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GUIDELINES

FOR COUNSELLORS WHO WORK WITH MIGRANTS



SoftSkills4EU:

Promote your Soft Skills with Open Badges



GUIDELINES

INFORMATION ABOUT OUTPUT

OUTPUT:

IO5: AMENDMENT OF DEVELOPED RESULTS TO THE SPECIFIC NEEDS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF MIGRANTS

ACTIVITY:

IO5: GUIDELINES FOR COUNSELLORS WHO WORK WITH MIGRANTS

OUTPUT LEADER:

PROMIMPRESA

PROJECT INFORMATION

PROJECT:

SoftSkills4EU: Promote your Soft Skills with Open Badges

PROJECT TITLE:

Promote your soft skills with open badges

ACRONYM:

SoftSkills4eu

PROJECT WEBSITE:

<https://softskills4.eu/>

PROJECT E-ACADAMY:

<https://academy-softskills4.eu/>

PROJECT NO.:

2018-1-SI01-KA204-047088

PROJECT COORDINATOR:

Development and Education Centre Novo mesto (RIC Novo mesto), Slovenia

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TABLE OF CONTENT

Introduction.....	4
Main challenges	5
Suggestions for modifications.....	6
Guidelines for Mentors and counselors	6
Main benefits	8



INTRODUCTION

The most relevant purpose of IO5 is to adjust the previously-developed project outputs to the needs of migrants and vulnerable people. Because of their specific characteristic and obstacles in learning/job searching process, special attention in guidance process should be given to these groups.

According to this premise, the following guidelines are based on feedbacks and recommendations for improvements collected during the whole project lifespan.

The e-tools and Open badges Eco-system developed, once adjusted to the needs of migrants will be of high quality and freely accessible on project platform, so they can be usable for all organizations involved in working with migrants; furthermore, SoftSkills4EU products could be useful in refugee centres and as input for other similar projects dealing with migrants' issue.

The project output in question consists, as expected, in the production of a set of changes and implementations to be to the e-learning platform developed by the partnership.

In order to develop the most exhaustive guidelines for the abovementioned changes, it was considered necessary to ask the opinion of the Advisory Boards, each one composed of experts in education, skills transfer, social inclusion, integration, immigration, sociology, etc.

Each partner has, during an interview, asked an external expert member of the Advisory Board (one per Partner Country) about the strengths and weaknesses of the e-learning platform, with particular attention to the use of the content by migrants and disadvantaged people.

In addition, experts were asked to provide suggestions for the resolution of critical issues in order to draw up guidelines for the implementation of the necessary changes.

The experts emphasised the importance and the relationship between skills, employment and the inclusion of young migrants in today's globalised marketplace.

In this sense, the most relevant points to be taken in account should be the following ones:

- Formal education frequently fails to deliver skills important for employment, despite the high labour market demand for such practical capacities;
- On the other hand, non-formal learning is extremely important in enhancing young people's creativity and innovation in today's globalised and fast changing market, driven by advances in the IT industry;
- Acquiring such skills is especially important for young migrants and people with disadvantaged backgrounds in their effort to co-create solutions that give them access to society and exercise citizenship – those are the issues that affect them directly;
- Migration is a significant issue not only for the individuals themselves, but for the labour markets of countries of origin, destination and transit;
- Effective management of migration can be a vehicle for responding successfully to labour supply and demand needs.

- In sum, the main challenges that migrants face today include the under-utilization of skills result in a lack of training and, moreover, employment opportunities.

Furthermore, these guidelines includes testimonials from migrants involved in the project activities who kindly shared what they experienced in using the e-platform and the training material.

MAIN CHALLENGES

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- Non-formal learning is extremely important in enhancing young people's creativity and innovation in today's globalised and fast changing market, driven by advances in the IT industry;
- Acquiring such skills is especially important for young migrants and people with disadvantaged backgrounds in their effort to co-create solutions that give them access to society and exercise citizenship – those are the issues that affect them directly;
- Migration is a significant issue not only for the individuals themselves, but for the labour markets of countries of origin, destination and transit;
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- In sum, the main challenges that migrants face today include the under-utilization of skills result in a lack of training and, moreover, employment opportunities.



SUGGESTIONS FOR MODIFICATIONS

According to the feedback received from the experts the platform is already user-friendly both for its technical and graphical features (i.e. icons and symbols within the material) making it easy for migrants to understand the contents and the skills covered by the modules are essential skills for the job market and, moreover, scenarios and activities are great ways for learners to put the knowledge they learned into practice.

Anyway, migrants and disadvantaged people may need additional help and some guidance in order to register and navigate through the platform initially because they could not understand English very well or official language of the country of their current residence.

It would also be crucial to develop short guidelines for mentors and counsellor to support migrant in procedure related to registration and enrolment

TESTIMONIAL

'I had the opportunity to learn more about the Softskills4EU programme at the Cyprus International "Education and Career" Exhibition where Emphasys Centre participated. I found the material developed very useful for someone who is looking to develop their skills and join the labour market and also very interesting. Also, the language used was simple and the icons used made the material easier to read. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to learn more about this fantastic programme!'

Shey Vitalis Mbunkur - Cameroon

GUIDELINES FOR MENTORS AND COUNSELORS



According to what has been suggested, here follow four relevant elements which, if observed by mentors and counsellors in supporting migrants while using the SoftSkill4EU e-learning platform, should be crucial in increasing the accessibility of the platform and, moreover in the quality of the learning process itself:

- **Tips/help/guidelines in order to make the registration process easier for users with no-experience in using registration/login form**

The registration process is the platform front. Often it is the first meaningful interaction our applicants will have with us and our project. The process should be painless, fast and seamless.

