

Innovative Vocational Training Approaches in Social Economy Small and Micro Enterprises

2008-1-PT1-LEO05-00404

<http://www.adam-europe.eu/adam/project/view.htm?prj=3930>

Project Information

Title: Innovative Vocational Training Approaches in Social Economy Small and Micro Enterprises

Project Number: 2008-1-PT1-LEO05-00404

Year: 2008

Project Type: Transfer of Innovation

Status: running

Country: PT-Portugal

Marketing Text: TSESME outcomes can contribute positively to human resource development in the enterprises of social economy by providing innovative and adoptable tools for the assessment of training needs and guidelines for the implementation of vocational training programmes. Résultats TSESME peut contribuer positivement au développement des ressources humaines dans les entreprises d'économie sociale en fournissant des outils innovants et adoptables pour l'évaluation des besoins de formation et de directives pour la mise en œuvre de programmes de formation professionnelle.

Tsesme Ergebnisse können einen positiven Beitrag zur Entwicklung der Humanressourcen in den Unternehmen der Sozialwirtschaft durch die Bereitstellung innovativer und adoptable Werkzeuge für die Bewertung der Ausbildungsbedarf und Leitlinien für die Durchführung der beruflichen Bildung Programme.

Summary: The strategic aim of the project in the medium term is the improvement of the innovation potential of social economy organisations which is a key factor of success and important to survive in the globalised economy as well as to accomplish the European social model. TSESME focuses on the specific situation of organisations into third sector, greatly the small and medium enterprises of the social economy sector, where vocational training needs are investigated insufficiently and there is lack of resources for planning vocational training actions. TSESME aims to improve the vocational training system in social economy enterprises by providing innovative and adoptable tools for the assessment of training needs and guidelines for the implementation of vocational training programs particularly in micro organisations. Selected tools will be elaborated as web based assessment application and all tools, models and guidelines will be compiled in a compendium that will be available in printed form as well as on a web platform in all partner languages. Based on the models, training measures will be realised in all partner regions. The consortium is composed by 4 organisations (PT; AT; LV and TR), compiling the required expertise to fulfil TSESME objectives. MERIG, the Austrian partner, was the coordinator of the prior TRAINSME project, the project that is actually being transferred. In the short term all participating organisations as well as small and micro organisations of social economy, participating in the evaluation, assessment and pilot processes, will directly profit from the new tools and models for a better assessment of learning needs and will also have the opportunity to test new tools and training models. The participants in the project processes will raise their human capital and directly profit from the trainings provided in the pilot studies. In general the project will raise awareness about vocational training in small and micro enterprises and will introduce ways to innovation processes. In the medium and longer term the project will provide wider access to training for managers and employees in small and micro enterprises and will encourage educational partners to develop more individualised and needs oriented training programs. The project results shall be adopted and transferred to other regions and sectors and will contribute to human resource development in small and especially micro enterprises in general.

Description: Lifelong learning and vocational training are the most important indicators for innovation and development processes and thus the motor in the European economy. TSESME focuses on the specific situation of organisations into third sector, a very significant sector³ representing 10% of whole European enterprises and 10% of total employment providing services benefiting quasi-totality of the population. Social economy assembles a great number of activities and covers different types of rganisations⁵. Research emphasizes the role of the social economy for a variety of Government policies, as: inclusion, through its community connections;

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regeneration, a number of organisations has seized a leading role in community regeneration; skills and lifelong learning – a subset of Inclusion and Entrepreneurship. Social economy organisations develop a holistic, client-focused approach at which it is adept; competitiveness and entrepreneurship –the sector generates enterprise and social entrepreneurs. Nevertheless, social economy faces various constraints that render difficult its role. TSESME addresses the small and medium enterprises of the social economy sector where is more visible a lack in personnel development. Recent studies and partners' experiences show that sector constraints fall into three main categories –specific to social economy organisations, imposed by the external environment and shared with for-profit SMEs. Specific constraints to the social economy include: Diffuse, confused and multiple goals - causing problems in their management and in stakeholder perceptions; A lack of social entrepreneurs – and ensuring that they can adapt to management as an organisation matures; Management skills – deriving from the very nature of the organisation; Managing organisational change – involving issues of cultural and technical capacity; Funding – issues around timescales, asset creation, surpluses and the perspectives of founders and stakeholders; Human resources – with problems around training (accessibility and affordability) and difficulties in sourcing volunteer labour; Dependency and resistance to change – often associated with shifting from a grant culture; Other constraints – finding premises, competition within the sector, founder demands for quick results and the effect of adverse publicity. The external and institutional constraints includes a lack of co-ordinated support, lack of awareness or a negative perception on the part of stakeholders, access to finance (in suitable forms) and regulatory issues. The constraints reported that match the experience of the private sector includes: Lack of management skills in marketing, IT, business planning and raising finance; Under-development of human resources; Pressures leading to short-term thinking and behavior as a result of limited financial and material resources; Problems of succession management; Bureaucratic procedures of public agencies.

