



ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP
AND DECENT WORK

Actwork Toolkit Piloting in the Czech Republic

Country: Czech Republic

Venue: Brno, Faculty of Education

Profile

of participants: The participants were young people who are about to finish their training and look for a job in helping professions. Most of them have had experience with part-time jobs, voluntary work and summer jobs. Some participants have different mother tongue than Czech, have come from foreign countries, and therefore, were experiencing social disadvantages.

Trainers: Helena Vařurová, ACTWORK project team member, 15 years of experience in teaching adults, 10 years of experience working with adults with disabilities in leisure time activities
Lucie Procházková, ACTWORK project team member, 18 years of experience in teaching adults, 5 years of experience in supporting people with disabilities at the job market (Wien, Austria)

Dates	Focus of the piloting
6 th April 2017	Chapter B "Looking for a job"
8 th April 2017	Chapter D "Creativity and entrepreneurship"
11 th April	Chapter A "Getting to know myself"
30 th September	Chapter A "Getting to know myself" Chapter C "Social and civic competences"
Total number of hours:	28
Total number of participants:	45

Individual piloting reports:

Date: 6th April 2017, 9:00

Tentative schedule:

9:00 – 10:30	Introduction, ice-breaking activities, some activities from Chapter A to set the scene
10:45 – 11:45	SWOT analysis of the labour market, discussion,
11:45 – 12:30	Looking for a job, webpages, search engines, discussion
12:45 – 13:45	CV, getting ready for a job interview from the position of an applicant and an employer
13:50 – 14:30	Role play – job interview
14:30 – 15:00	Reflection

The piloting focused on Chapter B – How can I look for a job? The piloting went through selected activities from each subchapter. After a short introduction and discussion concerning expectations an ice-breaking activity was organized. It was found by the trainer that it is better to initiate a conversation on a neutral topic and then commence the ice-breaking activity requiring trainees (unknown to each other) to interact together. The activity “Tangled” was carried out – trainees were required to communicate together in order to solve a shared problem (being tangled together with their hands).



Consequently a SWOT analysis of the labour market in the given field was explained (part B.3.). The trainees come from different regions, therefore, the issue of regional differences and commuting was introduced as well.

The trainees required more guidance concerning special webpages for helping professions and resources other than main job portals. This activity took longer than proposed 15 minutes. Participants, however, found this part very important for them successfully finding an appropriate job position.



The main part of the training was concerned with the role plays and discussions concerning job interview (parts B.4. and B.5.). It was found very demanding for trainers’ preparation and a wealth of materials needs to be prepared beforehand. Participants found these activities very useful, both when being an interviewer and applicant. Time was allowed for reflection of each role play experience. Trainees mentioned the importance of experiencing both sides and thinking “like the employer”. This activity could be preceded by activities from Chapter A+B “Ideal Employee”, which offers the perspective of an employer.



Further elaboration of CV templates and possible inventory of job interview questions would be useful. Regular breaks needed to be

taken and activities needed to vary and look at the same topic from different perspectives / in different activity types.

Date: 8th April 2017, 9:00

Tentative schedule:

9:00 – 9:30	Introduction, ice-breaking activities
9:30 – 10:30	Multiculturalism and the Czech society
10:45 – 11:45	Civic society, active citizenship
12:00 – 13:00	Critical thinking
13:30 – 14:30	Entrepreneurship, creativity, mind map
14:30 – 15:00	Reflection

The piloting focused on Chapters D and C, namely on the development of critical thinking and awareness of civic society and active citizenship. These areas were chosen due to current issues in the Czech Republic, i.e. homogeneous society facing migration, xenophobic movements and ongoing discussion about independent media. Furthermore, the group was international. Therefore, these issues were discussed from international perspective. Participants found it very enriching and interesting. The concluding part focused on creative thinking and thinking about one's own opportunities at the labour market.

The attendees were unknown to each other, therefore, the piloting started with ice-breaking activities not related to the issue of employment. Consequently the group discussed expectations of individual participants.



The participants were asked to search for a recent article concerning migration or diversity in their home country (C.1.1). These articles were printed and main issues discussed. Attendees reflected on their as well as others' articles. An outcome was a display of culturally specific issues related to civic life and employment. Further developing the activity, the participants were looking for some common features, building European and partially global identity (C.2.1).

In the consequent part of the piloting, participants were divided in two groups and asked to set-up a company. They looked for their national legislation, chose a particular type of company (for their purpose) and thought about all legislative requirements (C.2.1).

The final part of the piloting built on the previous section dealing with companies. Participants were asked to think about their SWOT analysis and prepare a mind-map of possibilities they have at the labour market. This activity was difficult for participants, further guidance on legislation, limits, structure would be useful. The mind maps were an interesting

source of inspiration and also a way to organize one's thoughts, as was found by participants (D.7.).

Date: 11th April 2017, 9:00

Tentative programme:

9:00 – 9:30	Introduction, ice-breaking activities
9:30 – 10:30	Personal SWOT analysis (A.1)
10:45 – 11:45	Social network (A.2)
12:00 – 13:00	Work experience and support needs (A.3)
13:30 – 14:30	Personal profile (A.4)
14:30 – 15:00	Reflection

The piloting focused on Chapter A – personal SWOT analysis, self-assessment and action plan. Introductory part offered space for getting-to-know each other as participants were unknown to each other. Ice-breaking activities were introduced as well. Consequently, the purpose of the piloting and project was explained and expectations of participants discussed.