In this sense, mentors and counsellors should be ready to explain migrants interested in enrolling our courses how to overcome issues and problems rising during the registration process.

- **Linguistic aid for non-speaker of any of the platform languages**

Whereas the content are already available in 6 Languages (English, Slovenian, Dutch, Italian, Croatian and Greek) it should be helpful for mentors and counsellors to be proficient in other languages not provisioned in the platform in order to make the fruition possible for those who want to enrol the e-courses despite they aren't speakers of one of the aforementioned languages.

- **Simplified text to be used as description for each module to be used as quick introduction to the topics of the courses**

If used as preliminary description for each module of the platform, short and simplified text will ensure a better comprehension of the contents for non-native speaker.

- **Awareness on what Open-Badges are and how to use it**

As the adoption of digital learning is growing at an exponential rate, the public and private bodies are documenting informal education more engagingly through credential badges. Digital badges are becoming the preferred way to recognize micro-credentials, study units that focuses on skills or competencies and recent evidence suggests that employers are increasingly accepting the badges as a means to evaluate potential employees. In this sense, it should be necessary for mentors and counselors to be informed and ready-to-inform migrants about the Open-Badges system and how to use it.

I arrived in Croatia not as an economic migrant or an assylum seeker, but as someone who was following her heart. By the time I moved here for marriage, I had already spent a quarter of my life living abroad as a student and/or worker, so being a foreigner wasn't really a foreign feeling to me. Nevertheless, as I was aware from previous experiences when moving abroad, there still remained a number of obstacles to face, mainly in terms of learning the language and integrating into the local culture.

As is usually the case, there are some skills that can be easily transferred from one country to the next. Those are usually the hard, quantitative skills which are invariable regardless of the territory you currently find yourself into – one plus one will always equal two, no matter where you are. But you can be a math genius across the globe, and still function better in one place relative to the other. Why is this so? Shouldn't it be just the opposite, that you carry your skills with you wherever you go?

And then there are the 'other' skills, which will make you understand the local culture better, fit in, and give your most productive self to the surrounding environment. They can be elusive at times (how do you measure innovativeness, critical thinking, because they're not well defined and can transmute from one country to another and adjust to its idiosyncrasies. Who do you ask? How many times do you ask for an explanation before it becomes too much?

This is where the SoftSkills platform came in handy for me. For the first time there was a place I could learn from which allowed me to be both self-paced and comfortable with my own demands. I particularly liked the design being so user-friendly and the ability to turn to it at my own schedule, be day or night. By It has helped me tremendously with my soft skills and I recommend it wholeheartedly to everyone finding themselves in a position similar to mine.

Bisera Karanović - Republic of Northern Macedonia



eLearning has turned out to be the fastest and easiest way of learning in the present mode of education. It improves learning through high retention of the learning material in memory, flexible curriculum and enhanced technological support with 24/7 accessibility. In this sense, eLearning can successfully improve Soft Skills learning paths of both migrants and non-migrants.

Migrants, in the same way of non-migrants, may wonder how eLearning improves one's Soft Skills learning process. It is due to the following reasons:

Better retention of the material learned.

Everything you learn without pressure sticks in your mind and stays there for a long time. E-learning is done through the most widely used medium in education, technology, and therefore allows learners to easily assimilate Soft Skills in a more effective way.

More collaboration between learners and mentors.

With technology acting as a mediator, learners can easily connect with mentors online and exchange views and participate in discussions. Their connectivity with their mentors is also enhanced by the flexibility of time and online support provided.

Self-paced learning.

SoftSkills4EU e-learning courses are self-paced, so learners choose what they want for their education. They define the courses according to their time needs and work schedules. Moreover, it is the student's interest that is most important in learning a course. Learners are motivated by their own interest. They organise their schedules and work accordingly.

Improved technological support.

SoftSkills4EU e-learning courses are designed with multiple tools that allow learners to use it to his or her advantage. Not only does ease of access promote a rapid learning process, but learners can also access more information and work more quickly with the e-learning tools available. It is a global environment with more interaction, connectivity, access to research materials and the best technical support.

Suitable for different types of students.



The SoftSkills4EU programme and its competence framework will be more usable in learners' curriculum and will be suitable for all types of learners. Learners can choose their path according to their skills and learning needs and follow it without any learning barriers. They can adapt your learning methods according to their objectives, wishes and skills. The improved digital support will make the course more accessible by introducing tools that improve and facilitate the process for different types of learners. eLearning has become one of the best ways to teach learners who show interest in continuing education despite other commitments. In this sense, Soft Skills offers an additional advantage to those who wish to improve their non-technical knowledge. It is also known that when learners take an interest in what they are learning, they acquire better retention skills and do wonders in their courses. Similarly, if a learner has the opportunity to use technology to its best advantage, it also excels in improving learning skills.

TESTIMONIAL

'I was aware about the importance of soft skills in the labour market but I thought that it was enough to specify in the CV that I was good in skills such as teamwork, stress management, etc. because I didn't know any way to certify it. As I discovered the learning platform developed by the project team, I started being curious about the way my abilities could be recognized. I think that Open Badges are the future! I suggest everyone to try it and to earn a badge. The contents are very accessible even if you're not so good in Italian.'

Salah El Jabbar - Morocco

