conditions.

Case description CY 4

▶ Name of the project

TraVeL AGEnts Project – Traveling, Volunteering and Learning Activities Generating Employment for the over 55s

TraVeL AGEnts Project – Traveling, Volunteering and Learning Activities Generating Employment for the over 55s

▶ Institution carrying out the project

Project leader:

H ANCE – Δίκτυο Εμπειρογνομόνων Αθήνας

Partners:

Omilos Gynaikon Eleftheris Kythreas, Cyprus

GSI, Italy

ORBIS Institute, Slovakia

Adult Education Center of Kuusankoski, Finland

Fundacja na Rzecz Kobiet „JA KOBIETA” (Women Foundation “Me, woman”), Poland

Raama Noorte Uhing Noorus Parnu Rahvaulikool, Estonia

VIDA Intergenerational Valorization and Active Development association, Portugal

50+Hellas, Greece

BAGSO, Germany

Zivot 90, Czech Republic

▶ Source of project funding Lifelong Learning Programme – Leonardo da Vinci

▶ Value of the project no data

▶ Term of the project 12. 2006 – 05.2008

▶ Project realisation area countries Greece, Cyprus, Italy, Slovakia, Finland, Poland, Estonia, Portugal, Germany, Czech Republic

Project type

The main objective of the project was to promote active aging and to facilitate the mobility of elderly people across the European Union, while increasing employment opportunities for older people in the field of tourism.

Project characteristics

Strong emphasis was on the cross-cultural experience of older people, which resulted in the development of specific instruments.

The main instruments for achieving the set goals are:

- creation of national "55 + without borders" networks, popularising the ideas, mission and activities of the network;
- carrying out the recruitment of trainers, developing syllabus of the training courses and preparing trainers for educating adults;
- creating the "elderly-friendly" guide;

- creating a website of the project, that popularize the results and enriches the knowledge and experience of the target group (in 10 languages);
- newsletters publication;
- holding international conference and 30 national conferences.

Effects

Thanks to the implementation of the project the following results were achieved:

- under network activities, in line with the plan, 10 national "55 + without borders" networks were created;
- under training activities - five syllabuses on balanced travel planning were developed, a base of 100 European experts /older trainers was created, 72 trainers were recruited and prepared for providing education to adults during 10 workshops, 200 older people were trained in balanced travel planning under 10 training programmes;
- 10 exchange programmes were organized (study visits to partner countries), which were participated by 66 people;
- under popularisation activities - five newsletters were published in 10 different countries, with a circulation of 30,000 copies (additionally, 40,000 people availed of their online versions), 10 cultural exchange programmes were prepared, 40 elderly people participated in testing of travel cultural exchange, 24 national conferences were held and one international conference (attended in total by 1,312 people), elderly-friendly tourist guide was developed in 9 languages and distributed in a print run of 2,000 copies, the project website was launched: www.travelagentsproject.org.

Strengths

The situation of the elderly is considered in the project both from economic and non-economic perspective. Multiculturality of exchanged experiences can be considered strength of the project. The project involved a wide range of different activities aimed at better involvement of older people, taken at several levels. Many participants in the project after its completion took another educational activity (language or computer courses) to facilitate future communication with partners in other countries and to get actively involved in tourism. Their mobility greatly improved. Some people started working after participation of the project. It was important to promote volunteering among older people, associated with tourism, and to open the elderly to volunteering activities.

Recommendations

As shown by the experience of the project, tourism is an interesting topic and area of activity for older volunteers.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

The project was implemented in Poland, and the lessons learned can be continued by the implementer - the Foundation for Women, an NGO whose activities revolve around combating stereotypes and preventing violence against the elderly, combating age and gender discrimination, the activation of people aged 50 +, intergenerational cooperation. A website was created under the project, adapted to a wider range of activities of the Foundation, which is available to this day (www.kobieta50plus.pl). Importantly, after the completion of the project the elderly involved remained active and they still initiate group activities and volunteering initiatives.

**„Central European
young democracy“**

Case description CZ 1

▶ Name of the project

Employment without Difference

Zaměstnávání bez rozdílů

Employment without Difference

▶ Institution carrying out the project

Project leader:

Škola manažerského rozvoje s.r.o

Partners:

Respond & CO s.r.o, Czech Republic

Agentura pro regionální rozvoj, a.s. , Czech Republic

▶ Source of project funding

 European Social Fund

▶ Value of the project

 4,720 920 Kč (around 28,000 €)

▶ Term of the project

 01.04.2006 – 30.06.2007

▶ Project realisation area

 regions: Olomouc, Moravia-Silesia

Project type

The aim of the project was to equalise the chances of long-term unemployed (over 6 months) women in the labour market from the regions of Olomouc and Moravia-Silesia through the development and implementation of the incentive training and mentoring programme, tailored to the specificity of the regional labour market.

Project characteristics

The following actions were carried out under the project:

1. The situation of women aged 45+ in the regional labour market was examined (for that purpose, 481 women were surveyed, and - to compare - 63 men).
2. The needs of employers in relation to newly hired workers of older age (179 employers surveyed) were identified.
3. Training and advisory incentive program was developed, adapted to the needs of the local labour market, and tested on four pilot groups (in Jeseník Olomouc, Frýdek Místek Přerov).
4. With help of psychologists and educators, the methodology of teaching the elderly was worked out.
5. Both training-advisory and practical modules were implemented:
 - basic issues (11 days) - communication, analysis of the labour market, labour law, introduction to economics, introduction to health and safety, the objectives of the European Union;
 - psychological counselling, (6 days) - individual meetings with a psychologist to reinforce motivation, identify own strengths and weaknesses, gain self-esteem and self-confidence;

- 20-days work experience in one of about 30 companies taking on women for internships under the project;
- individual consultations and advice for potential employees and employers interested in hiring women participating in work experiences in their area (7 days);
- meeting of employers and participants with Labour Offices staff, during which the project summary was carried out.

