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STRAIGHTEN BASIC SKILLS (SbS) – Intellectual output O I

Set of indicators - success indicators for implementing work related basic skills training for low qualified workers and unemployed

Summary of results of the national experiences – working paper

The basis of this working paper is provided by the findings of a draft overview of the experience and the knowledge of all partners of the SbS consortium, supplemented by one associated partner. All contributions take into consideration the intensive exchange of the networking of all partners, particularly in the EBSN and in the connection of a lot of European projects each partner are involved in over the last years.

SbS consortium



Institut National de Formation et de Recherche sur l'Education Permanente (France)
www.infrep.org



Büro für berufliche Bildungsplanung (Germany)
www.bbb-dortmund.de



BEST Institut für berufsbezogene Weiterbildung und Personaltraining (Austria)
www.best.at



National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (England and Wales)
www.niace.org.uk



Institul Român de Educatie a Adultilor (Romania)
www.irea.ro



Folkeuniversitetet (Norway)
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Success indicators for implementing work related basic skills training for low qualified workers and unemployed

Work at Intellectual output O 1 confirms what the project consortiums partners have suspected in the project outlines of Straighten Basic Skills. The partners have learnt from the importance of the combination of success factors in order to properly develop basic skills training. There is no single "golden bullet" fostering work related basic skills training. Only the interaction of some influencing, successful factors could result into real improvements in basic skills for work. With this in mind we can identify the following success indicators.

- **National legal framework**

National law or other legal regulations (like the "LLL: 2020, the government programme 2013-2018 Article 15a B-VG" in Austria, the "Law of Education, no.1/2011, Title V "Lifelong Learning" Art. 333" in Romania, the Law No. 2014-288 of 5 March 2014 on vocational training, employment and social democracy - replacing the former "Individual Right to Training" – DIF from 2004 in France or the new law on vocational training – LFCo -, that entered into force in January 2015, including sections 13 and 14 which concern the encouragement of basic skills in Switzerland) provide useful circumstances. On the other hand national law or other legal regulations, taken individually, are not sufficient to foster work related basic skills training in fact.

- **Regular funding systems**

Promoting work related basic skills training needs sustainable and manageable regular funding systems. In some countries training or education voucher systems are long established and successful ways of working. EU, national or regional funded programmes are often limited and/or are characterised by high administrative hurdles. In comparison, it is successful if there are easy to handle administrative approaches for enterprises and training providers. Two good examples particularly are the Norwegian BCWL – programme and the French system to support training financing at national level. The BCWL-programme has been a steady and regular governmental program running for more than 10 years. The funding has been increased every year in spite of political changes (Political consensus). The BCWL-programme involves more than 6.000 participants with a gross funding of approximately 12 million Euros (2014). The BCWL-program offers on-line applications, project funding, one deadline a year (November), database with a variety of reports, inspection activities and good informal contact with projects. In France the companies are paying a percentage of their payroll for different devices of training for instance the CPF (Personal training account: account credited with 24 hours per year, limited to 120 hours, for the worker to take a training that leads to a certificate, a qualification or diploma). The device "CPF" which replaces the former DIF (DIF – Individual Rights of Training) finances trainings which aim at acquiring basic skills including in the "set of basic skills" defined at national level. Another example is the FPSPP, a parity based fund for securing the professional pathways, notably provides additional credits to the OPCA and OPACIF – those who manage the individual training leave and professionalization actions.

- **National policy strategy**

In a number of countries national policy strategies are established, e.g. the Austrian Initiative for Adult Education, a cooperation of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs and the nine Austrian provinces, which aims to enable adults who lack basic skills or never graduated from a lower secondary school. Other examples are the "National Strategy for the professional development of adults 2014 – 2020" to stimulate participation of employees to continuing vocational training in Romania, the "National Strategy for Literacy and Basic Education of Adults", announced by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) together with the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs in Germany in 2012 or the "2010 to 2015 government policy: further education and training" in UK. These and similar initiatives are helpful but need more binding as to responsibilities and monitoring by qualitative and quantitative indicators - include an appropriate and sustainable financial basis.

