Kick-off meeting in Murcia

The kick-off meeting of ICARO (Innovative Curriculum for Adult Learners on soft skills) Erasmus+ funded project, took place on the 21 and 22 of November in Murcia. It was hosted by the Partner Coordinator Servicio Regional de Empleo y Formacion de la Region de Murcia (Spain) and counted with the presence of representatives from all the partners organisations: Tehnikes scholes epimelitriou Irakleiou, Greece, Dublin City University, Ireland, Socialiniu Inovaciju Fondas, Lithuania and Hamburger Volkshochschule, Germany, and EFVET.

This first meeting was focused on defining the working timeline for all the partners involved. One of the core aspect of the project is establishing Local Actions Groups with experts from the different partners countries. These groups will count with of trade unions, local and regional authorities and Government representative, as we explained in the next section.

Local Actions Groups

1. SPAIN
2. GREECE
3. LITHUANIA
4. GERMANY
Spain

ICARO project starts in the Region with the creation of a group that will identify the personal qualities most valued by employers.

The Ministry of Employment, Universities and Enterprise of Murcia Region, through the SEF, has started to develop the first phase of ICARO. To this end, the SEF has created a regional reference working group in order to identify the qualities that, despite having a great weight in personnel selection processes, do not have a training itinerary that facilitates their learning.

In this way, the SEF has provided the entities that make up this group, all of them related to the recruitment of personnel, with a document designed to discuss and detect the competences known as ‘soft skills’ in the workplace. These include optimism, teamwork and creativity, among others.

SEF General Director Alejandro Zamora pointed out during the establishment of the working group that "with such an ambitious objective as ICARO’s, which is going to bring about a real revolution in the field of regional human resources, we could not leave out those who know more about personal skills in the selection processes, employers".

Greece

The 1st Local Action Group in Heraklion, Greece was organized by the Technical Institute of Heraklion Chamber, on 18th December 2017. Stakeholders who were invited to participate, derived from different types of organisations, working in Education/Adult Education/Entrepreneurship Training/Informal Training etc.

Representatives from the following organisations took part: Decentralized Administration of the Region of Crete Hellenic, Open University, Youthnet Hellas, NGO, Technical Institute of Heraklion Chamber, 2 Adult Educators experienced in Soft Skills training and Science and Technology Park of Crete.

The meeting started with presentation of the project ICARO, the partnership, scopes, expected results, Intellectual Outputs. Participants were presented with the aim of the Intellectual Output 1 and the need to compile the National Reports, in order to prepare the final report for all participating countries. The ICARO Local Action Group showed great commitment and willingness to participate at the implementation of the programme and their comments, feedback and experience were vital for the compilation of the National Report for Greece.
Lithuania

In Lithuania Local Action Group (LAG) was created in December 2017. 10 partners, representing adult training institutions (3), NGOs dealing with unemployed groups (3), private companies (2) and universities (2) has shown an interest to partnership in ICARO project - share their experiences and knowledge on trainings in soft skills, and collaborate in an upcoming project activities.

Focus group meeting was held at the place of LAG partner Kaunas Region Education Centre, on 15th of December 2017.

Everybody has shared their original ideas, insights and experiences regarding soft skills importance, trainings and methodologies.

Germany

On 19 January 2018, the first meeting of the Local Action Group of the partner in Hamburg, the Hamburger Volkshochschule was held. The participants discussed the questionnaire regarding the competences in Soft Skills, listened to a presentation of Prof. Dr. Zeuner of Helmut-Schmidt-University about participation in Adult Education and the need for acknowledgement of non-formal and informal competences.

Representatives of the following organisations were present: Chamber of Commerce, Chamber of Skilled Crafts, State Department of Social Affairs, State Department of Education and vocational training, Association of AE- organisations, State Department for Science, Advising Agency for Trainings in Hamburg and Labour union for public servants.

The voting for the most needed Soft Skills in the different areas was done and showed very similar opinions.

The participants are anxious to learn about the results of the countries of all the other partners in ICARO.
 Needs Analysis

National reports on accredited tools/programs for adult learners on soft-skills has been completed and developed by Social Innovation Fund (Socialinių inovacijų fondas) Lithuanian Partner. The conclusions reveal that the need to design training programs that develop soft-skills related to employment in all participating countries is stressed. But it is also important to raise awareness of the managers in adult education organisations and companies about the importance of these programs. The main product of the project the ‘accredited curriculum for unemployed adults on soft-skills is seen as an opportunity to motivate job seekers’ and to overcome their ignorance about their own abilities related to soft skills. But also among the adult educators, and to show them the potential of these skills and competences.

On the top of that training of adult educators or mentors on this area is key success factor for developing such curricula.

Accreditation is seeing as crucial to show evidence when applying for a job.

With regards the key competences that should be included the improvement of digital skills is on the top of the list, followed by the ability to plan, team and individually work, to comprise, to communicate constructively in different environments and to accept feedback.

In general, the National Reports shows the lack of this type of accredited tools/programs focused on soft-skills.

Therefore, ICARO project could meet the needs as it is going to develop a platform to create, adopt and combine already existing tools and programmes for soft skills evaluation and training which would be specially oriented to lower-skilled job seekers.

 Project Status

- Attendance and involvement of ICARO project at the Spanish National Agency events.
- Set up of Local Action Groups.
- Working on the launch of the project’s website.
- Attendance and promotion of the project to national events on soft-skills.
- Needs analysis: status of programs/tools on soft-skills on national basis.
- Working on the preparation of the accredited curriculum, platform and project methodology.
- Developed of the dissemination strategy and studying involvement on EPALE platform.

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Project n° 2017-1-ES01-KA204-038271