Effects

The tangible results of the project consist in taking up employment by nearly half of the participants in the companies they initially do their work experience in.

In addition, 96% of female participants rated positively the way the project affected their labour market situation.

Strengths

The success of the project based on taking into account the needs of employers and adapting the qualification profile of the beneficiaries to them, The important factor for the success of the project was also developing a methodology for teaching the elderly and including it in the carried out training and advisory programme.

Recommendations

Taking into account the broad needs of potential employers imposes a low degree of individualization of measures that stimulate professional activation of the elderly. It is advisable in such situation to consider the concentration of activities on the needs of selected sectors of the economy, significant from the point of view of socio-economic development of the area in which the intervention is undertaken, and to "embed" public intervention on the regional or even local level, based on a diagnosis of current and target situation the labour market.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

The described practice can be directly implemented in Polish conditions.

Case description CZ 2

▶ **Name of the project:**

You May Work after 50 as Well

Pracovat se dá i po 50

You May Work after 50 as Well

▶ **Institution carrying out the project** CC Systems a.s.

▶ **Source of project funding** European Social Fund

▶ **Value of the project** 1,394,066 Kč (around 54,000 €)

▶ **Term of the project** 01.08. 2009 – 31.07.2010

▶ **Project realisation area** districts: Liberec, Česká Lípa and Jablonec nad Nisou

Project type

The aim of the project was to prepare unemployed women aged 50 years or more to return to the labour market through the implementation of comprehensive educational and motivational activities. The project was implemented on local scale.

Project characteristics

Actions taken under the project involved:

- diagnosis and assessment of knowledge and skills of participants in relation to navigating on the labour market,
- increase of the motivation of those involved in the project to look for work,
- improving participants' ability to communicate with potential employers and labour market institutions,
- organising training courses in three disciplines: 1) social service worker - guardian of dependents, 2) administrative assistant, 3) basic computer skills.

Additionally, the project involved creating job clubs, designed to help participants to support each other and to provide assistance in popularisation of information on job opportunities.

Effects

40 people participated in activities carried out within the framework of the project. There is no information available on the measurable results of the project.

Strengths

Recruitment of participants of the project, which is often the first barrier to the effective implementation of projects addressed to the groups disfavoured in the labour market, was conducted with the active involvement of local labour market institutions.

The actions undertaken under the project focused on development of the ability to move around in the labour market and increase of the motivation to find a job, which in the case of people aged 50+ is often low.

Recommendations

The experiences of the project indicate that - in order to effectively activate professionally the groups disfavoured in the labour market - should first eliminate the barriers associated with the lack of ability of these people to move around in the labour market and support the process of communication with potential employers. From this point of view, the projects that clearly expose the role of mediators, who may facilitate contact with employers, have more chances of efficient implementation.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

The described practice can be directly implemented in Polish conditions.

Case description CZ 3

▶ Name of the project

Szanse

ŠANCE

Chances

▶ **Institution carrying out the project** Akademie J.A. Komenského

▶ **Source of project funding** European Social Fund

▶ **Value of the project** 5,250,113.60 Kč (around 204,000 €)

▶ **Term of the project** 01.03.2011 – 28.02.2013

▶ **Project realisation area** Středočeský kraj region

Project type

The aim of the project was to increase the competitiveness of the long-term unemployed aged 50+ in the local labour market through equipping them with new professional skills.

Project characteristics

Actions taken under the project involved:

- recruitment of participants of the project, in collaboration with the labour office in Kladno,
- carrying out, in collaboration with a psychologist, staff analysis with regards to their skills and competency gaps,
- diagnosis and assessment of knowledge and skills of participants in relation to moving around in the labour market and their motivation to actively seek work.
- conducting professional courses grouped in professional blocks - the selection made from 2-3 of the proposed courses (courses to choose from: Administration Assistant, Security Guard, Social Services Worker, Assistant of the Disabled, Introduction to Business Studies, Introduction to Business Studies with English, Introduction to Computerised Bookkeeping)
- job search for project participants through contact with labour offices.

The project was carried out in 5 rounds; in each 45 people from the target group were to be recruited.

Effects

The project was completed by a total of 230 people from the target group who have finished the full training round. The "hard" effects of the project should be appreciated, which are expressed by the degree of beneficiaries' employability - 50% of the beneficiaries found a job after completion of the project.

Strengths

The success of the project was supported by the active involvement of the local labour office during key stages of the project: recruitment, identification of professions deficiency in the local labour market and job search for the beneficiaries of the project.

Extensive experience of the implementer in organizing training and education activities for adults as well as its good name in the local market also played an important role.

Appraisal of the results of the project resulted in its continuation in a similar form under Šance II project.

Recommendations

Involving labour market institutions in the implementation of pro-employment activities addressed to the elderly may be - as the example described shows - a "catalyst" for achieving high efficiency of the implemented actions and can improve support results. At the same time, such way of "controlling" the process of recruitment by the labour office (and disfavours other unemployed persons registered there) can cause distortion of the actual effectiveness of interventions and prevent the fair assessment of it.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

The described practice can be implemented in Polish conditions.

