



Gender & Diversity in Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Materialising gender mainstreaming and diversity issues from theory into educational practice
A transfer system into three different European societies

Manual

for gender sensitive
education in VET in
Romania

Executive summary ↙

Gender & Diversity in Vocational Education and Training (VET)

is a LEONARDO DA VINCI PROJECT that brings together 7 partners from 6 European countries targeted at the TRANSFER OF INNOVATION.

These partners are:



This product has been achieved through the contributions of all partners. It may be downloaded from the project website for non-commercial purpose: www.gender-and-diversity.eu.

Copyright 2009



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission and Agenția Națională pentru Programe Comunitare în Domeniul Educației și Formării Profesionale true the project 2007 LLP-LdV-TOI-2007-RO-016.

The contents of this material do not compulsorily reflect the official position of the European Commission regarding this matter.

The aim of this manual is to give an insight into the concepts of social-cultural diversity and gender as well as demonstrating the importance of their consideration for the labor market and consequently for vocational training.

The manual mainly addresses the **vocational trainers and counselors in Romania**, but also the key actors on the vocational training market. It shall be regarded as an instrument for the development of the programmes through implementation of diversity and gender's integration within vocational training programmes.

More specifically, the target group which this manual addresses consists of:

- *VET teachers and trainers who will, with their improved awareness of the importance of a gender sensitive approach, increase the appropriateness and quality of their teaching and training activities*
- *VET guidance counsellors who will be in the position to use gender sensitive guidance material in their daily practice*
- *Training providers can immediately improve the quality of their VET measures*
- *Key actors for lifelong learning policies in Slovenia, Romania and Turkey: These will have access to sensitisation materials in their language allowing integration of these materials into their respective web sites and data bases thus making them available to their users.*
- *People responsible for the design of labour market oriented guidance and qualification*

Although the manual primarily addresses the VET trainers, the final beneficiaries of these materials are the persons who attend vocational training courses. The final aim of these materials is in fact to train professionals sensitive to the gender and diversity issue and its implication in the vocational activity.

For the manuals development the products achieved within the LEONARDO DA VINCI programme network GenderNet – European network for

assessment, validation and dissemination of gender mainstreaming strategies (A/02/B/F/NT/124.223): GenderNet Guidelines and Toolbox and Respecting Diversity Guidelines and Toolbox have been taken into consideration.

The transfer innovation has been achieved through means of cooperation from the partners and through teamwork (tandem partners) thus resulting in a draft in English being produced that contains the approach of the gender and diversity issue at a European level.

The three target countries: Romania, Slovenia and Turkey improved and adapted the product to in compensate their specific needs and characteristics and through this obtaining a national product.

Throughout the testing and evaluation process of the product: "Manual for introducing Gender Mainstreaming into the daily practice of vocational education and training" in Romania, the following people have been involved:

- Professors and students from initial training institutions (two technical colleges in Timisoara: Colegiul Tehnic de Vest and Colegiul Tehnic Ion Mincu),
- Trainers and learners from continuous training institutions (FRG Timișoara, SC New HOPE SRL in Resita / Caras Severin and FRG Vladimirescu / Arad)
- Experts who are responsible for vocational training and the integration process within the NGO field (Foundation Pentru Voi)

FRG Timisoara has authorized the vocational training programme entitled FORMATOR, COR code 241207 in which the competence "Gender and socio-cultural diversity in vocational training and education" has been introduced.

Throughout the drawing up process of the final version of the manual, over forty trainers from initial and continuous vocational training institutions (responsible with business field training, counselors, practitioners etc.) have already acquired this competence.

The manual is structured into 4 parts – each one focusing on different essential aspects of vocational training, as well as the services and institutions specialized in training and counseling.

The first part introduces VET trainers to the terminology used in the context of diversity and gender and gives information about the formal status of disadvantaged groups within the EU labor market in general. Also, it introduces the VET trainers to the theoretical basis and principles of gender and diversity mainstreaming.

The second part of the manual contains information and exercises referring to the didactic aspects of introducing the gender and diversity issue into vocational training. In order to integrate diversity and gender in vocational training we have opted for a paradigm; which is based on competence development, emphasizing its relevance in the contemporary educational context. The issues specific to the approached theme are also developed in this section, a special focus being put on the modalities of using language and communication in the context of gender and diversity integration into vocational training.

The third part addresses the practical aspects related to the implementation of gender and diversity mainstreaming. It is comprised of two themes. The first theme is dedicated to the aspects relating to the vocational counseling activity. This embraces the way in which the counselors can collect client-related data, as well as the way in which the client can organize different types of vocational orientation activities. The second theme primarily addresses the trainers and provides general information concerning the organization of the vocational training activities, these should be sensitive to gender and diversity.

The fourth part contains the working instruments necessary for the development of the activities allowing implementation of the social-cultural diversity and chance equality for women and men in vocational training. It consists of a series of exercises based on the adult education principles.

The trainer can use the activities in this section within some training programmes in the field of gender and diversity sensitivity, but also within programmes that have other objectives, however these must be ones in which the social-cultural diversity and gender issue is significant.

The concept of the manual is to be a **useful working instrument** for VET trainers and counselors, offering a sufficient theoretical basis for the trainers who are less familiarized in this area; as well as practical instruments for implementing the specific activities within vocational training programmes.

Anticipating the need of some trainers to find out more information regarding the gender and diversity issues and wanting to offer a supple and adaptable manual, we have included two resource categories:

- Thematic cassettes, attached to the main section in the manual, which have the role of offering information, statistics and facts or exercises for the clarification of theoretical aspects;
- Resource list, bibliographic resources, as well as electronic resources, which have the additional aim of offering the VET trainers and counselors the chance to document themselves.

