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Piloting testing process: University of Strathclyde Centre for Lifelong Learning

Preparation to the Pilot

The Piloting of CaMEO was completed at the University of Strathclyde to test the E-Learning Platform, Matching Database and e-learning modules. The approach to the pilot took a multi-faceted approach in order to gain the widest possible number of responses and the greatest diversity of feedback (while staying within the key target group). It included:

1. Pre-pilot dissemination & promotion efforts
 2. Pilot-testing phase
 3. Follow-up
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1. Pre-pilot dissemination & Promotion efforts: While the pilot officially launched in December, the pilot was also facilitated by ongoing dissemination efforts about the programme, with the aim to build awareness and general interest to the CaMEO products. This approach included distributing flyers through the University of Strathclyde & Centre for Lifelong Learning and at events (such as the Employer's Diversity Forum, Generations Working Together Network Meetings and conference, The Gathering, at the Scottish Exhibition Centre and Glasgow Museums, etc,) using social media (Twitter, Facebook), and delivering presentations on the project at conferences and other dissemination venues.
 4. Pilot-testing phase: The pilot was launched with the promotion of the program and targeted presentations were delivered to older adults, as well as at individual meetings using a one-on-one approach. More information about the targeted presentations and the approach taken is provided below.
 5. Follow-up: Follow-up with the participants from stage one and stage two reminded participants of the survey, promoted the link to the questionnaire, and obtained further comments or answered any additional questions. Follow-up methods included individual emails and face-to-face requests where applicable. Given that most of the participants attended classes in the Centre for Lifelong Learning, follow-up on a face-to-face level was achievable.

Pilot-testing presentations:

The approach taken for the presentations mentioned in point 2 were as follows:

1. Project Overview: a) an explanation of the topic, b) discussion of mobility and its relevance to older adults and employers, particularly concerning the mobility of older adults in the ICT sector, c) the urgent skills mis-match that exists in the ICT sector in Europe; d) A description of the CaMEO project, its aims an objectives, its approach, and method:
2. The E-Academy & Matching Database: a) description of the e-Academy, Matching Database, and e-learning modules, b) a discussion of the EQF and how it is used, and c) a demonstration of how to use the e-Academy, Matching Database and E-Learning Modules.

Part of the approach in the pilot was to hold several meetings with the target group about CaMEO. These were held in small batches. Presentations were made to the following groups:

- Learning in Later Life Association (3Ls)
- Digital Health and Wellness Group
- Strathclyde Ageing Network
- Generations Working Together
- Tempus project visitors

In total, approximately 70 participants were involved in the CaMEO presentations. In addition to these methods, students at the Centre for Lifelong Learning were invited to participate. Tutors were asked to mention the opportunity to students attending ICT courses direct to the 50+ and to distribute flyers about the program, which were also distributed in the common areas and reception of the Centre where students are present throughout the day. The Project Manager (Megan DePutter) also met individually with interested lifelong learning students, community members, and other researchers to explain the project, provide instruction, and discuss the issues; at this time the questionnaire was also promoted.

During the presentations, participants were able to ask questions and were guided through the process of using the system. A hands-on demo was provided by showing the website on a projector and taking the participants step by step through the

process. They were then invited to try out using the system themselves and to try out the e-learning modules (minimum 3 modules) and provide feedback using the questionnaire. At the 3Ls, Strathclyde Ageing Network and Generations Working Together meeting, all information as mentioned above was provided except for the demo.

In all cases, participants had the option of submitting the questionnaire using a shared computer at the Centre for Lifelong Learning which offered them privacy, convenience, and also addressed the needs of those who might not have their own computer. They were also provided with a log-in and password if they did not want to create their own; this encouraged people to explore the platform without the deterrent of creating their own account if they did not want to.

Additionally, the participants were allowed to complete a hard copy questionnaire to complete if they chose, or complete the questionnaire using their own computer. In addition to completing the questionnaire, some participants provided informal verbal feedback which has also been taken into consideration in the report.

Although the presentations stimulated interest and obtained some general commentary, follow-up proved quite difficult, and a total of [11] responses were gained from a large dissemination pool. This is partly because the participants were able to perform the questionnaire at their leisure and anonymously. While that offered important benefits, it is also much more difficult to track the participation and less commitment can mean less follow-through. It is for the same reason that a single list of participants was not obtained. However, anonymity does help to guarantee that the participants answered the questionnaires honestly.