Case description CZ 4

▶ Name of the project

To work without obstacle

Do práce bez překážek

To work without obstacle

▶ Institution carrying out the project SOLEDPRO s.r.o

▶ Source of project funding European Social Fund

▶ Value of the project 3,614,104.00 Kč (around 140,000 €)

▶ Term of the project 01.03.2012 – 28.02.2014

▶ Project realisation area Středočeský kraj region

Project type

The project aims to increase the employability of job seekers through creation of an efficient system that consists in high-quality analyses, psycho-motivational process and general courses. It is addressed to 75 people in total who belong to one of two categories: long-term unemployed aged 50+ or long-term unemployed people with disabilities.

Project characteristics

Project activities are carried out in the following modules:

- motivational module designed to encourage participants to stay with the project;
- module devoted to conducting analysis of employees' knowledge, skills and competencies;
- module of basic knowledge in the field of labour law, introduction to psychology of work, self-presentation, navigating the labour market;
- professional training courses;
- taking up work by selected participants in subsidized workplaces.

During the project, the participants are provided with access to individual meetings with a psychologists, project assistant and professional educators. After completion of the project, the participants will be able to avail of career bureau services, established under the project.

Effects

The project is currently being implemented, so at the moment only the planned results can be discussed. The project intends to create 30 new jobs and provide training or retraining to 75 people. In total there should be 60 beneficiaries of the project.

Strengths

Efforts made to ensure the sustainability of the results can be considered strength of the project. The creation of career bureau under the project, for people who represent groups excluded from the labour market (persons aged 50+, people with disabilities) should in the long run contribute to the improvement of the employment situation of these people in the local labour market.

Recommendations

Intervention in the labour market that brings long term effects requires implementation of measures to ensure the sustainability of the results. The criteria for public funds distribution should therefore especially allow for the aspect of project results sustainability in case of project that apply for financial support.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

The described practice can be directly implemented in Polish conditions.

Case description CZ 5

▶ Name of the project

Find a Job Tailored to Your Needs

Najděte si práci na míru

Find a Job Tailored to Your Needs

▶ Institution carrying out the project MARLIN s.r.o.

▶ Source of project funding European Social Fund

▶ Value of the project 4,388,632.40 Kč (around € 170,000)

▶ Term of the project 01.05.2010 – 30.04.2012

▶ Project realisation area regions: Zlínský, Jihomoravský i Pardubický kraj

Project type

The elderly are among the main groups at risk of unemployment and exclusion from the labour market. Usually, after losing employment it is difficult for such people to adapt to the requirements of the employers. The aim of the project is to improve the skills of people aged 50+, which should contribute to reducing risk of losing jobs.

Project characteristics

The project consists in the implementation of measures to prevent loss of jobs in relation to people aged 50+ as well as to deal with problems and consequences of job loss in case of people from this age group. This is achieved e.g. through the information centre with a hotline, established under the project. In order to best adjust the offered support to the needs of people aged 50+, the analysis of the reasons for the rise in unemployment of these people was carried out at the beginning. Then, the individualized counselling programmes were created. The support consisted in: (1) counselling programme, (2) diagnosis of predisposition and strengths / weaknesses of the participants, 3) financial education module, introduction to law, communication skills, (4) retraining to ensure skills transformation. After completing these activities, a participant could further avail of the support offered by the project implementer.

Regional consultation centres were established where beneficiaries could obtain information about the project and to avail of professional individual advice services. Training sessions were organised, e.g. on computer skills, project management, social work. Participants' costs in relation to travel and accommodation were reimbursed.

Effects

The project provided support to 150 people aged 50+ from three regions: Zlínský, Jihomoravský and Pardubický kraj. In each region the regional consultation centres were set up.

Participation in the activities offered helped to raise self-esteem and self-worth of the beneficiaries. By participating in training offered under the project, people at risk of social exclusion gained new professional qualifications.

Strengths

Individualized support and adapting it to the needs of the beneficiaries is the strength of the project. It is also important that after participating in the project the participants were not left on their own but they could avail of further support offered by the implementer of the project. To find suitable employment, participants had the opportunity to avail of job centre services that offer assistance in CVs creation and preparation for a job interview.

Recommendations

In the light of the project experiences, flexibility of support, especially in form of training, is of great importance. The project did not include the specifically defined terms of recruitment, which facilitated beneficiaries acquisition, and - on the other hand - provided more chances to people aged 50+ to take part in the training. It is also important that the offered support be comprehensive - from the diagnosis and the creation of personal development plan, through counselling, training, and assistance in finding job.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

The described practice can be directly implemented in Polish conditions.

Case description BL 1

▶ Name of the project

Age Management in the Company

Управление на възраст във фирмата

Age Management in the Company

▶ Institution carrying out the project Carlsberg Bulgaria AD

▶ Source of project funding own

▶ Value of the project no data

▶ Term of the project 2006 (2-4 months)

▶ Project realisation area within the company

Project type

The project was part of the "Social Plan 2006", carried out by the Bulgarian branch of the leader in brewing industry - Carlsberg company. The project was the own initiative of the company undertaken within the framework of organisational restructuring. The details were worked out by the HR department in consultation with the lower-level managers.

Project characteristics

Under the Social Plan 2006 training to improve skills and retraining was developed and implemented, addressed to older people employed in the company.