Hoping that this manual will prove to be useful in training new competences in VET trainers and counselors, we recommend that the users utilize it in a professional and personal manner, so that it maximizes its benefits and that it matches the training needs of the trainers as well as of the counselors and their learners.

The manual is conceived from the perspective of the paradigm of pedagogy based on competences, this meaning that the final purpose of this manual's activities is developing new competences. In accordance with the pedagogic theory, the competences are tri-factorial; meaning the training activity will simultaneously develop three distinct plans:

- The *cognitive, declarative* plan; knowledge development and formation of gender and diversity related representations; development of reasoning algorithms that are sensitive to the gender and diversity issue in vocational training
- The *executive, procedural* plan; through which the development of practical abilities of applying the gender and diversity mainstreaming is pursued
- The *attitudinal* plan aims to modify and/or build positive attitudes towards social-cultural and gender diversity within the vocational space and investigate the implications

Respecting the andragogical model, specific to the adult education, the manual has been conceived basing upon the following suppositions regarding the learners who shall use this manual (VET trainers and counselors) and the final beneficiaries of the activities presented in this manual (VET learners):

- The adult learner is auto-centered (he is responsible of his own formation, including the modalities of planning, implementation and evaluation of his own vocational training)
- The learning process is based on life experiences. It is obvious that each learner contributes to his own learning formation, based on his previous experiences and his/her own unique methods of understanding the world,
- The learning experience is determined by a real need of a better understanding of the modalities and of optimal adaptation to the social-professional space
- The activities in the manual are not purely theoretical, but they also have an immediate relationship with the professional life of the learners
- The learning motivation is intrinsic, based on fulfillment of real, high level needs, such as the need of auto-updating
- The learners prefer concrete information
- The learners want to solve real problems
- The learners need different training methods.

Although similar, the teaching/training activity and the counseling are two distinctively different activities, each one having its own characteristics. The gender and diversity issue represents a special challenge for each of the two approaches due to the fact that none of them can, taken separately, reach its own objectives.

That is why we have decided that the didactic approach combines the two types of approaches and implicitly, the two sets of objectives. For example, it is not sufficient that at the end of the training the learner knows only the main aspects and approaches regarding gender and diversity (cognitive objective), it is also necessary that the learners representations and concepts restructure in accordance with the acquired information and in congruence with the own self image (counseling objective). Thus, the manual is not only a teaching instrument, but also a counseling instrument.

The groups of beneficiaries are diverse, from persons in transitory situations (unemployment) to groups with special needs; from young people (apprentices) to adult persons who want to improve their knowledge.

From an educational point of view, all the activities can be adapted to one of the four current didactic strategies:

- Individual strategies
- Strategies based on small groups:
 - Inequal pairs (tutoring)
 - Equal pairs
- Strategies based on small groups
- Strategies based on large groups

Of course, all these strategies need the methods and instruments engaged in the teaching/training activity to be increasingly flexible, as well as an adaptation of the curriculum at the need and requests of the group of beneficiaries.

The learner-centered training is almost compulsory in the current pedagogic context. The learner has in this way the freedom to develop a unique method of understanding and can assimilate the information available in this manual.

The focus on the learner is obvious within the activities presented in this manual. These are conceived so that the learners have the possibility to reflect and debate the modalities of understanding and can comprehend the contents of the manual. Also, the manual allows maximum flexibility within the teaching approach while selecting or adapting the contents to the needs of the learners.

The purpose of the didactic evaluation in situations of teaching competences aims not only to quantitatively evaluate the cognitive acquisitions, with the summative purpose being the possession of a grade, but also to offer realistic feedback that allows further development. Consequently, the evaluation methods aim at evaluating the knowledge, the abilities and the attitudes. The evaluation methods are diverse, from questionnaires and graphs to auto-reflection questions.

The inclusion of the secondary objectives within the training methods is an efficient method to simultaneously develop different sets of competences. Although the activities of training in the gender and diversity mainstreaming are of priority, other competences and abilities are also trained, developed or exercised, among them:

- Abilities of critical thinking;
- Abilities of communication and social interaction;
- Abilities of self-analysis and self-knowledge;
- Abilities of knowing the vocational characteristics and work place characteristics
- Literate abilities
- Counseling abilities

The other product involved in this Transfer of Innovation project are the "Gender & Diversity in VET didactic Guidelines" This complementary product for adult education organisations and vocational training institutions as well as educational, vocational counselors and tutors aims at offering didactic guidelines on how to incorporate the materials of the "Manual for introducing Gender Mainstreaming into the daily practice of vocational education and training". Within the framework of existing teaching schemes the specific requirements of the respective target country are considered - in particular the specific learning cultures and the requirements of vocational training providers in Rumania, Slovenia or Turkey.

This material aims at clarifying the practical modalities of implementing the manual in the vocational training programmes. As previously mentioned in the manual's introduction, it has been developed for the use by VET professionals, trainers and counselors, and this, in a wide variety of contexts.

From the point of view of the organizational framework, the manual can be implemented, partially or totally into the following contexts:

- Within especially designed training programmes– diversity or gender trainings, which would run over 2-3 training days;
- Within programmes for the training of trainers, teaching or counseling ability training – TOT training, vocational and school counselor training programmes, training and authorization programmes, improvement programmes, etc.
- In proper vocational training, the independent way of training fundamental competences, the diversity and gender issue developing the intercultural and social competences of the learners.

From the point of view of the organizational training and/or counseling activity, the manual can be used:

- in individual training and/or counseling activities
- in group training and/or counseling activities

