

SUVOT: Spicing Up Vocational Training

Progress Report

Public Part

Project information

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Executive Summary

SUVOT is a three years European project targeted at people suffering from mental illness, behavioural disorders and learning difficulties associated with mental or behavioural problems (e.g.: schizophrenia, personality disorder, etc.).

SUVOT aims to establish a **methodology of experiential learning** to enable the above mentioned group to acquire skills in order to facilitate them finding a job. SUVOT is a **vocational training course in cooking** specifically designed taking into account the particular needs of the target group. The innovative aspect of the project lays on the simulation methodology based on socio drama techniques that will be used during the vocational training aimed to improve skills as for example team working, hygiene, social interaction, hierarchy, etc.

SUVOT partners are experienced organizations working in the socio-sanitary area and trying to improve the quality of life of the people they work for. The Spanish coordinator, **Fundación INTRAS**, runs day centres and one residence for people suffering from mental illness, offering them psychosocial rehabilitation and support. **Ozara Slovenija** plays a similar role in Slovenia, having centres along the whole country. Both of them believe that employment is a crucial step in the recovery process of a person suffering from any kind of mental illness, and this is what SUVOT tries to offer. The vast experience in cooking training of **CJD**, a German vocational institution for young people and adults suffering from various disabilities, is certainly very valuable for SUVOT's objectives. The innovative content of the project lies on **Teatr Grodzki**, a Polish organization running educational and artistic programs for vulnerable social groups. They are developing the exercises based on sociodrama techniques that will give an original added value to the SUVOT course.

In these first 18 months, SUVOT team has developed a complete **teaching manual** to be used by trainers with a full description of the methodology and techniques applied, as well as the **textbook** that the trainees will use during the SUVOT course. SUVOT trainers will be conveniently trained by experts before starting the **pilot experiences** that will be performed at the same time in Spain, Slovenia and Germany during the second part of the project. After these pilot experiences lasting for 12 months, the manual and the textbook will be revised and improved in the basis of the lessons learnt. Moreover, a **teaching DVD** including cooking sessions will be edited and we expect that it will help to reproduce the training in the future.

SUVOT is fulfilling high quality standards thanks to the constant monitoring of the Quality Board established at the beginning of the project. It is permanently supervising the activities done within the project and assuring that everything goes as planned.

SUVOT project arises from the need to end the **social stigma** attached to mental illness that makes difficult the incorporation of this target group in the labour market. This is why SUVOT team is performing an ambitious **dissemination campaign** (informative newsletters each four months, brochures, promotional posters, emails, presentation in congresses and events, etc.) not only to promote the project, but also to give visibility to this group and make general audience aware of their capabilities. We have also organized two press conferences to reach general audience and increase the impact in the media.

You can find more information about SUVOT in <http://suvot.intras.es> (available in English, Spanish, Slovenian, German and Polish) and also in the [SUVOT facebook](#).

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1. Project Objectives

1.1. DESCRIBE THE PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The main objective of SUVOT project is to establish an **innovative model of vocational training in cooking**, based on the development of a simulation methodology specially conceived for the target group. People suffering from mental illness have less possibilities of getting a job, surveys reveal a 3 to 5 times higher unemployment rate with mentally ill individuals and this is what SUVOT project wants to change.

SUVOT partners are developing a different concept of training, including the acquirement or improvement of frequently underestimated soft skills that most of the times this target group needs to reinforce. Experiential learning is one of the bases of this new training, mainly practical and applied to daily life.

One of the key points is that the partners are not only developing the teaching methodology, but also the curriculum of the material to be taught: a “tailor-made” vocational training in cooking for people suffering from mental illness.