The training activities were carried out under two initiatives:

- **Training to develop qualifications in relation to SAP accounting module**, which was addressed to all employees in the accounting department of the plant in Szumen, and among them five people aged over 55. The training lasted for two months and was conducted by trained company employees.
- **Retraining courses** for nine members of technical staff, whose average age was 50 years. Courses lasting four months were designed to prepare individuals involved to take up work as a driver in the internal transportation system. The courses were conducted by an external training company.

Effects

In case of the **accounting training**, the elderly sufficiently upgraded their qualifications and were transferred to the logistics department. The reason for that was, first of all, that the accounting department had been moved to the company's head office in Sofia, which would require the employees to change their place of residence, and second of all, the lack of ability to use the SAP system, exhibited by the logistics department employees in the parent-plant. Thanks to the transfer of people familiar with SAP, the productivity of the logistics department increased.

In case of **retraining for the position of a driver**, the results achieved were not satisfactory. The reason for that was lower than expected learning ability of the elderly with regards to the scope of training.

Strengths

The strength of the project was finding the alternative employment for older workers in other department of the company, with simultaneous benefits for the organizational unit to which the employees were transferred, consisting in increased productivity as a result of absorption of people with new and useful skills.

Recommendations

Limitations related to new skills acquisition by the elderly should be considered. The attempts to retrain older workers by equipping them with skills strongly associated with mobility capabilities create a risk of failure in achieving the expected results. It points to the need of adjusting the training program to the age of participants.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

The practice can be used in combination with the business reorganization processes.

Case description BL 2

► Name of the project

SISC – Senior Intergenerational Social Capital

Социален капитал на възрастните за следващите поколения

SISC – Senior Intergenerational Social Capital

► Institution carrying out the project

Project leader:

E.Ri.Fo, Italy

Partners:

iCENTRES, Bulgaria

RKW Hessen GmbH, Germany

Institute for Private Enterprise and Democracy, Poland

► Source of project funding Lifelong Learning Programme – Grundtvig

► Value of the project €291,016

► Term of the project 01.10.2008 – 31.01.2011

► Project realisation area countries Bulgaria, Germany, Poland, Italy

Project type

The project was carried out according to the priorities of the LLP programme, related to equipping senior citizens with skills necessary for coping with changes and remaining an active community member, and to increase the involvement of older people in the development process and teaching others.

The main objective of the project was to use the potential of older workers (50+), especially those at pre-retirement age, through supporting transfer of their competence, know-how and individual knowledge to younger workers.

Detailed objectives were as follows: (1) to discover and show to older people their hidden skills and to develop tools necessary for effective transfer of knowledge and know-how between older and younger workers, (2) to strengthen the willingness of older workers to participate in an intergenerational learning process, and (3) to persuade entrepreneurs that it is important to use knowledge and skills of the employees at pre-retirement age.

Project characteristics

The project was based on the results of the project previously conducted by the Italian project partner - "OVER 55: Dalla Prevenzione del prepensionamento alla gestione degli innovativa over 55".

SISC project consisted in works on mentoring model, which enables efficient exchange of knowledge between older and younger workers. In order to work out the model, in the countries represented by the entities involved in the project, a survey was conducted among the entrepreneurs (15 interviews in each country) that enabled obtaining information on: (1) the possibility of accelerating the process of intergenerational education within companies, (2) the options of the use of e-learning for educating older workers, (3) ways to implement a mentoring program within the companies and to motivate older workers, (4) the knowledge and skills needed for older workers to become mentors.

The obtained results of research were used for designing e-learning tools for the intergenerational transfer of knowledge. This tool enabled workers aged 50+ to carry out analysis of skills and to identify their strengths and weaknesses, which was to be used for selecting appropriate e-learning trainings necessary to perform the role of a mentor.

The results of the projects were evaluated and then they were publicized through newsletters, conferences promoting the project and its results, and website of the project.

Effects

The following were developed within the framework of the project:

- Five-language analytical tool to enable independent analysis of skills and - through the identification of competency gaps - marking out the individualized training path that prepares to performing the function of a mentor,
- E-learning platform for self-development of skills for future mentors (availed of by around 180 people from various European countries),
- user guide for easier navigation and use of the tool's functionality,
- European best practices in relation to strengthening intergenerational social capital for the promotion of mentoring programs in the companies.

Additionally, strengthen self-esteem of older workers can be considered "soft" results of the project.

Strengths

Products developed in the project are the result of cooperation between institutions from different European countries which makes them versatile and trans-national. From this perspective, they could be best used especially for the implementation of the intergenerational transfer of knowledge in international companies that operate in diverse cultural environments.

Recommendations

The universal character of the developed measures does not always have to be well accepted in the conditions of smaller companies, operating in local markets. Therefore, it would be appropriate to test the adequacy of the developed products for companies which operate on a smaller scale.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

The practice was popularized in Poland by the project partner - the Institute for Private Enterprise and Democracy. The results developed under the project are ready for immediate transfer. The project experiences are currently being used by the Foundation during next stages of the projects addressed to people aged 50+. Mentoring approach is also promoted through including relevant elements of the HR Management Standard ZFP-2007, IPED ("Management Fair Play" standard), the companies can apply for.

Case description BL 3

▶ Name of the project

Age Management in the Company

Управление на възраст във фирмата
Age Management in the Company

▶ Institution carrying out the project

 Българската телекомуникационна компания АД

▶ Source of project funding

 own

▶ Value of the project

 €176,389

▶ Term of the project

 2004

▶ Project realisation area

 within the company

Project type

Following the privatization in 2004, the company carried out restructuring measures aimed at reducing employment. In cooperation with all five trade unions operating in the enterprise, a collective bargaining agreement was signed under which the entrepreneurship development programme was launched, addressed to people who opt for employment contract termination by mutual agreement and who had worked in the company for at least 10 years. The programme was availed of 429 employees in total. An alternative to the development program was to obtain compensation in the amount of up to 16 gross salaries (average 2683 euros).

