“It’s never too late to learn” ICARO final Conference

The Final Conference of ICARO “From Home to Work” took place on 12 June at the European Committee of the Regions. The event was co-organised by the Belgian partner EfVET and the Murcia Region Office in Brussels. The event was opened by Thomas Wobben (Committee of the Regions, Director Commission for Social policy, Education, Employment, Research and Culture (SEDEC). He stressed the importance of bringing the EU policies into the ground, local and regional contexts. The event counted with the presentations of Francisca Munuera Giner (Regional Service of Employment and Training, Murcia Regions) stated the leitmotif of the project is that “is never too late to learn” and that’s the main motivation for the partners involved. The online course “From Home to Work” was introduced by Iñigo Magdaleno, then Heike Kölln-Prisner, Jane O’Kelly and Maria Vouidaski introduced the main Intellectual Outputs and lessons learnt.

The panel discussions counted with: Alexia Samuel (European Commission, DG-EMPL), Michele Mombeek, Erasmus+ National Agency, CFWB, Gina Ebner, Secretary General, European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) and Ian Clifford (ALL DIGITAL).

Followed of an introduction to EPALE by Rumen Halachev, EPALE Central Support Service.

The conference had the honour to be closed by Agustin Mihalache, from the Romanian Presidency of the EU Council.

ICARO is a transnational cooperation project funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Commission that focuses on Soft Skills.

ICARO will work with long-term unemployed adult learners, low-skilled and people facing difficulties to access to labour market.

It will recognize the skills acquired by the learners after the practical application of the curriculum.

www.icaro-softskills.eu

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LAST PROJECT MEETING
Brussels

EfVET partner hosted the last project meeting on the 12 and 13 June at their premises.

The partnership final transactional meeting was focused on setting the last deadlines as the project is meant to finish by 30.08.2019. The next deliverables will be to revise the training platform in order that will be more consistent, case studies layout and the quality reviews of IO3 and IO4.

Partners shared as well their feedback from their pilot training, where the target audience had the occasion to test the tools.

During the pilots, partners realised the online training platform might be too complicated to let the target audience (adults unemployed learners) to navigate by themselves. Therefore, they will highlight the need to be in touch with the tutor and increase the face to face hours at the Handbook.

NATIONAL EVENTS

Hamburger Volkshochschule
Germany

On June 18, the Hamburger Volkshochschule organised ICARO project national dissemination multiplier event. The event was attended by around 30 participants from different organisations were present: State Departments, chambers, AE providers, labour unions, job agency representatives and district representatives.

The main discussions revolved around the need for Soft Skills in a changing and digitalized world of work (introduced by Jana Kappel, Chamber of Commerce Hamburg) and the introduction to the ICARO project ICARO by Heike Kölln-Prisner.

Following this, participants had the opportunity to discover the online the platform “From Home to Work ( “Soft skills für den Job)” and to carry out a face to face sessions lead by the trainer Martina Jürgensen.

The seminar paid special attention to the need for acknowledgement of informal and non-formal learning in the vocational area, a session conducted by Jana Kappel. In the end, participants had time to exchange views and network. Apart from the 30 external participants, several employees of Hamburger Volkshochschule were present to get informed about the platform and its further use.

Feedback

The main feedback was that ICARO introduced a very interesting platform and that similar efforts can play a vital role in validating skills and competencies for the job, but there should also be validation systems in place to validate specialized vocational skills. Together these two ways can provide a good option for upskilling.
On June 24, the Regional Employment and Training Service presented the ICARO project at the Archivo Region from Murcia. The event was attended by more than a hundred professionals related to training for employment in order to transfer the need to train the long-term unemployed in ‘soft skills’. The national seminar was the perfect occasion to introduce the tools and resources to the local community of professionals working on career counselling, human resources but also to adult learners, the main target audience.

One of the main tools presented was the online platform “From Home to Work” which facilitates the acquisition of soft-skills by the target audience. The platform, allows the learner, after registering, to find complete resources and content completely free of charge to improve their soft-skills.

