



ACT45

ENGAGING UNEMPLOYED LOW-SKILLED ADULTS OVER 45 YEARS OLD
IN TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH COLLABORATION SCHEMES
AMONG CSOS, EMPLOYERS AND TRAINING PROVIDERS

OUTPUT 1:
REQUIREMENTS AND INFLUENTIAL FACTORS FOR ENGAGING UNEMPLOYED LOW-
SKILLED ADULTS OVER 45 YEARS OLD IN TRAINING

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 AIMS OF STUDY

This study is focusing on the factors that influence the participation of unemployed low-skilled adults over 45 years old in education and training activities. The main objectives are: a) to understand what hinders the participation of unemployed low-skilled adults over 45 years old



in training opportunities in the partner countries; b) to identify best practices that motivate and engage this sub-group of learners; c) to understand the barriers that affect employers' involvement in training initiatives for low-skilled older adults, which would consist an extra motivation for participation in training, and d) to contribute to the development of the Act45 integrated collaboration framework.

Furthermore, effective collaboration schemes are analyzed among different stakeholders that promote motivation and engagement practices and have resulted in increased participation of low-skilled older adults in training programs.

It concludes on concrete motivation and engagement strategies that can be employed based on the factors and best practices identified and the needs and challenges faced by low-skilled older adults and employers.

1.2 CONTEXT OF STUDY

Eurostat data show that from 2008 to 2013, EU-27 unemployment rates generally appeared to be leveling out; the same could be said for older workers, for women and, to some extent, for young people. However, rates for people with low educational qualifications (ISCED 0-2) continued to rise, reaching almost 20% (OECD, 2019; European Commission, 2013).

There were around 25 million unemployed adults aged 25-64 in the EU in 2011 (Labor Force Survey — LFS)¹. Of those, around 10 million were low-qualified (ISCED 0-2), 11 million had medium qualifications (ISCED 3-4) and only 4 million had a high qualification (ISCED 5-6). Low-skilled unemployed people are over-represented among the long-term unemployed, many of

¹ For further information: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Labour_market_and_Labour_force_survey_\(LFS\)_statistics&oldid=249852#Labour_market_analysis_at_individual_level](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Labour_market_and_Labour_force_survey_(LFS)_statistics&oldid=249852#Labour_market_analysis_at_individual_level)



whom work in declining occupations and sectors.

Furthermore, the Survey of Adult Skills - PIAAC (European Commission, 2013), highlights that:

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- 20% of the EU working age population has low literacy and numeracy skills;
- 25% of adults lack the skills to effectively make use of ICTs;
- the high-skilled are progressing well through adult learning, but people with low proficiency are easily caught in a 'low skills trap' as they are less likely to participate in learning activities;
- education and skills increase employability: this represents a challenge for the one in four unemployed who has low literacy and numeracy skills.

The PIAAC Survey identified challenges per country, providing policy recommendations (European Commission, 2013: 20-22). In particular, for Italy and Spain, the survey highlighted that in both countries around 30% of adults have literacy and numeracy skills at level 1 or below, which are the highest shares among EU countries.

The survey recommends the reinforcement of re-skilling training programs for older and low-skilled workers, in order to increase the labor market relevance of education and training. Findings in Spain show that there is a general problem with skills proficiency, not only amongst the young but throughout the general population, as Spain scores far below the OECD and EU averages regarding numeracy and literacy (European Commission, 2013). In Italy, the PIAAC survey focuses on stepping up efforts to prevent early school leaving and improve school quality and outcomes. What is worrying is that findings show that in Italy, skills of people aged between 25 and 34 are at the same level as younger generations (European Commission, 2013). Skills among older generations are even lower.



Moreover, the PIAAC study (European Commission, 2013), shows that learning during adulthood tends to be undertaken by young adults and highly educated individuals as opposed to older adults or adults with lower skills. Furthermore, there is a divergence between participation in education and training by age group. Less than 6% of all 55-64-year-old participated in education and training in 2013, compared to nearly 17% of 25-34 year old (European Commission, 2013: 20-22). PIAAC also found that people who are employed were more likely to access non-formal learning activities compared to unemployed people (45% compared to 23% respectively).

Another European review (Bekker & Wilthagen: 2015:9-10) highlights that just 4.4 % of adults with low qualification levels (ISCED 0-2) participated in education and training, compared to 10.7% of all adults. This would seem to indicate that those who need education and training the most in order to return to employment have the least chance of getting it. This is a particular problem for unemployed people whose lack of basic literacy or numeracy skills prevents them from accessing more job-specific training (Bekker & Wilthagen: 2015).

Moreover, the same review concludes that training for unemployed adults is probably not sufficient, at least in countries such as Greece and Bulgaria, where small proportions of unemployed people take part in training despite these countries facing some of the highest unemployment rates for low-skilled adults in the EU (Bekker & Wilthagen: 2015).

1.3 DEFINING “UNEMPLOYED LOW-SKILLED ADULTS OVER 45”

Before proceeding to the analysis of the barriers to learning for unemployed low-skilled adults of over 45 years of age, it is important to define the target group.



1.3.1 “Unemployed”

An unemployed person is defined by Eurostat (2010), according to the guidelines of the International Labor Organization, as:

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- someone aged 15 to 74 (in Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom, Iceland, Norway: 16 to 74 years);
- without work during the reference week;
- available to start work within the next two weeks (or has already found a job to start within the next three months);
- actively having sought employment at some time during the last four weeks.

The unemployment rate is the number of people unemployed as a percentage of the labor force.

Eurostat (2010) estimates that 15.583 million men and women in the EU-28, of whom 12.334 million live in the euro area (EA-19), were unemployed in October 2019. Compared with September 2019, the number of persons unemployed decreased by 29.000 in the EU-28 and by 31.000 in the euro area. Compared to October 2018, unemployment fell by 939.000 million in the EU-28 and by 761.000 in the euro area.

1.3.2 “Low skilled adults”

Adults with low skills could be defined as:

- Adults with low educational levels, namely those whose highest qualification is at lower secondary level (ISCED 0-2, EQF 0-2).

European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

(descriptors indicating the learning outcomes relevant to qualifications at that level in any system of qualifications)

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Knowledge		Skills	Responsibility and autonomy
In the context of EQF, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual.		In the context of EQF, skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments).	In the context of the EQF responsibility and autonomy is described as the ability of the learner to apply knowledge and skills autonomously and with responsibility
Level 1 The learning outcomes relevant to Level 1 are:	Basic general knowledge	Basic skills required to carry out simple tasks	Work or study under direct supervision in a structured context
Level 2 The learning outcomes relevant to Level 2 are:	Basic factual knowledge of a field of work or study	Basic cognitive and practical skills required to use relevant information in order to carry out tasks and to solve routine problems using simple rules and tools	Work or study under supervision with some autonomy

European Qualifications Framework (EQF): <https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/en/content/descriptors-page>

International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 2011

(levels of education)

Level 1	Primary education	Programs typically designed to provide students with fundamental skills in reading, writing and mathematics and to establish a solid foundation for learning.
Level 2	Lower secondary education	First stage of secondary education building on primary education, typically with a more subject-oriented curriculum.

UNESCO (2012) <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-isced-2011-en.pdf>

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- Adults with low cognitive and non cognitive skill levels

These are adults who can at most complete very simple reading tasks, such as read brief texts on familiar topics, and mathematical tasks, such as one-step or simple processes involving counting, sorting, basic arithmetic operations and understanding simple percentages (OECD, 2019:4).

Moreover, the European Framework for Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (European Commission, 2018) identifies eight key competences considered as necessary for personal fulfillment, active citizenship, social inclusion and employability in a knowledge society:

- Communication competences (communication in the mother tongue, communication in foreign languages, multilingualism, cultural diversity, digital communication)
- Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology
- Digital competence (digital media literacy and critical thinking)
- Learning to learn (personal development, critical thinking, interpersonal skills, career



management skills and 'learning to learn' for lifelong learning)

- Social and civic competence (critical thinking, active democratic participation and sustainable development)
- Sense of initiative & entrepreneurship (innovation, creativity, risk-taking, teamwork, the term entrepreneurship in its broader sense, i.e. not just focusing on commercial entrepreneurship)
- Cultural awareness and expression (different cultural ideas, values and forms and the diverse range of media, modern forms - including digital - of cultural expression, intercultural awareness, and the global perspective)
- Transversal elements (critical thinking, decision-making, problem solving, career management, financial literacy, and physical literacy)

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These eight key competencies include both typical cognitive skills (e.g. language, maths and digital skills) and transversal skills (e.g. learning to learn, social and civic competence, initiative taking and entrepreneurship).

As it is mentioned by Brunelo and Schlotter (2011), in order to understand whether and how these transversal skills are related to the non-cognitive abilities, it is useful to examine the keywords associated with each transversal skill. For instance, the keywords that characterize “learning to learn” include self-discipline, perseverance and motivation and may also be related to the internal locus of control. Similarly, the keywords associated with “social and civic competencies” include the ability to communicate, tolerance, empathy and coping with stress, which are clearly related to the facets of agreeableness and extraversion. Finally, “sense of initiative and leadership” includes creativity, leadership, innovation and risk taking, which are important features of openness to experience.

- Adults with low digital skills



In addition, we recognize that low digital skills are an obstacle to adults' societal and economic participation and constitute an additional dimension of low skills, despite their typical educational background.

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It has to be noted that, agreeing with OECD (2019), low skilled adults could be capable of many other things. They may have low literacy and numeracy levels, but at the same time possess a range of other valuable skills such as the ability to drive different vehicles or care for customers. Equally, adults may have low qualification levels, but may have gained skills through years of work-experience that are equivalent to those associated with formal qualifications.

1.3.3 “Adults over 45 years old”

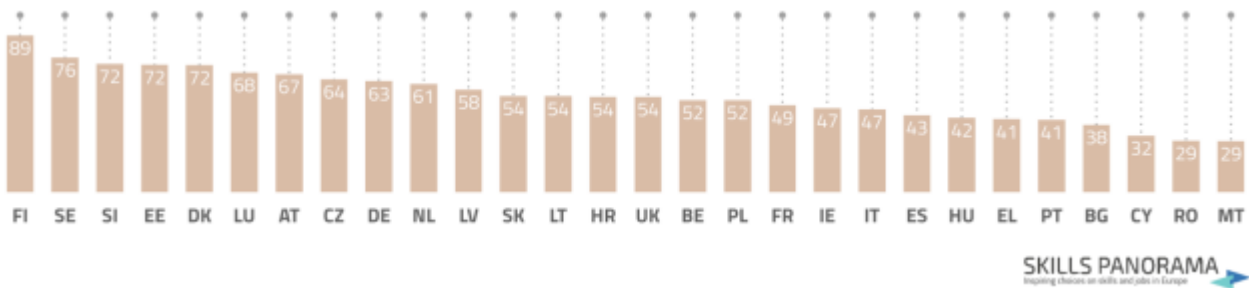
For the purposes of this study, given that we aim at endorsing training for employment, the target group age wise begins at the age of 45 and ends at the age of retirement, that is 65 in most European countries. More specifically, this project refers to adults that were born between 1-1-1975 and 31-12-1955.

1.3.4 Skills throughout the partner countries

The European Skills Index (ESI) is Cedefop's composite indicator measuring the performance of EU skills' systems. The ESI consists of three pillars: skills development, activation and matching. Based on this “Index”, all participating partners of the project (Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Spain) belong to the “Low achieving” group of EU Member States.

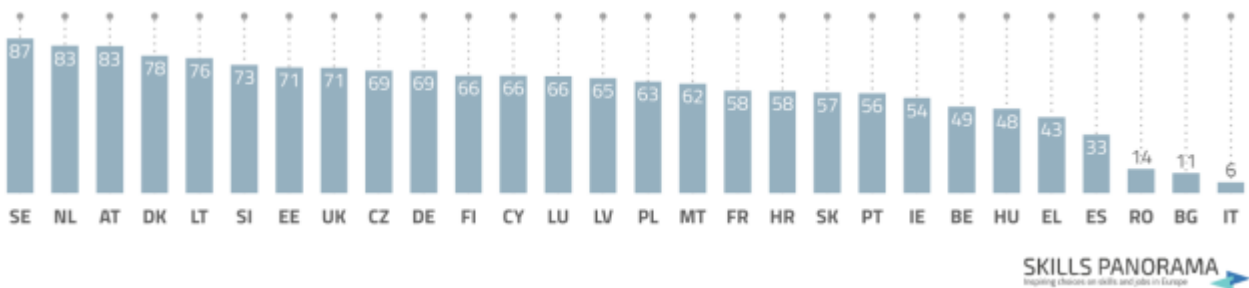
Skills Development across Member States in 2016

Skills Development represents the training and education activities of the country and the immediate outputs of that system in terms of the skills developed and attained.



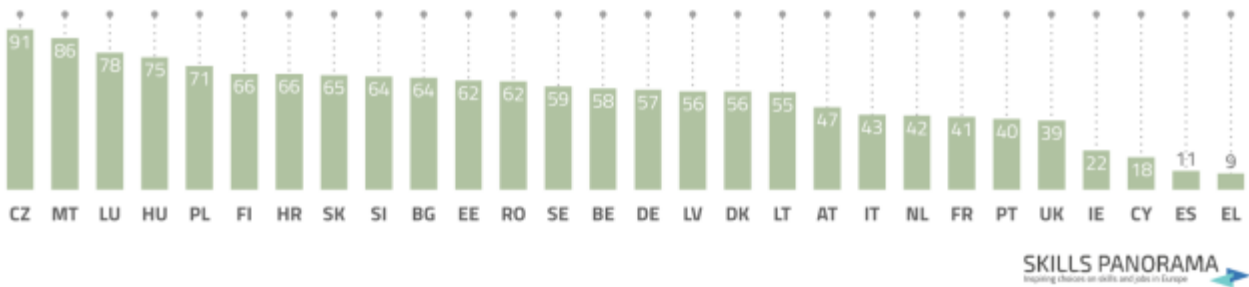
Skills Activation across Member States in 2016

Skills Activation includes indicators of the transition from education to work, together with labor market activity rates for different groups of the population, to identify those which have a greater or lesser representation in the labor market.



Skills Matching across Member States in 2016

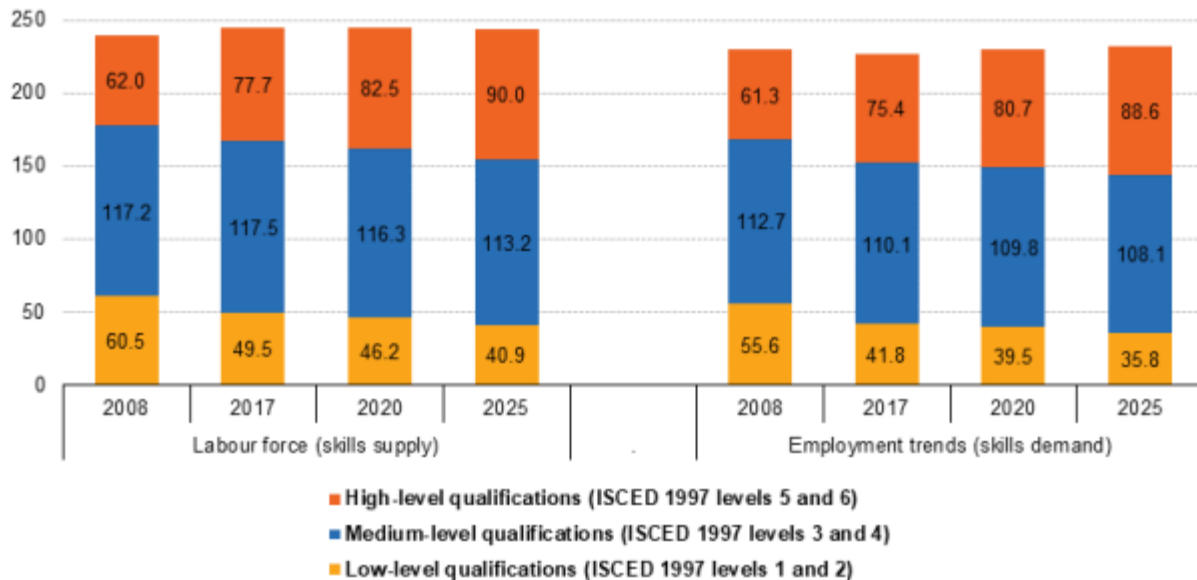
Skills Matching represents the degree of successful utilization of skills and the extent to which skills are effectively matched in the labor market. This can be observed in the form of jobs and mismatches which include unemployment, shortages, surpluses or underutilization of skills in the labor market.