Project characteristics

Entrepreneurship development program consisted in the implementation of three types of activities:

- short-term entrepreneurship training organized by the regional chambers of industry and commerce,
- assistance in business plans preparation,
- subsidized support for selected projects (provided by ProCredit Bank, specialized in providing micro-loans) - a condition for obtaining funding was the usefulness of the planned activities for the region and the creation of new jobs for the employee and his family members.

14 projects were selected for funding and supported with the amount of 345,000 BGN (176,389 euros), which constitutes an average of 12,599 euros per project). 11 persons of the group were employees aged 50+. Financial support was awarded to the projects representing a wide range of service, trade and manufacturing business, in particular with regards to: production and sale of vegetables, diagnostic medical services, accounting services, running a cafe, running a small store selling drinks and snacks, telecommunication services, beekeeping, production of paper packaging, cultural tourism, agricultural services, cars repair, small furniture manufacturing.

Effects

As a result of the project 11 people aged 50+ received substantive and financial support in starting their own business. There is no information on the sustainability of the effects achieved;

it is not known whether the companies established by workers aged 50+ stayed on the market. There is no doubt, however, that the scale and scope of the support provided as part of the entrepreneurship development programme offered significantly increased the chances of maintaining professional activity of the elderly after termination of their employment in BTC company.

Strengths

The high share of workers aged 50 + in the group of beneficiaries of financial support suggests that this group of people got special advantages in this regard. Help for redundant employees was not limited to the financial support but also included professional technical support before starting a business (training and counselling), and after it was created (support and monitoring by the financial institution).

Recommendations

In the process of controlled reductions the thoughtless use of equal opportunities policy would probably put older workers in more difficult position - as compared to younger workers - in the labour market in terms of possibilities of continuing professional activity. The example presented shows that older people are willing to use the possibilities of prolonging their professional activity, if such are created, for example through self-employment. Therefore, similar examples should be widely spread among both employers and employees who are facing restructuring process.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

The practice presented can be successfully used in restructured companies operating in Poland.

Case description BL 4

▶ Name of the project

The Skills Development and Employment Growth of People at the Age Over 50 in Municipality Kardzhali

Повишаване на квалификацията и осигуряване на заетост на лица над 50-годишна възраст от Община Кърджали

The Skills Development and Employment Growth of People at the Age Over 50 in Municipality Kardzhali

▶ Institution carrying out the project Business Consult Sp

▶ Source of project funding European Social Fund

▶ Value of the project €43,920

▶ Term of the project 19.08.2009 – 01.01.2011

▶ Project realisation area Kyrdzali municipality

Project type

A project dedicated to unemployed people aged 50+ from the municipality of Kardzhali. It was the only project in Bulgaria project carried under non-repayable financial assistance scheme "Providing grounds for professional activity to people aged over 50 and long-term unemployed." Its main objective was to create the conditions of sustainable employability through the acquisition of new skills or development of existing ones. The project was implemented by consulting company with extensive experience in international projects and consultancy, oriented at development of entrepreneurship and small and medium-sized companies as well as social dialogue.

Project characteristics

The project consisted in implementing the following measures:

- analysis of training needs of the target group in accordance with the requirements of the employer,
- training that prepares participants for work in insurance industry, addressed to 60 unemployed people aged 50+,
- acquiring the experience needed by beneficiaries in the field of insurance policies sale through internship,
- popularisation of project results.

Effects

As a result of the project, in a group of unemployed people aged over 50, 67 people completed training, 100 people participated three-month internship, and 12 people were covered by the guarantee of employment for a period of at least 9 months. After over two years since completion of the project, the majority of those who took up employment as a result of project implementation, continues to work and generate income.

Strengths

The project described significantly improved the chances of employment for the significantly large - in relation to spending - group of people though providing them with an opportunity to take a 3-month internship in insurance companies and guarantees employment for some of them for a period of nine months. Unlike many other projects, that entail activation of the elderly through often standardized training on computer skills and basic foreign language skills, the beneficiaries of this project were offered training to undertake a specific occupation in the insurance industry. This resulted from the analysis of local labour market needs and adapting to the real needs of employers who provided internship placement for the participants.

Recommendations

The "hard" results of project in relation to employment point out to their high sustainability, which prove that analysis of the local labour market needs is functional and effective. At the same time, drawbacks of the project in the present form are clearly visible - they consist in the inadequacy of the planned activities to the needs of the labour market, manifested for example in internships offered to a large group of beneficiaries who did not have a real chance to work in the field of insurance in a relatively small area covered by the project (Municipality of Kardzhali has a population of 73,000 people). More efficient support could probably be achieved through directing pro-employment activities to another, identified a niche in the local labour market.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

Transferability of such practices is quite high, with proper identification of the needs of the local labour market. A major limitation to the success of the support program in presented form (with too many people being trained to work in one field in relation to the needs of the local labour market) is the requirement of beneficiaries' willingness to change their place of residence to seek the supply of jobs corresponding to qualifications they had gained, which - given the low degree of mobility of the Poles - probably is not to be achieved here.