This includes four main themes: Digital Competence, Initiative and entrepreneurship, Social and civic competence, and Cultural Awareness.

What is next?
The SEF (Regional Employment and Training Service) is already working to introduce the “From Home to Work” online course into the personalized itineraries that are designed to improve employment options for the long-term unemployed adults in the Region of Murcia (Spain).

In Lithuania, ICARO project national dissemination multiplier events took place on June 20 and June 27. On June 20 the event was attended by 23 participants and on June 27 - by 16 participants, representing different organizations: Labour Exchange, Municipality, AE institutions, NGO. Participants were welcomed by the head of European Innovation Centre Daiva Damuleviciene and representative of Lithuanian Adult Education Association, Prof Irena Zemaitaityte. The idea of soft skills training for low skilled job-seeking adults and ICARO project intellectual outputs were presented by Zivile Jonyniene (Social Innovation Fund).

Discussion on “How soft skills can improve the employability of long duration unemployed adults” was held by Linas Likosius and Rasa Trepkuviene, who had run the ICARO piloting training in Lithuania. Participants had the opportunity to discover the Soft Skills Assessment Toolkit and online platform “From Home to Work”, also discussed the possibilities to use the ICARO IO’s in their organization’s work. Participants demonstrated a high interest in ICARO soft skills training materials. Many of them pointed out it could be valuable to integrate the materials into adult training programs and demonstrated personal interest in created ICARO materials.
Technical Institute of Heraklion Chamber of Commerce & Industry

In Greece, ICARO project national dissemination multiplier event took place on the 16 of July.

The event was organised by the Technical Institute of Heraklion Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

Dublin City University

Dublin

The multiplier event for the ICARO project in Ireland was held in the Institute of Education, St. Patrick’s Campus, DCU, Dublin on Thursday 20th June 2019. A range of stakeholders were invited including members of the local action groups, tutors and trainers from further education and training settings, employers, government officials and graduates, current students and lecturers from education and training programmes.

Two guest speakers presented on Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) in further education and training nationally and locally in education and training boards.

Ciara Ni Fhloinn from SOLAS the Irish Further Education and Training Authority presented the college framework and operations to the audience and discussed the range of industry-certified courses available to FET tutors and stakeholders through the national Moodle platform.

Aoife Fitzsimons, TEL coordinator from Galway Roscommon Education and Training Board spoke of the integration of technology-enhanced learning (TEL) tools and apps in FET courses and how tutors and learners were enhancing the digital literacy of learners and integrating ICT into teaching and soft skills development. The audience of over 35 teachers, tutors, stakeholders and students engaged with the material through discussion and questioning. The need for soft skills assessment and development was acknowledged and welcomed although concerns were expressed by tutors working with learners with additional needs. and disabilities that accessibility for any TEL or virtual learning environments needs to be a priority and built into the design of such interventions.
NEW RESOURCES

Training curriculum on soft skills for unemployed adult learners

This is an innovative curriculum on soft skills addressed to concrete target groups of adult learners: long term unemployed adults, groups under social exclusion risk, low-skilled adults etc. “From home to Work” available in English, French, Spanish, Lithuanian, Greek and German. Join

Handbook for Adult Staff

Handbook for Adult Staff, empirical training with Adult educators to follow this individualized methodology and practical acquisition of soft skills for the adult unemployed group is needed. Download

TRAINERS AND LEARNERS

“I would recommend it without any doubt. It is very interesting for unemployed people with a certain level of digital knowledge and the platform itself supports the use and development of digital skills” - María José Candel Romero, Trainer (Spain)

“I would describe the training as Intensive and elaborate. It touches on all aspects of German Life and Work Culture. The growing diversity in work force and need to understand the necessary tools required to integrate.” - Nisha Sayeed Kumar, Learner (Germany)

“ICARO platform allow optimal provision for differences in style, time, place and pace of learning of adult learners.” - Rasa, Trainer (Lithuania)

“The course is “one of a kind”! It’s structure and content is so well combined, so every trainee can attend, no matter the nationality and knowledge level..” - Giannis Linardakis, Trainer (Greece)