



Transparency and Self-employment
for migrant workers through
Assessment Center

GIVECOMPETENCEACHANCE



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme



NEWSLETTER N.3



Transparency and Self-employment
for migrant workers through
Assessment Center

GIVECOMPETENCEACHANCE



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

Project:

GC-AC Give Competence A Chance

Transparency and Self-employment for migrant workers through
Assessment Center

Agreement N°:

LLP-LDV/TOI/O9/IT/0504

Contractor:

Provincia di Perugia

The training and experimentation paths of the methodology Assessmentcenter came to the end in the Polish city of Olsztyn. Among the participants there were counsellors and officers from the regional job offices of the Varmian-Masurian Voivodeship and ten women with the experience of migration and work abroad in the countries like Great Britain, Ireland, Scotland, Italy and United States.

The latter group represents the final beneficiaries of the methodology, thanks to which one is able to recognize and emerge the competences of the single persons and to interface them with the requirements of the job market. As a consequence that methodology is a valid instrument for increasing the possibility to find a job adequate to the experience gained abroad.

The migration flows which can be observed in the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship, as well as in the rest of Poland, are mostly directed to Great Britain, Island, Germany and Sweden. The phenomenon of the “returning migration” can be noted. Problems of the “returning migrants” seem to be quite similar to those of the common immigrant: loss of the contact with the job market, assignment of the job which is not adequate to one's, usually higher, competences, problems related to the cultural integration, xenophobia. In those contexts the special attention is paid on the role of the female component: women face bigger difficulties during the integration with the job market but they are also more ambitious from the point of view of self-realisation, what is also related to the professional realisation.

Between April 4th and 8th 2011, a workshop dedicated to the methodology of Assessmentcenter was organised in Olsztyn. Eleven professional consultant from the Job Offices in Varmia and Masuria participated in that course. Theoretical and practical aspects of the methodology were presented.

Two trainers, Magdalena Adamczyk-Lewoczko and Andrea Simone from Life e.V, came on purpose from Berlin. Persons who took part in the training course played three different roles: of the moderator, of the observed and of the observing, during the realisation of the tasks aimed at reproducing critical situations which often have to be faced in the real work context. The same tasks were subsequently proposed to the final beneficiaries. In fact, the goal of the training course was to prepare the counsellors from the Job Offices to test the method of the Assessmentcenter with the women who after their return from abroad became unemployed and are currently searching for a job. In the second phase, which took place between May 7th and 20th ,

the job counsellors who had participated in the former training course, could experiment the Assessmentcenter method and observe and evaluate competences of the migrant women who were dealing with the assigned tasks. The evaluation was made on the basis of the predetermined criteria.

Now we will retrace the main phases, the meaning and the importance of that challenging path thanks to the stories, reflections and points of view of the different protagonists. .

Operators

Bożena Babyńko

After familiarizing with the methodology Assessmentcenter extender my skills in recognition „soft competences”. It has increased my work with new method, which gave me an opportunity formalized assess the level of these competences of participants. It was also an opportunity to improve this knowledge by real certificate. This method showed me, how difficult could be an objective assess, it means look only at specific behavior, activity, comments, without an interpretation of the situation. Two-stage way of transfer a method – one as an observer and second as an observed person, gave me a capability of full and many-aspect understanding the theme. This method allows to exact observing the participants, while realizing the tasks. It demands from observer big involvement, concentration, insight and very detailed description of observed competences. Making a report from observations requires from observers a great deal of work and demands high level of accuracy, diligence and look at the described person taking into account the views of the other observer and the feedback about the person. Using this method, we were observing such skills as assertiveness, resistance to stress, communication skills, problem solving, the ability to self-presentation, scheme of work and responsibility. In assessing the usefulness of this method as a highly useful, it is my desire to deepen the knowledge in this field.”

Marek Zbytniewski

Contemporary labour market - especially in our region - requires big demands for both people who are looking for a job and for people who are already working. To find a good job it is not enough to have the diploma from a good known university, employers require versatility. While working on one workplace, you need to use a whole range of competences - communication skills, assertiveness, ability to work in a group, work organization, etc. It is a challenge not only for employees, but also for advisers, whose job is to effectively help people who have problems in the labour market . The counsellor should direct the career of the person not only to find a job, but to find a job which suites the best to the personal potential and skills. To do this, it is necessary to use method, which allow to diagnose the level of competence of those who are looking for support from professional counsellor. Unfortunately, psychological tests are based on the statements - the result of a psychological test is not always equal to what would make the person in practice. Therefore, I believe that Assessmentcenter

is a very interesting method that through systematic observation of the client in simulated problem situations, allow to make an objective and fair assessment of the level of competence. Adapt this method (or even some elements of its methodology) to the counselling practice would be a complementary addition to the methods already used by counsellor; raising the effectiveness of the counselling process.

Barbara Poczynajło

Both the training conducted by experts and the experimentation on methods, required a large commitment from me and the other advisers. I had a general, theoretical knowledge of the Assessment Center as a method used in the recruitment process. After the training I received the possibility of practical use of a method for assessing the potential of the individual. During training in April, trainers from the Life e. V. showed us the Assessment Center methodology in a very accessible way as a series of carefully planned and prepared steps. That is why we had no problems with using the method while experimenting with migrants. The method is time consuming, involving many elements and from the other side, it is simple, because based on observation and skilful quotation and gives the opportunity to "strengthen" the observed person.