- **National quality assurance catalogue of standards for training agencies and training measures – framework – guidelines – quality marks**

National quality guidelines and frameworks can concern different aspects, for instance quality marks for VET provider, competence aims or standards for reading and writing and other basic skills at the workplace or quality requirements for trainers and pedagogues in the field of basic skills training. Examples of this are the National funding and standard frame for VET providers in Austria which funds VET-providers for basic skills trainings or some Austrian accreditation systems at national or regional level like the "Ö-CERT" or the "wien-cert" as certification procedures. In Norway the "Competence Goals for Basic Skills for Adults" establish national standards for reading and writing, mathematics, digital competence and oral communication. Similarly, in UK the "National Occupational Standards (NOS)" are established as statements of the standards of performance individuals must achieve when carrying out functions in the workplace, together with specifications of the underpinning knowledge and understanding. Furthermore there are some initiatives for the "labellisation" of training organisations and trainers or pedagogues as well e.g. in France. Such quality guidelines are suitable for the advancement of work related basic skills training but, however, should not impede the development of tailor-made and unique measures in specific contexts.

- **Policy making and net-working on national or regional level**

Examples of from almost every country involved in the consortium show the evidence of net-working on different levels. The decisive factor in this regard is the cooperation between as many relevant groups as possible (e.g. employment agency, educational institutions, trade union, employer's representations, employee's representations, civil society organisations etc.). Just exemplary named are the central counselling and information centre for basic education and alphabetisation „ZENTRALE BERATUNGSSTELLE für Basisbildung und Alphabetisierung“ in Austria, a national network for promoting various projects in the field of basic education. In France the "National Agency of Fight against Illiteracy (ANLCI)", an



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association of public and private partners, plays a crucial role. The ANLCI has raised awareness over the past decades on the issue of illiteracy in France. ANLCI's role is to gather actors engaged in literacy actions and promotion of basic skills. They create promotional material and pedagogical tools such a referential ("Référentiel des Compétences Clés en Situation Professionnelle - RCCSP") in order to guide everyone around a common vision of illiteracy. There are also net-working initiatives at regional level like the North-Rhine Westphalia Network of Literacy and Basic skills (Netzwerk Alphabetisierung und Grundbildung NRW – Alpha-Netz NRW) - AlphaNetz NRW, founded 2014 under the auspice of the Minister of school and adult education and the Network for work related basic skills North-Rhine Westphalia - AoG-Netz-NRW, founded in 2014 as a result of the SESAM – project, one of the projects of the "Workplace-oriented literacy and basic education of adults" funding programme provided by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research in Germany. Examples are also shown in other countries like Norway and France (Centre of Resources Illiteracy / Centre de Ressource Illettrisme). In Switzerland (in the French speaking part) the CRFBA is responsible for the Networking of the active associations in the field of basic skills in order to better defend the interests against political authorities and financiers.

- **National and regional campaigns - Visibility and re-movement from taboo**

In the last time some national and regional campaigns were carried out – like the “Courage to learn” – campaign in Carinthia in Austria, the “Reading and Writing – Key to the world” Campaign in Germany or the “Learning at Work Week”, a national event which is co-ordinated by the Campaign for Learning in UK. In France ANLCI launched a poster campaign “Help us make Illiteracy the National Cause 2013”. Such campaigns can be helpful to raise the public and political attention. On the other hand the question whether the life situation of low qualified persons with needs regarding basic skills is still treated as a taboo in most societies and such campaigns are necessary to make the situation more visible is not clearly evident. As two recent studies from Germany show that there is indeed a familiar and confident social environment of persons who know about the special circumstances, in particular the colleagues at the workplace.

- **Supportive agreements between the social partners**

Binding and institutionalised agreements between the social partners are a crucial success factor. One convincing example is the OPCA in France. The OPCA is a specific organization which is managed by unions' representatives (both employers and employees 'syndicates), and which main role is to collect the training tax to companies. It also provides counselling and awareness rising services in direction to these affiliated companies. The OPCA's can affiliate companies from a given professional sector or branch, or can be interprofessional and thus gathers different ones. They often have specific programs concerning basic skills (INFREP's OPCA is called UNIFORMATION, has a programme called “Les Essentiels”, aiming at promoting basic skills training to employers and employees). In Switzerland an information campaign called “Workplace, an identification place where one can develop!” was led by the Swiss Union of arts and trade (USAM) in order to encourage the integration of foreign workers by the improvement of basic skills. The USAM cooperates with public services. The

“Parity fund of the main construction sector in Switzerland (Parifonds)” that is managed by social partners Project have took over the costs of the “French / German on the building site” programme (2012-2015), specifically practice oriented language courses, as far as possible on the work site, in site huts or in workshops. Furthermore, knowledge and experience from all the countries in the consortium show that the work councils can play a facilitating role to strengthen work related basic skills initiatives in companies.