Case description RU 1

▶ Name of the project

Innovative Instruments in Vocational Training Helping to Increase Workers' and Enterprises Adaptability

Instrumente inovatoare în formarea profesională pentru creșterea adaptabilității lucrătorilor și a întreprinderilor

Innovative Instruments in Vocational Training Helping to Increase Workers' and Enterprises Adaptability

▶ Institution carrying out the project COLFASA

▶ Source of project funding European Social Fund

▶ Value of the project 1,468,678 lei (around €340,000)

▶ Term of the project 1.07.2010 – 30.30.2013

▶ Project realisation area Bucharest

Project type

The aim of the project was to stimulate employment in Bucharest through training courses, life-long education and access to new technologies. The main objective of the project was defined as supporting businesses in order to develop employee skills level. Detailed objectives were as follows: (1) to develop the abilities of businesses to support qualifications development of their employees, (2) to promote active aging of employees, especially those with low skills or those at risk early exclusion from the labour market and social exclusion, (3) to increase competitiveness and adaptation abilities of the companies in the region through specialist training for employees, (4) shaping awareness of key local partners in relation to necessity to invest in human resources.

Project characteristics

The measures implemented under the project were intended to promote lifelong learning and active aging through a series of workshops, information materials (brochure, posters, flyers), newsletter, press releases, conference closing the project. By means of the e-learning platform E-instruire.ro a series of training courses was carried out in three fields of expertise: English language, computer skills, entrepreneurship (including management, communication and marketing as well as safety at work), addressed to older workers with education lower than average.

The project partner – Research Institute on the Quality of Life (*Institutul de Cercetare a Calității Vieții*), specialising in research on life quality and social policy, was involved in conducting needs assessment – ex-ante i mid-term. Ex-ante concluded that in Romania the qualification development of employees does not keep up with technological development. This occurs mainly in the SME sector. During the project in-depth studies were conducted in order to: (1) evaluate the use of e-learning technology in Bucharest-Ilfov region-with regards to expectations and development prospects, (2) to evaluate e-learning training courses by employees.

The conference "Interactive learning systems for e-learning platforms" was organised, with practitioners from other EU countries. It was a forum for the exchange of good practices in the field of online learning. Also a debate on "Effective methods of learning, realities and challenges" was held.

Effects

The main product of the project is the e-learning platform through which the courses were conducted. English language courses were participated by 66 people, and completed by 51. Computer courses were attended by 59 people (52 completed them successfully), courses on entrepreneurship were attended and completed by 95 people. Participation in the e-learning courses contributed to increase the skills of those who with low education and improve their situation in the labour market. Through popularisation activities, employees became better aware of the need to undergo training and continue education; also, the workers' and employers were acquainted with concept of active aging (500 recipients in total).

Strengths

The strengths of this initiative include addressing the project activities to both sides of the employment relationship - both employees and employers. Access to training via e-learning platform increases the availability of courses for interested workers who are at risk of redundancy or who are considering leaving work due to age. It often results from the fact that linguistic and computer competency of the older generation is not relevant, which this project responds to. At the same time, increasing the awareness of the need to adapt one's skills to the changing needs of the labour market on the one hand, and on the other, preventing discrimination of the workers by the employers through promoting measures in relation to investment in human resources, should contribute to keeping older workers in employment.

Recommendations

It might seem that poor computer skills are a barrier to the involvement of older workers in online courses, their functionality, however, which is an advantage of the online platform E-instruire.ro as well appropriate programme and course content, resulted in great interest of the beneficiaries. Online courses should combine basic theory with practical exercises, as people aged 50+ prefer learning by reference to their past experience. In addition, the audio processing module, available online, helped to improve and correct pronunciation. It is also important to enable the teacher-student interaction, which is guaranteed by online consultations available at all times.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

As in Romania, also in Poland, e-learning is now a secondary solution for training companies and employers, despite the low cost and high flexibility of the education process. Counteracting digital exclusion, with the assistance of a promotional e-learning, should help overcome this demand barrier. Certainly, it is necessary to enable participants (especially those at the age of 45/50+) to exchange frequent online consultations (via live chat, mailing, etc.), but also in a stationary form. The proposed measures can be implemented in our country, it is advisable, however, to resign from limiting target group to those with low skills, because it significantly reduces the interest of the beneficiaries (and makes it difficult to recruit them).

Case description RU 2

▶ Name of the project

Accept Me! I Can Work

Accepta-ma! Si eu pot sa muncesc

Accept Me! I Can Work

▶ Institution carrying out the project

Fundația Paem Alba

Ministerului Muncii, Familiei și Egalității de Șanse

▶ Source of project funding

Phare 2006

▶ Value of the project

€83,185

▶ Term of the project

05.2008 – 04.2009

▶ Project realisation area

Alba poviati

Project type

Alba Paem Foundation is a non-governmental non-profit organisation that for 19 years operates on regional and local levels. The aim of the *Accepta-ma! Si eu pot sa muncesc* project is to improve the quality of life of people with motor disorders, hearing and speech impairment – usually aged 45+ – in Alba poviati through:

- obtaining by 45 people professional competences and skills adjusted to the existing labour market needs,
- access to the labour market by the disabled,
- development of social responsibility through informational campaign.

Project characteristics

Project activities were directed to residents of Alba poviati with motor disorders and hearing and speech impairments, both the young and experienced workers approaching retirement age. The project offered assistance to people with disabilities to gain skills and qualifications required by the labour market. Through active career counselling and job placement, the access to employment for people with disabilities was facilitated. There was also a campaign for social responsibility, conducted through organizing an information campaign and raising awareness of the potential, skills and commitment of persons with disabilities in the labour market.