What is important, while giving a positive feedback the observer makes it more reliable by quoting a statement of the participant, which make competences more visible.

In A.C. methodology the observer is doing notes based on specific indicators (which are components of competencies), confronted with the participant's self-esteem and compiled in a report of competence and the final certificate.

Awareness of particular competence, further confirmed in the self-assessment, strongly affects on the increase esteem.

It surprised me that participants were so involved in their roles during simulated situations, that they did not feel the presence of observers. It might seem that the fact that the criteria for observation are known to the participants (they know "what will be seen" during the task) creates a situation to "adulterated" behaviors to show up in "a better light." However, sometimes, when the competence is shown in the strongest way, commitment into the task is so intense, that the observed person is not able to manipulate and behave in the natural way.

Migrants

Migrant 1

Angelika Kosińska, 29 years old, Master of Arts in field of international relations; she was working in England and Scotland

Q:What are your memories of participation in the Assessmentcenter? What are your feelings about it?

A:I'm happy, that I took part in the project. It gave me new capabilities and a chance to meet some people in similar situation on the labour market, with similar experience of working abroad. I had a chance to exchange my opinion and experience and to collect some new information, related to unemployment and employment.

Q:What did you like the most in the Assessmentcenter?

A:Capability of free conversation and exercises without stress and "tense atmosphere", and awareness, that during the workshop everyone consider only positive sides of participants.

Q:Did the Assessmentcenter have an influence on your self-esteem?

A:No, this method had no influence on my self-esteem, because I was aware, on higher or lower level, of my good and bad points. But it gave me an opportunity to think about the better usage of my good points and the improvement of my imperfections. I didn't find out anything new about myself, but I've noticed that some of the participants were surprised about feedback's results, they didn't know about their good points and capabilities and how to use them during the interview with a potential employer.

Q:Did the Assessmentcenter have an influence on your personal development?

A:No, Assessmentcenter didn't have an influence on my personal development.

Q:Do you think, that Assessmentcenter could have a positive influence on your professional career in the future?

A:Yes, but not because of experience gained in the project, but because of the certificates of the participation in that workshop.

Q:Would you recommend participation in the Assessmentcenter? Why?

A:Definitely I would recommend participation in Assessmentcenter. It's very good method for persons, who don't knowt their good points and opportunities to use them. Persons, who had to come back from abroad are often confused, what is an obstacle in successfull and effective searching for work. Hearing good opinion during the

workshop, let my colleagues look at themselves in a positive way and gave them knowledge how to use their capabilities in order to find a job. It's also an opportunity to exchange experience not only between participants, but also among operators.

Migrant 2

Joanna Glinka, 28 years old, environmental engineer. After her study she went to Great Britain, where during 3 years she was working as a storekeeper. At the moment she is unemployed and looking after 2-year old daughter.

Q: What are your memories of participation in the Assessmentcenter? What are your feelings about it?

A: I have very pleasant memories of my participation in the AC workshop. I'm proud of myself and of making exercises by myself. I have shown my competences both in group and individual work. Workshop was really a very important experience for me and I'm sure that knowledge, which I've gained during the workshop will help me in the future.

Q: What did you like the most in the Assessmentcenter?

A: I liked very nice and pleasant atmosphere during the workshop. I think that the level of professional preparation was really high. Also very high involvement, both of participants and operators could be observed. Every exercise was preceded by competences' presentation, which was very helpful in realization of this exercise. Information was given in a very comprehensible way and operators didn't embarrassed participants, while they could ask and get answers with sufficient details.

Q: Did the Assessmentcenter have an influence on your self-esteem?

A: Yes, this process had very positive influence on my self-esteem. My self-confidence and awareness of my skills have really grown. I didn't know, that assertiveness is one of my stronger competences. It's very important and I think, that it could help me in the future with complicated situations. I think, that knowledge and gained skills will help me to find a good job.

Q: Did the Assessmentcenter have an influence on your personal development?

A: AC gave me an opportunity to know strong sides of my person and these elements of my personality, on which I have to work. Thanks to the workshop I have gained a theoretical knowledge and skills, and it would be easier to work with them in the future.

Q: Do you think, that Assessmentcenter could have a positive influence on your professional career in the future?

A: I hope so, because it would be very helpful for employer to get the information about my personal skills and abilities and could be important for successful professional life.

Q:Would you recommend participation in the Assessmentcenter? Why?

A:Undoubtedly I would recommend participation in AC, because as I have already mentioned above, it was new experience, which helps to understand myself and my capabilities. This method let me be more self-confident. Thanks to participation in this workshop it would be easier to solve the problems. I think, that it is worth to spend time on this kind of event, to gain both theoretical and practical knowledge,



GIVE COMPETENCE A CHANCE

Transparency and Self-employment
for migrant workers through
Assessment Center



Provincia di Perugia
Italia



Wojewódzki Urząd Pracy w Olsztynie
Polska



Life e.V.
Deutschland



Iter
Italia



**Agentia Nationala pentru Ocuparea
Forței de Munca**
România



Share-it
Italia



If Italia Forma
Italia



Fondazione ECAP
Ufficio Studi e Ricerche
Switzerland
(Silent Partner)



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.