Key Points and Conclusions

In addition to the feedback provided in the survey, some participants provided qualitative verbal feedback or in the form of written feedback. Presented is a summary:

1. Feedback on the platforms and project concept:

- The general concept is very useful. Many older adults experience difficulty in trying to find work. There was great enthusiasm around supporting older adults to find new jobs.
- Many older adults have an interest and ability to learn new skills. They should not be discounted because of that. This project helps to support older adults' learning and mobility, and that's important.
- The E-Learning module on recognising prior learning is especially important for that reason. Older adults have a lot of other skills and experiences to share and it's important that these are captured. But people need help to be able to do that. This module supports people in doing just that, and helps to build confidence and leadership skills as well. The EQF misses the most valuable reason to hire an older worker – their soft skills, customer service skills, etc., which makes the content in the e-learning modules really important.
- Some participants are concerned that, while the database supports older workers, it doesn't directly challenge discrimination. The employers still have methods of finding out how old a person is (for example, they would notice their age in an interview or the dates when they obtained their qualification) and age discrimination would lead the employer to choose a younger person. (However others have argued that it's still valuable for older workers to try to compete using such a platform).
- It is questionable whether the rating system is really accurate. People could say anything to make them sound better than they are. Especially in situations where people are desperate for a job, they could lie and there is no way to test this in this initial stage. It would be better to have a test that provides an objective indicator of skill. (However, some participants disagreed with this and emphasised that this is a first step; an interview would help to verify their qualifications.)
- The skill ratings in the EQF are questionable. In fact, some of the skill levels could be applied in almost any scenario (even referring to a 3rd year university class outcome). To improve, they could be made more specific.
- It's good that in the e-learning modules, additional materials and resources were offered, although it would be helpful if they were specifically tailored (for example if when you complete the EQF it identifies gaps/weaknesses and suggests courses to develop those skills.) But this information is still valuable.

- However, within the e-learning modules, there are some problems. For example, it is a problem that you cannot go backwards; it seems that you instead need to exit the course.
- This is a useful platform that could be expanded to other areas outside ICT. In fact, going beyond ICT would be really important because it's not necessarily an area where a lot of older workers want to work.
- The partners should work directly with companies, and explain this program, and bring the companies on as partners who will agree to use the system. Then the CLL can show older workers that certain companies are willing to use the platform. This will increase usage. Also, CLL could also work with the company partners to understand their specific skills at those companies and then create learning programmes based on those skills needs.

2. Suggested improvements to the e-learning modules

- To improve, the fonts need to be increased. Also, the e-learning modules should be able to be viewed in full-screen. Remember that older adults can have visual impairments. Some things could be done to improve the layout to improve the readability of the text. Some parts of the e-learning modules are hard to see without being made full-screen. The graphs are blurry.
- Quizzes should have the answers given at the end. It does for some (for example some answers in Module 3) but not for the other ones.
- In some, there are no back buttons so you can't go back to re-read something or change your answer in a quiz.

Module 1

- The links are not hyper-linked. Nor can you copy them. So you really cannot visit the websites from these links.
- In Module 1, there is something that looks like it's a test but it's not clear. It should be clearly stated if it's a test.
- There are some grammatical errors.
- When you get a wrong answer, you should be able to try again, or get the right answer! In Module 1, it just tells you that you got it wrong.
- It's not exactly clear how Module 1 fits with the other modules. It seems more about policy, but how does that fit with me, the worker? It's also very heavy on the text.

- In Module 1, when you get to the end of the Module and click Next, nothing happens.
- Module 2:
- In Module 2, some of the font is just too small and hard to read!
- Some links are hyperlinked and work fine; but others do not.
- In Module 2, slide 21, it did not tell me if I got the right answer or not.
- In Slide 23, as soon as you click one answer it tells you that you got it wrong, even though it says 'check all that apply.'
- In several quizzes it gives you a response before you click 'submit'.
- When you're finished, you click Next and nothing happens

Module 3:

- Fonts in some cases are too small.
- In 'My Skills' Activity, after clicking 'review', it says 'incorrect' even though it is a self-assessment, and when I do a print-out, it says 'incorrect' and that I've failed. Given that this is supposed to be a positive exercise and self-assessment, this looks poorly.
- It forces you to go through that exercise several times. Instead it should automatically take you to the end of the module.
- There is a lot of text that could be broken up into several different slides.

Module 4

- In slide 18 I think I gave the right answer. I think it's incorrect. It should tell you what the incorrect answer is.

Modules 5

- The picture looks mean at the beginning slide
- The picture in the next slide is too blurry
- I did not understand what I was supposed to do with the embedded slides in the beginning or how to read them. They are tiny and impossible to read.
- On slide 18 the graph is too small to read.
- I did not understand a lot of the content. Not all of the content made sense. It seemed disconnected. I didn't understand what I was reading about.
- Some pictures (for example slide 39 and 40) are too blurry and small to read.

Comment [H1]: Maybe we should remove any slides, graphs or screen captures that are impossible to read

- Also there are screen captures of other websites which are too blurry and small to read.
- I think it might have been better to have a facilitator recorded in giving this presentation. The material doesn't make sense on its own.
- Links are not hyper-linked.