As it is mentioned in EU Skills Panorama 2014 (European Commission, 2015) there is an interplay between low level literacy and numeracy skills, qualification levels, skill levels, occupation and skills development. Individuals with low level literacy and numeracy skills also tend to have low level vocational skills and work in low-skilled jobs. Moreover, they are expected to find it increasingly difficult to compete in the labor market (European Commission, 2015). The number of jobs and occupations requiring low-level skills and qualifications is shrinking. As it appears in the following graph, the percentage of low-skilled jobs in EU-28 fell by 11% from 2008 to 2017 and is expected to fall further by 9% from 2020 to 2025. Furthermore, Individuals with low literacy skills are also more than twice as likely to be unemployed as those with higher level skills (European Commission, 2015).



Labour force and employment trends by qualification, EU-28, 2008, 2017, 2020 and 2025
(million persons)



Source: Cedefop 2016 skills forecast

eurostat

Eurostat: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:Labour force and employment trends by qualification, EU-28, 2008, 2017, 2020 and 2025 \(million persons\).png](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:Labour_force_and_employment_trends_by_qualification_EU-28_2008_2017_2020_and_2025_(million_persons).png)

On the other hand, based on the PIAAC data (European Commission, 2013), only 20% of adults with low skills participate in job-related adult learning. Participation of adults with medium and high skills is much higher (37% and 58% respectively). There is a number of obstacles that unemployed low-skilled adults aged 45 and over may face when participating in training. Not all individuals may experience the same number of difficulties because low-skilled adults over 45 have their own set of unique life circumstances (European Commission, 2013).

1.3.4.1 The case of Bulgaria

Bulgaria, based on ESI, ranks 23rd with poor performances in Skills Development (rank 25th), with average scores in three out of the six indicators in this pillar and low scores in “Recent training” (rank 27th), “High computer skills” (rank 27th) and “Reading, maths & science scores” (rank 26th). It ranks second to last out of all the Member States in Skills Activation. In this pillar, it ranks worse than 20th in all indicators, with a particularly poor performance in “Early leavers from training”, where it ranks 27th, and “Activity rate (20-24)”, where it ranks 28th. Bulgaria ranks 10th in Skills Matching. Poor rankings in “Long-term unemployment” (rank 20th) and very good performances in “Qualification mismatch” (rank 4th) and in “Underemployed part-timers” (where it in fact ranks 1st).

1.3.4.2 The case of Greece

Based on ESI, Greece ranks 27th out of the 28 Member States, with low performance at all three pillars. At the Skills Development pillar Greece ranks 23rd. Among the indicators at this pillar, Greece performs better only in “Pre-primary pupil-to-teacher ratio” (rank 10th) and “High computer skills” (rank 13th). The country also performs badly in “Long-term unemployment” (ranked 27th). However, Greece is doing better in the indicator “Early leavers from training” (rank 11th). At the Skills Matching pillar, Greece ranks last (28th), with low scores across all indicators. Among all the indicators in the pillar, Greece performs the best in “Low-wage earners (ISCED 5-8)” (rank 22nd).

1.3.4.3 The case of Italy

Italy, based on ESI, ranks 26th and belongs to the “Low achieving” group of EU Member States. It ranks 20th in Skills Development. It has a good share of “VET students”, ranking 11th at this indicator, but a very low “Upper secondary education (and above)”, where it ranks 25th. The other indicators in this pillar are between the 15th and the 18th position. Italy performs really

poorly in Skills Activation, reaching the bottom of the ranking among all Member States. It performs among the worst in all the indicators, particularly in “Activity rates (25-54)” where it is last. Italy ranks 20th at Skills Matching. It has a relatively good score for “Low waged earners (ISCED 5-8)”, where it ranks 8th, but a very low performance in “Long-term unemployment”, where it ranks 26th.

1.3.4.4 The case of Spain

Based on ESI, Spain ranks 28th out of 28 Member States, with low scores at all three pillars. The low scores place Spain in the “Low achieving” countries group at EU level. For the Skills Development pillar, Spain ranks 21st, with a low performance in “Upper secondary education (and above)” (rank 26th). However, Spain does perform better in the proportion of the population with “High computer skills” (9th). For the Skills Activation pillar Spain ranks 25th, with a low performance in the “Transition to work” sub-pillar (27th). Among the indicators of this pillar, Spain’s performance ranges from rank 27 in “Early leavers from training” to rank 11 in “Activity rate (aged 25-54)”. For the Skills Matching pillar Spain ranks 27th. In this pillar, Spain seems to be doing better only in “Low waged earners (ISCED 5-8)” (rank 16th); in all the other indicators it ranks towards the bottom.

2. BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION OF UNEMPLOYED LOW-SKILLED ADULTS OVER 45 IN TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

2.1 THEORIES ON BARRIERS TO LEARNING

Possible learning barriers have been discussed extensively by researchers in the field. Yet, there is no comprehensive theory that interprets adult participation in educational activities



or factors that inhibit this participation - although there is a common ground between researchers on the variables that influence this participation (Karalis, 2017). These variables have been categorized by many researchers, with the most well-known being that of Patricia Cross (1981).

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Cross developed a typology for adults' barriers to education, which has been adopted by theorists in the field. This typology includes three categories of barriers:

- *Situational barriers*: these are objective factors that derive from the person's circumstances at a particular period of time.
- *Institutional barriers*: these are factors associated with the practices and procedures of providers offering lifelong education programs and of organizations regulating the institutional framework for the operation of these programs, which directly or indirectly exclude or discourage individuals from participating.
- *Dispositional barriers*: these refer to attitudes towards learning and self-perceptions of adults about their role as learners.

According to this school of thought, which emphasizes individual characteristics and personal barriers to education and training, research identifies the following barriers which we could link to this study's target group at the level of age (adults over 45), employment status (unemployed) and at the level of skills (low-skilled) (Marjan, 2011; Karalis, 2017).

2.1.1 Situational barriers

Many adults in this age group have family responsibilities, such as caring for children, grandchildren and/or elder family members. These responsibilities lead to limited time that could be spent for training and education. The lack of childcare and elderly care increases the time burden for this age group. Lack of support from other members of the family adds to the above barriers.



Furthermore, the financial hardship linked to unemployment does not allow for accessing private sector care facilities, which could overcome to an extent the time burden of older adults. Lack of finance also limits the access to education as such, given that many courses require fees. Even when there are no fees linked to a program, potential unemployed adults need to face the lack of study facilities at home (e.g. a study room or even a computer). Additionally, financial stringency is also linked to mobility barriers, as transportation to an education provider may be costly.

Finally, low-skilled adults face further barriers to education and training due to lack of formal qualifications required for entry to programs as well as lack of actual skills needed to fulfill the requirements of a course (e.g. computing, writing skills, etc.)

2.1.2 Institutional barriers

This age group has particular learning needs, which are often overlooked by providers. Similarly, the scheduling of the courses provided may be difficult to follow for adults with the responsibilities of this age group. Tuition fees that are required to be paid at specific dates, as well as location can also be seen as institutional barriers to learning for the unemployed. Lastly, entry requirements to courses will generate barriers for low-skilled persons.

2.1.3 Dispositional barriers

Older adults often fear the return to education and training. They fear of being seen as too old, of having health obstacles to learning, of not having enough time to dedicate, of the cost, of commuting to the training provider and back, of not having a peer with them, of not knowing where to acquire the relevant information, of competing with younger adults and of being exposed. In other words there is a general fear of the unknown.



Moreover, unemployed low-skilled adults tend to have low-self-esteem and low aspirations. Their fear of failing is often based on bad previous experiences of education. This negative attitude towards education usually comes along with a lack of interest based on the belief that education and training qualifications will not lead to employment.

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Finally, adults with low skill levels find it more difficult to recognize their learning needs and hence are less likely to seek out training opportunities (Windisch, 2015). Accordingly, OECD (2019), highlights that 11.6% of adults with low skills looked for learning opportunities compared to 35.5% of adults with high skill levels.

2.1.4 Perspective on barriers to learning

As it is mentioned by Windisch (2015:40) “low-skilled adults participating in learning activities often have a family to support, face financial and personal challenges, work in low-wage jobs with nonstandard working hours, lack supportive relationships, and have little career awareness and information on possible education programs”. From the above, one can see that the inclusion of a barrier in one of the above categories depends on the perspective we are looking from. This is the case especially between the situational and institutional categories.

A different school of thought attempts to highlight and reveal the social and political contexts that contribute to the emergence of these barriers. Accordingly, Rubenson and Desjardins (2009) put together the categories of situational and institutional barriers, under the term of “structural barriers”, given that both types derive from social conditions and structures. In this way, societies that provide for older adults, for the unemployed and for low-skilled adults, tend to not pose institutional barriers to education and training, and as such, the situational barriers that one may face are also overcome.



Desjardins and Rubenson (2013) suggest a further division between “structural” or “personal/individual” constraints, recognizing also next to (i) Situational, (ii) Institutional and (iii) Dispositional barriers, (iv) Informational barriers and (v) Financial constraints. Information and financial constraints are both individual and structural (Windisch, 2015:40). *Information* barriers are individual because of a person’s insufficient knowledge about adult education offers, and they are structural because of limited data on the benefits of participation in adult education, and of a potential mismatch between individual needs and the existing provision of adult education. *Financial* barriers are individual to the extent that the individual has no financial resources and they are structural if credit institutions fail the individual’s financial demands. Situational and institutional constraints are structural as they depend on structural relationships between the State, the family, and work (Windisch, 2015:40). Dispositional barriers are individual because they relate to the individual’s agency.

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Types of barriers to lifelong learning	
Individual barriers	Structural barriers
Informational barriers	
Financial constraints	
Dispositional/psychological barriers	Situational barriers (e.g., family, job)
	Institutional barriers

Source: (Desjardins & Rubenson, 2013)

This typology highlights also the role of the state and civil society in motivating and providing accordingly for all citizens, and especially for unemployed low-skilled older adults.



3. MOTIVATION AND ENGAGEMENT OF UNEMPLOYED LOW-SKILLED ADULTS OVER 45 IN TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

3.1 THEORIES ON MOTIVATION TO LEARNING

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Besides cognition, students' motivation and preference are among the fundamental factors for effective and useful learning and achievement (Gopalan et al., 2017). Motivation is a theoretical concept utilized to clarify human activity. As, there is no standard definition for motivation, we could say that it is related with terms such as behavior, attribute, feelings, desires, needs etc. Motivation could also be seen as a process to make a start, to maintain goal-oriented behaviors or to fulfill expectations (Gopalan et al., 2017). Overall, motivation leads individuals to take action in order to achieve something.

There is no integrated theory that includes all factors, processes and outcomes related to motivation. However, there are several motivation theories (Stalidzane & Dislere, 2016) rooted in the individual's endogenous factors (the cognitive and dispositional approaches), whereas other theories focus on the individual's exogenous factors (e.g. the status of unemployment, various intensifiers of responsive reactions). Few theoretical approaches are highly cognitive (self-regulation, expectancy theory, goal determination, self-motivation), while other approaches have a distant connection with cognitive processes (genetic predisposition, emotions and affects).

Attempting to achieve a holistic view on motivation theories, we will review several theories that could be implemented, especially in the education domain:

1. orientation theory
2. self-determination theory (SDT)
3. intrinsic and extrinsic motivation theory
4. ARCS Model
5. self-regulation theory



6. social cognitive theory

3.1.1 Orientation Theory

The first widely known systematic investigation of participation motivations is attributed to Houle (1961), who in the early 1960s proposed a typology of trainees on the basis of their participation. He is distinguishing three types of learners: goal-oriented, action-oriented and learning-oriented. Starting from the above typology, emerged the Educational Participation Scale, which focuses not only on the types of trainees but also on the motivation for participation based on their orientations. The most recent form of the scale consists of seven categories (Boshier & Collins, 1996):

- improving communication skills
- development of social contacts
- educational preparation
- professional development
- improving family relationships
- seeking social stimuli
- interest in learning an object

3.1.2 Self-Determination Theory

The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is a macro-theory on human motivation in social context. The theory assumes the tendency to be curious, to cognize one's environment and to be interested in learning and in improving one's knowledge as an inherited trait (Stalidzane & Dislere, 2016). Moreover, based on the same scholars, evidence shows that educational frameworks that support autonomy, competence and experience in mutual obligations of learners contribute to higher motivation and engagement, including the self-regulation of learning, improved learning outcomes, persistence in learning, creativity and wellbeing. Six important motivation factors are highlighted as key for endorsing learning (Stalidzane & Dislere, 2016:265):

- self-guidance
- joint learning



- active engagement in learning
- immediate usability of learning outcomes
- recognition of the achievements of learners
- supportive emotional environment

3.1.3 Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation Theory

The scholars Richard Ryan and Edward Deci (2000) define intrinsic motivation as the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfaction rather than for some separable consequence. When intrinsically motivated a person is moved to act for the fun or challenge entailed rather than because of external prods, pressures, or rewards. In educational and training activities, lots of will power and positive attitude is very much required to sustain motivation (Gopalan et al., 2017). The challenge, curiosity, control and fantasy are the key factors to trigger up intrinsic motivation (Gopalan et al., 2017).

In contrast, extrinsic motivation is a construct that pertains whenever an activity is done in order to attain some separable outcome (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Extrinsic motivation depicts external activities such as a reward, compulsion and punishment (Gopalan et al., 2017). This kind of motivation provides a high level of will power and engagement, yet it would not be able to sustain longer than the intrinsic motivation can do.

Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is needed in a learning process (Gopalan et al., 2017). Learning is a complicated process and motivation is the hard rock of this process. Hence, participants in learning activities have to be highly motivated to face the challenges, understand the process and be able to apply in real circumstances. Intrinsic motivation leads to self-motivation in pursuing the learning meanwhile extrinsic motivation gives the purpose to pursue the learning (Gopalan et al., 2017).



3.1.4 ARCS Model

The ARCS model is a systematic way to determine and deal with learning motivation (Gopalan et al., 2017; Stalidzane & Dislere, 2016). ARCS is abbreviated from Attention, Relevance, Confidence and Satisfaction. For learning to be effective, this model argues that catching the attention and curiosity of students is very crucial for gaining and sustaining students' engagement in learning (Gopalan et al., 2017). Moreover, ARCS highlights students' experiences and needs related relevance. Lastly, the positive feeling regarding the learning process and the gained knowledge leads to satisfaction as completing the whole learning process (Stalidzane & Dislere, 2016).

- attention: a contribution that motivates them to be aware of the gains made during the learning process
- relevance: the usability of self-assessment (gains and losses) in real life situations
- confidence: getting feedback on the usefulness of learning and the feeling of evaluation of learning achievements
- satisfaction: the development of the feeling of achievement or gain, which motivates to keep learning

3.1.5 Self-Regulation Theory

As described by Noordzij (2013:24), self-regulation refers to processes of self-generated thoughts, feelings, and actions that are planned and cyclically adapted to the attainment of personal goals. These self-regulatory mechanisms enable individuals to guide their goal-directed activities over time and across changing situations. The core distinction, among phases of self-regulation, is between goal choice and goal striving. *Goal choice* refers to the process of selecting one or more goals, whereas *goal striving* refers to the process of implementing an existing goal by initiating action and putting forth effort, reflecting a continuous interplay of behavior and cognitions (Noordzij, 2013).

For instance, applying the above distinction to job search, the goal-choice phase reflects



processes related to setting a reemployment goal, whereas the goal-striving phase refers to processes related to finding employment or participating in training activity (Noordzij, 2013). Usually the goal striving phase requires extensive self-regulation, whereas adults need to manage their thoughts, attention, emotions, and motivation to control the search process and deal with rejection, obstacles, and failure.

Self-regulation comprises three interdependent activities: self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and self-reaction (Noordzij, 2013). Self-monitoring refers to the self-observation of thoughts and actions; Self-evaluation refers to the comparison of current performance to the desired goal and; self-reactions such as self-satisfaction and self-efficacy influence the reallocation of effort to achieve a goal or to withdraw.

3.1.6 Social Cognitive Theory

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) refers to the acquisition of knowledge by direct observation, interaction, experiences and outside media influence (Gopalan et al., 2017). The environment - social and physical - is considered as a crucial factor that can influence people. The social environment refers to family and friends while the physical environment refers to the comforts (Gopalan et al., 2017).

