



Pilot testing

Evaluation of the collaboration framework and tools and impact assessment results

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1 Introduction

The project “Engaging unemployed low-skilled adults over 45 years old in training opportunities through collaboration schemes among CSOs, employers and training providers” (Ac+45) is a 24 months project funded by the EU Erasmus+ Programme. Its main objective is to establish effective local ecosystems that encourage participation of unemployed low-skilled adults over 45 years old in training opportunities, increasing collaboration among CSOs, employers and training providers and ultimately improving socio-labour inclusion of unemployed low-skilled adults over 45 years old.

The project is being implemented through a partnership of five organizations, established in four European countries, Greece, Spain, Italy, Bulgaria.

The project is structured around three horizontal set of activities dealing with management / coordination, training, and dissemination respectively and four core set of activities (intellectual outputs) comprising desk research, development of the intended collaboration framework, relevant guidelines and tools and pilot testing and evaluation of the produced framework that are intended to collectively produce the expected results.

Set of activities / Activity	Leading Organisation
Project management and implementation activities	
A1-6 Project Management, monitoring and dissemination activities	AAH
M1-6 Transnational project meetings	All partners, depending on location
Intellectual outputs	
O1. Requirements and influential factors for engaging unemployed low-skilled adults over 45 years old in training	INE GSEE
O2. Integrated collaboration framework and tools for establishing effective local ecosystems and engaging unemployed low-skilled adults over 45 years old in training	AAH
O3. Guidelines and knowledge resources for employers and trainers in companies to support their involvement in the design and implementation of training programmes for unemployed low-skilled adults over 45 years old	SZREDA
O4. Network of Ac+45 outputs’ adopters and repository of impact assessment results	ACH
Multiplier events	
E1-E4 National infodays (Multiplier events)	All partners, depending on location
E5 European Conference	INE GSEE
Training activities	
C1 Training workshop	ACH



2 Purpose and methods used

The present report aims at evaluating the pilot testing activities implemented in the context of Act45 project in the four project countries, taking into account the extent to which pilot testing activities were scheduled to be implemented in each country. The evaluation focuses on assessing:

- The effectiveness of the motivation / engagement strategies suggested for participants (evaluated in GR, ES, IT)
- The effectiveness of the motivation / engagement strategies suggested for employers (evaluated in GR, ES, IT)
- The effectiveness of the tools suggested for counsellors (evaluated in GR, ES, IT)
- The effectiveness of the tools suggested for trainers (evaluated in GR, ES, IT, BG)
- The effectiveness of the tools suggested for employers (evaluated in GR)
- The overall effectiveness of the collaboration framework in producing its intended results (evaluated in GR, ES, IT, BG)
- The impact of the collaboration schemes on participants, i.e. unemployed low skilled adults over 45 years old and other stakeholders (assessed in GR, ES, IT, BG)

The evaluation was carried out using a mixed methods approach, analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data to draw conclusions, ensuring that the views of all stakeholders directly involved in the pilot test, i.e. unemployed low skilled adults over 45 years old, employers, trainers, counsellors and project partners have been taken into account in the process. Data collection methods and tools, mainly involved:

- Meetings with all stakeholders involved (consultants, employers, trainers) and interaction with beneficiaries at local level
- Surveys through structured questionnaires containing both closed and open-ended questions for participants, trainers, employers, counsellors designed at central level and delivered at local level: The questionnaires were delivered to participants in the pilot testing activities in all countries and responses received (compared to total number of people participating) are as follows:

	Participants (low skilled adults over 45 years old)	Trainers	Counsellors	Employers
Greece	24/40	7/18 ¹	3/3	6/14
Spain	19/40	12/15	8/10	3/13
Italy	5/24	2/8	3/4	No response
Bulgaria	41/41	4/4	Not included in the activities (by design)	Not included in the activities (by design)

¹ Including employers' trainers on job related issues who were asked to respond to the employers' questionnaire



- Internal partner's reports, summarizing all the above information

All findings included in the present report are based on evidence obtained through the process described above. Descriptive statistics have been used for the analysis, summarizing features of the data collected, combined with the qualitative information received to draw conclusions on the effectiveness of the collaboration schemes created and the tools used, identify good practices and challenges and make suggestions on features to be included in possible future schemes. Those conclusions derive from the evidence collected, which provides indications on the possible functioning of future schemes. The feedback collected cannot be treated as the basis for statistical inference and thus broader generalisations, nor would such approach be suitable in the context of this pilot test. The results contained herein are also uploaded in the project's website, <https://act45.eu/>

3 Summary of results in all countries

Description of activities

Activities to pilot test the framework and tools developed by the project partnership were implemented in all four project countries. The extent of the activities implemented and the extent of the different stakeholders' involvement in the schemes created, varied either by design (e.g. the pilot test in Bulgaria was meant to mainly test the tools created for trainers and did not include the whole set of activities suggested by the project methodology) either by result, i.e. the schemes created were different in every country, with different degrees of employer involvement and different kind of activities implemented, although the basic methodology remained the same, including individualized sessions, group and training sessions and contact with employers.

A schematic presentation of the structure of the pilot test in the four countries can be seen in Figure 1, while a more detailed overview of the activities conducted in every country is presented in the relevant country chapters of this report.

The fact that the collaboration schemes created in every country varied in terms of activities implemented and, more importantly, in the degree of employers' involvement, suggests that the effectiveness of the framework proposed by the project in producing results for the target population was evaluated under different circumstances, thus the results varied accordingly.



Structure of the pilot test in the 4 project countries



Figure 1: Structure of the pilot test in the 4 project countries

Key numbers

- Collaboration framework and tools tested in 4 countries
- 40 agreements made with stakeholders (NGOs, employers, training providers)
- 145 participants (unemployed low skilled adults 45+)
- 272 individual sessions
- >75% of participants and stakeholders involved were satisfied, except for Italy where more neutral responses received by consultants (see figure 2 below for details)

Satisfaction Rates (% of respondents scoring 4 or 5 in a scale 1=very dissatisfied – 5=very satisfied)			
Greece	Spain	Italy	Bulgaria
Participants: 76%	Participants: 89%	Participants: 80%	Participants: 100%
Consultants: 100%	Consultants: 75%	Consultants: 33% (67% neutral)	Consultants: N/A
Trainers: 100%	Trainers: 100%	Trainers: 100%	Trainers: 100%
Employers: 100%	Employers: 100%	Employers: N/A	Employers: N/A

Figure 2: Summary of results - Satisfaction rates



Participants' profile

- In all countries the majority of the participants were women, except for Italy, where the majority (75%) were men
- In all countries, the majority in the age range 45-55 years old
- In all countries, a substantial part of participants had not participated in trainings in the last 5 years
- Participants in Italy were people with multiple vulnerabilities: disabilities, mental illnesses, past in jail, people that were drug-addicted, which seems to have played an important role in the results

Evaluation of motivation / engagement strategies for participants (unemployed low skilled people over 45 years old)

The motivation / engagement strategies for the participation of unemployed low skilled people over 45 years old in trainings were overall evaluated as effective in Greece and Spain, and as neither effective nor ineffective in Italy.

Strategies evaluated as most effective were those involving contact with employers and / or trainings designed by employers. Individualised support and the practice-based approach, also seem to work well to increase motivation and engagement, but also to produce results for the target group. Trainings in groups also seem to increase motivation and engagement, with group dynamics, peer support and socialisation resulting as important factors to create both engagement and results for the target group.

In some cases, however, commitment remained low. Participation in holistic programmes, offering multiple support in a structured context seems to work best. Covid-19 situation brings more challenges, causing, in some cases, reluctance to participate online (where activities were implemented online) and lower motivation.

Overall, at least 65% of participants have finished the planned intervention in all countries.

Evaluation of motivation / engagement strategies for employers

Evaluated as effective in Greece and Spain, as ineffective in Italy, depending on the extent of strategies used and on partnerships created. Building on already established collaborations made employers' involvement easier, whereas in cases where such relationships were not already present, engaging employers has proved challenging.

Strategies evaluated as most effective were those involving a structured plan, with clear objectives and / or requiring employers' commitment, e.g. designing a project together, adapted both in the company's and in beneficiaries' needs. Using agreements to translate intentions into real actions also worked well, although they often create further delays due to companies' legal departments' involvement.

More solid arguments and sensitization strategies to engage companies might be needed in some cases and definitely time constraints have heavily impacted employers' involvement, as partnerships with employers need time to build and bring results. Covid-19 situation and consequences in labour market further hinder employers' involvement, as some are hesitant to participate when they cannot offer employment.



Involvement of public bodies to enhance incentives for companies to participate and financial incentives to companies to hire low skilled over 45 people have been suggested as possible factors to increase employers' engagement.

Evaluation of tools for counsellors

Evaluated as effective in Greece and Spain, rather neutrally in Italy. They proved to be useful especially in terms of creating self-awareness to the target population and the realisation of the need to update their skills and competences. In some cases, counsellors using them found them flexible to be adapted for use according to participants' individual circumstances. Language has proved difficult in some cases and there were suggestions for the tools to be adapted to be used online. Some counsellors in Spain mentioned that some tools could have been more innovative, as there were participants already familiar with the ones presented.

Evaluation of tools for trainers

Evaluated as effective in Greece, Spain and Bulgaria, neutrally or as ineffective in Italy. They overall worked well and encouraged active participation. In Italy, they also worked well, but they might not have been very suitable for involved participants. The tools proved to be flexible, as they could be adapted to meet the time constraints and still achieve their intended results. Challenges mentioned, in the cases of online use, were mainly related to participants' lacking of digital skills. There were some suggestions to include videos and role playing in the material, different scenarios per employment sector and be more precise in the description of some activities (e.g. instead of referring to "people" to refer to the specific job status "employed / unemployed", depending on the case).