- **Good access to employers and enterprises**

How to find a good access to employers and enterprises respectively how to develop offers for employers and enterprises that fit to the current challenges of the enterprise is a determining factor for the success. On the basis of past experience of all consortium partners¹ some of successful indicators are:

- partners tailor-made organisational offers for companies,
- sensitising of enterprises and training of multipliers within the company,
- creating an approach to enterprises and companies via different counselling services,
- using the “language in enterprises”,
- planning - and building motivation (giving good information to the employees from the beginning, mapping problem areas, creating secure fields of interaction, strengthening self esteem and building motivation),
- a whole –organisational approach,
- implementation and investment in basic skills influenced by recruitment profile,
- frequent reinforcement of the contribution of good basic skills,
- high expectations and a strong training culture,
- provision that is discrete and intensive, contextualised to employer settings and highly relevant to workplace scenarios,
- broad principles and resources for the programme negotiated between the provider and the employer.

On the other hand it is not only a question of successful access paths entering companies but also: Which company/which employer is suitable to realise work-oriented basic skills for low skills employees? Most interested are companies / employers

- with a high proportion of low skilled employees,
- with internal drivers / promoters for low skilled employees and the chances of further education,
- with particular attention to the needs and development opportunities of the staff,
- with high social responsibility in their role,
- with an actual pressure / stress because of restructuring processes in the company,
- with personal in situations of radical change (e.g. good employees are likely to leave the company or good staff coming from temporary employment are needed to stay for good).

¹ e.g. Skills for Life – Make it your business employer toolkit, DfES, 2004, The Network for workplace language, literacy and numeracy (UK), European LLP LEONARDO DA VINCI and GRUNDTVIG – projects in which the consortium partners are involved, ...

Finally, it is recognised that basic skills training must be embedded in innovation strategies, for example shown by the GO2 – project in Switzerland. The GO2 project responds to a reintegration of training in site logic. It encourages the acquisition of basic skills in enterprises, according to particular and emblematic professional situations, allowing thereby answering the needs of, as well as the enterprise, as individuals. In this project, work situations in enterprise are meticulously analysed together with the concerned responsible persons, and they serve as a working base for the implementation of the trainings for the low qualified employees.

- **Successful co – operation with labour offices and job centres - Involvement of all relevant actors in the field of work related basic education respectively**

Fostering work related basic skills training be dependent on a strong cooperation of all relevant actors as much as possible supported by a fundamental attitude that shows concern for shared interests. Labour offices and job centres are key stakeholders in this context. For example The NIACE research report – Helpful approaches to the delivery of English and maths for unemployed adults - commissioned by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, shows that the “Pre-employment” can be a successful approach. “Pre-employment” is based on a Partnership work between learning providers and Job Centre Plus and Co-location of provider staff in Job Centres or establishing single point of contact at the learning provider institution where JCP staff can book referees into allotted time slot for initial interviews. This minimised waiting times and raised awareness for JCP staff and unemployed adults about the benefits of improving English and Maths skills and not at least increased motivation to attend first appointment.

- **Good range of providers**

Extending the range of work related basic skills training needs a vast number of different providers in the field of adult education in general and basic skills training in special. These include commercial, public, NGO's and others. It should be noted that a good range of providers, taken individually, are not sufficient without qualitative criteria (see also the indicator quality guidelines and marks). We have to take into account: increased competition induces to select not the best, but mostly the favourable offer. We need criteria and indicators to choose experienced and highly qualified providers.

- **Professionalization of trainers**

In almost all countries of the consortium partners no formalized specific training for adult basic skills teaching is available. In Romania for example National requirements were established for those who teach/train accredited (formal) courses to adults to have the qualification as trainer. The requirement is in force since 2010 – but: There is no sectorial approach in Romania to what concerns adult trainers. They all obtain a general qualification as adult trainers with no differentiation among the different sectors or subjects, meaning that language trainers, vocational trainers etc. they all receive the same qualification. In



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Germany too there are no standardised educational requirements for basic skills trainers, but some practical examples of qualification measures developed in the last five years. VOX in Norway has been assigned the responsibility to design a model for teacher training customized to the needs of teachers who teach basic skills to adults. A model for formal training for teachers who teach basic skills to adults was developed in close cooperation with pedagogical experts from training seminars, and in 2009/2010, the model was implemented in cooperation with teacher training institutes at universities and university colleges. In France the ANLCl published a guide book called “Basic education actors: how to professionalize oneself” (in French). This presents a definition of the professional profile for a basic education trainer (according to studies carried out in 2005-2006 on a sample of 39 participants) as well as a list of existing training courses to professionalize oneself and improve competences. Also the Regions are launching call for tenders in order to train trainers (of apprenticeship centres - CFA).