SUVOT team is producing a **complete set of teaching tools** listed below:

- A **teaching manual**: this document describes the goals of the training programme, including 96 teaching modules with a complete description of the curriculum, 40 simulation methodology exercises developed and the exhaustive explanation of the techniques used during the training. This manual is just finished, but it will be revised and improved once the pilot experience finishes.
- A **trainee textbook**: it is an assisting tool for the trainees attending the course. It includes also the 96 cooking lessons, international recipes and explanations about partners' countries to improve their European knowledge, but it does not include information about the simulation exercises, as they have always to be supervised by an expert.
- A **teaching DVD**: with practical visual examples of the training. It will be done once the pilots start and will be available in five different languages.
- **Web platform <http://suvot.intras.es>**: this is a complete informative tool, as well as an educational and dissemination tool. You can find information about SUVOT, news in the media, recipes and the didactical materials developed thanks to the project.

Pilot experience will involve 30 people suffering from mental illness from the centres of INTRAS, OZARA and CJD. After the pilot practical training, it is expected that the trainees learn how to work in a restaurant or a catering company but also that they **gain cognitive, social and practical skills** that will make easier their access to the labour market.

SUVOT has taken also into consideration the big **social stigma** that accompanies the daily life of the target group. To fight against this stereotype and stigmatization, a big effort is been made informing about mental illness and about this project in order to show the general public that people with mental illness is perfectly capable of doing a job. Promotional material has been developed and distributed during several national events and this dissemination campaign will continue until the end of SUVOT project, including informative seminars and more press conferences.

The last aim of SUVOT is to **employ some of the participants** after being trained with the methodology developed and thus, promote the employability of this target group into the labour market.

1.2. EXPLAIN HOW THE PROJECT BENEFITS A SPECIFIC COMMUNITY OF USERS AND HOW THEY ARE INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT

SUVOT is specifically thought for people suffering from **mental illness, behavioural disorders and learning difficulties**. Most of the times, vocational training does not consider their special needs and they drop out this kind of training or they do not even try it. We are living in a competitive world and education is needed for almost any kind of job. It is proven that **having a job is the first step to social integration**, so if we want our target group to integrate in our nowadays society, we should facilitate them the access to the labour market.

30 people are going to directly benefit from the project, as they are going to receive cooking training but also to improve their social skills. Their families will also become favoured from the project within a short time, making an estimation of 4 people per participant; we have a total amount of **150 people benefited thanks to SUVOT**.

In this first half of the project we have involved **101 people suffering from mental illness** in Spain, Slovenia and Germany. They completed a survey explaining about the problems that they have to face up in a working environment that was conveniently evaluated by SUVOT team.

Participants in the vocational training are regular users from INTRAS, OZARA and CJD willing to improve their capacities and that have shown deep interest in being part of this project. They will attend the course three times per week during a complete year and been monitoring by staff, that already know about their limitations, skills and potential. After that, they will be prepared enough to work in a restaurant or in a catering company.

They are **very motivated about SUVOT**; this is something new that will allow them to learn useful things that hopefully they could apply in a future job. They have the feeling that they will have a daily responsibility and the result will be very rewarding for them.

1.3. THE POTENTIAL IMPACT UPON AND BENEFITS TO THE TARGET USER GROUP

During this first half of SUVOT, users in the different partners' centres have been informed about the project and they are highly motivated and looking forward to starting the training. They have the feeling that SUVOT will help them to find a job and thus increase their independence, purchasing power and, what is more important, their self-esteem and self-motivation. For the full integration of our patients it is crucial feeling useful, feeling that they have something to give to society.

Psychologists and social workers working with them believe that the simulation methodology exercises will allow us to provide our users with a **safe environment** where they could deal constructively with their conflicts and insecurities. We expect their relationship with themselves, their environment and with our society to be improved. This new approach will allow a better use of the theoretical course because all conflicts appeared will be conveniently treated for users to be at 100% capacity.

SUVOT means new employment opportunities for everybody. One of the impacts that we intent to achieve is to establish a **permanent cooking vocational training** in each partner organization and then create a catering social company that employs the people professionally trained with SUVOT.