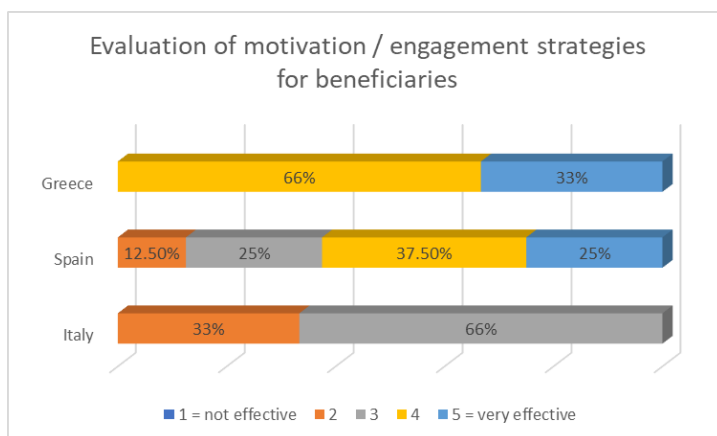


Figure 3: Evaluation of motivation / engagement strategies for beneficiaries

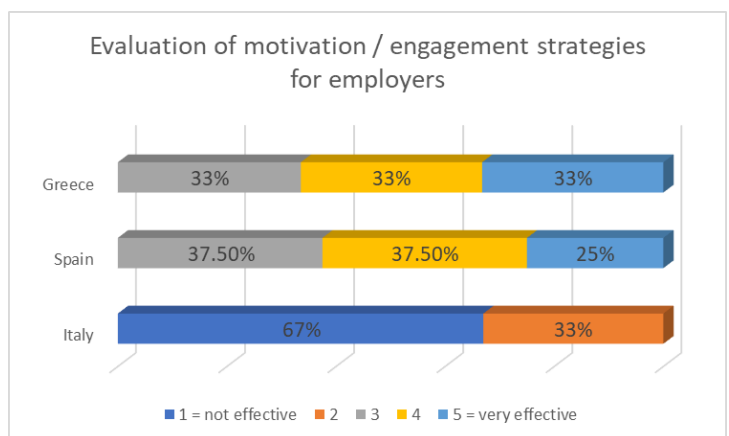


Figure 4: Evaluation of motivation / engagement strategies for employers

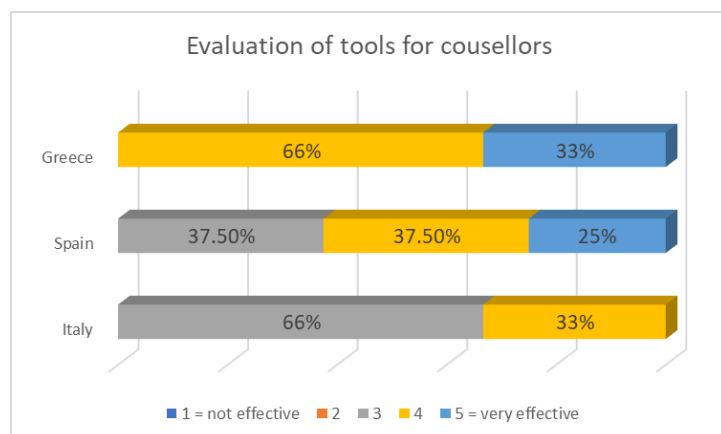


Figure 5: Evaluation of tools for counsellors

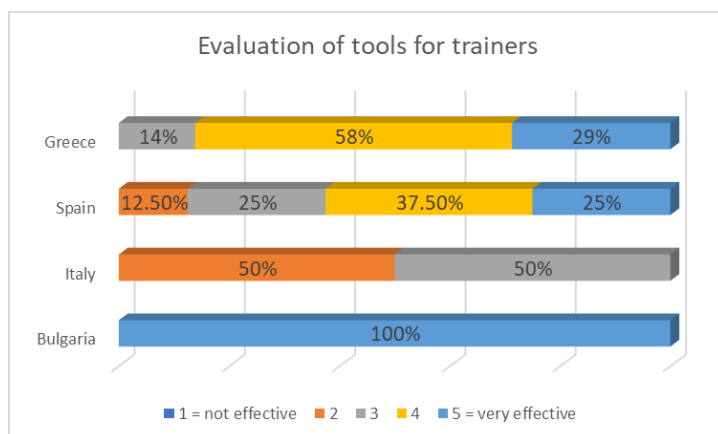


Figure 6: Evaluation of tools for trainers

Evaluation of the collaboration framework

Overall

Evaluated as effective in producing its intended results, i.e. establish collaborations among training providers, employers and CSOs in order to motivate adults 45 to participate in trainings which are close to the labour market needs, by all stakeholders involved in Greece, Spain and Bulgaria, neutrally or as ineffective in Italy. The particular circumstances relating to the collaboration scheme tested in Italy (beneficiaries with multiple vulnerabilities, limited employers' involvement) seem to have played a decisive role in terms of the framework's effectiveness in delivering the intended results.

% of respondents evaluating the collaboration framework as effective (% of respondents scoring 4 or 5 in a scale 1=not effective – 5=very effective)			
Greece	Spain	Italy	Bulgaria
Counsellors: 100%	Counsellors: 63%	Counsellors: 0% (33% neutral)	Counsellors: N/A
Trainers: 100%	Trainers: 100%	Trainers: 50% (50% neutral)	Trainers: 100%
Employers: 83%	Employers: 66%	Employers: N/A	Employers: N/A

Figure 7: % of respondents evaluating the collaboration framework as effective

As most effective aspects of the framework have been mentioned:

- The collaboration with employers / networking activities / activities implemented in collaboration with employers
- The empowering element / the individualised support for beneficiaries, creating training paths, building trust and deconstructing age-limiting beliefs
- The practice-based approach, which seems to work better with the target group



Assessment of the impact of the collaboration schemes created on participants

In Greece and Spain, the impact that the project had on low skilled adults over 45 years old participating in the activities, seems to build on two axis:

- A. **Positive impact on participants' employability profile** in terms of acquiring skills and knowledge on the field(s) trained and on the overall functioning of the labour market, thus increasing their job readiness and their possibilities to find a job.
- B. **Participants' overall empowerment and indications of change in their attitudes and behaviour.** This could be understood as an increase in their self-awareness / self-confidence / self-esteem and goal setting, a more positive and active attitude towards job search and a more positive attitude towards training but, in some cases, it can also be extended to overall increase in motivation, confidence in their skills, positive attitude and improved situation in their family or environment.

Additionally, the project has contributed in **30% of participants finding a job in Spain and 40% of participants finding a job in Greece.**

In Italy, the project seems to have had a **positive impact** on participants **in terms of acquiring knowledge and skills on the field trained** and on their **overall empowerment, motivation and personal development.** However, this is not directly perceived as improvement in their employability profile nor in their situation in the labour market. This seems to be related with the low levels of employers' participation in the pilot activities, the difficult connection of the training paths selected with the labour market and the personal circumstances of the participants.

In Bulgaria, the pilot testing activities for unemployed low skilled adults over 45 years old included (by design) only training activities, using the experiential training material developed in the context of the project, thus the impact on participants is expected to be more limited. Still, it seems that the scheme created has achieved some impact on participants, in the sense that they participated in a training corresponding to their professional needs, gaining sufficient knowledge of the topic (98% of respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement), which they will use to fulfil related professional tasks (85% agree or strongly agree) and which will help them in the process to find employment (98% agree or strongly agree).

Some selected indicators showing the project's impact on participants, are shown in figures 8-9 below. More details are contained in country-specific chapters of this report.

% of respondents who agree / strongly agree with the statements			
	Greece	Spain	Italy
The project can help me in the process to find a job	76%	100%	40%
The project has an impact on my personal development, beyond the professional dimension	80%	100%	60%
After my participation in the project, I feel more willing to participate in similar projects in the future	95%	95%	100%
After my participation in the project, I feel more willing to seek training opportunities to upgrade my skills	80%	95%	40%

Figure 8: % of respondents who agree / strongly agree with the statements

Positive empowerment indicators (% of respondents scoring 4 or 5 in a scale 1=not at all – 5=to a great extent)			
	Greece	Spain	Italy
To what extent your participation in the project has improved your situation in the labour market?	58%	63%	40%
To what extent you feel more motivated, more confident in your skills and have a more positive attitude after participating in the project?	62%	84%	80%
To what extent your participation in the project improved the situation in of your family or environment?	71%	63%	20%

Figure 9: Empowerment indicators

Assessment of the impact of the project outputs on other stakeholders

Through the feedback received in the pilot testing phase of the project, there are some indications that the proposed collaboration framework and tools had an impact on other stakeholders participating in the pilot test, which seems to build on the following axis:

- A. **It has provided counsellors, employers and trainers with useful tools and material, which the majority of the evaluation questionnaires' respondents state that they will continue to use in the future** (see also table below)



% of respondents likely to use the project's outputs in the future (% of respondents scoring 4 or 5 in a scale 1=not likely at all – 5=Very likely in the following statements)				
	Greece	Spain	Italy	Bulgaria
% of counsellors likely to use the proposed tools for unemployed low skilled adults over 45 y.o. in the future	100%	62.5%	100%	N/A
% of counsellors likely to use the proposed strategies for employers in the future	100%	62.5%	66%	N/A
% of trainers likely to use the proposed tools in the future	86%	62.5%	0% (100% answered neutrally)	100%
% of employers likely to use the proposed tools in the future	66%			

Figure 10: Possibility to use the project's outputs in the future

- B. It has enhanced counsellors' and trainers' knowledge on the target group and has improved their understanding of the target group needs. In some cases changes in perceptions have been also reported.
- C. **It has encouraged the creation of partnerships and collaborations with different stakeholders:** 40 collaboration agreements have been signed in the context of the pilot testing activities, while the majority of stakeholders responding the evaluation questionnaire state that they are likely to participate in a similar project in the future. (see also table below)

More importantly, in some cases, **project partners report that the project has led to the initiation of collaborations with different stakeholders not only in the context of the project, but also beyond.** For example, AAH has been asked to share some of the project tools with other NGOs and INE GSEE reports that **they have been contacted by stakeholders in two regions in Greece who were interested in initiating procedures in re-skilling / re-integrating adults over 45 years in the labour market.**

% of respondents likely to participate in a similar scheme in the future (% of respondents scoring 4 or 5 in a scale 1=not likely at all – 5=Very likely in the following statements)				
	Greece	Spain	Italy	Bulgaria
% of employers likely to participate in a similar project in the future	83%	100%	N/A	N/A
% of trainers likely to participate in a similar project in the future	86%	100%	100%	100%

Figure 11: Possibility to use the project's outputs in the future



4 Main conclusions / recommendations

In Greece and Spain, the collaboration framework and all relevant tools and strategies created by the project have been evaluated as relevant and effective in producing their intended results by all stakeholders involved in the pilot process, while all elements of the methodology used (individual sessions, trainings, contact with employers) have been evaluated positively by the people participating in the activities.

In this context, it has been shown that in Greece and Spain the project had positive results on participants' employability profile (a) in terms of acquiring skills and knowledge on the field trained, (b) in participants' overall empowerment, improving self-awareness / self-confidence, also achieving change in attitudes towards training and job search. In some cases, the empowerment achieved goes beyond employability and can be extended to overall increase in motivation, confidence in their skills, positive attitude and improved situation in their family or environment.

In Italy, the effectiveness of the framework was evaluated less positively, as the scheme created did not succeed to effectively engage employers nor to substantially improve participants' employability profile (which seems to relate to the fact that employers' involvement was marginal). Even in this case, participants did feel empowered and were definitely satisfied by the process. Participants' profile and circumstances (mainly people with multiple vulnerabilities), must have also played a role in results being more difficult to be achieved.