SCT is derived from constructing meaning and knowledge from the social influences and shows that the continuous learning and constructing meaning are shaped from communication among the community (and transform now to internet) (Gopalan et al., 2017). In this way SCT depicts the interrelationship between behavior, environment and personal factors and highlights that interactive learning allows students to gain confidence through practice.

The above theories are considered very important for the motivation of unemployed low skilled adults over 45 years old to keep educating themselves and for their career



development. A structural scheme that takes into consideration factors from the above theories could be very useful for the descriptive analysis that is needed in this project. Moreover, regarding career education and training opportunities for this group, it is necessary to contribute to the self-guidance and self-confidence of the unemployed, to match the unemployed with the labor environment and enhance their competences in their profession, which could result in their integration in the labor market (Stalidzane & Dislere, 2016).

As already explained above, regardless of the differences in content, quality and amount of training offered to adult people, they are less likely to have access to skills development than younger workers and are less likely to engage with learning if the opportunities are available to them (ILO & OECD 2018). Motivating the target group of this study is thus of great importance.

3.2 STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS FOR MOTIVATION TO LEARNING OF LOW-SKILLED UNEMPLOYED OVER 45

According to Cross (1981), in order to provide motives to the adults for learning or participation in education, namely in order to be assisted in fulfilling their educational needs, the following are important:

- The response of education to the changes in their lives.
- The creation of opportunities.
- The removal of obstacles to learning.
- The comprehension of the goals and expectations of the trainees.

More specifically for our target group, according to Konrad's research (2005), lower qualified workers are motivated to learn, if they think that training is useful, believe that they are able to complete the training and that they have some opportunities for better work conditions or advancement possibilities. The lower qualified workers are open to learning opportunities, but not highly motivated (Konrad, 2005). Besides work tasks in a working environment which are generally simple, they consider that there is no need for further training. Training is seen as



valuable and important, but motivation is not high because the work environment does not motivate individuals to develop new skills. Adults are motivated to participate in learning activities if they have positive experiences of learning, and some support from their employer (Konrad, 2005). Accordingly, the level of participation in learning activities could be increased if (European Commission, 2018):

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- There are real opportunities for advancement and job rotation.
- Learning opportunities lead to continuing learning experiences.
- The operation of the learning process is tailored more closely to participants needs.
- More support is provided for learning in the workplace.

These elements can be found in the European Commission's proposals on Key competences for lifelong learning (2018), which suggests *six crucial factors for increasing participation* in adult learning and skills development opportunities.

A. Increase adults' willingness to take part in, and their positive attitudes towards learning

Participation and retention are dependent on adult learning having a **positive reputation** and on individual learners being well-disposed towards it. To ensure that this is the case, Member States can work with social partners and other stakeholders to raise awareness about the many benefits of adult learning, to reach out to adults who would most benefit from it, and provide them with **tailored information and guidance**. This is of particular importance for our target group, given the dispositional barriers they face, especially because of previous negative educational experiences.

B. Encourage employer investment in adult learning



As job requirements evolve, employees must develop their existing skills and talents – along with acquiring new ones. For this reason, **professional development and job-related training** are key factors that can motivate adults to return to learning. Ensuring that employers invest in adult learning is essential for increasing both the range of opportunities available and the number of employees taking part in learning.

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C. Enhance access to learning for disadvantaged and difficult-to-engage groups

There are many different kinds of adult's learners with many different learning needs. There is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution: policies should incorporate **tailor-made programs and be flexible enough to respond to each individual's learning needs and motivations** – including **basic skills development for low-skilled learners**. Unemployed and older adults are also difficult groups to reach. To accomplish this, forming partnerships with intermediary organizations such as community groups and trade unions is recommended.

D. Improve the relevance of adult learning for everyone involved

A key factor for tackling unemployment is education and training opportunities that address **the specific needs and motivations** of both learner and employer. Then, not only does participation increase, but the end result is also better: meaning higher skills, access to better jobs and improved social outcomes. For this reason, adult learning policies and provision should be **designed in a way that responds to the needs of different user groups**, of all ages, occupational status and qualifications.

E. Assure the quality of adult learning opportunities



It is important that adult learning provision be of **high quality**, both to ensure positive outcomes for learners, employers and the community, and to make the most effective use of public investment. Factors associated to quality that are crucial for motivating to participate in learning settings are amongst others (Konrad, 2005) the amount of autonomy provided, the degree to which students can identify with and find interesting a given learning task or set of tasks and the type and timing of the feedback provided.

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F. Coordinate adult learning policy at national, regional and local levels

For maximum policy success, there needs to be **effective coordination** of the different initiatives happening at the national, regional and local levels, and effective collaboration of all the various institutions, organizations and stakeholders.

3.3 BEST PRACTICES FOR MOTIVATION TO LEARNING OF LOW-SKILLED UNEMPLOYED OVER 45

As defined in EUBIA (2010:29), “Good Practice” is the most efficient (least amount of effort) and effective (best results) way of accomplishing a task, based on replicable procedures that have proven themselves over time for large numbers of people. However, it is acknowledged that the term ‘good’ is very subjective. The term “practice that works”, work that satisfies certain criteria and therefore has some aspects that may be useful to others for consideration and adaptation, is preferable. The use of the term ‘good’ should not be construed as a firm recommendation EUBIA (2010:29).

European Union and Members States in order to encourage more adults to return to learning are reinforcing adult learning opportunities by improving the availability and overall quality, quantity and accessibility of them. However, despite these efforts, statistics show that (OECD,



2019; Adult learning statistics²):

- only one out of every 10 European adults takes part in some form of education or training,
- more than a quarter of all adults lack the basic literacy, numeracy and digital skills that many of today's jobs require,
- the participation of younger persons (aged 25–34) in the EU was more than 20 percentage points higher than that of older ones (aged 55–64) in 2016.

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However, there are cases that European countries try to raise awareness about weak literacy and numeracy skills, as adults with a lower level of educational attainment are less likely to search for information about learning opportunities than adults with higher education attainment (Windisch, 2015:44). For example, Luxembourg conducted a national campaign focusing on literacy, numeracy and ICT that included the distribution of postcards, the introduction of a free number to call to get advice and information about course offers and the launch of a website (Windisch, 2015:44). Germany have published a fact-sheet with pointers and recommendations on how to recognize and address adults with low basic skills, based on research findings (Windisch 2015:45-46).

Three marketing methods for literacy and numeracy provision have been highlighted (Windisch 2015:47):

- **Word of mouth** with instructors and former participants spreading the news of adult basic education.
- **The media:** Evidence from Australia, Canada, England, Finland, India, New Zealand, Scotland, Sweden, and the United States suggests that media campaigns are particularly important for attracting more disadvantaged participants, with television

² For further information: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Adult_learning_statistics

- proving more successful in reaching people with low skills than print media.
- **Community outreach programs** that provide information for prospective learners in the community.

Studies in the UK show that :

*“One of the most effective methods of convincing learners to join basic skills courses is through a **one-on-one approach**. Moreover, offering basic skills courses in accessible locations, such as **community centers or the workplace**, also helps recruit learners”*

*“When people live in communities where **education is seen as a means of advancement**, they are more likely to participate in formal learning themselves”*

*“Potential learners preferred **more informal learning venues**, such as community centers, parish buildings, homes for elderly, and private homes, over school settings”*

Basic Skills program in Norway:

*A scholar found that **the name of courses**, such as reading and writing, can put people off and that classes are sometimes better promoted under another name, such as “communication skills”*

For further information see: (Windisch 2015:48-51)

Although useful information and guidance services can support motivation, few European countries have a structural guidance service that is specifically geared towards adults with low literacy and numeracy skills (Windisch, 2015). In Austria there is a central level institution that delivers guidance services related to basic skills and literacy (Zentrale Beratungsstelle für Basisbildung und Alphabetisierung); in Germany there is a telephone guidance service for those facing literacy problems. Other countries offer guidance services open to all. Portugal



has a network of Qualification and Vocational Training Centers; ICT tools by the British National Careers Service.

An innovative co-funded project by Erasmus+ (2015-2018) was the project GOAL (Carpentieri et al.: 2018). GOAL was a guidance pilot targeted at adults without upper secondary education (ISCED level 3), aimed to develop or expand guidance and orientation interventions for low-educated adults in six countries: Belgium (Flanders); Czech Republic; Iceland; Lithuania; the Netherlands, and Slovenia.

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In most European countries, basic skills programs usually include between 100 and 300 teaching periods (Windisch, 2015:54). For example, the program Key Competences in France comprises around 100 teaching periods and takes around six months to complete. In Luxembourg, courses within Adult Basic Education generally takes one year to complete and include between 150 and 300 hours, depending on learners' needs. In Norway, the standard courses in 'basic competence in working life' include 130 lessons and this standard model was chosen by 75% of applicants in 2013. However, some researchers suggest that a new measure of gains through literacy and numeracy programs is needed because some progress learners make, such as improvements in confidence, teamwork, employee initiative and problem solving, cannot be captured by a purely quantitative comparison of basic skills proficiency prior and after the course (Windisch, 2015). Therefore, they suggest more valid ways of measuring adults' literacy gains.

Another study that took place in the US between 1998-2007 (Reder, 2012 in Windisch, 2015:57) found that most literacy programs retained learners only for relatively short periods of time, and that learners often had fragmented patterns of participation in multiple programs and services. Therefore, is suggested by Reder (Windisch, 2015:57) that local communities should develop new types of learning support systems that provide persistent structures or pathways



for adults. These pathways could combine periods in which adults attend programs, use online materials to work independently or with tutors, or receive support services from local community-based organizations and volunteer programs.

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Additionally, learner motivation can be stimulated by involving them in the content and design of their own literacy and numeracy courses and learning material (Windisch, 2015:58).

Example of learner engagement in the development of learning materials (Windisch 2015:59)

An innovative element of Indonesia's nation-wide AKRAB adult literacy program is that, in addition to learning materials developed by a team of non-formal education experts, **learners develop their own booklets** and newspapers during writing classes which are then used as learning material by other participants.

A similar project named "Adult Learners' Lives" took place in the UK between 2002-2003 (Windisch, 2015:60). It investigated how factors related to language, literacy and numeracy provision interface with factors related to the learners, such as their dealing with difficulties and their classroom experience. In the classroom, the project examined the links between teaching and learning, participation, motivation and persistence, aiming to identify teaching and learning strategies that effectively encourage basic skills learning. Research findings included (Windisch, 2015:60):

- In learning, **relationships matter**: teacher/student, student/student, and the learner's support network.
- Learning environments often offer structure and stability in learners' lives.
- Being in control is key motivation for learning.
- Health is often a barrier to learning, both physical and mental health.
- Small gains in language, literacy and numeracy skills and their wider benefits need to be assessed.
- Learners value knowing what progress they have made.
- There is a complex relationship between teaching and learning: learners do not learn what



teachers teach.

- A more effective interagency response to the social and learning needs of students seeking asylum is needed.
- Students of “English” as a second language classes often express satisfaction with their classes, but there is a need for more free use of language and “bringing the outside in”.
- Involving teachers in research projects benefits their professional development, the culture of their work-places and regional networks.

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Although, there are different approaches on establishing schemes to support low-skilled unemployed people towards training, evidence show that tailored training achieves better results for the low-skilled than general schemes (Bekker & Wilthagen: 29):

- It is difficult to compare the relative success of different schemes because the outcomes depend on the mix of target groups and each scheme’s objectives.
- Country-specific evidence indicates that interventions which include a package of measures and that combine training with other labor market measures are successful and that a mix-and-match approach may pay dividends.
- Evaluation results tend to be most positive when the training is well tailored to the person’s potential, employers’ skill needs and leads to formal qualifications.
- Employer-based approaches (i.e. those targeting specific vacancies and on-the-job training placement schemes) generate higher employment outcomes than classroom-based training).

As it is highlighted above (Bekker & Wilthagen: 2015:31), the general trend appears to be towards sustainable models of building employability that will remain relevant over time (i.e. linking training to labor market forecasting approaches, or training being embedded in the national qualifications frameworks). Thus, local adaptation to the needs and trends with focus on current and future employment opportunities emerges more and more, either directly through customized schemes, with specific employers or indirectly based on labor market forecasts (Bekker & Wilthagen: 2015:31).



4. EMPLOYERS' INVOLVEMENT IN TRAINING INITIATIVES FOR LOW-SKILLED ADULTS OVER 45

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In order for unemployed low skilled adults over 45 years old to reintegrate into the labor market, knowledge and skills that match market demands are needed. Increased participation can be achieved by improving systems for career guidance and opportunities for the recognition of skills acquired through informal and non-formal learning (Bekker & Wilthagen, 2015:32). For small firms, targeted initiatives to encourage skill needs assessment and training provision are also important measures to reach low skilled adults (Bekker & Wilthagen: 2015).

In most OECD countries, low-skilled adults are less likely to participate in training activities, and employers and workers representatives have a key role to play in mobilizing them (Bekker & Wilthagen: 2015). The validation or recognition of non-formal and informal learning improves skill matching in the labor market by strengthening the signaling power of skills and making it easier for employers to identify which skills jobseekers already have (ILO & OECD, 2018). This process of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is particularly important in countries with high levels of under-qualification where workers possess skills required for the job but lack a qualification to prove this.

Engaging employers in the frameworks of training for unemployed adults has been addressed in a number of ways (Bekker & Wilthagen, 2015: 33-35):

- insert the Long-Term Unemployed into a professional working environment
- internships;
- work practice schemes;
- employer training allowances for taking on unemployed;
- combining employment with training (working contract of part time in a company



and part time in a training centre);

- matching training to vacancy;
- specific skills matching with skills shortages;
- on-the-job training schemes;
- adult apprenticeships.

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The extent of involvement of social partners and employers, in the selection and content of vocational and educational training, appears to be dependent on local conditions and contacts/ networks between local Public Employment Service (PES) offices and local employers and trade union representatives (Bekker & Wilthagen: 2015:33). The main challenges are around putting in place adequate incentives for employers, providing regulated training provision, and not generating big bureaucracy (Bekker & Wilthagen, 2015: 33).

Lately, in many European Countries “a matching approach” gains more and more popularity. This approach tends to link training for unemployed adults to current and future employment opportunities, either directly through customized schemes, with specific employers or indirectly based on labor market forecasts (Bekker & Wilthagen: 2015:32). Moreover, this approach assumes that specific training delivers a number of specialized skills needed for a specific job. The strengths of this employer-focused approach are that (Bekker & Wilthagen, 2015: 32): (i) it responds to actual vacancies and (ii) it puts unemployed trainees and employers together (e.g. through guaranteed interviews).

On the other hand, the main challenges of this approach are summarized as follows (Bekker & Wilthagen, 2015: 32): (i) Difficult to have a clear view of companies’ future needs; (ii) Tends to lead PES counsellors to impose training actions on unemployed people; (iii) Tends to foster return to work in sectors different from those of the training program, suggesting challenges around matching. In that situation, the positive effects of training actions are drastically



decreased. In addition to all these, many researchers argue that the “matching approach” tends to diminish sustainable return to employment, maintaining and developing employability and security for career paths (Bekker & Wilthagen: 2015:33). However, it is mentioned that the orientation process is key to this: employment actors, when orienting unemployed people towards training programs, have a responsibility to make sure that the program is in line with a viable professional project.

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Key measures of success are usually related to the employment outcomes (Bekker & Wilthagen: 2015:33): getting a job, time taken to get a job and sustainability of employment, although other outcomes (such as effect on qualifications, income) might also feature. However, it is hard to compare the relative success of different schemes because the outcomes depend on the objectives of the schemes and the issues faced by the target groups (Bekker & Wilthagen: 2015:35).

In **Spain** (Madrid Region), women and older people were less likely to find a job after completing a training program (Bekker & Wilthagen, 2015:39). Unemployed receiving unemployment benefit and those who enrolled in VET studies were more likely to find a job after a training course. In **Greece**, the impact of training on enhancing employability is generally low (KANEP-GSEE, 2013). In **Bulgaria** (Bekker & Wilthagen, 2015:37), 47 % of individuals found employment after participation in training; and the trained persons worked in low-paid jobs and most probably performed labor functions that require low qualifications. Results from **Italy** confirm the relatively higher success of interventions which are delivered in a combination of training with other active labor market measures, such as work experience and incentives (Bekker & Wilthagen, 2015:42).

