



Report: Analysis on the existing coaching programmes on soft skills in social competence in Bulgaria

Y.U.S.S. – Addressing Youth Unemployment through Soft Skills Coaching Programmes

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Partnership

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1 Introduction:

The current situation in Bulgaria is that there are many companies, organizations and freelance trainers and coaches who deal with training, coaching, workshops and seminars on soft skills in social competence.

Diverse skill types and categories are available concerning training market and services in Bulgaria: communication, emotional intelligence, leadership, conflict resolution, presentation skills, interpersonal relations, giving and receiving feedback, teamwork skills, negotiation skills, coaching, facilitation etc. The existing coaching programmes on soft skills in social competence in Bulgaria focus on “communication” and “emotional intelligence” competences rather than on “autonomy” and “ability to adapt to an organisational environment (flexibility)” most likely due to users’ demands and needs.

2 First best practice

2.1 Short introduction to the programme

The coaching programme on the soft skill “Effective communication” was provided by IDEAs Bulgaria (International Development Evaluation Association) which is part of the international consulting group IDEAs International, which has offices across Europe and more than 25 years of experience in consulting, training, coaching and project management.

The coaching programme in “Effective communication” is provided on permanent basis by IDEAs Bulgaria, the last one being provided on 17 and 18 May, 2011. Participants receiving coaching under this programme are required to pay 600 levs (about 300 euros). The price includes training materials, technical equipment, room, coffee breaks and lunch.

2.2 Main soft skills covered in the programme

The main soft skills covered in the programme are related to the communication competence and more specifically to the following soft skills:

- Control and management of emotions
- Better operational level functioning
- Overcoming interpersonal communication barriers

- The ability to neutralize negative emotions and communication
- The ability to manage critical situations
- The ability to manage interpersonal conflict
- The ability to gain compliance

The programme covers general types of communication goals: self presentation goals, relational goals and instrumental goals.

2.3 Target group

The coaching sessions are intended and highly recommended for:

- Employees in the Front office and employees who work with difficult clients
- Leaders / Managers
- HR managers
- Traders
- Presenters, coaches

2.4 Methodology

The methodology of this coaching programme is designed to facilitate learning new behaviour for personal growth and especially for professional advancement. For the communication purposes, the coaching method is carried out with groups.

2.5 Assessment tools

Participants receive a certificate for successfully passed course in "Effective communication" by the standard model of administrative know-how and Hubbard Management System which employs more than 120,000 companies worldwide.

2.6 Duration of the programme

The coaching programme duration is two-days which consist of full-day sessions on effective communication.

2.7 Certification of the programme

Participants receive a certificate after successfully completing the programme. The programme is certified by IDEAs Bulgaria but not by any public authority.

2.8 Added value of the coaching programme

Taking into account the duration of the course (only two days) and the personal determination of the coachees to take responsibility for their learning, the coaching programme can bring short or long term benefits to individuals, teams and organisations.

2.9 Results/ effect of the training programme on the target group

The social skills building exercises provided by the coaching programme ensure that participants will gain social skills to deal with various interpersonal situations; to deal effectively with communication; to lead the conversation to a favourable and desired effect. This will result in better work performance, better team work communication and overall better organizational performance.

2.10 Internet link for additional information:

<http://seminari365.com/new.php?id=952>

3 Second best practice

3.1 Short introduction to the programme

The long-term coaching programme for personal and team effectiveness called "SUCCESS based on Experience" is provided by "Likora Ltd" – an organization offering coaching and training in social and behavioural skills.

The current coaching program has been constructed due to a specific request of a corporate client. Initial goals were: people to increase personal effectiveness individually, increasing team effectiveness as a whole, improving the overall atmosphere of the company, satisfaction and motivation.

As a result of further and thorough examination of the core needs of the company and the existing problems in the organization, the following program was constructed for long-term coaching provided on permanent basis.

Changes were made and modules were modified between training days for higher learning efficiency. The course is paid by the participants/ employees or by the company/ the employer.

3.2 Main soft skills covered in the programme

The main soft skills covered in the programme are:

- Teamwork skills that lead to a healthy and positive work environment
- Emotional Intelligence
- Effective interpersonal communication skills
- Time management
- Proactivity especially in conflict situations and work with difficult people
- Self-motivation
- Taking (personal) initiatives (part of the “ability to adapt to a company’s environment”)
- Business communication
- Stress management

3.3 Target group

- Specific individual clients
- Employees
- Work teams
- Managers

3.4 Methodology

The coaching can be conducted with a small group or individually, the latter being the most common practice. Usually “Likora Ltd” provides coaching service to managers of companies because the coaching format is very suitable for transmission of specific knowledge and skills to a very limited audience. The coaching programme includes theory, games, interactive exercises, workshops.