In Bulgaria the scheme created involved, by design, trainings for the target group to test the experiential training material created by the project. In this perspective, the collaboration framework foreseen by the project and the tools created were evaluated as effective in producing its intended results by the trainers participating in the scheme, while both trainers and participants, i.e. the target population (low skilled adults over 45 years old), seem to be very satisfied by their participation in the project. Results have been achieved for participants in the scale anticipated.

It seems that the project had also an impact on other stakeholders participating in the pilot test, in terms of (a) providing useful material which they will continue to use in the future, (b) enhancing counsellors' and trainers' knowledge on the target group and improving their understanding of the target group needs, (c) encouraging the creation of partnerships and collaborations among different stakeholders not only in the context of the project, but also beyond in some cases. For example, AAH has been asked to share some of the project tools with other NGOs and INE GSEE reports that they have been contacted by stakeholders in two regions in Greece who were interested in initiating procedures in re-skilling / re-integrating adults over 45 years in the labour market.

Time constraints seem to have impacted the pilot testing to some extent, by:

- (a) limiting the time available to support participants both through individual sessions and through trainings
- (b) limiting the creation of partnerships with employers or the level of employers' involvement, since partnerships need time to build and bring results.



Covid-19 situation seems to have also impacted the pilot testing to some extent, by:

- (a) causing reluctance for some companies to engage due to Covid-19 consequences in the labour market,
- (b) creating challenges related to the online implementation of activities, which, combined with the lack of participants' digital skills, did not facilitate interaction

On the basis of the above, we can conclude that **the collaboration framework proposed by the project indeed produces results**. However, those highly depend on the collaboration scheme created and **employers' involvement remains critical for the scheme to be effective**.

Other positive aspects of the collaboration framework, as evaluated through the pilot test, that would be good to be included in future schemes include:

- **The empowerment aspect, the practical / experiential aspect of the trainings** (together with the contact with employers already mentioned), which seem to be the most important elements both in increasing motivation and commitment and in producing results for the target group
- **Work in groups / peer support / the socialization element**, which also seem also to produce results, increasing motivation, willingness to participate and commitment, more than originally anticipated
- It seems that results for participants are more important when they take part in more **structured activities with a longer duration**
- Exposure in multiple motivation / engagement strategies increases commitment and engagement both for participants and for employers

Engaging employers in the schemes remains challenging in all countries and needs time to produce results. More solid arguments and sensitization strategies to engage companies might be needed, but the limited time available for the pilot test seems to have been the most important factor, which impeded the creation of (more) fruitful partnerships in some cases.

Involvement of public bodies and/or financial incentives to companies might increase their willingness to participate and overall schemes' effectiveness.

Using the project's collaboration framework as a starting point, national / specific context arrangements might be needed for the framework to be more effective, at least in some contexts.

The collaboration framework and tools proposed by the project, might not be suitable for people of specific profiles, e.g. people with multiple vulnerabilities, thus a future expansion of the material could include tools and methods designed specifically for this population.

Suggestions received for improvements or future expansion of the suggested material:

- Need to adapt the tools for counsellors to be used online



- Need to simplify some tools, so that they are more easily understood by participants (e.g. non-native speakers, people with low literacy skills), and, in some cases, include more innovative tools, as some participants were already familiar with the presented ones
- Suggestion to include videos and role playing in the material for trainers
- Suggestion to include different scenarios per employment sector in the case studies and be more precise in the description of some activities (e.g. instead of referring to “people” to refer to the specific job status “employed / unemployed”, depending on the case)



5 The pilot test in Greece

5.1 Summary of activities

In Greece, Act 45 pilot has been implemented through ActionAid Center in Athens in the period March-July 2021. Outreach activities took place to identify people already participating in the center's activities matching the profile targeted by the project and invite new people to participate. In this context, 8 organisations have been contacted to refer people who potentially would be interested in participating in the project. Additionally, 18 stakeholders in total (CSOs, training providers and employers) have been invited to participate in the scheme.

Following the suggested methodology, the pilot testing activities for unemployed low skilled adults over 45 years old included:

Individual sessions: 3 individual counselling sessions with each participant on average. 127 individual sessions held in total.

Training: Soft skills' training activities through the counsellors in charge of the program and through external trainers, including Act45 partner INE GSEE. Hard skills trainings through experts in the respective field. Training topics mainly included: training on job related skills (work efficiency, communication, adaptability, problem solving, stress management), training on labour market issues (recruitment practices, tips for successful self-presentation), and hard-skills training (digital skills, Greek language courses).

Contact with employers: This has been done mostly through:

- A holistic programme designed together with a major Greek retail company, providing training on soft and digital skills, individualized and group counselling and on the job training / job placement, in which 6 women participated
- Workshops implemented by employers, focusing on recruitment processes, interview practices and specific job-related skills, depending on the case
- A job fair addressed to all the people who have participated and didn't have the chance to meet employers in the process, where people had the chance to interact with employers and hold job interviews.

68% of the pilot participants have participated at least in one activity with employers.

Most activities were implemented online, but some training activities were implemented face-to-face, depending on the case.

Overall:

- 18 stakeholders invited
- 127 individualized counseling sessions
- 40 people participating
- 13 agreements signed with stakeholders



- 3 counsellors participating
- 18 people offering trainings (including employers offering trainings) participating

5.2 Participants' profile

73% of the participants were women, of all ages between 45 and 64 years old. The prevailing age range was 45-49 years old, but people of all ages participated (please refer to charts below for details). The profile of the participants responding the survey, which feeds the main results on participants drawn in this report, broadly shares the same characteristics: 75% women, 38% in the age range 45-49 years old, 41% 50-59 years old, 21% older. It is worth mentioning that 71% of the respondents in the evaluation questionnaire notice that they had not participated in trainings in the last 5 years.

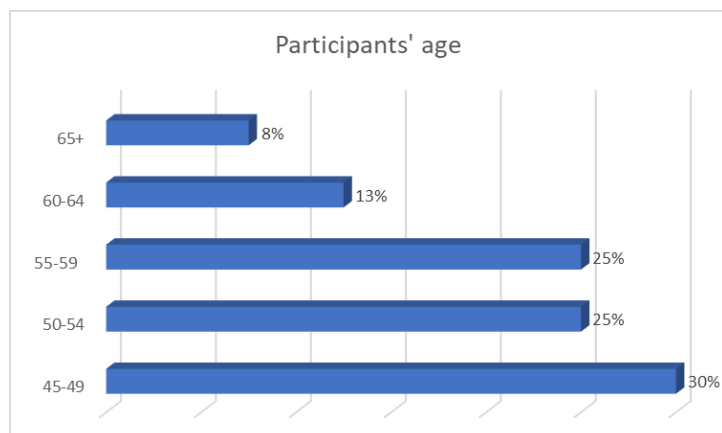


Figure 12: Greece – participants' age

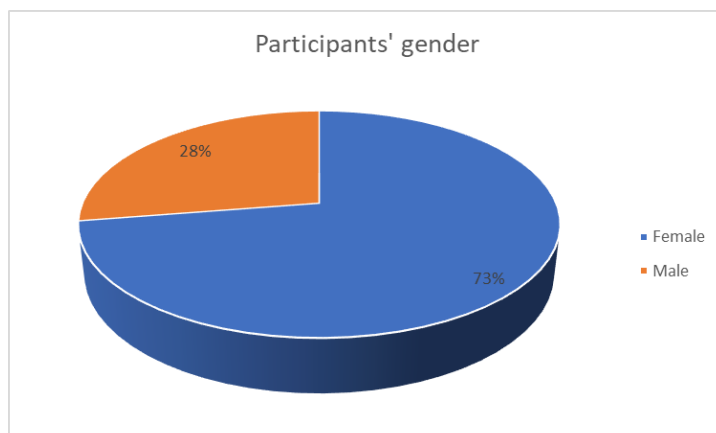


Figure 13: Greece – Participants' gender



Figure 14: Greece – Participation in trainings in the previous 5 years



5.3 Evaluation of key project activities by participants

5.3.1 Individual sessions

Individual sessions were evaluated very positively by participants, highlighting the impact they have on their motivation but also as a key to explore new professional opportunities: **87% of the respondents in the relevant questionnaire noticed that individual sessions helped them to a large extent (65% scored 5/5 and 22% scored 4/5²).**

The empowerment element and the holistic support received, were highlighted as the most useful aspects of the individual sessions. Through this process, participants seem to be able to re-evaluate their skills and possibilities, explore different employment options and increase their motivation. The information received on the labour market and on different opportunities available, as well as the human contact aspect were also highlighted as very important.

On their own words:

[the most useful aspects of individual sessions] *"They helped me understand how things work these days. I can now see things through a different perspective. We went into many details. They are interested to the person in a holistic way."* (participant, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for participants)

[the most useful aspects of individual sessions] *"The information I received and the human contact"* (participant, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for participants)

[the most useful aspects of individual sessions] *"Locating & Recognizing my skills, motivation and orientation, participation in workshops, CV writing."* (participant, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for participants)

[the most useful aspects of individual sessions] *"EVERYTHING WAS PERFECT. Mainly the psychological part, we worked on"*, (participant, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for participants)

[the most useful aspects of individual sessions] *"Being able to figure out new employment opportunities from now on"* (participant, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for participants)

5.3.2 Trainings

Group and training sessions were evaluated positively by participants, both in terms of organisation, tools and methods used and in terms of content, correspondence to needs and results achieved in strengthening participants' employability profile. It is worth mentioning that the majority of respondents stated that the trainings were relevant to their professional needs and that, after the trainings, they will be able to build on the knowledge gained to find a job and fulfil related professional tasks.

In particular:

² In a scale 1-5 where 1=not at all, 5 = to a great extent



- Regarding organisation, tools and methods used: At least 82% of respondents agree or strongly agree that the seminar was well organised, that the facilitator met the requirements of the thematic area and that the tools and methods used were appropriate. 75% agree or strongly agree that the pace of the trainings were appropriate and 65% that the length of the trainings was appropriate. This last percentage, although it remains high, seems to reflect the view expressed that it might have been good for some trainings to last longer. (please refer to figure 15 for details)
- Regarding content, correspondence to needs and results achieved:
 - At least 70% of respondents agree or strongly agree that the content of the seminar was appropriate for their needs, that they gained sufficient knowledge on the topic, that they will use the knowledge gained to fulfil related professional tasks and that the training will help them in the process to find employment (please refer to figure 16 for details)
 - 67% of respondents state that the trainings corresponded to their professional needs.