Building trust and robust partnerships among stakeholders (PES, VET providers, employer associations/ chambers and employers) are essential for offering high quality training



placements, targeted to the learner's skills and career aspirations, as well as meeting the needs of employers (Cedefop, 2018:37-39). Moreover, combining a matching approach with basic skills training, career counseling and mentoring supported by multi-professional teams contributes also to the success of work-based activation programs (Cedefop, 2018:37-39).

Work-based learning programs

Employment Internships in Portugal aim to support the transition of the unemployed (youth and others) into employment, complementing their skills through training and practical experience at the workplace. By improving qualifications and skills, the internships promote employability and support the transition between the education system and the labor market. Success factors include the shared funding of wages by the PES during the relatively long (12-month) internship period. A factor that contributed substantially to the long-term impact of the internships is that enterprises benefiting from the measure were entitled to compensation once the internships ended. Another support program helped them engage former participants as young recruits. Nearly 70% of participants were employed nine months after completing the internship, roughly 45% in the same company and 24% in other companies.

The Community Public Work program established in Hungary in 2011 provides basic professional skills, occasionally supplemented with specific vocational qualifications. It seeks to connect work and practical training to eliminate employment disadvantages, increase job seeker qualification levels, improve their basic skills and gain practical professional experience. The programs are related to local community work (environmental, infrastructure or care jobs) and target vulnerable groups, such as long-term unemployed, physically handicapped and the Roma community.

Source: Cedefop, 2018:38

Job rotation (Denmark)

The Job rotation scheme is a relatively old instrument (introduced in 1994) established to address high unemployment and to counter the unwillingness of companies to invest in upgrading their employees' skills. It was adapted in 2007 so that the focus became to create employment for the unemployed. As part of the negotiations between labor market stakeholders in 2006, a new and less complicated scheme was developed and agreed within the so-called welfare agreement (Velfærdsaftalen). The basic idea is to fund companies to enable them to offer their employees reskilling and training opportunities. During their absence, their workplaces are made available for the unemployed with the aim to strengthen their practical experience and their connections to the labor market. Both public and private companies can apply for funding for training of skilled or unskilled workers. In order to receive funding, a company is obliged to employ an unemployed person and pay the same salary as the employee in training.

The key feature of the approach is that local job centers match companies to the unemployed and cooperate



with educational institutions to stay informed on education/training opportunities. Through their intermediary role, they seek to provide employees with basic skills the means to grow and the unemployed with the opportunity to develop professional skills in employment. Stakeholders involved in the scheme are all convinced that it offers good opportunities for upskilling the workforce and supporting the unemployed.

Source: Cedefop, 2018:39

One of the challenges for employers is that although they recognize the issue of low basic skills they are hesitant to take an initiative (Windisch, 2015:93). Many employers believe that tackling the issue of low basic skills must be a shared responsibility between the government, education authorities and employers (Windisch, 2015:93). They also acknowledge that the involvement of managers is critical for efficient basic skills workplace courses.

Another challenge is that workplace basic skills training requires the involvement of all relevant stakeholders (Windisch, 2015:93). Evidence shows that from conception through to planning, design, marketing, implementation, delivery and evaluation, managers, supervisors, workers, union representatives, providers and instructors must work together as a team to determine where the training needs are, what the goals of training should be, how training should be delivered and how the entire process and its results should be evaluated. Giving everyone an equal voice fosters confidence and trust and strengthens the stakeholders' commitment to the program and ownership of it, thereby promoting not only quality and relevance, but also sustainability (Windisch, 2015:93).

More challenges are summarized by Windisch (2015: 91-95) on work-based literacy and numeracy training activities:

- Measuring performance and productivity outcomes.
- Few enterprises (can) develop lasting opportunities for workplace learning.
- Employers need to create environments that allow the use of newly acquired skills.



- Contextualizing literacy and numeracy learning in the workplace.
- There is little information on what is working best.
- Numeracy training needs to be framed positively.
- Instructors of workplace programs need to be flexible.

Apart from these challenges, skills developed through workplace basic skills training can contribute to a company's productivity (Bensemann, 2012 in Windisch, 2015:90-91):

- More accurate completion of forms such as incident reports and timesheets.
- Improvements in specific language, literacy and numeracy skills (e.g. measuring).
- Better following of policies and procedures.
- Improved oral communication.
- Increased confidence in work roles, and in taking initiative.
- Less frustration with workmates and supervisors.

4.1 SCHEMES THAT SUPPORT TRAINING ACTIVITIES

Concerning the target group of the project Act45 and its characteristics (i) unemployed, (ii) over 45 years old and (iii) low skilled, useful criteria / key factors can be found from the research paper of Cedefop (2015). Schemes that seek to provide skills needed through new education or training provision for individuals generally show a clear focus on content.

Linking industrial needs and VET to optimize human capital (Malta)

This was a study aiming to identify the specific skill needs and current gaps in 10 different sectors (pharmaceuticals and chemicals, financial services, ICT, furniture, printing, infrastructure, food, beverages, maritime and plastics and tourism sectors). As a follow-up, training and education programs are adapted according to the findings of the sectoral research groups. While more specific identification of needs is organized by sector, other instruments may take a more regional approach.

Source: Cedefop, 2015:64



The Assured Skills program (United Kingdom)

The program includes new training provisions while also matching curricula closer to labor market needs (Cedefop, 2015:70). Key success factors of this project were:

- ☐ tailor-made training approach for foreign companies;
- ☐ early involvement of the private sector in designing and delivering training;
- ☐ well-defined skills demand;
- ☐ fast communication channels in a confined area;
- ☐ public institution as broker/mediator between differing stakeholder interests.

Source: Cedefop, 2015:70

Moreover in the research paper of Cedefop (2015:73-85) two main types of schemes that support training activities are mentioned. These schemes focus on: (i) Improving the supply of skills; (ii) Meeting a particular skills demand.

4.1.1 Improving the supply of skills through updating

Schemes for improving the supply of skills could help increase job security by equipping employees with relevant skills (Cedefop, 2015:75). These schemes focus on the individual in terms of securing better job security and/or a more competitive labor market position.

These schemes can focus either on skills-specific (and therefore, often sector-specific) or refer to more generic skills, for instance when they encourage updating skills in the use of certain ICT applications (Cedefop, 2015:75). They make employees more responsive to particular skills demands from their employers and may prevent them from becoming unemployed by avoiding skill obsolescence (Cedefop, 2015).



Key Success Factors

- ☐ combination of school studies with a vocational qualification;
- ☐ clear identification of skill shortages;
- ☐ compatibility with further studies;
- ☐ engagement of training providers in developing the program;
- ☐ labor market studies as a basis;
- ☐ recognition of non-formal learning;
- ☐ flexibility towards labor market requirements;
- ☐ new classification system for (partial) qualifications.
- ☐ combination of networking and closer cooperation among education and training providers and encouragement of potential learners;
- ☐ offer the means to update skills in line with rapidly changing skill needs;

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Key Lessons

- provision of active labor market tools instead of direct financial aid;
- focus on local labor market and local possibilities;
- top-down approach (legislation) corresponding with basic labor market demand;
- consideration of traditional perceptions of qualifications;
- need to broaden information on training supply offered by multiple education and training providers;
- importance of physical contact and providing face-to-face information.

Cases of schemes supporting training of unemployed/employees to improve their skills³

³ For further information you can visit: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/matching-skills/all-instruments?instrument_type tid%5B%5D=4151



EGF/2014/015 EL/Attica Publishing Activities (Greece)⁴

The program, provided by INE GSEE and Hellenic Management Association (EEDE), had as beneficiaries 705 workers made redundant in 46 enterprises operating in the Publishing activities sector in the region of Attica. All of them were entitled to receive support in terms of counselling, training, business consultancy, self-employment subsidy and mobility allowance. Through a series of personalized services the instrument aimed to support workers that lost their jobs in publishing enterprises due to the crisis. The personalized services, which were provided to the redundant workers consisted of the following actions: occupational guidance (recording and investigation of the needs, skills assessment, personal and occupational development procedure, conducting the individual action plan, follow-up), training and vocational training, self-employment subsidy, job-search allowance and training allowance, mobility allowance.

Step One Ahead (Hungary)

Step One Ahead gives uneducated or undereducated individuals in occupations requiring low skills the opportunity to raise their skill level through training for specific occupations. The purpose of such training is to attain stable employment, where possible in fields where skill shortages exist. Responding to regional skill shortages was possible through partnerships between stakeholders responsible for implementation (PES, chambers of commerce and training organizations).

The instrument combined completing elementary and/or secondary school studies, leading to a school certificate, with learning for a vocational qualification: this mixes upskilling in general skills with vocational skills training. By responding to labor market needs, the instrument concentrated on so-called 'missing vocations' such as electrician, plumber and carpenter, for which shortages exist or are foreseen in the near future. A key element of the approach was to use active labor market tools instead of direct financial aid. Training combined practical training and theoretical learning, tailored to individual capacities. Stakeholders attribute the low dropout rate (around 5%) to this personalized approach.

Between 2006 and 2008 (phase I) Step One Ahead reached around 20.100 individuals (19.000 in phase II).

⁴ For more information: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/matching-skills/all-instruments/egf2014015-elattica-publishing-activities>



Around 60% held jobs matching their skills after completing training.

The two interrelated instruments, Transitional Employment Agency and Transitional Company (Germany)

This scheme aims to place existing employees threatened by unemployment in a different company and to provide them with services such as competence assessment, career advice, job search and interview-training to support them in making the transition. The instruments arrange either a direct placement in a new company (transitional agency) or a tripartite contract between employer, employee and a provider of a transitional company (an organization where workers can be employed and upskilled between two employment contracts).

Source: Cedefop, 2015

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4.1.2 Meeting a particular skill demand by training employees in skills needed in the labor market

A second type focuses on meeting a particular skill demand by training employees in skills needed in the labor market. Instruments belonging to this type do not focus on job security per se, but on expanding job mobility, by training developing skills for which shortages exist (Cedefop, 2015). It focuses on achieving macro-level impact by targeting skill shortages and/or improving job mobility. Focusing on current or future skill shortages by targeting training on the skills employers need is crucial for ensuring competitive economies.

Key Success Factors

- ☐ ownership based on employers' contribution to design and funding;
- ☐ competitive application procedure;
- ☐ clear identification of skill shortage;
- ☐ requirement of proof of insufficiency of existing tools;



- ☐ community orientation;
- ☐ cooperative relationship between participating companies;
- ☐ inclusion of representatives of different communities;
- ☐ ensuring participation and input from companies that were not granted a project.

Key Lessons

- successful public-private partnership in training delivery;
- importance to bridge cultural and language divides between policy-makers and businesses;
- strategic value of promoting cooperation between companies;
- evaluation of an optimal degree of joint financing;
- building network structures at local level;
- bottom-up approach for local skill mismatch instruments;
- considering local needs in skill supply.

Cases of training employees in specific skill shortages

Initiative for Skilled Workforce (Germany)

SMEs in eastern Germany were confronted with several challenges in securing a skilled workforce: rising qualification requirements, decline in the working population, emigration, and low participation in the dual apprenticeship system. The objective of the initiative was the long-term development of skilled workforce using a top-down approach initiated at federal level.

The main idea was to fund projects for evaluation of measures to secure a skilled workforce in sectors with an increasing demand for skilled workers. A total of 10 out of 85 applications were chosen to be funded. The



budget for each of the 10 was 100.000EUR. Implemented between 2010 and 2012, the duration was around one and a half years.

The projects were developed bottom-up at local level by existing regional stakeholder networks: the collaborative development and application process can be seen as a core element. The themes of the funded projects were very different in nature and covered several fields: examples include motor mentoring (new female professionals and young managers for the future of the automotive sector in Thuringia) and the transnational network for securing a skilled workforce for promising activities in a region close to the Polish border (Frankfurt/Oder, Eisenhüttenstadt).

Events like conferences and workshops with a multitude of stakeholders (social partners, chambers, education and training institutions) helped promote innovative approaches in securing skills in the respective regions. A central coordination point, called the Transferstelle moderated development processes, coordinated activities, supported the organization of events and secured links between relevant stakeholders. At local level, representatives of communities played an important role as change agents.

The workforce initiative was not restricted to particular sectors or groups of people. In addition to the outcomes of the projects, the collection of ideas aimed at securing a skilled workforce was an important outcome: 85 network-based approaches were collected through the application process.

Addressing Skill Mismatches in the Aviation Maintenance Industry (Malta)

An instrument delivering training on different educational levels with the aim to deliver highly skilled workers. It has been set up to improve the program portfolio of Malta's main training organization, Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology. The program provides training in aircraft maintenance, avionics systems, aircraft structures and composites.

The Energy Challenge Fund (UK-Scotland)

Responds to the lack of skills identified in the Scottish energy sector which cannot be covered by graduates



from the education system: it is related to the government's energy skills investment plan. The fund enables new entrants to Scotland's energy sector to acquire the qualifications necessary for working in renewables, oil and gas, subsea and micro-renewables.

The Skilled Labor Grant (Austria)

Addresses skill shortages on the basis of a comprehensive list of shortage occupations. If workers or the unemployed with low or middle level qualifications complete a training program directed at one of these occupations, they receive financial support for up to three years. The instrument is part of a policy package addressing the lack of skilled workers.

Strategic Transformation Support (Belgium-Flanders)

A funding scheme helping small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) further develop their human resources. The instrument is not sector-specific but it includes proof of a specific lack of skills as funding criterion. The overall goal is upgrading the staff of Flemish SMEs to stay competitive on international markets.

Source: Cedefop, 2015

4.2 IDENTIFYING SPECIFIC LABOR MARKET NEEDS

From the previous chapter, it has become clear the importance of identifying current and future skills needs. For this reason, Cedefop has created an online platform about "skills forecast"⁵ that provides comprehensive information on future labor market trends in Europe. Moreover, the use of other tools is needed in order to examine the trends on current skills needs, the top sectors of economic activity by country and the dynamic of occupations. Below, we present the skills forecast, especially for low-skilled posts, for the countries Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Spain.

⁵ For further information see: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/skills-forecast> and <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/el/publications-and-resources/country-reports>



4.2.1 The case of Bulgaria

Based on the “skills forecasts country reports” of Cedefop for Bulgaria⁶, it seems that most jobs will come from the need to replace workers retiring or changing occupations. The occupation expected to have the highest number of job openings is professionals. This occupation also accounts for 17% of total job openings of which only 6% from new jobs creation. Other occupations, such as technicians and associate professionals, elementary occupations and clerks, are expected to provide a significant amount of job openings due to the creation of new jobs. Service workers and shop and market sales workers, skilled agricultural and fishery workers and craft and related trades workers are occupations expected to shrink by 2030, although the need to replace retiring workers will still provide numerous job openings.

Under the project "**Establishment of a system for forecasting labor needs with certain characteristics**" a pilot model has also been developed for the medium and long term forecasting of Labor market demand and supply in the Bulgarian Labor market. The economic activities with the highest number of jobs requiring secondary education in 2028 will be:

- Manufacturing - 521 711 jobs
- Trade - 305,083 jobs
- Transport, storage and mail - 162,391 jobs
- Construction - 137,014 jobs
- Human health - 120,877 jobs

Among others, it is expected an increase of the employed in professions not requiring special qualification of 3.0%, with the number of these persons increasing to 386.1 thousand at the end of the medium term. In 2022, the largest number of people with primary and lower

⁶ For further information see: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/cedefop_skills_forecast_2018_-_bulgaria.pdf



education will be needed in the activities of manufacturing (62.3 thousand), construction and trade (25.6 thousand) and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (14.3 thousand). The largest absolute increases are expected in the first two activities, while the trade sector is expected to see some reduction in the needs of persons with primary and lower education.

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Furthermore, based on an analysis “Short-term forecasts for the development of the Labor market in Bulgaria 2015”, it is mentioned that the services sector is in a constant need for labor. This applies also to lower value-added services for which a relatively more low-skilled and middle-skilled employees are needed, such as catering and hotel industry, transport activities, some consulting services and a number of office activities.

4.2.2 The case of Greece

In Greece, the National Institute of Labor and Human Resources (NILHR) has developed a Labor Market Diagnosis System⁷. Based on the employment data, those educational levels presenting the highest dynamism are secondary, tertiary and postgraduate education. On the contrary, the lowest educational levels are characterized by declining employment (NILHR, 2016:13).