Most of these constraints can be tackled through a customer-focused support, namely at vocational training level. The latter often is not directly related and harmonised to the occupational profile due various reasons, as following: - The vocational training needs are investigated insufficiently in most of the addressed organisations; - There are no or few resources for active human resources development, namely in small and micro organisations of the social economy and there is also a lack of medium and long term strategic and systematic planning for organisational and personnel development. - Detected training deficiencies are often neglected, because the organizations cannot afford the loss of time, production and flexibility resulting from an employee who is attending training courses during work-time. - There is lack of resources for planning vocational training actions in small and micro organisations and also a lack of knowledge about funding possibilities. - To some extent people in small and micro organisations are frustrated about the standard training packages which are available on the market, because these vocational training offers only meet their needs to a small extent and are seen as waste of valuable work- or leisure time.

The social economy SMEs presents common constrains with all remaining for-profit SMEs. There is evidence showing that a lack of skilled labour is the main obstacle for SMEs. Recent survey indicates the existence of a positive relationship between enterprise size and the regular nature of the enterprises' competence development activities, what suggest that SMEs, specially the smallest ones, suffer from a number of specific obstacles in developing their competence base⁸.

A European literature survey⁹ underlined that the main reason for not carrying out formal training activities is also related to lack of time considerations. Other important reasons include, in this order, insufficient financial resources, lack of planning and, finally, lack of relevant training courses.

Further studies and experiences allow the following statements: • Small and micro enterprises are also particularly affected by the cost of developing the competence base of their workforce, especially if the expected economic returns are not very clear. Such costs include the direct and the costs related to the absence of an

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individual employee, as well. • Another important barrier is that in particular micro-entrepreneurs are often not able to diagnose their own competence needs effectively. The entrepreneur's limited information and contact with sources of competence results in a limited overview of the opportunities available and links to their workforce's competence needs. • There are no or few resources for active human resources development in small and micro enterprises and there is also a lack of medium and long term strategic and systematic planning for organisational and personnel development. • Small and micro enterprises are often critical about the quality, extent and orientation of the existing supply of formal training and external advice. Too theoretical and seldom tailored to the companies needs are common criticisms. Employees themselves may be a barrier to the upgrading of their competence levels, especially if they are unconvinced of the benefits of learning, they are afraid of further responsibilities derived from them or they have limited. The situation in all partner regions concerning the company structure is similar since the regional economies are built on prospering small and micro enterprises. Summarising we can conclude that it is necessary to foster vocational training in small and micro enterprises and support the innovation potential which is important for these companies to meet the challenges and chances of the European integration and the globalisation.

A significant number of those SMEs are in the social economy sector, focuses on social economic self-help of poor people and disadvantaged communities, especially the foundation of cooperatives

Themes: *** ICT
 *** Lifelong learning
 *** Open and distance learning
 *** Enterprise, SME
 *** Continuous training
 ** Social dialog

Sectors: *** Education

Product Types: evaluation methods
 CD-ROM
 website
 procedure for the analysis and prognosis of the vocational training requirement

Product information: The result of the project will be tools for needs assessment and models for the establishment of needs oriented vocational training. Selected needs assessment tools will be provided as online applications and tested in the pilot studies. A compendium on the assessment and implementation of vocational training needs in social economy small and micro enterprises will be formulated. It will include detailed analyses of existing models and their strength and weaknesses; vocational training needs assessment tools and guidelines for the realisation of needs oriented vocational training focusing on the specific situation of small and in particular micro organisations of the social economy sector. The compendium will be available in printed form as well as on a web platform in the final stage of the project in all partner languages. The following list of the steps of the project implementation shows the main interim and final results of the project:

Detailed needs analyses: In each partner region the needs of small and micro enterprises of the social economy will be assessed (personal interviews and questionnaires with managers and personnel in regional enterprises, stakeholders etc.) and analysed in detail. The analyses will be compiled and enriched by detailed studies on recent theoretical models and publications. A mapping of existing expertise, limitations and needs in all participating countries will be the result of this step. It is important to point out that on the one hand existing need analyses and backgrounds are reflected and used but on the other hand specifically the needs of micro enterprises in the participating regions are assessed where we identified a lack on recent and feasible data.