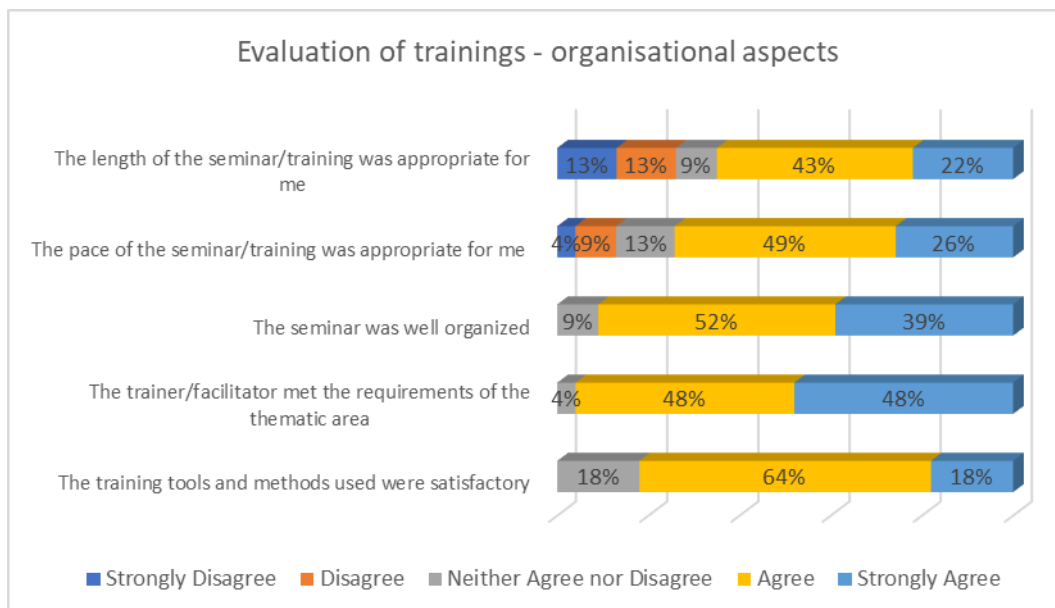


Figure 15: Greece – Evaluation of trainings: organisational aspects

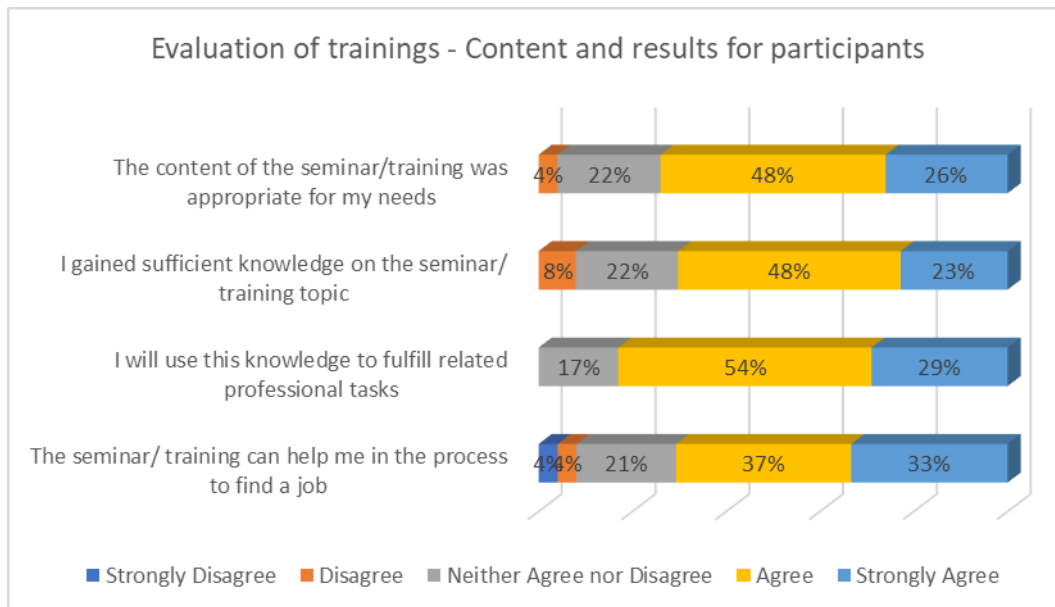


Figure 16: Greece – Evaluation of trainings: Content and results for participants

5.3.3 Contact with employers

Contact with employers has been highlighted as one of the most important motivation factors for people to participate in the collaboration schemes both by project teams (counsellors, trainers) and by participants.

The extent to which the contact with employers proves to be useful, seems to relate to the kind of contact taking place and whether the expected result, i.e. finding a job, has been achieved. Most of the respondents (61%) found the contact with employers useful, 23% evaluated it neutrally and 15% negatively.

5.4 Evaluation of motivation / engagement strategies for participants

The partnership tested motivation / engagement strategies such as:

- Personalized guidance and skills audit
- Trainings designed by professionals of the labor market targeted to the labor market needs
- Direct networking with companies at the end of the trainings
- Practice based approach, through participatory and experiential methods, which is evident already from the info session
- Provision on information on existing training opportunities
- Learning outcomes recognition through certifications
- Use of distance learning methods to ensure flexibility



All three counsellors participating in the project evaluate the motivation / engagement strategies used as effective³.

All three counsellors participating in the project state that they will definitely use the proposed strategies / tools in the future. All three counsellors assess the requirements and factors affecting participation of unemployed low-skilled adults over 45 years old in training, as defined in IO1, as accurate.

However, in some cases, engagement remained low. Overall, 65% of project participants finished the planned intervention.

Strategies evaluated as most effective

The strategies evaluated as most effective were those involving direct contact with employers and activities designed by employers, requiring their active involvement, i.e. activities directly linked to employment highly increased participation / engagement. Individualised support, the practice-based approach and trainings in groups which can potentially create group dynamics with peer support and socialization, were also mentioned as important in increasing engagement for the target group.

The importance of the strategies mentioned above as motivators for participation is re-confirmed by the project participants, stating as main incentives for participation in the project: to find a job / increase their possibilities to find a job (92%), having direct contact with employers (42%), the need to learn new things (60%) and the need to meet other people and improve their social network (42%).

Challenges / suggestions

Lack of participants' engagement has been a challenge for the pilot test implementation in some cases. Finding available trainings close to participants' needs or designing such trainings in collaboration with employers seems to increase motivation and engagement, however, this is not an easy process, as partnerships need time to build and bring results.

The period in which activities were implemented (many activities implemented during the summer months, where attendance rates traditionally drop) and pandemic restrictions leading to the online delivery of a substantial part of the activities, also created challenges, as there were people reluctant to participate, due to the period of implementation or the lack of digital skills.

Further counselling support, more time and better timing have been suggested as possible solutions to overcome such challenges.

"I don't think that there were strategies missing from the framework. I would like to have developed more collaborations with employers, so that we can suggest more activities to the participants, which was not possible, due to: 1. pandemic restrictions (participants were more receptive to participate in programs face-to-face as they are not familiar with technology), 2. limited time (building partnerships is a process that takes

³ Based on answers in the evaluation questionnaire: % of respondents evaluating the strategies used with 4 or 5 in a scale 1 = not effective to 5 = very effective.



time and requires building of trust and a good timing so that the needs of the company coincide with our proposals)” (counsellor, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for counsellors)

5.5 Evaluation of motivation / engagement strategies for employers

The strategies to engage and involve companies and potential employers mainly included:

- The designation of a specific focal point, in charge of canalizing all actions conducted with employers, to invite them to participate in the different project actions, etc.
- The organization of meetings and cooperation opportunities
- The creation of an engagement strategy plan presenting all the benefits for the employers and translating intent into action by signing partnership agreements
- The development of transformational partnerships- adapt to employer’s motivations and together create new projects or collaborations

Overall, 2/3 counsellors⁴ evaluated the motivation strategies for employers as effective, while one evaluated them as neither effective nor ineffective.

All three counsellors stated that they are likely or very likely to use the proposed strategies in the future.

All respondents stated that is likely to use the proposed strategies in the future.

Strategies evaluated as most effective

The strategies evaluated as most effective were those involving a structured plan, with clear objectives, requiring employers’ commitment, e.g. designing a project together, adapted both in the company’s and in participants’ needs.

“The strategies that worked best were those requiring more involvement of employers in the project. We noticed that with AB, for example, with whom we implemented a 2-month program with computer training, counselling and on-the-job training, we built a very close cooperation, necessary for the effective outcome of the project and we were in contact almost on a daily basis. As a result of this collaboration, a second programme was designed and implemented, which is still in progress and seems to have very good outcomes” (counsellor, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for counsellors)

Challenges / Suggestions

As mentioned above, time constraints and timing seem to have impacted employers’ involvement, as partnerships with employers need time to build and bring results, while building on already established collaborations made employers’ involvement easier.

⁴ Based on answers in the evaluation questionnaire for counsellors: % of respondents evaluating the strategies used with 4 or 5 in a scale 1 = not effective to 5 = very effective.



Another inhibiting factor for employers' commitment seemed to be the need to sign written agreements, which made necessary the involvement of the companies' legal departments, creating delays.

Offering financial incentives for companies to hire low skilled over 45 people has been suggested as a possible factor to increase employers' engagement.

5.6 Evaluation of tools for counsellors

Tools for counsellors tested during the pilot:

A. For Individualized sessions

Employment history
Counselling process calendar
Professional Interests
Opportunities for career development
Working conditions
Skills and competencies
Values
Personality self-report questionnaire
Constraints
The wheel
Identify network and allies
Interview with expert
Decision making
Professional goal definition
6 thinking hats
Personal action plan
Balancing personal and professional life

B. For Group sessions

Job search methods self-questionnaire
Job search record

C. For organization and management of training

Recruitment process
English Language
Internet skills
Soft skills
Training assessment template
Evaluation cards
Final assessment

D. For educational activities



Case studies

All counsellors agreed that all tools worked well and provided useful information both for the participants' self-knowledge and for the identification of the need to update or develop their skills.

The employment history and the wheel were reported as working effectively in most of the cases. The tool "skills and competences" did not work well for one counsellor.

The language has proven difficult in some cases (e.g. non-native speakers, low literacy skills), but overall the tools have proven flexible and adaptable by the counsellors, if such need raised.

Overall, 100% of counsellors evaluated the tools used as effective and they all state that they will use them again in the future.

Suggestions for improvement involve adding a list of skills in the tool "skills and competences" and simplifying the language in some cases, although this could be done by the counsellor, if such need occurs.