Educational Level	Number of employed in 2016	2015-2016 % Change
They have graduated from high school	1.276.971	+3,9

⁷ For further information see: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news-and-press/news/greece-new-labour-market-skills-diagnosis-mechanism> and <https://imd.eiead.gr/%CF%84%CE%B5%CE%BB%CE%B5%CF%85%CF%84%CE%B1%CE%B9%CE%B1-%CE%B4%CE%B5%CE%B4%CE%BF%CE%BC%CE%B5%CE%BD%CE%B1-%CE%B5%CE%BE%CE%B5%CE%BB%CE%B9%CE%BE%CE%B5%CE%B9%CF%82/>



They have a university degree	1.125.912	+3,7
They have a postgraduate degree	160.095	+16,3
They have post secondary education professional training	354.015	+5,8
They never went to school	8.386	-0,3
They never completed primary education	6.950	-34
They have graduated from middle school	344.671	-5
They have graduated from primary school	425.614	-6,9

Based on the data from NILHR⁸ we can see the top 25 occupational categories that low qualified employees are working.

Occupational Categories (The occupations are categorized based on ISCO-08 ⁹)		% Low qualified
1	Worker, fishery	70,8
2	Agricultural, forestry and fishery laborer's	68,0

⁸ For further information you can see: <https://lmd.eiead.gr/%CE%93%CE%B9%CE%B1-%CF%84%CE%BF%CF%85%CF%82-%CF%83%CF%87%CE%B5%CE%B4%CE%B9%CE%B1%CF%83%CF%84%CE%AD%CF%82-%CF%80%CE%BF%CE%BB%CE%B9%CF%84%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AE%CF%82-%CE%B5%CF%81%CE%B5%CF%85%CE%BD%CE%B7%CF%84%CE%AD%CF%82/%CE%A7%CE%B1%CF%81%CE%B1%CE%BA%CF%84%CE%B7%CF%81%CE%B9%CF%83%CF%84%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AC-%CE%B5%CF%80%CE%B1%CE%B3%CE%B3%CE%B5%CE%BB%CE%BC%CE%B1%CF%84%CE%B9%CE%BA%CF%8E%CE%BD-%CE%BA%CE%B1%CF%84%CE%B7%CE%B3%CE%BF%CF%81%CE%B9%CF%8E%CE%BD/>

⁹ See: <https://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/isco/isco08/>



3	Mixed crop and animal producers	65,5
4	Animal producers	64,5
5	Builder	59,4
6	Farmer, cereal: market production	58,9
7	Vendor, Street and market	54,5
8	Collector, waste	53,3
9	Operators of fixed plant and production machinery	52,2
10	Cleaner, hotel, house, office	51,0
11	Painter, building cleaners and practitioners	49,9
12	Mining and mineral processing plant operators	46,8
13	Transport and warehouse workers	45,9
14	Mobile plant operators	45,7
15	Vehicle, window, laundry and other hand cleaning workers	43,3
16	Clothing technicians and practitioners	43,1
17	Drivers of cars, small trucks and motorcycles	42,6
18	Mining and construction workers	41,7



19	Manufacturing laborers	38,6
20	Woodworking technicians, furniture makers and related practitioners	36,9
21	Operators of wood processing, paper making plants	36,6
22	Housekeepers and building managers	36,1
23	Other unskilled laborers, manual laborers and small businessmen	35,8
24	Food processing and related trades workers	35,4
25	Food preparation assistants	33,8

Based on the “skills forecasts country reports” of Cedefop for Greece¹⁰, we can see that numerous job opportunities will arise, from 2016 to 2030, for service workers and shop and market sales workers, representing 29% of the total job openings, (compared to 16% for the EU-28) with almost 750.000 job openings, 80% of them are the result of replacement demand. Even though skilled agricultural and fishery workers will experience a decline in employment size, as shown by the amount of jobs lost, the need to replace existing workers will create a significant number of new jobs. However, most of the new posts will be generated for occupations that are traditionally considered as medium-skilled, such as sale workers and personal service workers.

¹⁰ For further information see: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/cedefop_skills_forecast_2018_-_greece.pdf



4.2.3 The case of Italy

Based on the “skills forecasts country reports” of Cedefop for Italy¹¹, we observe that the occupations, from 2016 to 2030, expected to have the highest number of openings are professionals and technicians and associate professionals, accounting for 21% and 19% of total job openings respectively, with about 80% of openings due to replacement demand. Several other occupations are expected to shrink in total employment, with service and shop and market sales workers being the occupation with the strongest decrease. Moreover, new posts will be created in customer service clerks, hospitality, retail and other service managers, as well as among building and related trades workers excluding electricians.

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4.2.4 The case of Spain

Based on the “skills forecasts country reports” of Cedefop for Spain¹², it is expected that almost all the occupational groups will create new jobs, except skilled agricultural and fishery workers. The occupation that is expected to have the highest number of job openings, out of which 80% are due to replacement needs, is service workers and shop and market sales workers, accounting for 21% of total job openings in Spain. The occupational group expected to increase the most in terms of new jobs is technicians and associate professionals. Within detailed occupational groups most of the new jobs are expected to be created in customer service clerks, sales workers and personal service workers.

Based on these forecasts, one can expect that low skilled unemployed over 45 years of age can have the opportunity for re-entering the labor market. Yet, training in basic skills and vocational training for specific occupational skills will be necessary for them to succeed.

¹¹ For further information see: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/cedefop_skills_forecast_2018_-_italy.pdf

¹² For further information see: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/cedefop_skills_forecast_2018_-_spain.pdf



5. DATA ANALYSIS ON BARRIERS AND MOTIVATION: THE VIEWS OF LOW-SKILLED UNEMPLOYED OVER 45 AND OF EMPLOYERS

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The desk research has shown that over 45 low-skilled are the most affected by unemployment and at the same time the ones less likely to join training activities. The project Act45 aims to explore the boundaries and motivation triggers laying behind this situation, in order to generate some engagement strategies valid for Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Spain and replicable in the other EU countries. Along this research analysis, motivation and barriers' theories have been explained and compared to the findings of the empirical data of the study.

The empirical study has been a combination of quantitative and qualitative research, with both representatives of the target group and of employers. In this way we have a triangulation of data.

The quantitative research was based on semi directive interviews based on an interview schedule with mostly closed and some open questions. It aimed to shed light on the constraints, barriers and motivational factors towards participation of 45+ low-skilled unemployed in training activities. The questionnaire was developed by ActionAid Hellas and was based on the research study of Karalis (2018). The interview schedule can be found in the annex. The interviews were conducted with 41 low-skilled unemployed over 45 years old in Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Spain.

The qualitative research was based on the data collected by focus groups with employers and stakeholders of the labor market. Based on a focus group schedule, 4 focus groups were conducted in all partner countries of the consortium (Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Spain). Again, the research tool was developed by ActionAid Hellas and it can be found in the annex. 5 to 7



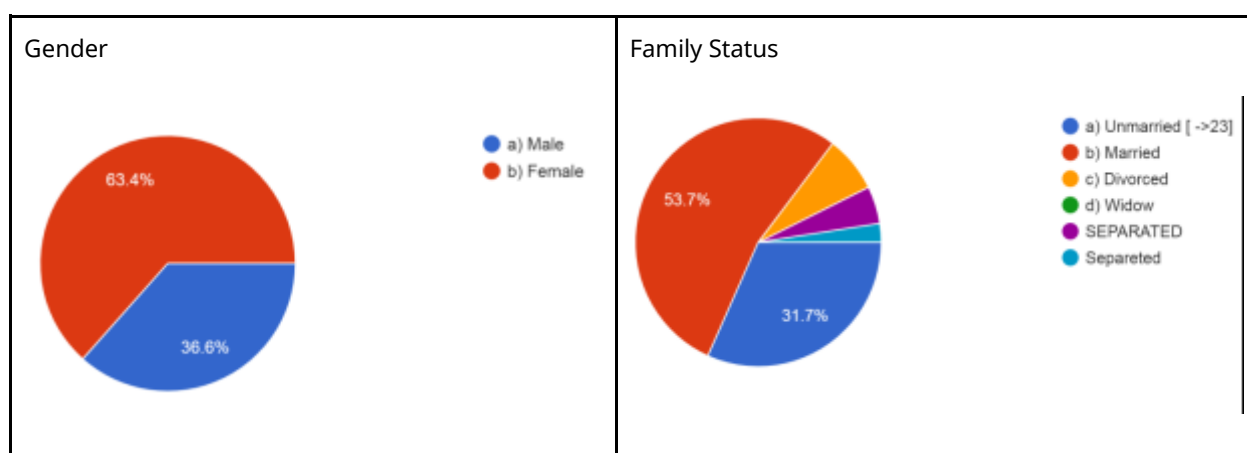
representatives participated in each focus group, with the total of participants being 25.

5.1 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH WITH LOW-SKILLED UNEMPLOYED OVER 45

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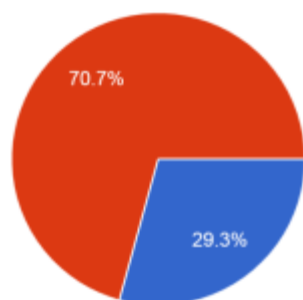
A general profile of the participants of the interviews shows that they used to have professional activity (min 7 years – max 35+ years) mostly in technical fields and manual work and elderly care. Almost all of them have a low educational background (ISCED- 1 or 2). The majority lack basic digital skills and have difficulties using a computer and searching on the Internet.

In total 41 low-skilled unemployed over 45 years old participated in the interviews of ACT45, 26 Female and 15 Male. Almost half of them were married, 13 people were unmarried and 6 were divorced or separated.





Having children under 18 years old



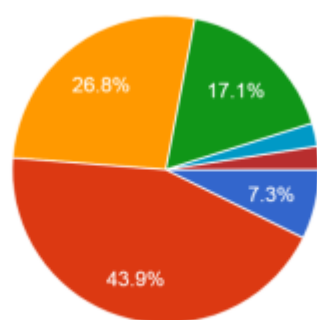
● Yes
● No

A percentage of 70,7 of the participants in the research say that they do not have children in their family under 18 years old. The remaining 29,3 (12 people) they have. Moreover, 7 out of 41 participants answer positively, if they have any other relative who is depending on them. Based on their answers, depending members of their families appear to be sons (under 18 years old), parents of the participants, (like mother) and in one case the wife of a participant.

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The majority of the participants (43,9%) have finished Primary School (ISCED-1). A percentage of 26,8% (11 people) have finished Basic Education (ISCED-2), another 7 people (17,1%) have finished High School (ISCED-3). From the remaining 5 participants, 1 of them holds a University Degree (ISCED-6), 3 have not finished Primary School and 1 participant holds a non validated degree.

Educational Level



● Has not finished Primary School
● Primary School
● Gymnasium (Basic Education)
● High School
● Vocational Training program (after high school)
● University degree
● Master Program
● PHD
● Non validated degree in the country

The absence or the moderate level of basic skills such as Numeracy, Literacy and Digital skills

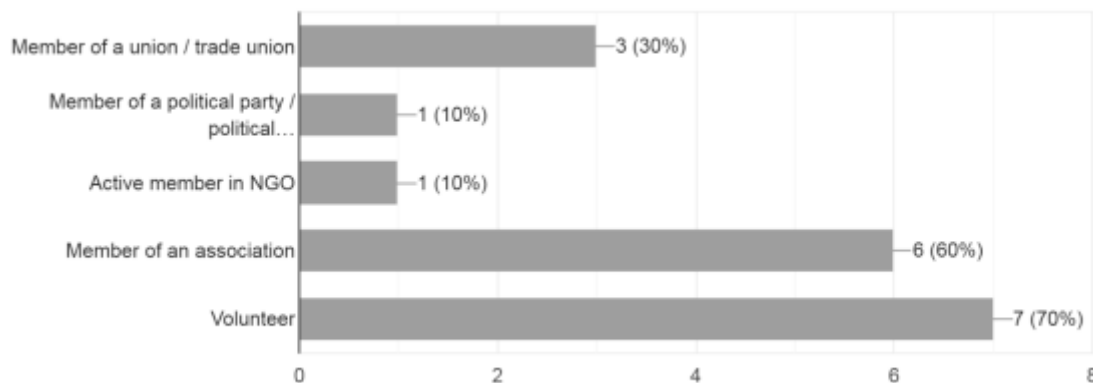


could cause a series of negative conditions (OECD: 2019) in relation with: (i) the occupation, such as long term non formal job, less job and wage satisfaction, (ii) the training activities, such as no time for up-skill or re-skill.

<p>Numeracy Skills</p> <p> ● Baseline Numeracy ● Functional Numeracy ● Multiple Numeracy </p>	<p>A very strong percentage of 48,8% has Functional and almost “1 in 3” participants have Baseline Numeracy Skills. Lack of numeracy skills could lead to simple processes involving counting, basic arithmetic operation, understanding simple percentages and simple tasks of organizing and programatizing activities concerning time and money.</p>
<p>Literacy Skills</p> <p> ● Baseline Literacy ● Functional Literacy ● Multiple Literacy </p>	<p>Additionally, “1 in 2” participants have Functional and “1 in 4” have either Baseline, or Multiple Literature Skills. Lacking literacy skills simple reading tasks can be completed, such as reading brief texts, poor understanding of job vacancies, confusion and false impression of activities that are going to be involved.</p>
<p>Digital Skills</p> <p> ● Foundation ● Intermediate ● Advanced ● Highly Specialized </p>	<p>The majority have Foundation digital skills and seem to face difficulties using a computer or searching on the Internet. The lack of these skills may be either an obstacle to their job finding process as well as to their access to information about training and seminars that may be interested in.</p>

A very low number of the interviewees, 10 out of 41, reply positively to the question concerning their active citizenship.

Active citizenship (officially and unofficially)

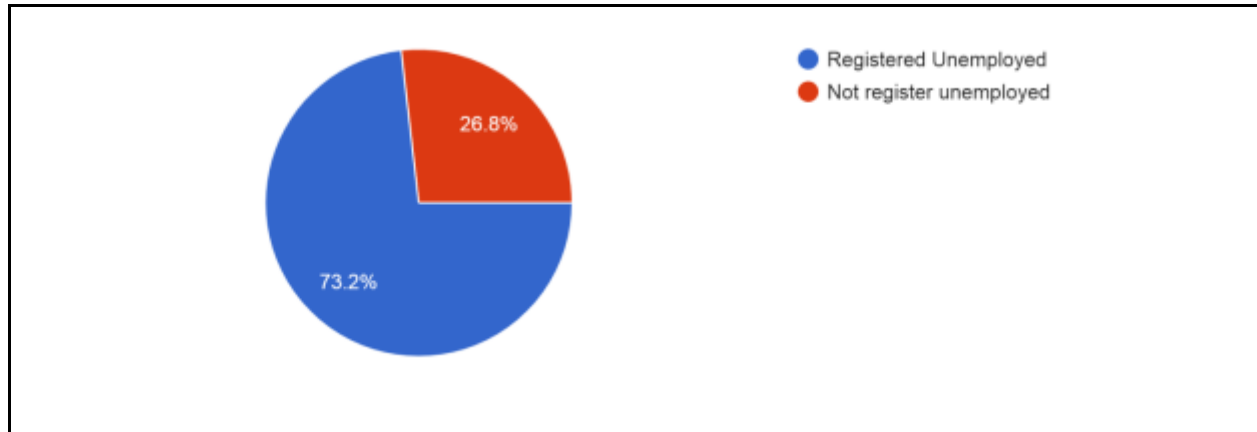


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All of the participants in the research are unemployed; 11 out of 41 are not officially registered as unemployed. Moreover, almost all of them have more than 10 years working experience in different occupational sectors; lowest 5 years and highest 40 years of working experience. The occupations with the highest frequency based on their working experience are:

1. Construction Sector - Worker
2. Sales & Commerce
3. Agriculture Jobs
4. Caring Services (children or elderly people)
5. Cleaning services

Employment Status



In the question “Which is your professional goal”, their answers vary. Many participants were able to specify job positions such as: Cleaning Services, Accountant or Cashier in a Supermarket, Elderly Care or Babysitting, Logistic Sector, Waiter and Entrepreneurship. However, the majority of the participants mentioned that their career orientation is to “Find a Job” without specifying the occupation that they would like to be involved in. Next to them, some other answers were related with their “Skills” (to use/ to apply their existing skills or to acquire new skills), with the condition of the labor market (for instance: to find a decent job or a job position for long term employment), with their retirement period (such as: to work 2 more years).