The first part focused on the audit of one's strengths and weaknesses. A range of worksheets was used. It was shown that each participant prefers a bit different approach – from a very structured and simple to free activity using only blank paper and a mind map. Therefore, this finding was incorporated to the Toolkit instructions. Participants were encouraged to present and discuss their findings. Each characteristic was put into context, i.e. a concrete example of the manifestation of the skill/characteristic was provided by the participant. Participants found it difficult to name strong skills and competences. Therefore, discussion on the importance of adequate self-esteem was led.

Consequently the group worked on discovering their social network. This activity was seemingly easier and took less time than proposed in the Toolkit. However, a follow-up discussion led by the trainer filled in the time and was a very good source of reflection.

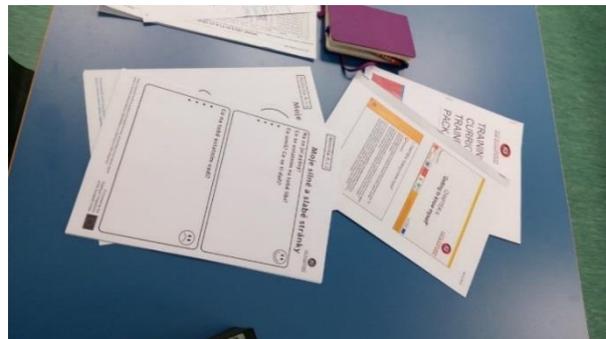


The key part of the training was summarization of participants' work experience and their needs related to the work environment (A.3.1. – A.3.3). Participants without work experience focused on worksheets A.2.1. – A.2.4. Consequently, the whole group created together an ideal employee with his/her characteristics. In pairs, participants compared these characteristics to their SWOT analysis.

For participants with limited work experience, an additional activity offering a list of job positions and matching them to competences might be useful.

Finally, participants took all their worksheets and notes and used them as a basis for preparation of their profile and/or action plan. This part was thoroughly reflected in the whole group.

Participants found most of the activities pleasant and not difficult. They had difficulties putting forward their strengths and proposing concrete steps for elimination of some bad habits/barriers the person experiences.



Date: 30th September 2017, 8:30

Tentative programme:

8:30 – 9:00	Introduction, ice-breaking activities
9:00 – 9:30	Multiculturalism, individual needs and embracing diversity in society
10:45 – 11:45	Civic society, active citizenship
12:00 – 13:00	Social entrepreneurship, cooperation
13:30 – 14:30	Personal profile and reflection
14:30 – 15:00	Reflection

The final piloting experience focused on chapter C devoted to social and civic competences. As an icebreaking activities, an activity focusing on stereotypes and expectations was organized. Participants discussed the prejudices (often unconscious) they have. Consequently the multicultural group discussed the meaning of national and cultural identity and the importance of communication (part C.2.). Activities on collaboration and communication were piloted. The participants were encouraged to communicate and seek information form one another.



Active citizenship, civic society and ways to participate on the life of the society were the focus of the second part of the piloting. Participants offered their perspective on active civic life.



In the third part, participants were putting together a social entrepreneurship that was relevant to the current Czech context. This activity involved thorough discussions on attributes and function of a

social entrepreneurship. A lot of information was provided by the tutors as this form of economic activity was not very well known among participants (part .C2.2.)

To conclude, students discussed their strengths and weaknesses related to the



current society and job market. Based on the pair and group work they individually filled in their worksheets about work experience and personal swot analysis (parts A.3. – A.4.).

The students' feedback was positive. They appreciated active teaching methods and generous space for discussions and feedback.

Feedback from the trainees:

The feedback was collected continuously through the piloting and immediately after the termination of the session as we have experienced poor response rate with online feedback form previously.

Results applicable to the IO:

The feedback from piloting experience can be divided into two groups: from the point of view of the trainer and from the point of view of the trainees.

From the point of view of the trainers, it can be said that the manual offers solid introductions and overview of activities. It is important to have a concise and clearly organizes structure as the material is complex. For the material to be user friendly, all activities need to be easily found and matched to their chapter and purpose. These issues were discussed within the project group and reflected in the final version of the manual.

Even though it offers a number of worksheets and ideas, it is not completely self-contained. Trainers have to prepare country specific and topical materials. We consider this necessary for the trainings to be up-to-date. Concerning chapter B, the materials offering tips for interviews and lists of possible issues or questions were very useful.

From the point of view of the participants, the overall feedback was positive. Concerning chapter A, the activities need to be adopted according to the target group. For participants without intellectual disabilities more complex versions of the activities shall be used, e.g. without the support of the worksheet. Furthermore, for students lacking work experience, it is important to explain that any form of work (paid or unpaid) counts and shall be included and discusses. This lead to increased self-esteem of the participants. Some students found it difficult to describe positive aspects of their personality and support them with concrete examples. Chapter B was very well received by the students, searching job market

opportunities and rehearsing for interview was evaluated as interesting. It might be effective to use personal profile from chapter A to support activities in chapter B (CV and preparation for interview). Chapter C worked very well in multicultural groups where the students shared their first-hand experience with the Czech Republic (very homogeneous society). With groups lacking this characteristic, newspaper articles or examples had to be brought to the class as it was difficult for the students to relate to the topic and discuss straight away..

General conclusion:

The material is well-structured, starts with fundamentals and gradually builds more complex competencies as well as practical skills. The biggest challenge is consistent organization of all the materials and clear presentation of aims and content of the chapters and individual activities so that trainers can easily orientate themselves and choose activities to build their training tailored to their particular group of students.