Another expected impact is the **improvement of the overall picture** we all have of people with mental illness. Making people aware of their potential and capabilities will have also a positive effect on the group and on their recovery process.

2. Project Approach

To better know about the difficulties that people with mental illness have to encounter when trying to get a job, we designed a **survey distributed amongst 101 persons** with any kind of mental illness in Spain, Germany and Slovenia. It included 10 questions to test about their worries in a working environment and their attitude towards work. According to the results of these questionnaires, the area of co-operation with colleagues at work is certainly problematic for the target group. **Developing social skills** in this area is essential to opening vocational opportunities to this group of mentally ill people. Personal motivation is a very important area to address as altogether 39% respondents of our survey are not really motivated to achieve what they want. We will try to solve this point thanks to the simulation exercises and thus help them to go undertake and complete vocational training. SUVOT has taken into account the real needs of the people mentally ill, not only to give them theoretical content but also confidence and tools to deal with daily problems.

We have also created **surveys to evaluate the trainers** in each of the organizations carrying out the pilot experience to assure high quality training. It is formed by 15 questions about their past references, educational history and personal characteristics; the threshold of acceptance is 12 out of 15 points.

The curriculum of the course has been completely developed by CJD, a renowned vocational training institution that have years of experience in designing cooking courses for people at risk of social exclusion. Teatr Grodzki contributed to it integrating simulation exercises based on socio-drama techniques, a creative combination never tested before. The **Quality Board** established within the project, made a monthly monitoring of the development of the teaching manual and textbook and all the necessary amendments to get the best results.

To respect high quality standards during all the stages of the project, an **external evaluator** is monitoring every SUVOT actions and activities. This evaluation is composed by 4 steps during the entire duration of the project. So far, first part of the evaluation has been done with excellent results. The second one is expected to be carried out during the pilot training course, the third one after the second year of the project and the last one at the end of the project. In addition to an objective assessment, the evaluation includes the subjective point of view of all partners, so it gives us a complete picture of the working process and projects' results.

In terms of coordination, we use fixed templates to collect information amongst partners, so all of us have a clear idea of the kind of data that need to be gathered. Meetings (on line and in-presence) are preceded by a complete agenda in order to cover all the points that need to be dealt. After meetings, partners are required to complete satisfaction surveys.

The SUVOT dissemination campaign is based on the creation of **SUVOT brand**, that is to say, a set of newsletters, posters, brochures, press releases, website (including attractive recipes), invitations and informative emails following the same structure and layout in order to make easier to identify SUVOT. Partners are very active in promoting projects at national but also at European level, so it has been possible to reach a large number of people related to this specific area (mental illness) but also general public.

For the exploitation of results we will organize **seminars in each of the partners' countries** and publish at least one scientific article explaining SUVOT results. We expect to reach as much final users as possible (people with mental illness and the organizations working for them, training organizations, entities working in the socio-drama area, etc.) so SUVOT experience could be reproduced in the future in any European country and thus allow its sustainability beyond the project duration.