The experiences of the consortium partners show that the professionalization of the trainers in a specific way is essential because trainers and other actors in the field of work related basic skills training like counsellors are faced with various specific challenges. The educational staff – teachers, trainers, course leaders, counsellors – need extensive competences for the development of work related basic skills learning settings. Methodical-didactical competences are not sufficient. Necessary, for example, are

- competences to deal with the different underlying logics of the behaviour and activities of enterprises and labour offices,
 - consulting expertise regarding personnel and organizational development processes,
 - expertise regarding different branches and working areas,
 - knowledge how to analyse workplace situations and workplace requirements,
 - communication skills (considering the communication with different target groups in the enterprises).
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- **Flexible programme structure - (Focus on target groups)**

Work related basic skills training does not follow a fixed Curriculum but is being developed based on the needs that were identified and objectives that were negotiated. A flexible programme structure means to focus on the needs of target groups and the challenges of the enterprise. In Norway Basic Job Skills Profiles are established. The Basic Job Skills Profiles are a tool meant to facilitate the design of basic skills courses tailored to the needs of each work place and individual learner. The profiles describe how each of the basic skills is used by workers in a particular occupation. The profiles are based on the “Competence Goals for Basic Skills for Adults” (see also the indicator quality guidelines and marks) . Through the use of these profiles, employers can get an overview of the skills that need to be strengthened and workers can increase their awareness about their need for further training in literacy, numeracy, oral communication and digital competence. There is a need to tailor-make the Job profiles to the specific company. The best profiles are those that have been tailored to each individual situation, taking into account a concrete case and adapting them to each individual need.

- **Particular methodical and didactic approaches**

Against the background of the manifold and long-time experiences of the consortium partners a lot of various aspects can be identified to show that work related basic skills training need particular methodical and didactic approaches like

- learning to learn,
- blended learning,
- raising skills by broadening fields of interests and job perspectives,
- innovative approaches to teaching embedded basic skills,
- assessment of basic skills programmes at the workplace,
- different formats,
- teaching and counselling as training strategy,
- certification as a means of high appreciation for the participants (for example in Switzerland: a competency framework concerning basic training (enacted by the CRFBA) can lead to a recognized certification at a cantonal level,
- formative and summative evaluation of training,
- transfer of learning to more performance on the workplace,
- taking into account current developments in the working life. Skills challenges in a digitalized work life – “Advanced Craft Certificate” in Norway,
- mapping reading and writing skills,
- individual follow up – both before and during training,
- the training takes place in the production area, not in a classroom,
- securing the training in the companies “inner life”,
- adapted training, that means flexibility and individual adaption,
- provision of intensive courses should take into account the needs and backgrounds of the learners,
- “bite-sized” approaches to delivery, which break up learning into smaller parts,
- helpful approaches to delivery include contextualisation to real-life,
- employment scenarios,
- the embedding of personal and social development (PSD) learning content,
- provision that is discrete and intensive, contextualised to employer settings and highly relevant to workplace scenarios,
- qualifications which support sustainable skills development,
- provision of appropriate support for learners with a specific learning disability (SpLD),
- recording, tracking and reporting of individuals and corporate basic skills performance,
- use of collaborative learning approaches with peers,
- resource and feedback oriented.

This is an incomplete and unsystematic list that must be complemented and more structured. But it is indeed no doubt that the development of work related basic skills training can fall back on many successful experiences in this field.



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- **Supporting guidance systems**

Examples from Austria (Individual “coaching” approach - An offer in collaboration with the AMS to increase employability of women, especially those with migration background), Germany (Counselling on professional development – “BBE - Beratung zur beruflichen Entwicklung”) and France (Law No. 2014-288 of 5 March 2014 on vocational training, employment and social democracy establishes the conditions of realization of the “Consultancy for Professional development”) show the evidence of supporting guidance systems to initiate and to support learning processes, particularly for the target group of the low qualified employees and job seekers. A crucial factor for the level of satisfaction and success achieved is in the consideration of individual resources, problems, specific sections and sub-support requirements.