"The tools should be used to support the counselling process, thus the counsellors should adapt them according to beneficiaries' needs, e.g. the "values questionnaire" is often difficult for people with low educational background or for non-native speakers, in this case, knowing the theoretical background on which the tool is based, I simplify the questions [and adapt the tool categories] [...] to have an idea of the priorities of the beneficiary. I believe that this tool, despite its difficulty, gives food for thought to the beneficiary and a lot of useful information to the consultant" (counsellor, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for counsellors)

5.7 Evaluation of tools for trainers

Tools for trainers tested during the pilot:

- Case study 1: Work efficiency
- Case study 4: Time management
- Case study 5: Problem solving
- Case study 6: Stress management
- Case study 7: Adaptability
- Case study 8: Analytical skills
- Case study 9: Interpersonal skills
- Case study 10: Team work
- Case study 11: Literacy skills
- Case study 12: Communication
- Case study 13: Decision making
- Case study 14: Work independently
- Case study 15: Willingness to learn

Overall, the feedback regarding the tools was positive and big challenges have not been reported.

86% of the respondents evaluated the tools as effective and 14% neither effective nor ineffective. Furthermore, 86% of respondents stated that it is likely to use the tools proposed by the project in the future.



86% of the respondents stated that they are very likely to use the proposed tools in the future.

Challenges / suggestions

Challenges mentioned related to the online implementation of some of the activities and mainly involved technical difficulties, either due to internet connection issues (e.g. delays) or due to lack of participants' digital skills and trainers' experience in remote education settings, but those were mostly overcome, the workshops were implemented satisfactorily and participants had the opportunity to share their experiences and communicate - raise concerns.

"The case studies have worked very well, as participants easily linked to the goal of the exercises. There were technical difficulties, due to the remote process and the limited experience of participants and trainers in online trainings." (trainer, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for trainers)

Some suggestions for improvement / future development of the material, included the addition of videos / role playing in the material, the creation of different scenarios per job sector and changing of wording / description for some activities, e.g. instead of referring to "people", to refer to specific status of employee / unemployed, depending on the context.

5.8 Evaluation of tools for employers

Tools tested during the pilot:

Job description (instructions and template)

Job interview evaluation (template)

Mock interview (guidelines)

Speed interview (instruction and tools)

Overall, the feedback regarding the tools was positive and challenges have not been reported.

83% of the respondents evaluated the tools as effective and 17% neither effective nor ineffective. Furthermore, 66% of respondents stated that they are likely or very likely to use the tools proposed by the project in the future.

5.9 Evaluation of the collaboration framework

5.9.1 Overall

The collaboration framework foreseen by the project establishing collaboration schemes among training providers, employers and CSOs in order to motivate low skilled adults over 45 years old to participate in trainings close to the labour market needs, was evaluated as effective in producing its intended results by all participants in the schemes created: counsellors, trainers and companies, while all participants, including the target population, i.e. low skilled adults over 45 years old, seem to be very satisfied by their participation in the project.

In more detail:



- 76% of unemployed low skilled adults participating in the project, 100% of trainers, 100% of counsellors and 100% of employers state that they are satisfied with their participation in the project
- 100% of counsellors, 100% of trainers and 83% of employers evaluate the proposed framework as effective in motivating adults 45 to participate in trainings which are close to the labour market needs

(please also refer to figures 17-18 below)

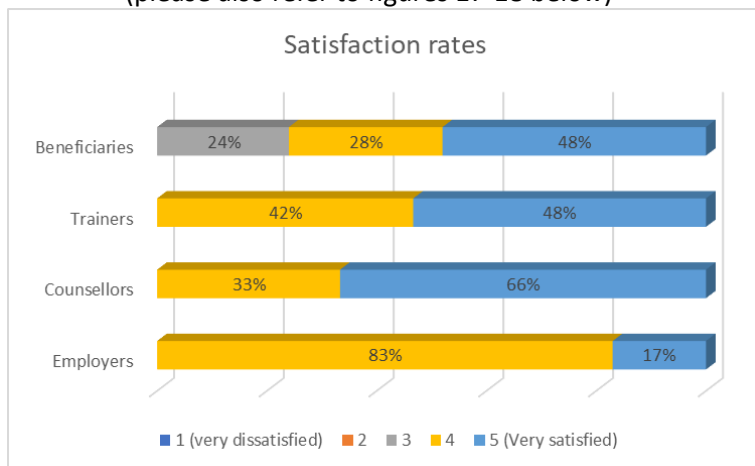


Figure 17: Greece – Satisfaction rates

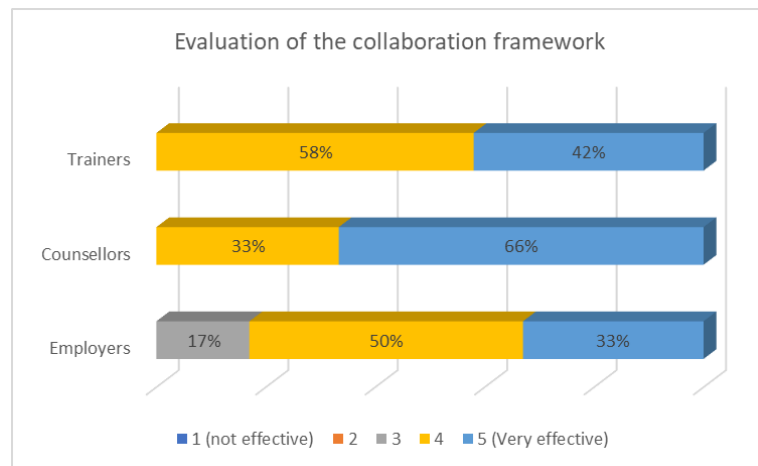


Figure 18: Greece – Evaluation of the collaboration framework

5.9.2 Most effective aspects of the framework

According to counsellors, the most effective aspects of the collaboration framework were (a) the collaboration with companies / potential employers and the relevant networking activities, as they created an important incentive for participation, also increasing motivation and engagement for participants and (b) the individualized support, building trust between participants and counsellors and finding solutions suitable for participants' needs. Furthermore, according to counsellors, it seems that results for participants are more important when they take part in more structured activities with a longer duration.

Individualised support leading to overall empowerment and knowledge of the current labour market together with the contact with employers seem to be very important parts of the framework, also for unemployed people over 45 years old participating in the project. Further contact with employers was mentioned as an additional request by some participants.

[suggestions for improvement] "We need to get to a point where we contact more employers. I had an interview but it did not succeed, I would like to have more." (participant, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for participants)

According to trainers, the creation of synergies is a very effective way for all parts to understand each others' needs and work together. The need for the trainings to be practical to suit the target group needs was



highlighted once again, while group dynamics / mutual support in the learning process and sharing of personal experiences were highlighted as a great motivator, achieving results for participants.

According to employers, the most effective aspect was the empowering element and the creation of opportunities for networking among candidates and companies, which in turn improves their employability possibilities.

5.9.3 Assessment of the impact of the collaboration schemes created on participants, i.e. low skilled adults over 45 years old

The impact that the project had on low skilled adults over 45 years old participating in the activities, seems to build on two axis:

- A. **Positive impact on participants' employability profile** in terms of acquiring skills and knowledge on the field(s) trained and on the overall functioning of the labour market, thus increasing their job readiness and their possibilities to find a job.

In this regard, according to unemployed low skilled adults over 45 years old responses:

- 71% of respondents claim that they gained sufficient knowledge on the seminar(s) / training(s) topic(s), through their participation in the project
- 83% of respondents state that they will use the knowledge acquired to fulfil related professional tasks
- 76% of respondents feel that their participation in the project will help them in the process to find a job
- 58% of respondents feel that their participation in the project has improved their situation in the labour market

(see also figure 19 for details)

- B. **Participants' overall empowerment and indications of change in their attitudes and behaviour.**

This could be understood as an increase in their self-awareness / self-confidence / self-esteem and goal setting, a more positive and active attitude towards job search and a more positive attitude towards training but, in some cases, it can also be extended to overall increase in motivation, confidence in their skills, positive attitude and improved situation in their family or environment.

In this regard, according to participants' responses:

- 80% of respondents state that the project had an impact on their personal development beyond the professional dimension
- 95% of respondents mention that after their participation in the project they feel more willing to participate in similar projects in the future.
- 80% of respondents mention that, after their participation in the project they feel more willing to seek training opportunities to upgrade their skills



- 62% of respondents feel more motivated, more confident in their skills and have a more positive attitude after participating in the project
- 71% of respondents feel that their participation in the project has improved the situation in their family or environment

(see also figures 20-21)

Additionally, the project has contributed in **40% of participants finding a job**.

The knowledge and skills acquired through the project leading to a positive impact on participants' employability profile, include the development of soft and hard skills, depending on the case, better understanding of the labour market and better understanding of job-related processes (CV writing, interviews, selection process).

Participants' overall empowerment, and increase in their self-esteem and self-confidence has proved to be the key element throughout of the project, contributing in producing results.

These results have been achieved through the whole range of activities, individual sessions, group sessions, trainings, contact with employers, all evaluated as useful and helpful by participants (see par. 5.3 for details).

Beyond the quantitative information presented above, self-confidence and self-knowledge, together with development of job-related skills, seem to be the most useful aspects mentioned by participants themselves:

[What was the most important thing you gained?] *"self-confidence and I learnt things on perceptions in a workplace and on how other people see us"* (participant, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for participants)

[What was the most important thing you gained?] *"I was supported psychologically and I received help in writing my CV"* (participant, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for participants)

This positive impact on participants on the levels of change described above, **is also confirmed by counsellors participating in the project**, although it is **still too early to draw definite conclusions**:

"yes, a more positive attitude towards education, especially when they participated in short trainings like those of digital skills. They also developed technical professional skills with "On the job training" which can be an asset and be used in other work environments too" (counsellor, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for counsellors)

"It is still too early to notice if there is any change in behaviour or perception to the participants. Nevertheless, we can see differences mainly in the beneficiaries that participated in activities with a longer duration and were exposed to multiple motivation / engagement strategies at the same time. [...] We observed differences in their self-confidence at the beginning and at the end of the project. Some of them realized that they could learn new things, that they could cope successfully with a demanding work environment, and that they could successfully deal with crisis situations or conflicts with colleagues. Others have realized that this is not the career path they want to follow, and they are now focusing other industries / professional sectors" (counsellor, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for counsellors)



Trainers and employers participating in the project, also mention some impact on participants noticed on their part, mainly involving the development of soft skills, digital skills, overall self-awareness and professional(re) orientation and indications of change in stance and attitudes towards training and professional integration.