3. Project Outcomes & Results

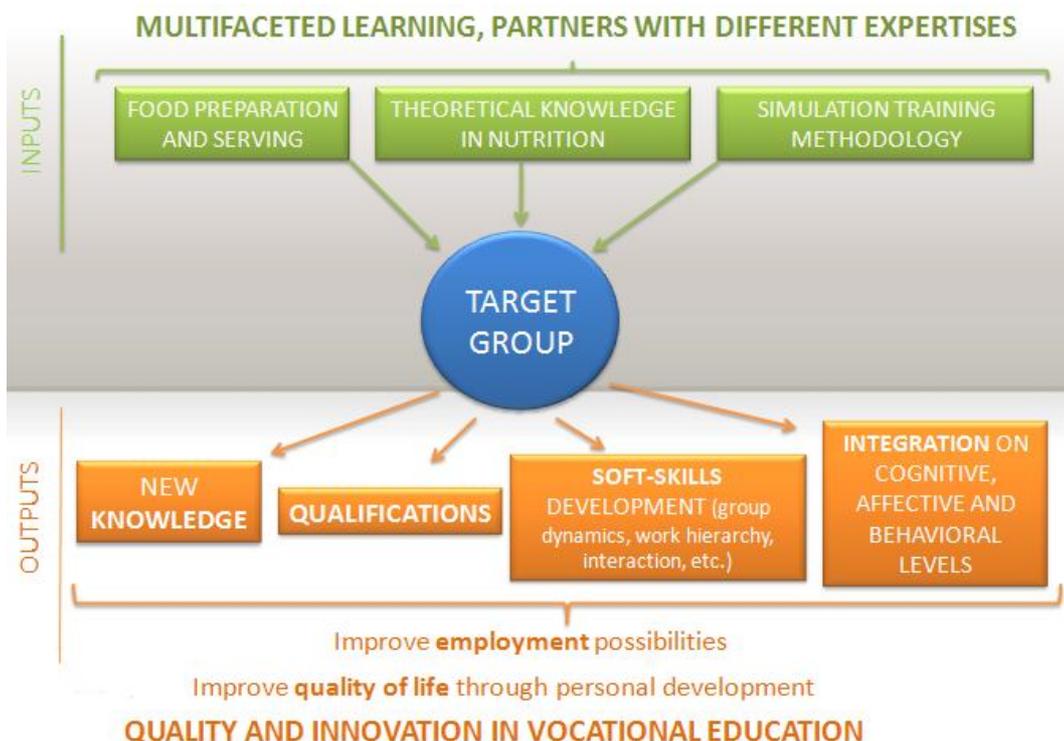
In these 18 months, SUVOT team has completed **60 deliverables out of the 100 deliverables foreseen** during all the project life, so we have completed 60% of the tasks planned for this first half of the programme.

SUVOT team has achieved one of the most complicated tasks, **designing and developing the teaching manual** (including curriculum and simulation methodology exercises) and the textbook for participants. To create an innovative and useful text, SUVOT team based on the real needs of the target group (directly asked) and in the valuable background of the partners, working for years with people suffering from mental illness and people in risk of social exclusion.

Most of the results achieved so far are related to the dissemination campaign (poster, brochure, newsletters, emails, invitations, facebook page and press releases), as the pilot experiences have not started yet. **Website** is one of the strongest points of this campaign (<http://suvot.intras.es>). It is very attractive, available in five languages, easy to read and contains interesting information about the project and also about mental illness in general, cooking recipes (typical dishes from partners' countries), news, etc. Moreover, this platform is proposed to be not only an informative website but also a supporting tool for both teachers and trainees involved in the project implementation. We have created a map including 1.635 stakeholders throughout Europe that are periodically informed about SUVOT activities.

SUVOT is having a big impact in media; we have collected **24 news about SUVOT** appeared in local, regional, national or European publications (paper or electronic edition). But we will continue working on spreading information about the project, especially now that the training is about to start.

SUVOT is also in social networks, this is a useful tool to approach the project to anyone potentially interested in this kind of initiatives, giving short but direct information about progress of the project.



4. Plans for the Future

In terms of coordination, two meetings will be held during the second half of the project: the second-year meeting in Germany in October 2012 and the final meeting in Spain at the end of 2013. As usually, reports will be done and approved by all the team. To assure permanent contact amongst partners, at least two on line meetings will be held each year. Also, to monitor the correct fulfilment of activities and monitor expenses made within the project, 2 more financial reports will be done and 3 more activity reports will be presented by partners.

SUVOT course will start in May 2012 and will last until May 2013. It will be structured in three sessions per week, three hours per session. There will be 10 participants in each of the partners' organization, making an overall of 30 participants trained thanks to SUVOT. Each institution will have one trainer devoted to curriculum content (expert in cooking issues) and another expert in simulation methodology, but both of them will be present during all the training sessions. During the SUVOT course, experts from CJD and Teatr Grodzki will visit the three pilot experiences in order to **monitor all the activities and work plan** and thus make sure that everything is running as planned and fulfilling high quality requirements.