- Elaboration of models and guidelines: Based on the analyses and inputs of the project partners' models for the elaboration of individualised, needs oriented training programs will be elaborated. A specific focus of the models is the application of e-learning programs and the advantages and disadvantages of ICT

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support of vocational training in small and micro organisations of social economy. Selected tools will be provided as web applications.

- Testing, evaluation and validation of the new tools and models: Based on the models, training measures will be developed and realised in all partner regions. The development process (the models, the web applications etc.) and the realisation of the pilot trainings will be assessed in detail.

- Final models and guidelines: The final step in the project is the update of the models and the elaboration of the handbook and web applications. The handbook and web based assessment tools will be available in the languages of all participating partners on the WebPage, on CD Rom and in the printed compendium.

- Professional project management, a well-coordinated dissemination and exploitation strategy and a well-elaborated evaluation strategy accompany the implementation of the project. The detailed dissemination and evaluation plans will be drafted within the first 3 project months and consequently updated. The exploitation strategy will be published within the interim report. The project team intends to further develop and exploit the project results after the finalisation of the project was finished offering the on-line service and the publications to social economy enterprises.

Projecthomepage: <http://www.tsesme.org/>

Project Contractor

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Project Files

W2 Final Report.pdf

<http://www.adam-europe.eu/prj/3930/prj/W2%20Final%20Report.pdf>

The analysis was made in order to give relevant background information for the needs of the subsequent stages of the project. It was based on previous studies and an inquiry targeted to the Social Economy small and especially micro enterprises. The inquiry for the needs of this analysis was organized simultaneously in four countries; Portugal, Austria, Latvia and Turkey. It was conducted in the period from January to February 2009. The total number of inquiries was 197.

Products

- 1 Training Needs' Analysis of Small and Micro Enterprises in Social Economy of Portugal, Austria,
- 2 Compendium
- 3 Toolkit

Product 'Training Needs' Analysis of Small and Micro Enterprises in Social Economy of Portugal, Austria, Latvia and Turkey'

Title: Training Needs' Analysis of Small and Micro Enterprises in Social Economy of Portugal, Austria, Latvia and Turkey

Product Type: procedure for the analysis and prognosis of the vocational training requirement

Marketing Text: The project TSESME addresses the problems of the Social Economy SMEs by aiming to improve the vocational training system in small and micro enterprises by providing innovative and feasible tools for the assessment of training needs and raising awareness about the changes and challenges throughout training.

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It was produced country specific reports by partner and a compiled one, reporting main findings.

Target group: small organisations in the social economy field; vocational training providers; trainers, counsellors and mentors

Result: The results of the survey are very much close to the information gathered with bibliographical research and focus group.

Most of the respondents organisations are small or micro organisations, work in a very traditional field and address diverse target groups; usually assume the form of Associations. The majority of the respondents held high positions within the organisation, and possess high degree but usually not in management or related sciences. The concept of "training" is well understood by the respondents who also have a positive representation of it.

Most of the respondents in each country stated they need and use training services, which are available not only locally, but also regionally or nationally. A possible explanation for this is that many of the social economy SME need very specific training services so they use internal training or use training services from organisations from their sector acting regionally.

Concerning quality of training, most consider that it is good, but can be better; for instance, tailored to their needs, which is also visible when present bad training experiences. They have a positive image of training providers.

Most of the respondents consider that the vocational training is very expensive per se, and also present important associated costs, regarding time consuming and the possible escape of collaborators. Besides these statements, most of the respondents consider that training is a good investment, and many know and use public funding to training services.

encourage their collaborators to undergo, training course. In short, there is a need for training and these organisations are open to undertake training even during working hours.

Concerning the organisation of the training provided, most of the respondents consider the e-learning a good approach, but also the mixture of different methods, including the trainer coming to the organisation, and providing training during working hours – this way, blended courses is quite wellcome by the majority of respondents, and under the topics which are subjects that can be also available to SMEs for profit and related to Management, but of course adequated to Social Economy.