3.5 Assessment tools

Not available.

3.6 Duration of the programme

Effective frequency of the coaching programme is once in a month with duration of one day (8 hours).

3.7 Certification of the programme

Participants receive a certificate after successfully completing the programme.

3.8 Added value of the coaching programme

The coaching programme brings long term benefits to individuals, teams and organisations. Some of the benefits of coaching for an individual are: improved skills needed for different job positions; personal growth; greater self-motivation; better work-life balance; more effective communication. Some of the benefits of coaching for the organization are: improved staff motivation and effectiveness; increased staff retention and ease of recruitment; better communication and team working; higher profitability through increased sales or more effective service provision.

3.9 Results/ effect of the training programme on the target group

As mentioned above results/ effect of the training programme on the target group are related to the acquisition of various social skills and competences such as emotional intelligence, communication skills, autonomy skills etc.

3.10 Internet link for additional information:

<http://likora.com/conscious-success>

4 Third best practice

4.1 Short introduction to the programme

The long-term coaching programme called “Effective Personal Productivity” is provided by “LMI – Leadership Management Bulgaria”. Leadership Management International, Inc. is a world pioneer in professional development, organizational development and strategic planning. LMI delivers coaching programmes in soft skills.

The coaching programme on “Effective Personal Productivity” is provided on permanent basis each year by “Leadership Management Bulgaria”. The last coaching programme in EPP was provided in 2011.

Participants receiving coaching under this programme are required to pay.

4.2 Main soft skills covered in the programme

The main soft skills covered in the programme are:

- Time management
- Controlling priorities which includes “Managing communications” and “Saying “NO”
- Communication skills
- Empowering the team

4.3 Target group

“Leadership Management Bulgaria” recommends the coaching programme on “Effective Personal Productivity” (EPP) to employees at all levels of an organization.

4.4 Methodology

The coaching is conducted with a small group. The coaching package contains workbooks, 6 printed lessons, CD version of the lessons available in English, trainer guides and practical exercises.

4.5 Assessment tools

The final evaluation of the coaching programme is conducted after the sixth lesson of the last session. It is intended to encompass all the activities and lessons of the programme.

4.6 Duration of the programme

The coaching programme on “Effective Personal Productivity” is generally delivered in 7 consecutive weekly meetings, 120 minutes in length.

4.7 Certification of the programme

Participants receive a certificate after successfully completing the coaching programme on “Effective Personal Productivity” is certified.

4.8 Added value of the coaching programme

The coaching programme brings long term benefits to individuals as they increase their productivity through changing their attitudes toward planning and goal setting, toward other people, toward practices and procedures, toward external circumstances.

4.9 Results/ effect of the training programme on the target group

Results of the training programme on the target group are related to productive behavioral changes, increased productivity through controlling, effective interpersonal communication, dealing better with interruptions, setting goals and achieving results; improved teamwork skills.

4.10 Internet link for additional information:

<http://www.lmi-bulgaria.com/bg/tools.html>

http://www.lmi-bulgaria.com/files/schedule_EPP.pdf

5 Conclusions: SWOT analysis at national level

The strengths of the existing coaching programmes on soft skills in social competence are in helping participants learn how to communicate effectively, how to work more productively, how to improve and develop their emotional intelligence, how to become more autonomous. Other positive sides of the coaching programmes on soft skills in Bulgaria are related to their practical purposes and results. Employees, managers, teams, organizations can benefit from learning new strategies and actions that can help them work more effectively and manage different situations and people.

The advantages of these best practices are related to positive long term effects/ results on individuality, work and work environment.

The weaknesses of the existing coaching programmes on soft skills in Bulgaria are due to the funding of these programmes. Generally, participants need to pay for the coaching programme if they want to participate in this kind of coaching activities although some non-profit organizations offer free training and coaching services that meet the needs of community.

Another disadvantage of some coaching programmes on soft skills in Bulgaria can be related to duration of the programmes and consequently, short term effects on participants.

Publicity of these programmes and easier access of young people to them can lead to higher employability of young people. The coaching programmes in Bulgaria could enable young people to develop the soft skills necessary for their entry on the labour market and improve their work performance as well.

These programmes could be enhanced to the benefit of young people by covering more soft skills. Most of the programmes focus on specific soft skill and exclude others that are important. Autonomy and ability to adapt to an organizational environment need to be also considered and young people need to be facilitated by the coacher to discover answers and new ways based on their values, preferences and unique styles.

External elements that could prevent coaching programmes on soft skills from achieving short and long term objectives are lack of certification or/ and poor self confidence and low self esteem of young people due to lack of experience or lack of higher education.