“Mainly awareness of individual barriers to professional integration and increased effort to find alternatives” (trainer, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for trainers)

[I can see] “more positive attitude, consistency, cooperation” (trainer, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for trainers)

“In general yes, but always it needs work. One thing that impressed me is that they have developed self-awareness.” (trainer, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for trainers)

“For some people, the professional goals to aim for are not yet clear. Some people find it difficult to change established attitudes and behaviors,[...], for some participants, the workshops functioned in a way that “awakened” or even made them aware of the professional choices available for them”. (trainer, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for trainers)

“Judging from the people I met, a small percentage has developed some social skills which are important for an interview [...]”. (employer, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for employers)

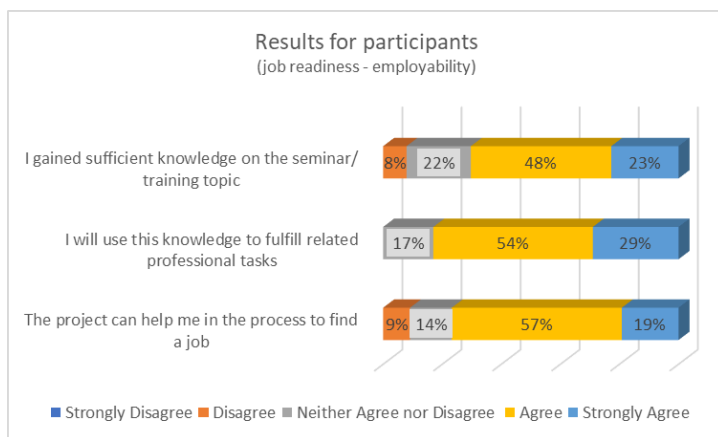


Figure 19: Greece - Results for participants – job readiness / employability

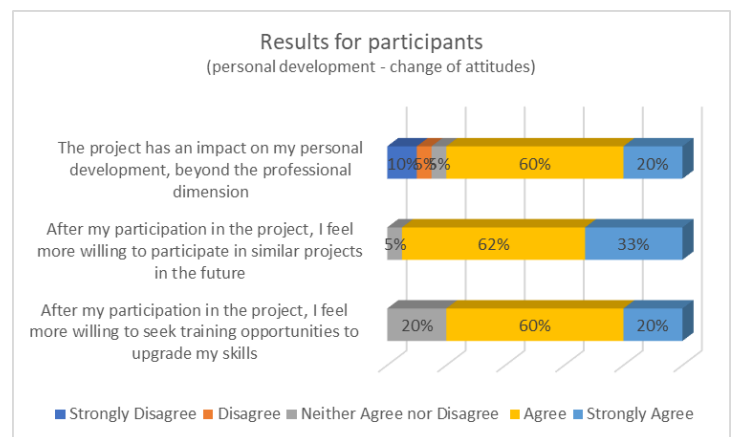


Figure 20: Greece - Results for participants – personal development / change of attitudes

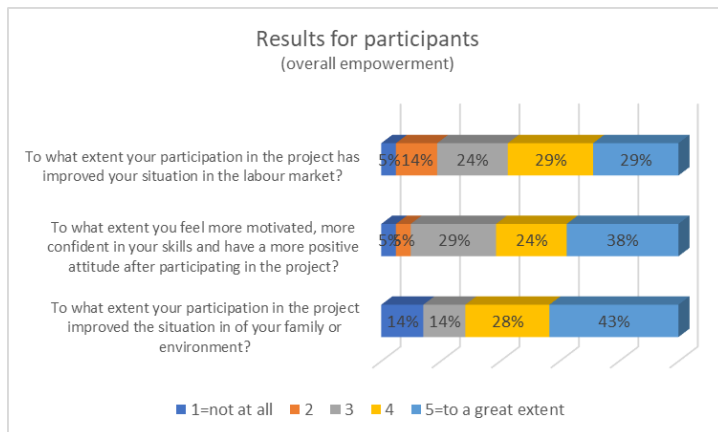


Figure 21: Greece - Results for participants – overall empowerment

5.9.4 Assessment of the impact of the project on other stakeholders participating in the pilot testing activities

Through the feedback received in the pilot testing phase of the project, there are some indications that the proposed collaboration framework and tools had an impact on other stakeholders participating in the pilot test, which seems to build on the following axis:

- A. **It has provided counsellors, employers and trainers with useful tools and material, which the majority of the evaluation questionnaires' respondents state that they will continue to use in the future** (see also table below)

"The strategies contained in the collaboration framework have been integrated in the daily practice of our employability services and we will use them to better support the beneficiaries we support" (counsellor, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for counselors)

Possibility to use the project's outputs in the future (% of respondents scoring 4 or 5 in a scale 1=not likely at all – 5=Very likely in the following statements)	
[counsellors] How likely are you to use the proposed tools for participants in the future?	100%
[counsellors] How likely are you to use the proposed strategies for employers in the future?	100%
[Employers] How likely are you to use the proposed tools in the future?	66%
[Trainers] How likely are you to use the proposed tools in the future?	86%

Figure 22: Possibility to use the project's outputs in the future



- B. It has enhanced counsellors and trainers knowledge on the target group and has improved their understanding of the target group needs. In some cases changes in perceptions have been also reported.

“Yes, it affected my perception but also my ability to work purposefully with people with this profile. I also have and have tried targeted tools for this population”. (counsellor, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for counselors)

“It gave me the opportunity to learn more about this target population both through the research process and through the activities we implemented.” (counsellor, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for counselors)

“It enhanced my ability to talk to people with positive scenarios and opportunities that until now were extremely limited”, (trainer, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for trainers)

- C. **It has encouraged the creation of partnerships and collaborations with different stakeholders:** 13 collaboration agreements have been signed in the context of the pilot testing activities, while the majority of stakeholders responding the evaluation questionnaire states that they are likely to participate in a similar project in the future. (see also table below)

More importantly, **project partners report that the project has led to the initiation of collaborations with different stakeholders not only in the context of the project, but also beyond.** For example, AAH has been asked to share some of the project tools with other NGOs and INE GSEE reports that **they have been contacted by stakeholders in two regions in Greece who were interested in initiating procedures in re-skilling / re-integrating adults over 45 years in the labour market.**

Possibility to participate in a collaboration scheme in the future (% of respondents scoring 4 or 5 in a scale 1=not likely at all – 5=Very likely in the following statements)	
[Employers] How likely are you to participate in a similar project in the future?	83%
[Trainers] How likely you to participate in a similar project in the future?	100%

Figure 23: Possibility to use the project's outputs in the future

5.10 Main conclusions / suggestions

The collaboration framework and all relevant tools and strategies created by the project have been evaluated as relevant and effective in producing their intended results by all stakeholders involved in the pilot process, while all elements of the methodology used (individual sessions, trainings, contact with employers) have been evaluated positively by the people participating in the activities.

It has been shown that the project had positive impact in participants' employability profile (a) in terms of acquiring skills and knowledge on the field trained, (b) in participants' overall empowerment, improving self-awareness / self-confidence, often achieving change in attitudes towards training and job search.



The individualized support, the empowering aspect, the practical / experiential aspect of the trainings and the active involvement of employers seem to be the most important elements both in increasing motivation and commitment and in producing results for the target group.

Work in groups / peer support / the socialization element, also seem to produce results, increasing motivation and willingness to participate, while it seems that results for participants are more important when they take part in more structured activities with a longer duration. Exposure in multiple motivation / engagement strategies increases commitment and engagement both for participants and for employers.

It seems that the proposed collaboration framework and tools had also an impact on other stakeholders participating in the pilot test, in terms of (a) providing useful material which they will continue to use in the future, (b) enhancing counsellors' and trainers' knowledge on the target group and improving their understanding of the target group needs, (c) encouraging the creation of partnerships and collaborations with different stakeholders not only in the context of the project, but also beyond.

Covid-19 situation seems to have impacted the pilot testing to some extent, creating reluctance on the part of some candidates to participate, due to lack of digital skills, but also creating technical difficulties, either due to internet connection issues (e.g. delays) or due to lack of participants' digital skills and trainers' experience in remote education settings.

Time restrictions and timing (activities taking place during the summer months) might have also impacted the pilot testing to some extent, by:

- (a) limiting the time available to support participants both through individual sessions and through trainings.
- (b) limiting the creation of partnerships with employers, which need time to build and bring results.
- (c) decreasing levels of participation, as attendance is traditionally lower during the summer months

Availability of financial incentives for companies to hire low skilled over 45 people, has been suggested as a possible factor to increase employers' engagement and thus overall schemes' effectiveness.

Regarding the material suggested by the project, overall suggestions for improvement or future expansion included:

- Need to simplify some tools, so that they are more easily understood by non-native speakers, people with low literacy skills (although the tools have been assessed as flexible and adaptable by the counsellors, if such need raised).
- Addition of videos / role playing in the case studies, creation of different scenarios per job sector and changing of wording / description for some activities, e.g. instead of referring to "people", to refer to specific status of employee / unemployed, depending on the context.



6 The pilot test in Spain

6.1 Summary of activities

In Spain, Act45 pilot was implemented from March to July 2021 through ACH's existing Vives Emplea programme, a six-month programme that aims to improve the employability profile of participants, working in groups, building on group dynamics, peer support and empowerment. The pilot was implemented in 10 different regions throughout the country and all activities were held virtually.

ACH started the project with wide dissemination of its Vives Emplea Program and organized two online sessions to explain to participating counsellors and stakeholders the piloting activities, introducing them to the project's methodology and tools. The dissemination of the Vives Emplea program in which the Act45 pilot actions are being carried, reached the interest of 504 unemployed people, out of whom 242 were over 45 years old. Everyone interested in participating is called to an interview, resulting in the selection of 40 persons to participate in the pilot actions in different regions.

In parallel, 94 different stakeholders – training providers, CSOs and employers had been invited to participate in the project, resulting in 16 collaborations made in total.

Following the suggested methodology, the pilot testing activities for unemployed low skilled adults over 45 years old included:

Individual sessions: 2 individual counselling sessions have been carried with each participant. 80 individual sessions held in total.

Training: Training activities through the counsellors in charge of the program and through external trainers. Internal trainers participated implementing the full project, and external trainers provided short training sessions on topics of their expertise, relevant to participants' needs. Training topics included: motivation and self-esteem, communication, entrepreneurial skills, personal branding and social networking, overcoming limiting beliefs, training on different job-hunting strategies: traditional (networking, job announcements etc.) and newer ways (managing personal brand and social networks), digital skills for employment, other employment-specific skills.

Contact with companies: This has been done mostly through workshops implemented by employers from companies, focusing on recruitment processes, interviews' practices, Job application processes and tools, training opportunities in emerging sectors and how to access, the importance of emotional wellbeing for finding and preserve a job.

85% of the pilot participants have participated at least in one activity with employers.

Overall:

- 242 participants invited
- 94 stakeholders invited
- 80 individualized counseling sessions



- 40 people participating
- 16 collaborations made
- 10 counsellors participating throughout the country
- 15 trainers
- 13 people from employers

6.2 Participants' profile

75% of the participants were women, of all ages between 45 and 64 years old. The prevailing age range was 50-54 years old (please refer to charts below for details). The profile of the participants responding the survey, which feeds the main results on participants drawn in this report, shares to an extent the same characteristics: 79% women, 26% in the age range 45-49 years old, 63% 50-59 years old, 11% older. It is worth mentioning that 47% of the respondents in the evaluation questionnaire notice that they had not participated in trainings in the last 5 years.