Product 'Training Needs' Analysis of Small and Micro Enterprises in Social Economy of Portugal, Austria, Latvia and Turkey'

Area of application: Organisations within the social economy field

Homepage: http://www.tsesme.org/summary_for_wp2.pdf

Product Languages: English

product files

WP2 Report

Compiled report on analysis.pdf

<http://www.adam-europe.eu/prj/3930/prd/1/2/Compiled%20report%20on%20analysis.pdf>

Product 'Compendium'

Title: Compendium

Product Type: evaluation methods

Marketing Text: The Compendium provides an overview of the TSESME project, its main findings and presents the most relevant aspects of the toolkit.

Description: After a short presentation of the training needs analysis undertaken, the Compendium gives a general idea on the toolkit, its main features as well as the results obtained during its piloting test. The toolkit was seen as an adequate method that provides general feedback and suggestions about specific training needs and offers a good basis for discussions with training providers for the definition of a training programme as well as encouraging staff to think about the importance and necessity for vocational training in general. To emphasize that the pilot work revealed the versatility of the toolkit and how it is possible to assess training needs and design training activities to meet those needs in a way that fits the requirements of the small and micro social organisations. The complete toolkit is as annexed to the Compendium as a cdrom.

Target group: TSESME focuses on the specific situation in small (<50 employees) and particularly micro (<10 employees) organisations of the social economy sector. It includes organisations which are business with primarily social objectives whose surplus are principally reinvested for the purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximize profit for shareholders and owners. Primary target groups: managers/owners of small and micro social organisations, that use the assessment tools and the guidelines for the assessment of their training needs and the needs of their employees and for designing needs oriented vocational training programmes in their organisations. Secondary target groups: trainers, training managers, consultants and training providers, which use the tools for supporting the needs analyses in small and micro companies and create user and needs oriented training programmes

Result: The Compendium is available online and printing in five languages: PT; DE; LV; TR and EN

Area of application: Consultancy; Human Resources Management; Vocational Training; Identification of Learning Needs

Homepage: http://www.tsesme.org/Compendium_EN_FINAL.pdf

Product Languages: English

Product 'Toolkit'

Title: Toolkit

Product Type: procedure for the analysis and prognosis of the vocational training requirement

Marketing Text: The TSESME toolkit shall help small and micro enterprises of the social economy to better understand and analyse training needs.

Description: it contains three main features:

- The 'individual tool', which is used for a quick assessment of individuals' training needs,
- the 'other skills assessment tools' which provides information on other available instruments and checklists that can be used alone or in combination with the 'individual tool' and
- the 'good practice' section which contains case study reports from other TSESME toolkit users about their experiences with the toolkit, the assistance that has been provided and the lessons learnt.

Also guides the more experienced users through the 'organisational tool' and pinpoints different articles, checklists and questionnaires of the theoretical framework section.

Additionally the TSESME toolkit offers:

- An on-line library with materials, articles and checklists. The library is divided into two sections: the 'articles' section where background material on vocational training and the identification of training needs are provided and the 'checklists' section with resources that can assist the user when carrying out the training needs assessments;
- A glossary containing definitions and short explanatory texts on several terms described in the toolkit, varying from action competency to working models conducive to learning.
- The contact section contains information about the TSESME project consortium members. The interested users can use this information for contacting the TSESME consortium.

Target group: Managers of small and micro enterprises who have not dealt with skills development and human resources development before and want to start dealing with this issue. Also addressing the more experienced user for whom skills development is not a completely new field of activity, directed to managers who are experienced in HR and skills development, trainers, training institutions and professional working in the field of vocational training.

Result: The TSESME toolkit provides adoptable tools for the assessment of training needs as well as guidelines for the implementation of vocational training programmes. The users can find their own way through the material provided in the toolkit. However, further assistance – with respect to design and delivery of specific and tailored training programmes – should be sought at training institutions or specialised training professionals. The Toolkit is available on line and annexed to the Compendium in cdrom format. It is available in five languages: PT, DE; LV, TR and EN

Area of application: Consultancy; Human Resources Development; Vocational Training; Identification of Learning Needs

Homepage: <http://toolkit.tsesme.org/>

Product 'Toolkit'

Product Languages: English

Events

Dissemination Workshops

Date 30.09.2010

Description The final products were presented and tested by interested users and stakeholders in all partners' countries

Target audience Managers of social organisations; VET professionals and providers; researchers

Public Event is open to the public

Contact Information

Time and place Graz - 23 September 2010
Ankara - 26 September 2010; Siirt - 27 September 2010
Lisbon - 27 September 2010; Leiria - 30 September 2010
Tukums - 30 September 2010