Prior to the course, an **intensive training of the trainers** will be taught in CJD facilities by the experts from Germany and Poland that designed the manual and textbook. During a complete week, trainers from Spain, Slovenia and Germany will be trained in SUVOT content using the teaching manual developed and learning first hand what they need to know about cooking and exercises based on socio-drama techniques. Once the course starts, experts will answer any possible doubt or question appeared during the training implementation.

Some sessions will be recorded and translated into all partners' languages in order to obtain a **teaching DVD** including cooking recipes, tips and advices, so it would be easier to reproduce the experience in the future. Also, cooking videos subtitled into English will be uploaded into You Tube channel to broadcast SUVOT all over the world.

At the end of the pilot experiences the **manual and textbook will be revised** in the basis of the feedback collected and improved if necessary. We will have these books edited and printed in five European languages (English, Spanish, Slovenian, Germany and Polish).

SUVOT team will continue with the **dissemination work**. We will write and send 5 newsletters more, trying to increase knowledge about mental illness, employment, training opportunities for the target group, activities within the project, point of view of people participating in the course, etc.

Partners will keep on promoting SUVOT during **national events and specific seminars** will be organized in each of the partners' countries to explain about SUVOT results and products developed. We will reinforce SUVOT brand by sending attractive invitations, press releases, etc.

At least **one scientific article** will be written about SUVOT's results and outcomes achieved during the three working years so we can also reach academic audience.

5. Contribution to EU policies

This project has a clear connection with European policies, for example, the Commissions Green Paper “**Improving the Mental Health of The Population: Towards A Strategy on Mental Health for The European Union**”, and the “**European Pact on Mental Health**” whose purpose is to highlight the relevance of mental health for public health, productivity, learning and social cohesion in the EU. This project also supports the ET2020 benchmarks of (a) ensuring the acquisition of basic skills by all, and (b) increasing adults’ participation in learning. It also supports two specific European Reference tools i.e. (a) the Recommendation on Key Competencies for Lifelong Learning which emphasises the role of education for individuals’ personal fulfilment, social inclusion and active citizenship, and employability and (b) on-going work on the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

In these first 18 months, we have promoted SUVOT through the **European network “Mental Health Europe (MHE)”**, which organises, every year, a thematic debate at the European Parliament, to raise awareness and advocate on mental health and wellbeing as key issues impacting on social and health policies in the European Union. SUVOT appeared in the MHE newsletter on January 2012, reaching 67 member organizations in 30 European countries and 72 individual members. We will continue sending information to this network during all the project life, so new articles could be published and thus reach specialized audience throughout all Europe.

SUVOT is not merely set to evolve an innovative training methodology or to facilitate access to the labour market, but also to propose strategic and structural solutions for a more cohesive and tolerant society of Europe’s tomorrow. We intent to establish a cooking vocational training in each partner organization and, hopefully, to create a **catering social company** that employs the people professionally trained thanks to SUVOT project. Then, this company could be hired for supplying food to the users of the different health care resources of the organizations (residences, day-centres, supervised flats, etc.).

Lifelong learning has a direct effect on well-being, and influences the social and economic environment in which people spend their lives. “Policies that encourage learning, will enable individuals to develop new skills, strengthen social networks, and feel more able to deal with life’s challenges” (New Economics Foundation, 2009). This is what SUVOT wants to achieve, to improve the well-being and competences of people with fewer opportunities and thus facilitate their integration into society.

The **materials produced** in the framework of SUVOT project will be available in **five European languages** (English, Spanish, Slovenian, Germany and Polish) to ensure a wide exchange of knowledge and experiences between as much professionals as possible.