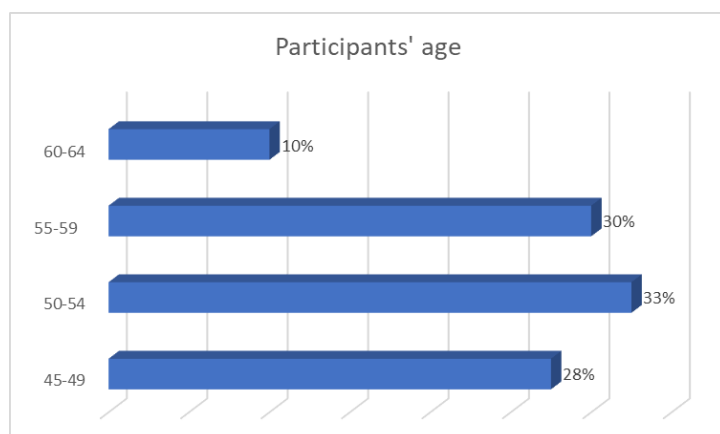


Figure 24: Spain – participants' age

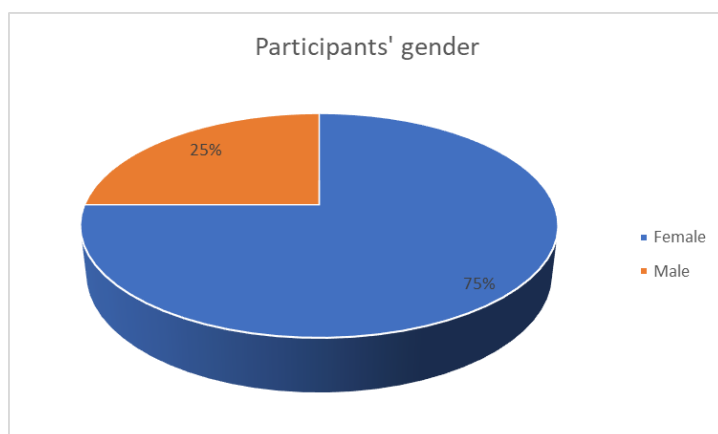


Figure 25: Spain – Participants' gender



Figure 26: Spain – Participation in trainings in the previous 5 years



6.3 Evaluation of key project activities by participants

6.3.1 Individual sessions

Individual sessions were evaluated very positively by participants, highlighting the impact they have on their motivation but also as a key to explore new professional opportunities: **100% of the respondents in the relevant questionnaire noticed that individual sessions helped them to a large extent (68% scored 5/5 and 32% scored 4/5⁵).**

Higher motivation, self-confidence and self-esteem are reported by almost all participants, as the most important results of individualized counseling. They believe that the individual sessions helped them consider more and wider professional options and to prepare well before a job interview. The most significant aspects that have been noted were the personalised job orientation, strengthening about the recruitment and interview processes (prepare well before a job interview, advice on how to write a CV), better self-knowledge with goal setting and informed decision making and personal skills' development, which resulted in increased self-esteem and higher motivation to keep learning and improve their employability profile.

On their own words:

[the most useful aspects of individual sessions] *"They have increased my personal and professional skills, strengthening my self-esteem and have provided me with tools that I did not know to achieve my goals"* (participant, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for participants)

[the most useful aspects of individual sessions] *"The orientation of my options, correction of mistakes, positive motivations, open range of possibilities and eagerness to excel"* (participant, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for participants)

[the most useful aspects of individual sessions] *"Personalized attention oriented me to increase my chances of finding a job."* (participant, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for participants)

[the most useful aspects of individual sessions] *"Knowing myself and knowing that I can do more things than I think I can"* (participant, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for participants)

[the most useful aspects of individual sessions] *"To feel that I can keep learning things"* (participant, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for participants)

6.3.2 Trainings

Group and training sessions were evaluated very highly by participants, both in terms of organisation, tools and methods used and in terms of content, correspondence to needs and results achieved in strengthening participants' employability profile. It is worth mentioning that the majority of respondents stated that the trainings were relevant to their professional needs and that, after the trainings, they will be able to build on the knowledge gained to either find a job or fulfil related professional tasks.

⁵ In a scale 1-5 where 1=not at all, 5 = to a great extent



In particular:

- Regarding organisation, tools and methods used: At least 79% of respondents agree or strongly agree that the length and pace of the trainings were appropriate, that the seminar was well organised, that the facilitator met the requirements of the thematic area and that the tools and methods used were appropriate (please refer to figure 27 for details)
- Regarding content, correspondence to needs and results achieved:
 - At least 89% of respondents agree or strongly agree that the content of the seminar was appropriate for their needs, that they gained sufficient knowledge on the topic, that they will use the knowledge gained to fulfil related professional tasks and that the training will help them in the process to find employment (please refer to figure 28 for details)
 - 84% of respondents state that the trainings corresponded to their professional needs.

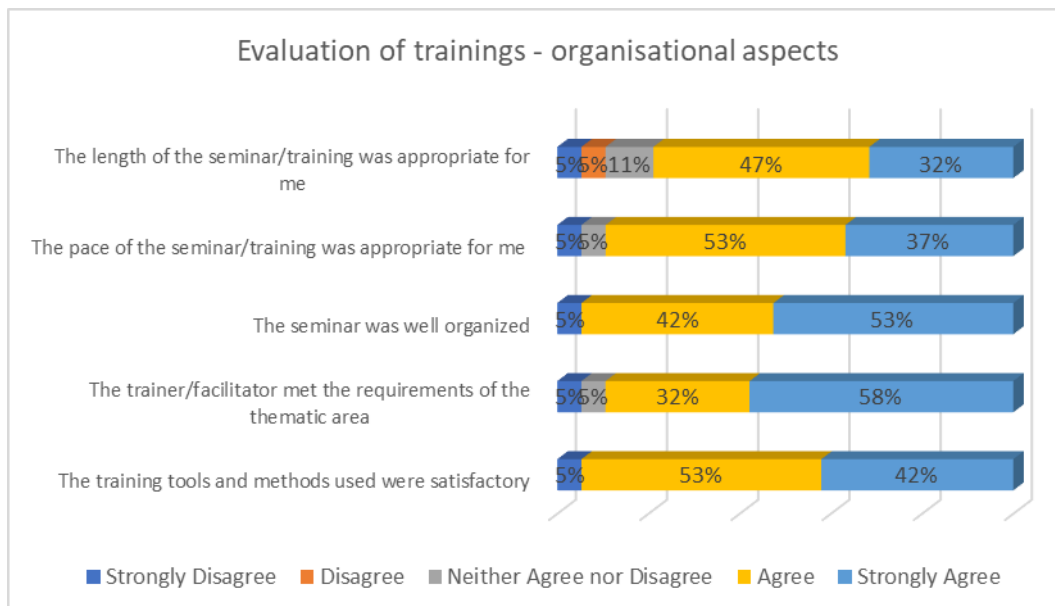


Figure 27: Spain – Evaluation of trainings: organisational aspects

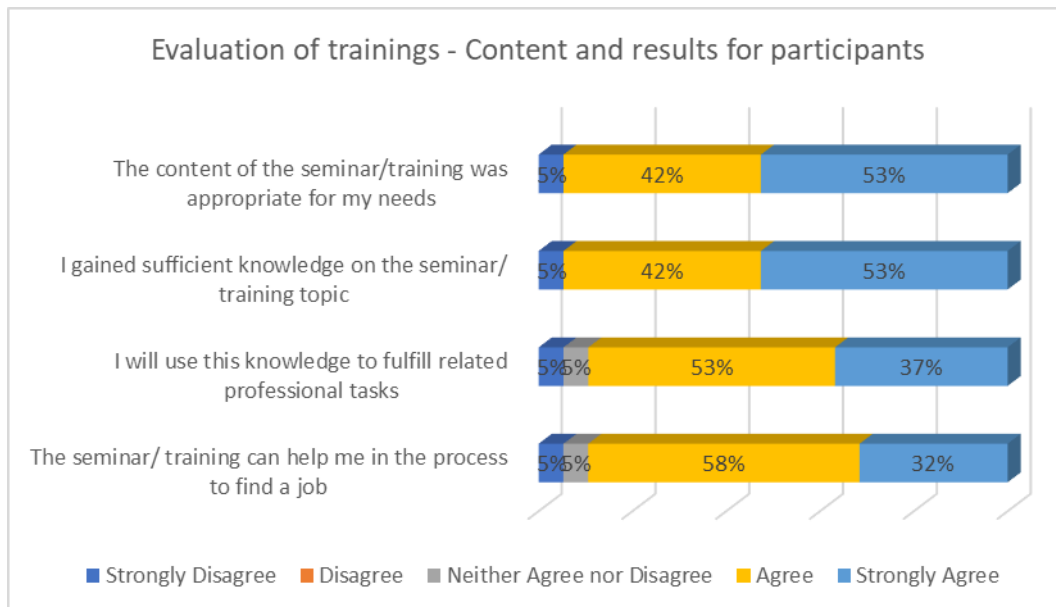


Figure 28: Spain – Evaluation of trainings: Content and results for participants

6.3.3 Contact with employers

Contact with employers has been highlighted as one of the most important motivation factors for people to participate in the collaboration schemes both by project teams (counsellors, trainers) and by participants.

The extent to which the contact with employers proves to be useful, seems to relate to the kind of contact taking place. Most of the respondents (58%) found this contact useful, 21% evaluated it neutrally and 21% negatively.

6.4 Evaluation of motivation / engagement strategies for participants

The partnership tested motivation / engagement strategies such as:

- Personalized guidance and skills audit
- Trainings designed by professionals of the labor market targeted to the labor market needs
- Direct networking with companies at the end of the trainings
- Practice based approach, through participatory and experiential methods, which is evident already from the info session
- Learning outcomes recognition through certifications
- Use of distance learning methods to ensure flexibility



Overall, 62.5% of the counsellors evaluate the motivation / engagement strategies used as effective⁶, while 25% evaluated them neutrally and 12.5% negatively. 75% assess the requirements and factors affecting participation of unemployed low-skilled adults over 45 years old in training, as defined in IO1, as accurate.

Contributing on the effectiveness of the strategies used, it is worth mentioning that 95% of project participants did finish the planned intervention.

Strategies evaluated as most effective

The motivation strategies evaluated as most effective were the fact that the project involved contact with employers, the fact that the activities were structured in a practice-based approach, as well as the inclusion of digital and professional skills building in the activities. Trainings in groups and the group dynamics which can potentially be created with peer support and socialization, were also mentioned as important in this regard.