Effects

Under the project the database of job offers for people taking part in the project was developed and updated. The “hard” results also include:

- support was offered to 410 direct and indirect beneficiaries,
- 30 people completed courses on floor laying (carpets, woodwork) by
- 15 people got the ECDL certificate attesting to computer skills,
- 55 persons availed of vocational counselling and job placement,

- 30 individualised plans of action were prepared for people with disabilities,
- informing 50 employers about rights of people with disabilities.

Within the framework of informational campaign 100 posters and 550 leaflets were printed, 6 newspaper advertisements posted and public debate on disability was held. Media campaign was conducted to promote the rights of people with disabilities and with impairment of hearing and speech among employees and members of the public.

The main “soft” results include the acquisition of soft skills that increase employability and developing awareness of employers in relation to employing people with disabilities.

Strengths

The strength of the project was customising actions to a specific, narrow target group, which enabled to provide support tailored to the needs of specific groups of beneficiaries.

Recommendations

The project was implemented in 2008-2009, i.e. in the period prior to economic downturn. As the implementers of the project point out, in light of the crisis it is increasingly difficult to find employment by all groups of the unemployed, especially the disabled. Therefore, if the project was to be carried out at present, it would have to take into consideration the difficulties of modern labour market, and at the same time to make employers sensitive to current, European and national legislation concerning persons with disabilities - with an emphasis on current benefits (e.g. financial profits and other benefits provided by law) of employing persons with disabilities. In addition, the opportunity to learn new skills that will enable people with disabilities to find work or start their own business, should be provided by the project. Situation of disabled people in Romania is not easy, and it is made ever more difficult by the stereotypical approach to limited capacity of this group in the labour market. This requires the intensification of information, but also financial incentives that encourage employers to employ people with disability. It is also recommended to incorporate employing of disabled people, especially the elderly, in the certification for socially responsible businesses (CSR).

New tools, including e-learning which thanks to lower costs allow to offer support to a larger number of those in need, should be used for the expansion and acquisition of new skills by people with motor disorders, hearing and speech impairments, many of whom are aged 45/50+.

An emerging problem during project implementation that limited the effectiveness of the activities carried out was the attitude of employers, who were mainly uninterested in hiring people with disabilities (the implementer does not provide any information enabling to assess the effectiveness of the activities carried out in terms of employment).

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

From the point of view of the Polish labour market it seems important to transfer the concept of dedicating actions to a specific group of beneficiaries, as well as to provide support to people with disabilities aged 45/50+ who are at risk of social exclusion. These tasks require a customised training offers, that involves simple, professional vocational training that do not require holding professional qualifications and complementing them with computer courses (which in turn should be conducted with the support of modern tools, such as e-learning

platforms, which, especially in the case of navigation difficulties of the blind and the visually impaired will provide an additional incentive to undertake educational activities). It is also important to carry out intensive informational campaigns in order to improve the situation of people with disabilities, including incorporating employment of people with disabilities aged 45/50+ as an element of CSR certification.

Case description RU 3

▶ Name of the project

Developing Professional Skills to Reintegrate the Unemployed into Working Life in Giurgiu

Dezvoltarea abilităților profesionale pentru reintegrarea șomerilor în viața activă în județul Giurgiu
Developing Professional Skills to Reintegrate the Unemployed into Working Life in Giurgiu

▶ Institution carrying out the project

Project leader:

Camera de Comerț și Industrie a Județului Giurgiu

Partners:

S.C. Info Grup S.R.L.

A.J.O.F.M. Giurgiu

Grupul Tinta

▶ Source of project funding

European Social Fund

▶ Value of the project

137,758.97 lei (around € 32,000)

▶ Term of the project

29.06.2011 – 01.06.2013

▶ Project realisation area

Giurgiu

Project type

The project provides activation of 252 people from Giurgiu within the period of two years, including the unemployed, unemployed youth and people aged 45+, by developing their skills and the acquisition of new skills or re-training in the direction closely linked to the development of the local labour market, in order to make it easier for the jobseekers to find employment.

Project characteristics

Under the project four job clubs were established, in which the unemployed can get help in writing CVs, preparation for job interviews and job search efforts. Each of the unemployed, before being sent to the training, had taken an active part in guidance and counselling, sessions, the aims of which was to enable project participants to select courses relevant to their needs and abilities. The syllabi of the training were developed under the project and tailored to the needs of beneficiaries. Finally, professional training courses in occupations: bricklayer, plasterer, waiter, cook, debt collector, hairdresser, beautician, were conducted. Also, training on IT technologies was organised. Support group for long-term unemployed was created.

Focus study of the needs of the labour market was carried out (once a year).

For the purpose of popularising the information about the project, as well as the communication between the project partners, a website was developed and launched. Website also enabled on-line networking between jobseekers and the employers.

Effects

The worked out products include:

- 18 sessions of guidance and counselling for the unemployed, under which 426 people received assistance,

- 3 job offers surveys,
 - 4 focus groups,
 - 2 annual studies on the needs of the labour market (in accordance with the guidelines developed during the focus study)
 - 20 training programs of 720 or 360 hours,
 - 13 training courses in various disciplines (salesman - 3 courses, 44 participants; data processing - 3 courses, 99 participants; hairdressing, manicure, pedicure - 4 courses, 58 participants; bricklayer, plasterer - 2 courses, 34 participants; waiter / seller at food serving places - one course, 17 participants; cook - two courses, 36 participants)
 - 309 people were trained
 - 3 training sessions to improve IT skills (attended by 48 people).
- Completed products enabled the realization of the goals of the project.