Additionally to the above job orientations, the participants of the research highlighted the barriers that they are facing in order to find a job in the professional field that they are focusing on. The top 3 barriers for finding a job are:

1. Age (mentioned by 13 participants)
2. Lack of Skills, Training, Education (mentioned by 11 participants)
3. Lack of Jobs (mentioned by 8 participants)

Other barriers that are related to lack of experience, demanding job requirements, short-term contracts, low salaries, mental physical issues and emotional condition, lack of time for



searching a job, low level of English language.

From the whole population that participated in the research 24 answered positively that they have participated in a seminar or training program or educational activity at least once in their life. From them:

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- 6 participants have been in a training activity before 2015
- 5 participants have been in a training activity from 2015 to 2018
- 13 participants have been in a training activity the last 12 months (in 2019)

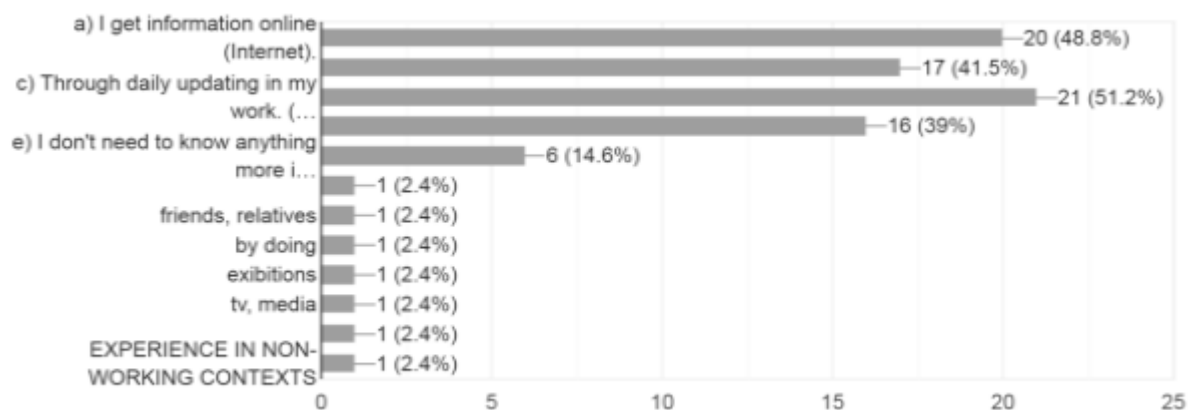
Moreover, from the 24 people who participated in a training activity, 15 participants consider the training that they had relative to their profession. Furthermore, 4 out of 24 participants have attended more than one seminar or training activity (formal or informal) relative to their profession in the last 5 years. Also 6 out of 24 participants have attended more than one general seminar or training activity in the last 5 years and only 3 participants had to pay in order to attend a seminar.

In the question, “how do you learn things you consider necessary for your work”, the majority of the participants choose hierarchically the following ways of learning:

1. Through daily updating in my work. (Discussion – Observation) - 51,2%
2. I get information online (Internet) - 48,8%
3. I study/read related books or specialized magazines - 41,5%
4. From other colleagues - 39%
5. I don't need to know anything more in order to do my job effectively - 14,6%

In addition to the above ways of learning about their profession they are mentioning other ways such as by asking friends and relatives, by doing, through exhibitions, TV and Media and through gaining experience in non-working environments.

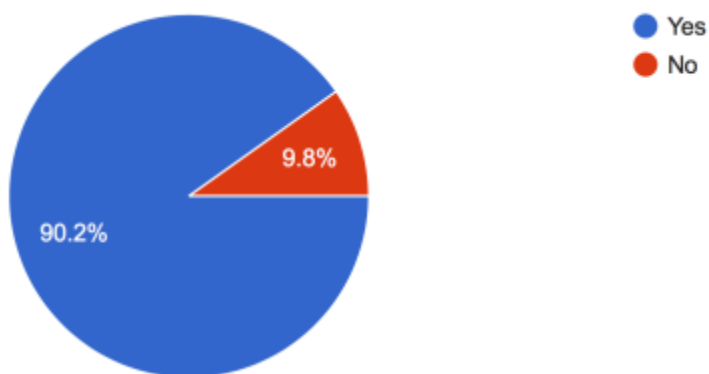
How do you learn things you consider necessary for your profession?



63

From the 41 interviewees, 37 answer positively that they would like to participate in a training activity relative to their profession.

Would you like to participate in a seminar related to your profession?



Factors that could facilitate interviewees to participate in a training activity, based on their answers (open question) are:

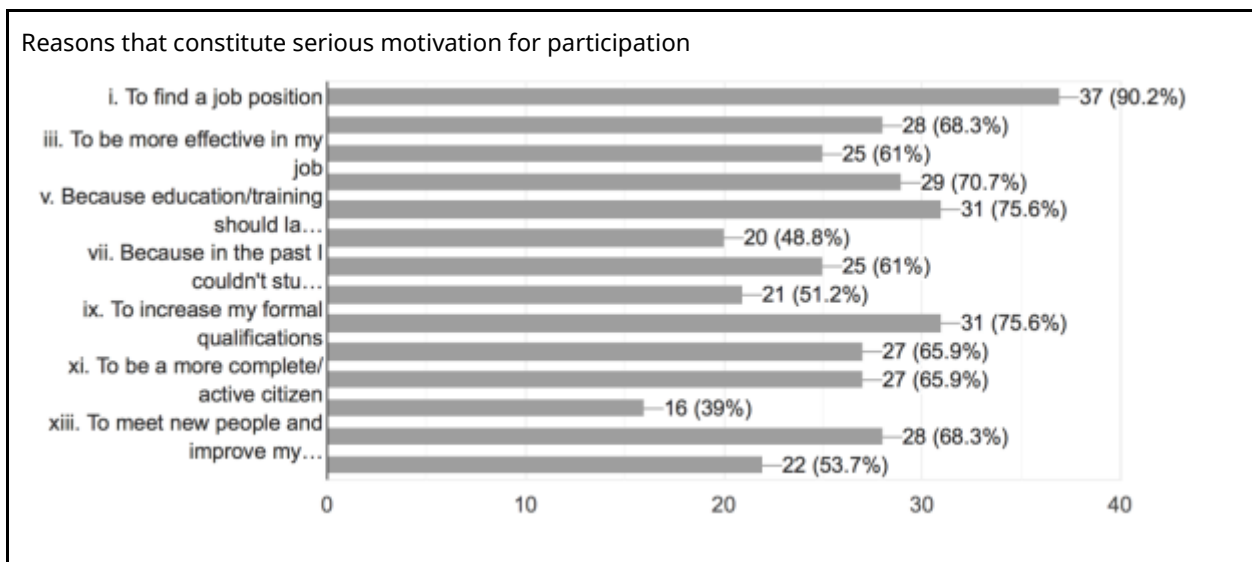
- To find a job / To increase possibilities on finding a job
- To learn new things
- To get new qualifications
- Socialization



- To improve skills
- Flexible timeline & Easy
- Do not answer

Additionally, in a “closed” question “which of the following reasons constitute a serious motivation for your participation” the interviewees answered:

1. (i) To find a job position (90,2%)
2. (v) Because education/training should last in our whole life (75,6%)
3. (ix) To increase my formal qualifications (75,6%)
4. (iv) I like to learn new things (70,7%)
5. (ii) To increase my salary / competitive profile (68,3%)
6. (xiii) To meet new people and improve my social network (68,3%)



From all the above we can observe that motivational factors for participating in training activities are: (i) through a training program they could find a job position, (ii)



education/training should last in their whole life, (iii) to increase formal qualifications and to develop professional or soft skills, (iv) they like to learn new things and (v) to increase their socializing, to meet new people and improve their social network. Furthermore, a flexible schedule of the training sessions and easily understandable subjects could reinforce their participation in training activities.

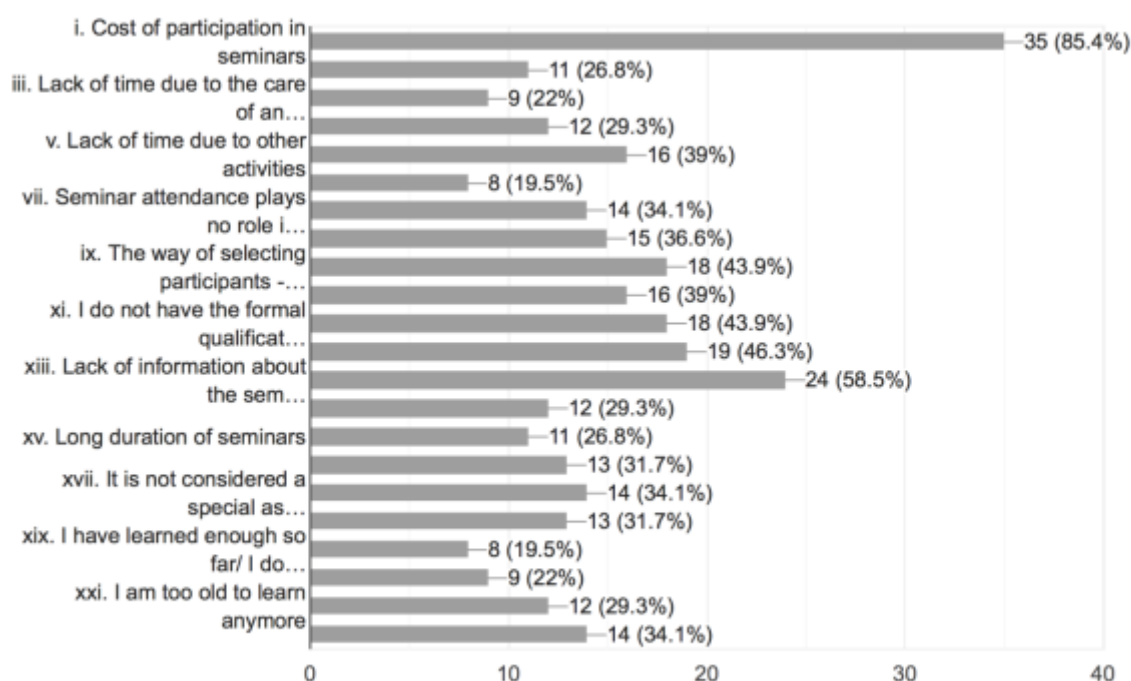
Examining barriers and obstacles towards participation in training activities, the interviewees gave their answers in an open question: “what are the reasons that prevent you to participate in a training”. The most common answers separated by the types of barriers to lifelong learning (Desjardins & Rubenson, 2013) are the followings:

Situational	Institutional	Dispositional	Informational	Financial
Health issue Family issues/duties Lack of time	No seminars	Lack of interesting Lack of basic skills Fear of the new Difficulty to move/ distance	No information	Lack of money Cost of Seminar

Additionally, in the next chart we see specific reasons that prevent unemployed low-skilled over 45 years old to participate in training activities. The first barrier is referred to “Cost of participation in seminars” (**85,4%**). The second barrier with **58,5%** is “Lack of information about the seminars and training programs that taking place”. The third obstacle is “I do not have the essential skills required for participating in a seminar (pc skills, language, etc)” with **46,3%**. With **43,9%** there are two obstacles “I do not have the formal qualifications required for participating the seminar” and “The way of selecting participants - I don't think I have a chance to be selected”. Another two barriers are in the same position with **39%** “Difficulty of moving to where the seminar takes place” and “Lack of time due to other activities”. Last but not least: “The seminars take place in days and hours that I cannot attend” (**36,6%**), “Seminar

attendance plays no role in improving my job/ finding a job" (**34,1%**), "It is not considered a special asset in my work environment" (**34,1%**) and "I can learn in other ways what I would learn in a seminar" (**34,1%**).

Barriers and obstacles for participation in a training activity



In an attempt to summarize the main barriers we will use again the typology of barriers to lifelong learning. Along that, the table shows that the most common barriers, with the two highest percentages, appeared to be Financial and Informational. In addition to these, a variety of Dispositional barriers make the scene more challenging. Institutional barriers come into view concerning the “selection process” and the recognition of the training in a working environment. Last but not least, Situational barriers appear to have the lower percentages in relation to others types of barriers. Yet, when present, they tend to be considered as the most serious constraints, and they are prioritized as key reasons that prevent low-skilled adults over 45 from training activities.

Barriers to training activities				
Situational	Institutional	Dispositional	Informational	Financial
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of time due to other activities (39%) - Lack of time due to child care (26,8%) - Lack of time due to the care of another relative (22%) - Health issues do not allowed me to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The way of selecting participants - I don't think I have a chance to be selected (43,9%) - It is not considered a special asset in my work environment (34,1%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I do not have the essential skills required for participating in a seminar (46,3%) - I do not have the formal qualifications required for participating (43,9%) - Difficulty of moving to where the seminar takes place (39%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of information (58,5%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cost of participation in seminars” (85,4%)

participate (31,7%)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The seminars take place in days and hours that I cannot attend (36,6%) - Seminar attendance plays no role in improving my job/ finding a job (34,1%) - I can learn in other ways what I would learn in a seminar (34,1%) - I am too old to learn anymore (29,3%) 		
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The participants that filled up the questionnaire answered the following question: “what would make it easier for you to attend a seminar that interests you”. Their answers vary, but a crucial group of factors able to accommodate their expectations for attending a seminar has been highlighted. Based on their answers:

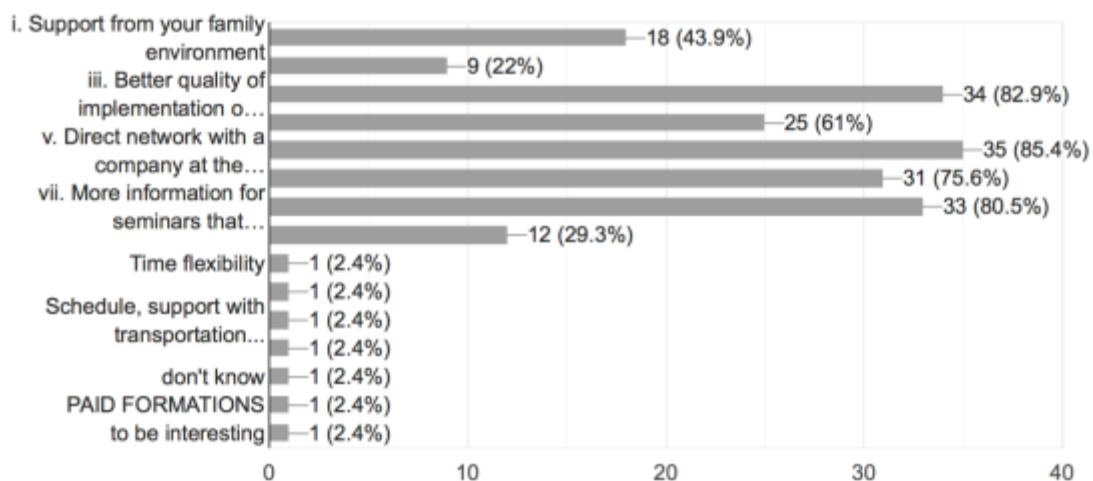
1. Direct network with a company at the end of a seminar, speed interviews, job fair etc. (85,4%).
2. Better quality of implementation of the seminars (more practice than theory) (82,9%).
3. More information for seminars that are going to happen (80,5%).
4. Training designed by professionals of the labor market, direct contact with the enterprises, targeted to the labor market needs (75,6%).
5. Recognition of qualifications gained through the participation in a seminar/ certification, etc (61%).



6. Support from your family environment (43.9%).
7. To use distance learning methods (29,3%).
8. Child care services during the seminar (22%).

Additionally, answers of the participants are referred to “time flexibility”, “support with transportation”, “without cost”.

Facilitator factors for attendance a seminar



5.1.1 The case of Bulgaria

In Bulgaria, 10 participants (8 women and 2 men) were interviewed in the South – East region of Stara Zagora (villages or small towns). All of them were married and have children over 18 years, except for 1 female participant who has 1 child under 18 years old. Six of the participants

have finished primary school (ISCED-1) and four elementary schools (ISCED-2). All of them have a Baseline or High Literacy and Numeracy Levels, none of them have good digital skills, although some of them use the internet, mainly on their mobile phones or their children's laptops.