Strengths

The project was based on the diagnosis, which made it easier to adjust the training to the needs of the local labour market resulting from the expectations of employers. Thanks to the project, people aged 45+ received support in the job clubs which raised their self-esteem and increased their self-confidence. Thus, in addition to increasing the capacity and skills, people aged 45+ received psychological support, so important for them.

Recommendations

Diversifying of the training offer, adapted to the needs of people aged 45+, while adapting it to the needs of the labour market, increases the chance for the success of the project. Diversity of participants turned out to be problematic which should be considered while adapting this practice to Polish conditions.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

Similar projects are currently being implemented in Poland. Training activities are preceded by creating an individual action plan (IPD). Distinguishing feature, however, is an on-going monitoring of the situation on the labour market within the framework of the project, which enables better adaptation of training content to the needs of employers (they provide direction of actions during the focus group meetings). This enables better flexibility of project measures. Current financing conditions of HC OP projects unfortunately do not promote such projects, which means that the activities planned are often based on a diagnosis carried out several years earlier. This often results in the gap between the project offer and the actual needs of the local labour market. Promoting flexibility of project measures through on-going adjustment of the training offer to the needs of the labour market needs should be used in competitions in the next financial perspective.

Case description RU 4

▶ Name of the project

Training for Teachers of Mathematics and Economics in a Knowledge-Based Society

Formarea continuă a profesorilor de matematică și științe economice în societatea cunoașterii
Training for Teachers of Mathematics and Economics in a Knowledge-Based Society

▶ Institution carrying out the project

Project leader:

Universitatea „Andrei Șaguna” Din Constanța

Partners:

Siveco

Centrul pentru Inovare în Educație (TEHNE Romania)

▶ Source of project funding

European Social Fund

▶ Value of the project

18,419,186 lei (around 4,300,000 euro)

▶ Term of the project

01.02.2011 – 31.12.2013

▶ Project realisation area

regions: Nord-Est, Sud-Est, Centru, Sud Muntenia, Sud-Vest Oltenia, Bucuresti-Ilfov

poviats: Suceava, Neamt, Bacau, Botosani, Iasi, Vaslui, Braila, Buzau, Galati, Vrancea, Tulcea, Constanta, Alba, Brasov, Covasna, Harghita, Mures, Sibiu, Arges, Calarasi, Dambovita, Giurgiu, Ialomita, Prahova, Teleorman, Dolj, Gorj, Mehedinti, Olt, Valcea, Bucuresti

Project type

The project is addressed to experienced teachers - provides for the participation of 5000 beneficiaries aged 35-64 (teachers in primary schools - 500 participants, teachers in vocational and technical education institutions - 250 participants, teachers in secondary schools - 4250 participants) and only 100 participants aged under 35. Its aim is to develop the teaching skills of mathematics and economics teachers, to create and implement an interdisciplinary school curriculum of mathematics and economics, as well as to prepare teachers to teach these subjects. It is in fact necessary to improve the level of teaching skills of teaching staff and to level disproportions resulting from the age of the participants as well as to differentiate teachers from different regions of Romania in terms of access to training.

Project characteristics

Under the project, a model program of interdisciplinary studies and innovative educational activities based on existing standards of teaching was developed. Two training modules were developed and converted into digital format: Module A - the possibility of lifelong education for teachers, Module B - continuation of professional development and professional career. This resulted in an increase in the ability of teachers to design learning process, taking into account the real needs and interests of the students, and also in the development of their creativity in relation to preparing lesson plans. Another task set by the implementers of the project was to continuously improve and adapt the training offer and interdisciplinary curricula. At the same time, teachers had an opportunity to improve their skills in a way that allows them to teach new objects (through participation in training).

For the purpose of the project web-based cooperation platform was developed to facilitate the exchange of experiences and to ensure the effectiveness of training for teachers. This also contributed to the sustainable development and innovation in the ICT sector. The platform is also used to conduct online courses, providing better access to modern training programmes. The introduced ICT tools (e-learning platform, portal, online courses) are an element of the modernization of the vocational training system.

Effects

Under the project two accredited training modules for teachers were developed. 5100 teachers of mathematics and economics were trained. E-learning platform was created. The main products of the project contributed to the achievement of soft results, among which are:

- prolonging professional activity of teachers by adjusting their expertise to the requirements related to teaching new subjects,
- establishing contacts between teachers from different regions and at different age,
- exchange of experiences between teaching staff,
- providing teachers with new skills and knowledge necessary to teach new subjects,
- adjusting professional competences of teachers to the needs of the schooling system,
- improvement of the situation of young people in the labour market through curriculum changes and improving qualifications of the teaching staff.

Strengths

The strength of the project was the project team - a partnership including a university, a company specializing in providing software, educational training centre. Each partner had experience in training and implementation of projects.

When compared with other projects, this initiative stands out because of its target group and innovative solutions proposed. The strength of the project is providing equal opportunities for people from different regions, professional development of secondary school teachers in particular. Older teachers, through the development of skills and preparation for teaching new subjects, increased their chances of further employment.

Recommendations

The project enables development of teachers' skills at all levels of school education. This undoubtedly makes the project valuable, but at the same time prevents an individual approach to participants. Institutions interested in the implementation of this practice in Poland should make attempts to adapt the project in a way which would reduce the weakness of the operation.

Assessment of the possibility of good practice popularisation in Poland

Polish universities are ready to implement similar measures, so the possibilities of popularising this practice are high.