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All the interviewees are willing to find a job and their main barrier is the lack of job offers for non educated people over 45 years old. Moreover, only one had participated in a training activity, which was not relevant with their professional interest. During the survey it appeared that the majority of participants had difficulty "finding a job position" due to the lack of education and skills. Almost all the participants wish to attend a seminar in order to improve their skills and find a job. Some of the participants have long working experience in a particular field, in most cases informal. The main difficulty that they face in finding a job is the lack of adequate information. Concerning constraints and barriers towards training activities it emerges through the survey that "lack of information" and "non training activities" are in top. More thoroughly, the "cost of participation in seminars" is the number one barrier. It follows "lack of time due to other activities", "lack of information about the seminars and training programs that taking place", "the way of selecting participants" and they do not feel confident to be selected due to their "qualification and skills".

They could attend a training activity in order to find a job position, to create a more competitive profile, to increase their formal qualifications and almost "1 in 2" believe that education/training should last in our whole life. Another reasons that could speed up their participation in training activities are: 1) More information for seminars that are going to happen; 2) Direct network with a company at the end of a seminar, speed interviews, job fair etc; 3) Better quality of implementation of the seminars (more practice than theory); 4) Training designed by professionals of the labor market, targeted to the labor market needs; and 5) support from their family environment.



5.1.2 The case of Greece

In Greece (Athens) 10 people participated in the research 5 men and 5 women. The majority of the interviewees used to have professional activity more than 20 years (minimum 7 years and maximum 33 years) mostly in technical fields, manual work and elderly care. The majority of them are thinking to work as employees and three (3) out of ten (10) seriously thinking to orient themselves towards entrepreneurship (bakery, field of nutrition, cosmetics). Most of them are looking for entry level positions, without any skill requirements. Many of them have participated in digital skills training activities that are related indirectly with their professional goals.

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They believe that “their age”, “lack of digital skills” and “lack of financial resources” are obstacles for their career path. Usually, they get informed about their profession by observing and discussing with others. Additionally, they learn new things often more by books, magazines and then by searching on the internet, although they are facing difficulties in using a computer and most of them do not have a computer at home. On the other hand, main barriers for participating in training activities are “lack of time”, “lack of money”, “lack of basic/digital skills” and that they “do not find something interesting”. The most common obstacle that they face is related to the cost of the training. They believe also that they do not have the necessary level of basic/digital skills in order to be able to participate in seminars. Also, they do not have the necessary information and access to the training/seminars that are taking place.

Examining what could motivate them to participate in a training activity two main motivation factors emerge: (i) will to learn, (ii) to develop competencies that make them better at their profession. Moreover, based on question 20b, the most frequent motivation factor for the interviewees to be enrolled in a training activity is “finding a job”. The second factor seems to



be “to enhance the typical/ basic skills” and the third factor is “to be efficient”. For 9 out of 10 interviewees the implication of employers in professional training and information about training programs are the two main factors of motivation towards their engagement in a training activity. Furthermore, they appreciate a certification at the end of the training that could give them an added value in the labor market and recognition of the competencies gained through the training. Finally, they appreciate the participation of employers at the end of the training in the framework of networking events, job fairs or speed interviews.

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5.1.3 The case of Italy

In Italy, 10 people were interviewed in Torino, in “Barriera di Milano” neighborhood. Six (6) participants in the research were men and four (4) women. Regarding family status, 4 were single, 3 married and 3 were separated or divorce. Half of them had secondary education (gymnasium) and the other half had secondary high education. They have quite heterogeneous professional experience and the most common sector among men was in the building industry. Moreover, 7 of them were registered unemployed.

Their biggest obstacle towards employment is “age” and next to this a climate of negativism (i.e. bureaucracy, never look or negative answers). Almost “1 in 2” prefer to get informed and to learn new things about their profession through the internet and mainly through a constant updating by discussion and observation. Nine of them had been involved in training activities and only four the last 12 months. Additionally, their main obstacles for participating in training activities are lack of time and money. Indeed 80 % agreed that the “economic cost of participating” was the greatest constraint.

For the 30% of the interviewees, “finding a job” was the first priority to start a training activity. Another 30 % chose “I like to learn new things” as the first priority. Other reasons are: “to have a more competitive profile”, “to be more effective in their job”, “education/training should last in our whole life”. “2 in 10” participants see a seminar as a way “to get rid of personal/family



issues". In addition to all these, "support from the family environment" and "better quality of implementation of the seminars (more practice than theory)", "the training are designed by professionals of the labor market, targeted to the labor market needs" and there is a "direct network with a company at the end of a seminar (such as speed interviews, job fair etc.) seems positive factors that could help them integrate in a training environment.

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5.1.4 The case of Spain

In Spain, 11 people were interviewed in 6 different regions of the country ensuring better representation and bringing a more coherent picture of the over 45 low skilled unemployed situation. Nine (9) out of eleven (11) were women. This fact is coherent with the higher unemployment rate in woman than in men, according to the Active Population Survey (EPA-June 2020). Regarding family status, one third of the women were single and the other two thirds were married. Almost 6 out of 11 have primary education and 2 out of 11 has completed the secondary education (gymnasium). The most common professional sectors interviewed had experience in logistic and commerce/ retail.

In almost all cases they mentioned "age" and "low education" as the greatest barriers they find towards employment. However, 5 out of 11 have previously participated in training activities before and all of them seem willing to receive training in the future. Concerning the reasons that prevent them from participating in training, there was lower consensus but 55.4% agreed that "the cost of participating" was a great deterrent. "Lack of time" for participation due to "childcare and other activities", as well as the "feeling that they were not eligible" for certain trainings were mentioned. During the interviews, when they asked about the way they usually learn and get information they need, "learning from other colleagues" was the most common answer, followed by looking online. In this regard, the answers show the importance of group learning approaches and strengthening the digital skills of learners to encourage their self learning as well.

For almost "7 in 11" of the interviewees, "finding a job" was the first priority to start a training



activity followed by “becoming more effective in their profession” and because they enjoy “learning new things”. Furthermore, a serious motivation for them is “to become more competitive” and be “more efficient in their job”, “to learn new things” and “Because education/training should last in our whole life”. Additional factors that could reinforce their participation in training activities are: almost the 50% mentioned “direct network with a company at the end of a seminar” as the first priority. This is followed by “training realized by professionals of the labor market”, “direct contact with the enterprises and the labor market” and “recognition of qualifications gained through the participation in a seminar/ certification, etc. These results comes to demonstrate the importance of generating learning experiences that are job related, designed and implemented in close collaboration with employers.

5.2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH WITH EMPLOYERS

5.2.1 Participants’ experience with the target group

The twenty eight (28) participants of the focus groups came from different types of organizations. These included companies and stakeholders in the labor market. The companies were both large, medium and small: six (6) large companies, four (4) medium and four (4) small. They were from different sectors and were selected in order to cover different job positions that might be of interest for the purpose of the research. The following sectors are represented in the groups:

- Insurance
- Tourism
- Food processing
- Cleaning services
- Automobile parts
- Machine production
- Microcredit services
- Marketing and advertising
- Multiservice
- Travel agency
- Customer service
- Retail



The other eleven (11) participants representing stakeholders come from the following sides:

- Training providers
- Recruitment agencies
- Consultants
- Chamber of Commerce
- Trade Union
- Public body

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All these participants have experience with low skilled adults over 45 years of age, although they form a small segment in many companies' staff. Especially some large companies have measures and projects aimed at people in vulnerable situations as part of their inclusive policy. Adults over 45 are not considered vulnerable, but low-skilled persons do fall under this category.

Besides, the stakeholders involved have extensive experience with the target group via assisting them to train for employment purposes, supporting them in programs of re-entering the labor market (e.g. work placements), matching them to positions as recruiting agencies, offering consultation, policy-making for active employment measures and adult education and providing assistance in terms of Human Resources and the organizational improvement of companies.

The target group occupies mostly entry level positions, such as:

- Cleaning and maintenance
- Retail assistant
- Valets
- Servicing in the hospitality sector
- Telemarketers
- General duties



5.2.2 Training needs of low-skilled over 45

Many of the positions covered have limited expectations from staff in terms of education. Many companies offer initial technical on the job training for their employees before starting to work. Yet, in some positions basic skills training is indeed needed -basic skills in **ICT** and **languages**. Moreover, employers highlighted the training needs of the target group in soft skills, rather than hard and technical skills.

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They specified that the ability to be **flexible and adapt** to the context, new positions and conditions is very important in order to find a job and thrive in it. For the target group, it is crucial to overcome their previous work situation and keep an open mind to the new and actual options they might be offered to them. As a participant explained *"They come from a long working experience, they have been doing a certain job for a long time and they must adapt to the first opportunity that arises, whether they feel comfortable or not."*

This implies a need for self-development competencies and job seeking skills. Unemployed low skilled over 45 years old should develop a more **active behavior** towards their professional and personal development, they should be more curious and willing to learn and evolve. They should also develop competencies in analyzing and researching information and develop and maintain a **competitive profile** via lifelong learning or even via an attractive CV or a training in interviewing skills. As mentioned by a participant, *" +45 don't usually know how to build a proper CV and to show their soft skills and experience in it".*

Self-motivation and the development of an internal locus of control were also skills that were discussed. Unemployed low skilled over 45 years old should not present themselves as victims but as actors of their own lives. One employer mentioned the difficulty in developing these competencies and at the same time the importance of their existence for the target group. **Stress management** is also a skill that most employers mentioned. This competence



is also valued due to today's changing environment.

Emotional intelligence was also a competence that the employers praised a lot. Digging a little bit further, employers mentioned **humility as** a key skill. They mentioned that it is very important to be able to adapt to the person you are addressing or/and being able to assess a professional situation. Thus, self-consciousness, the ability to know oneself, is a key competence for successful professional integration.

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Training providers are interested and offer educational opportunities to this group. An example is that of CPIA Torino, who implement an intensive course addressed to people who are expressing their need to enter the labor market. This course is structured in five sections, reflecting to a great extent the needs highlighted above. These sections are:

- Job search
- Informatics
- Financial management
- Security
- Work in the company

5.2.3 Challenges in integrating the target group into the labor market

Most of the participants agreed that a mindset change is needed both for employers and the perception they have for the target group as well as in the target group itself. Still, the challenges deriving from the side of the employers were not analyzed in the groups. One relevant issue mentioned is that often enterprises have a young culture, which makes it difficult to integrate older adults. Moreover, low skilled job positions are not always adapted to the needs of older adults. As explained by a participant, *"it is important to find positions that*



match their profile - for instance, a stock waiter over 45 might not lift very heavy weights but can do a training for similar positions. Usually companies do not want to make these changes or adaptations". This is linked to employers' prejudice that older candidates will be harder to adapt and more difficult to train. As such, they often opt to recruit younger candidates. Finally, many employers fear that older adults will have more family responsibilities and therefore they will be less committed.

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From the side of the target-group, the main challenges for integrating into the labor market are the following:

- They have problems adapting to the new working environment, sometimes due to long periods of unemployment. They hesitate to take risks in the working environment and have difficulties in adapting to the changing environment. They seem to value their prestige and have great expectations from employers, not accepting low salary positions. An example that an employer described was about his experience at a job fair when he interviewed low skilled candidates over 45 that could not handle the fact that the recruiter was younger.
- Low-skilled adults over 45 tend not to have a positive opinion about lifelong learning. As such they often resist participating in training. They do not want to become students again and be in a school-like environment. Sometimes peer-to-peer training is not giving the proper results due to the lack of respect for the hierarchy towards other long-term employees. On the other hand, they have difficulty in using new technologies and appreciate e-learning programs. This comes hand in hand with their unwillingness to learn basic digital skills.
- There is often a lack of responsibility towards the working process, examples of employees not showing to work due to personal issues or because *"they simply did not feel like going to work"*. This is linked to a lack of basic work habits, such as come to work on time and call when they are off sick.



- Finally, according to a research one HR director mentioned during the focus group, older adults tend not to be efficient for 40 hour a week.

5.2.4 Overcoming challenges in integrating the target group into the labor market

First of all, it was highlighted that although young people might be more enthusiastic, they are also not so willing to be committed and would rather expect the company to be committed to them with benefits. A person over 45 years of age tends to be more willing to offer and to commit due to the more responsibilities they have, their experience of unemployment and the value they give to work. As such, they are often more loyal, motivated and hard workers.

As a result, in order to overcome the challenges they face due to situational barriers, companies could properly integrate older adults by offering them more flexibility when needed. Part-time job positions and job-sharing are also suggested as means to maximize the target group's efficiency and have a win-win situation for employer and employee. Other special measures for over 45 years old (bonification) can also be effectively used. In the past years, these bonifications were granted for NEETS and as a result unemployment over 45 rose. Fiscal benefits are the first thing companies look for, and it should be taken into consideration. One participating company offered their example, according to which they have a specific program where they provide economic incentives to the hiring company as to defray part of the salary of the vulnerable person they are hiring or taking for a paid internship. In 80 percent of cases, the person stays in the company.

Large companies are already developing initiatives through their Social Corporate Responsibility departments, but in other cases it is more difficult. Linking companies so they can exchange positive experiences with the target group is a good practice for endorsing their integration into the labor market. Implementing evaluations that prove that older adults'



performance is as good as younger adults can be another means for endorsement. In this way, recruiters are more open to see the person for their potential (what they can do and potentially do) rather than for what they have done. In the case of recruiting companies that act as brokers to companies/clients, they should be encouraged to better promote older candidates.

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In relation to vocational education, a representative of the labor market confirmed that professional training should be simple and useful. Employees should see the immediate result of the training in their day to day activity and have access to the necessary equipment to practice what they have learned. Finally, training should be recognized via certification of the skills developed during the seminars.

5.2.5 Involvement of participants in the project

Participants were open to discuss the topic, expressed a willingness to collaborate within the project and confirmed their interest in working on best practices. The fact that participating stakeholders derive from different sectors, have diverse profiles and represent all levels of enterprises (small, medium and large) will be a strength for the project. Employers were positive in investing in this growing pool of manpower in order to cover market's needs, and specific acts were suggested as starting point (e.g. a mailing list of stakeholders, the creation of a network involving companies, training organizations and CSOs, the sharing of findings and best practices from other EU countries). Nonetheless, the limited availability of working hours and staff due to workload is predicted as the key challenge for their participation.

6. MOTIVATION AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF UNEMPLOYED LOW-SKILLED ADULTS OVER 45 IN TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Given the above analysis of barriers to learning, the issue is not the existence or not of



obstacles, but the formulation by the state and society of those conditions that allow the individual to overcome them (Rubenson and Desjardins, 2009). Moreover, the desk research shows that there is an interplay between low level literacy and numeracy skills, qualification levels, skill levels, occupation and skills development (European Commission, 2015). This interplay has an impact on the unemployed, either in seeking job procedures or in participating in training activities. The same is confirmed through the research analysis.

This part of the report summarizes the findings of the desk research, interviews and focus groups. The data from unemployed low-skilled over 45 years old (interviews) and from employees and stakeholders (focus group) in the labor market of Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Spain was analyzed by using, on the one hand semi-structured questionnaire (Annex 1) for descriptive analysis and, on the other hand, focus group grid for in-depth analysis (Annex 3).

The research findings focus on the challenges towards participation in training activities of the target group, namely unemployed low-skilled adults over 45 years old. Although education and empowerment of skills could increase employability, only “1 in 4” unemployed low-skilled over 45 is participating in training schemes (Bekker & Wilthagen, 2015). Additionally, the training schemes offered to unemployed adults are probably not sufficient and small segments of unemployed people take part in training despite the high unemployment rates for low-skilled adults in Europe (Bekker & Wilthagen, 2015).

6.1 Analysis and Recommendations

Recommendations are suggested below as an effort to reinforce the engagement of unemployed low-skilled adults over 45 years old in training schemes and to develop ways to trigger and sustain their learning interests through adult learning programs adjusted to skills' demand.



6.1.1 Lack of Skills

In total of 41 low-skilled unemployed over 45 years old who participated in the interviews of ACT45+:

- 48,8% have Functional and almost “1 in 3” participants have Baseline Numeracy Skills.
- “1 in 2” participants have Functional and “1 in 4” have either Baseline, or Multiple Literature Skills.
- The majority (70,7%) have Foundation digital skills and seem to face difficulties using a computer or searching on the Internet.

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The lack of these skills may be either an obstacle to their job finding process as well as to their access to information about training and seminars that may be of interest. Almost “1 in 2” (48,8%) confirms through a question on “how do you learn things necessary for your profession” that they get information online through the use of the internet.

Besides these basic skills, in the focus groups, stakeholders from the point of view of the employers highlighted the lack of soft skills that this group faces. Flexibility, adaptability, self-motivation and a proactive behaviour towards professional development regarding both training and job seeking are necessary skills for low skilled unemployed over 45 years of age. Finally, emotional intelligence and stress management are also found as important yet missing skills.

As such, further attention should thus be paid on the ways that they apply on getting and analyzing information (concerning job positions or seminars) as well as on soft skills, maybe through workshops on digital and soft skills.



6.1.2 Difficulties in seeking a job position

Interviewees seeking job positions have a difficulty to orient precisely themselves towards their professional goal. Approximately, 25 out of 41 of the participants mentioned that their career orientation is to “find a job”, without specifying the occupation that they would like to be involved in. Furthermore, the skills that they have, the condition of the labor market at the time that they are searching for a job and the distance from their retirement period seem very influential factors for their career goals. Next to all these, the barriers that they are facing in order to find a job in the professional field that they are focusing on are: Age, Lack of Skills-Training-Education, Lack of Jobs. At the same time, stakeholders in the focus groups noted the difficulties that this group has in overcoming their previous job status and being open to opportunities in their current context. Still, they also saw their own prejudices in having a “young culture” in the companies, preferring a younger recruit that can be more easily molded into their form of work habits.

Accordingly, further attention should be paid on tackling the issue of “age” by all the stakeholders involved in the project.

6.1.3 Participating in training activities

From the 41 interviewees, 37 answer positively that they would like to participate in a training activity related to their profession. Many of them seem to relate their attendance of a seminar with a way to find a job or with increased possibilities to find a job. Despite their willingness to participate in training, in the focus groups, it was agreed upon that this target group resists lifelong learning. Their low participation is also found in the literature.

Further attention should be paid on promoting general benefits that someone could have by their participation in a training activity (i.e. socialization, new qualifications, developing new skills).

6.1.4 Barriers to training activities

The most common obstacles appeared to be Financial and Informational. In addition to these, a variety of Dispositional barriers make the scene more challenging. Institutional barriers come into view concerning the “selection process” and “the recognition of the training in a working environment”. Last but not least, Situational barriers appear to have the lowest percentages in relation to other types of barriers. Yet, when present, they tend to be considered as the most serious constraints and they are prioritized as key reasons that prevent low-skilled adults over 45 from training activities.

Most intrinsic factors are related with the dispositional barriers and the development of soft skills' workshops are suggested in order to tackle these barriers.

Situational	Institutional	Dispositional	Informational	Financial
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of time due to other activities (39%) - Lack of time due to child care (26,8%) - Lack of time due to the care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The way of selecting participants - I don't think I have a chance to be selected (43,9%) - It is not considered a special asset in my work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I do not have the essential skills required for participating in a seminar (46,3%) - I do not have the formal qualifications required for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of information (58,5%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cost of participation in seminars” (85,4%)

of another
relative (22%)

- Health issues
do not allowed
me to
participate
(31,7%)

environment
(34,1%)

participating
(43,9%)

- Difficulty of
moving to where
the seminar takes
place (39%)

- The seminars take
place in days and
hours that I cannot
attend (36,6%)

- Seminar
attendance plays no
role in improving
my job/ finding a
job (34,1%)

- I can learn in other
ways what I would
learn in a seminar
(34,1%)

- I am too old to
learn anymore
(29,3%)

6.1.5 Motivational factors for participating in training activities

The motivational factors for the interviewees that emerge through the questionnaire for participating in training activities are:

- (i) through a training program they could find a job position,
- (ii) education/training should last throughout their life,
- (iii) to increase formal qualifications and to develop professional or soft skills,



- (iv) they like to learn new things and
- (v) to increase their socializing, to meet new people and improve their social network.

A flexible schedule of the training sessions and easily understandable subjects could reinforce their participation in training activities. Especially for this target group, training should be relevant to their needs, delivered in a practical way. Moreover, it is suggested that training activities that lead to qualifications recognized by employers could increase their participation (Windisch, 2015).

6.1.6 Techniques for raising awareness

Additionally, based on the desk research, factors for increasing participation in training activities are (i) raising awareness about the many benefits of adult learning, (ii) reaching out unemployed low-skilled adults with tailored information and guidance, (iii) offering job-related training with tailor-made programs. Techniques for raising awareness and sensitizing the target group of the project could be:

- **Word of mouth** with instructors and former participants spreading the news of adult basic education.
- **The media:** Evidence shows that campaigns are particularly important for attracting more disadvantaged participants, with television proving more successful in reaching people with low skills than print media.
- **Community outreach programs** that provide information for prospective learners in the community.
- Offering basic skills trainings in **accessible locations**, such as community centers or the workplace, also helps recruit learners



- Maybe they prefer **more informal learning venues**, such as community centers than school settings
- **The name of the courses** (i.e Communication Skills instead of writing or reading)
- Workshops developing **soft skills** such as confidence, teamwork, employee initiative and problem solving.
- Develop new types of learning support **systems that provide persistent structures** or pathways for adults (seminars, online materials to work independently or with tutors).
- By **involving them** in the content and design of their own courses and learning material.
- In learning, **relationships matter**: facilitator/trainee, trainee/trainee, trainee/organization and the educator's support network
- Evaluation results tend to be most positive when the training is **well tailored** to the person's potential, employers' skill needs and leads to formal qualifications.

6.1.7 Facilitating factors for attending a seminar

Facilitating factors that emerge from the interviewees able to accommodate their expectations for attending a seminar are:

- Direct network with a company at the end of a seminar (speed interviews, job fair etc.),
- Better quality of implementation of the seminars (more practice than theory),
- More information for seminars that are going to happen,
- Training designed by professionals of the labor market, direct contact with the enterprises, targeted to the labor market needs,
- Recognition of qualifications gained through the participation in a seminar/ certification.



6.1.8 Stakeholders

Last but not least, building trust and robust partnerships among stakeholders (Employment Services, VET providers, employer associations and employers) is essential for offering high quality training placements, targeted to the learner's skills and career aspirations, as well as meeting the needs of employers. Having everyone an equal voice fosters confidence and trust and strengthens the stakeholders' commitment to the program and ownership of it, thereby promoting not only quality and relevance, but also sustainability.

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Key Findings per Interested Party			
Training Providers	Employment Services	Employers	Unemployed Low-skilled 45+
Training activities relevant to their needs, delivered in a practical (experiential) way with a clear job perspective	Soft skills workshops are suggested in order to tackle dispositional barriers	Lack of soft skills: flexibility, adaptability, self-motivation, emotional intelligence and stress management	Need for digital skills & access to information (for job positions and vocational training)
Job-related training with tailor-made programs	Tailored information and career guidance	Prejudices towards their employees: "culture of young employees"	Need for soft skills workshops (teamwork, employee initiative and problem solving)
Flexible schedule of the training sessions	Systems that provide persistent structures or pathways	To tackle the issue of "Ageing" at the framework of discrimination	Difficulty to describe explicitly their career goal
Easily understandable subjects, concepts, thematics	More information for seminars that are going to happen	To recognise valuable skills and abilities from previous work experiences	Low participation in lifelong learning settings



Training activities that lead to qualifications / certifications recognized by the employers	Direct contact with the enterprises / employers, targeted to the labor market needs	Recognition of qualifications gained through the participation in a seminar/ certification	Participation in training activities without cost
Raising awareness about the many benefits of adult learning	Promoting not only quality and relevance, but also sustainability of a training scheme	Guarantee job positions (full-time, part time, internships) as part of the training activity	Lack of information
Promotion of general benefits for participating in a training activity (i.e. socialization, new qualifications, developing new skills)	Direct network with a company at the end of a seminar (speed interviews, job fair etc.)	Initiatives through their Social Corporate Responsibility departments	Variety of dispositional barriers
Strengthen the relationships during a training activity	Strengthens the stakeholders' commitment to be involved		Situational barriers are the most vigorous, when they appear
Combining a matching approach with basic skills training, career counseling and mentoring supported by multi-professional teams contributes the most to the success of work-based activation programs.			



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Annex 1

Act45 Questionnaire

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(Inspired by Karalis, T. (2018) «The participation of Adults in Lifelong Learning: Obstacles and Motivation 2011-2016»)

Purpose of the study

Act45 is a European project that aims to develop and test an integrated collaboration framework among CSOs, employers and training providers, promoting tailor-made motivation and engagement strategies for encouraging the participation of unemployed low-skilled adults over 45 years old in training on basic and soft skills. This study is part of the project and has as main goal to find out what motivates 45+ unemployed people to participate in training as well as to focus on the challenges they face to participate in a training. In this framework, we would also like to find out which measures could encourage their participation.

Participation criteria

If you are

- 45+ unemployed and you have or a primary or low secondary education degree
- 45+ unemployed and you lack computer skills

Procedure

If you want to participate in this project, we will arrange an interview time that will last approximately 40minutes. The semi-structured interview will be confidential and your personal data will not be related



to the final outcomes of the study.

At the end of the study, the final document can be available upon request.

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I(Name and Surname)..... accept to participate in this study and allow
team to use my answers for the purposes of the European project act45.

Date

Signature

Name

Surname

Age

Date of birth

1. Gender

- a) Male
- b) Female

2. Family Status

- a) Unmarried [->23]
- b) Married
- c) Divorced
- d) Widow
- e) Other (specify)



3. Do you have children (under 18 years old)

- a) Yes
- b) No

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4. Do you have any other relative depending on you?

5. Educational Level

- a) Has not finished Primary School
- b) Primary School
- c) Gymnasium (Basic Education)
- d) High School
- e) Vocational Training program (after high school)
- f) University degree (AEI/TEI)
- g) Master Program
- h) PHD
- i) Non validated degree in the country

6. Self-evaluation of skills and competencies ^[13]

6.1 Numeracy (1-3)

Baseline Numeracy - Having a sound knowledge of numbers, measures and structures, basic operations, basic mathematical presentations and the ability to use appropriate aids that enable further development.

¹³ For further information on definitions on literacy and numeracy skills see European Commission (2015) : https://skillspanorama.cedefop.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUSP_AH_LiteracyNumeracy_0.pdf



Functional Numeracy - The ability to apply basic mathematical principles and processes in everyday contexts at home, school and work (as needed for banking, payments, reading timetables, etc.).

Multiple Numeracy - The ability and willingness to use mathematical modes of thought (logical and spatial thinking) and presentation (formulae, models, graphs, charts) that enable a person to fully function in a modern society.

6.2 Literacy (1-3)

Baseline Literacy - Having the knowledge of letters, words and text structures that is needed to read and write at a level that enables self-confidence and motivation to further development.

Functional Literacy - The ability to read and write at a level that enables someone to develop and function in society, at home, at school and at work.

Multiple Literacy - The ability to use reading and writing skills in order to produce, understand, interpret and critically evaluate written information. It is a basis for digital participation and making informed choices pertaining to finances, health, etc.

6.3 Digital Skills^[14] (1-4)

Proficiency Level:

Foundation Intermediate Advanced Highly Specialized

7. Active citizenship (officially and unofficially)

Yes No N/A Member of a union / trade union

¹⁴ For further information on definitions on digital skills see DigComp 2.1: The Digital Competence Framework for Citizens with eight proficiency levels and examples of use, p.13 ([https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC106281/web-digcomp2.1pdf_\(online\).pdf](https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC106281/web-digcomp2.1pdf_(online).pdf))

Yes No N/A Member of a political party / political organization

Yes No N/A Active member in NGO

Yes No N/A Member of an association

Volunteer

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8. Describe your employment status:

- a. Registered Unemployed
- b. Not register unemployed

9. In sum, how many years you have been working in total (officially and unofficially); in which sector?

10. Which is your professional goal? Describe

11. What are the barriers you encounter in order to find a job in the professional field you are targeting?

12. Have you ever participated in a seminar / training program or educational activity?

- a) Yes
- b) No

13. When?

- a) In the last 12 months (In 2019)
- b) From 2015 to 2018



c) Before 2015

14. Was it related to your profession (informal or non-formal learning)?

a) Yes

b) No

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15. How many seminars have you attended in the last five years related to your profession?

16. a) How many seminars / educational programs or general education / education activities have you attended in the last five years in general?

b) In how many of those seminars you were paid to attend?

17. How do you learn things you consider necessary for your work? If more than one prioritize

- a) I get information online (Internet).
- b) I study/read related books or specialized magazines.
- c) Through daily updating in my work. (Discussion –observation)
- d) From other colleagues.
- e) I don't need to know anything more in order to do my job effectively.
- f) Other way ...

18. In the next 12 months would you like to participate in a seminar related to your profession (in order to improve your professional knowledge and skills)?

a) Yes

b) No

19. What would motivate you to participate in training?

20. a) Which of these reasons constitute a serious motivation for your participation and which are not (Yes/No).

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b) Prioritize the reasons which motivate you.

	Y/N	Prioritize
i. To find a job position		
ii. To increase my salary / competitive profile		
iii. To be more effective in my job		
iv. I like to learn new things		
v. Because education/training should last in our whole life		
vi. Because this is how I set a good example for my children		
vii. Because in the past I couldn't study as much as I wanted to		

viii. To acquire a certification of participation		
ix. To increase my formal qualifications		
x. To feel more competent		
xi. To be a more complete/active citizen		
xii. To get rid of personal/family issues		
xiii. To meet new people and improve my social network		
xiv. To take advantage of my free time		

21. What are the reasons that prevent you to participate in training?

22. a) Which of the following reasons prevent you to participate in training?

b) Prioritize the reasons which prevent you

	Y/N	Prioritize
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i. Cost of participation in seminars		
ii. Lack of time due to child care		
iii. Lack of time due to the care of another relative		
iv. Lack of time due to work obligations		
v. Lack of time due to other activities		
vi. Negative attitude of my family or friends		
vii. Seminar attendance plays no role in improving my job/ finding a job		
viii. The seminars take place in days and hours that I cannot attend		
ix. The way of selecting participants - I don't think I have a chance to be selected		
x. Difficulty of moving to where the seminar takes place		
xi. I do not have the formal qualifications required for		



participating the seminar		
xii. I do not have the essential skills required for participating the seminar (pc skills, language, etc)		
xiii. Lack of information about the seminars and training programs that taking place		
xiv. No attendance certificate is given		
xv. Long duration of seminars		
xvi. The quality and the organization of the seminars are not at the desired level		
xvii. It is not considered a special asset in my work environment		
xviii. Health issues do not allowed me to participate		
xix. I have learned enough so far/ I don't need it		
xx. I don't like attending seminars, they remind me the era of school		



xxi. I am too old to learn anymore		
xxii. I can learn in other ways what I would learn in a seminar		

23. a) What would make it easier to participate in a seminar?

b) Which of the following would make it easier for you to attend a seminar that interests you?
Prioritize

	Y/N	Prioritize
1. Support from your family environment		
2. Child care services during the seminar		
3. Better quality of implementation of the seminars (more practice than theory). Training designed by professionals of the labor market, targeted to the labor market needs.		



4. Recognition of qualifications gained through the participation in a seminar/ certification, etc.		
5. Direct network with a company at the end of a seminar, speed interviews, job fair etc.		
6. Training realized by professionals of the labor market, direct contact with the enterprises and the labor market		
7. More information for seminars that are going to happen		
8. To use distance learning methods		
9. Other...		

23) Was the questionnaire understandable?

24) Do you have anything else to add?



Annex 2

Interview schedule

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1st step

Identify beneficiaries that meet all the criteria required in the proposal

2nd step

Present the project, the participation procedure and recruit the candidates for the interviews

3rd step

Arrange an interview date

4th step

After signing their participation consent proceed to the semi-structured interview. Inform the participants that you will take notes during the interview.

5th step

Analyze the answers and give feedback to INE GSEE until 15/02.



Annex 3

Focus group Grid

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1. What is your experience with this target group?

(In that subject we can gain information in the following fields:

-in which positions we can find 45+low skilled

-what are the percentage of 45+ low skilled in their enterprise

- what are the training needs of their employees over 45 years old)

2. What are the needs identified in your open position?

3. In your opinion what are the challenges in integrating this population?

4. How can we mitigate these difficulties/ How can we work together?

5. Can you identify the challenges of your involvement in the design and implementation of the project

6. Can you identify the advantages of your involvement in the design and implementation of the project