“Knowing that some of the materials have been developed together with companies was highly motivating, as well as being in contact with them along the project.” (counsellor, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for counsellors)

“A theory-practice based approach, this was a great asset.” (counsellor, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for counsellors)

“Practice based approach were +45 can learn from their own progress.” (counsellor, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for counsellors)

“Providing digital skills development options was really appealing, especially when they will be building them together with other 25 people that can support them in achieving their goals.” (counsellor, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for counsellors)

“Combining competence-based training with more technical or specific skills.” (counsellor, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for counsellors)

The importance of the strategies mentioned above as motivators for participation is re-confirmed by the project participants, stating as main incentives for participation in the project: the increase of their possibilities to find a job (84%), having access to learning opportunities related to the labour market needs (79%), the need to learn new things (68%) and the need to meet other people and improve their social network (53%).

Challenges / suggestions

Most counsellors do not report significant challenges in reaching and engaging the target group.

⁶ Based on answers in the evaluation questionnaire: % of respondents evaluating the strategies used with 4 or 5 in a scale 1 = not effective to 5 = very effective.



However, some mention a challenge when they face the labour market as there are not as many opportunities for low skilled over 45 years old people as for younger groups and companies are still not very sensitized. It was also mentioned that some participants prefer participating in training opportunities where a job position is guaranteed after the training, thus job placements / on the job training could be effective for those cases.

The importance of companies' involvement and the design of activities adapted to participants' needs was highlighted again as an important factor to generate both motivation and commitment, as often it is hard to find patterns in the motivation factors and individualized and ad-hoc solutions or strategies might be needed.

"I believe that the visibility of the involvement of companies that offer employment and / or training to this group is essential to motivate them more and more to participate." (counsellor, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for counsellors)

"Provide job offers, more contacts with companies, provide training opportunities more adapted to their lack of digital skills." (counsellor, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for counsellors)

"Starting from their real needs, previously investigating and analyzing the needs of these people. We often make the mistake of designing and executing employment and training plans without "asking" the target people what they really need." (counsellor, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for counsellors)

"I consider it is important to work from the person and not towards the person, therefore it is necessary to implement motivation strategies created ad hoc according to the participant, the territory and taking into account the tools (in this case distance communication)." (counsellor, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for counsellors)

6.5 Evaluation of motivation / engagement strategies for employers

The strategies to engage and involve companies and potential employers mainly included:

- The designation of a specific focal point, in charge of canalizing all actions conducted with employers, to invite them to participate in the different project actions, etc.
- The organization of meetings and cooperation opportunities
- The creation of an engagement strategy plan presenting all the benefits for the employers and translating intent into action by signing partnership agreements

Overall, most of the counsellors (62,5 %⁷) evaluated the motivation strategies for employers as effective, while 37,5% evaluated them as neither effective nor ineffective.

Furthermore, 62,5% of the respondents stated that they are likely to use the proposed strategies in the future.

⁷ Based on answers in the evaluation questionnaire for counsellors: % of respondents evaluating the strategies used with 4 or 5 in a scale 1 = not effective to 5 = very effective.



Strategies evaluated as most effective

Creating opportunities to work together and establishing a structured plan with clear objectives regarding employers' involvement have been reported as strategies that work well. Using agreements has also been proven effective in working with employers towards a common goal, translating intentions in real actions.

Challenges / Suggestions

Building on already established collaborations made employers' involvement easier, thus in territories where previous relationships were not so strong, the most important challenge recognized was the limited time, which inhibited the creation of strong partnerships.

Covid-19 situation and consequences in labour market, create further challenges in engaging employers, as they are often hesitant to participate when they cannot offer employment:

"I think it has been more of a cyclical problem, with the COVID issue, the first thing they told us was that they were not going to be able to hire anyone. They were a little embarrassed to participate without being able to offer a real opportunity." (counsellor, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for counsellors)

More solid arguments and sensitization strategies to engage companies might be needed in some cases (e.g. *"A more defined and focused argument for companies [would be needed]"*)

6.6 Evaluation of tools for counsellors

Tools for counsellors tested during the pilot:

A. For Individualized sessions

- Employment history
- Professional Interests
- Working conditions
- Skills and competencies
- Transferable skills
- Values
- Constraints
- Identify network and allies
- Interview with expert
- Professional goal definition
- 6 thinking hats
- GROW model
- Personal action plan
- Balancing personal and professional life

B. For organization and management of training



Recruitment process
Soft skills
Training assessment template

C. For educational activities

Case studies

Overall, counsellors believe the tools provided by the project were useful, especially those regarding changing attitudes and beliefs towards learning opportunities. **62,5% of the respondents evaluated as effective the proposed tools**, 37,5% evaluated neither effective nor ineffective. In parallel. 62,5% of the respondents' stated that is likely to use the purposed strategies and tools in the future.

Tools evaluated as most effective

Tools considered as most effective were those on the practice on recruitment processes, on the exploration of participants' skills and competences and on changing attitudes and beliefs towards learning opportunities.

"I consider the tools very interesting for the exploration and evaluation of people's competencies [...]", (counsellor, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for counsellors)

Challenges / suggestions

The main challenges mentioned, related to Covid-19 situation, which led to all activities being implemented online, creating:

- The need to adapt the tools to be used online
- The need to simplify some tools, so that they are more easily understood by participants

"The tools are designed for face-to-face methodology and we are currently in telematic modality. Some of these tools are difficult to "convert" to online format." (counsellor, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for counsellors)

"They are too complicated to present to the participants, which has meant that I have had to simplify and adapt the explanation of the tools." (counsellor, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for counsellors)

Some counsellors also mentioned that the tools could have been more innovative, as some participants were already familiar with the presented ones.

Time restrictions were also mentioned, as obstacles in the overall results anticipated in the pilot:

[what could be improved / changed / developed] *"To be able to dedicate more time, especially to individual counseling, so that the participant can ground all the concepts, internalize them and apply them in their daily life and job search."* (counsellor, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for counsellors)



6.7 Evaluation of tools for trainers

This section involves feedback received by external trainers during the pilot. It is important to mention that, while all trainers worked in topics covered by the case studies (communication, adaptability, digital skills etc.) they not always did so with the use of the project tools, as they often prepare their trainings using their own materials. Thus, the results presented below, may not be always representative in terms of evaluating the project material.

Tools for trainers tested during the pilot:

- Case study 1: Work efficiency
- Case study 3: Digital skills
- Case study 4: Time management
- Case study 5: Problem solving
- Case study 6: Stress management
- Case study 7: Adaptability
- Case study 8: Analytical skills
- Case study 9: Interpersonal skills
- Case study 10: Team work
- Case study 11: Literacy skills
- Case study 12: Communication
- Case study 13: Decision making
- Case study 14: Work independently
- Case study 15: Willingness to learn

Overall, the feedback regarding the tools was positive and big challenges have not been reported.

62,5% of the respondents evaluated the tools as effective, 25% neither effective nor ineffective. Furthermore, 62% stated that it is likely to use the tools proposed by the project in the future.

Tools evaluated as most effective

The case studies 3 (digital skills) and 15 (lifelong learning) have been mentioned as the most relevant and effective.

Challenges / suggestions

Most significant challenges mentioned related to the online implementation of activities combined with the lack of participants' digital skills, which did not facilitate interaction, although participants' attitude was overall participatory and enthusiastic, easing the work greatly.

Most of the trainers did not mention any other challenge, but three people reported that having more time for training and delivering more sessions would be an asset for the integration of learning and could help participants develop trust and willingness to share and collaborate.

6.8 Evaluation of tools for employers

N/A. Employers participating in the pilot test mainly used their own tools.



6.9 Evaluation of the collaboration framework

6.9.1 Overall

The collaboration framework foreseen by the project establishing collaboration schemes among training providers, employers and CSOs in order to motivate low skilled adults over 45 years old to participate in trainings close to the labour market needs, was evaluated as effective in producing its intended results by all participants in the schemes created: counsellors, trainers and companies, while all participants, including the target population, i.e. low skilled adults over 45 years old, seem to be very satisfied by their participation in the project.

In more detail:

- 89% of unemployed low skilled adults participating in the project, 100% of trainers, 75% of counsellors and 100% of employers state that they are satisfied with their participation in the project
- 62.5% of counsellors, 100% of trainers and 67% of employers evaluate the proposed framework as effective in motivating adults 45 to participate in trainings which are close to the labour market needs

(please also refer to figures 29-30 below)



Figure 29: Spain – Satisfaction rates

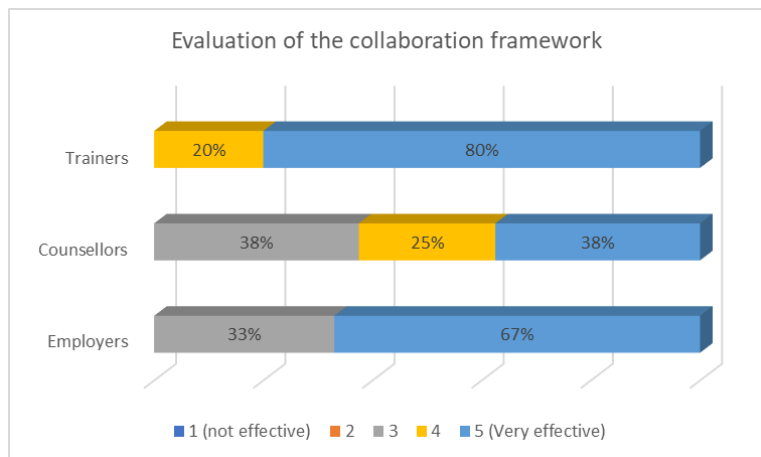


Figure 30: Spain – Evaluation of the collaboration framework

6.9.2 Most effective aspects of the framework

According to counsellors, the most effective aspects of the collaboration framework were (a) the collaboration with companies / potential employers and the relevant networking activities, as they created an important incentive for participation, also increasing motivation and engagement for participants and (b) the individualized support, increasing participants' self-confidence and – together with all project activities – deconstructing age-limiting beliefs. They highlighted the need of further creating interventions aiming at +45, while also mentioning that higher levels of employers' involvement would have further benefited the schemes created.



“A more effective work for the company and make real the possibility of practical [on the job] training, only then we will know if we are really on the right path.” (counsellor, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for counsellors)

Individualised support seems to be a very important part of the framework, also for unemployed people over 45 years old participating in the project, generating higher motivation levels, self-confidence and self-esteem (see next chapter for details). Higher levels of companies' involvement in the activities, with on the job trainings / job placements was mentioned as an additional request by some of the participants.

[suggestions for improvement] “As I have already indicated, the contact with public, semi-public companies and employment exchanges of the same.” (participant, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for participants)

According to trainers, the most important elements were the variety of learning topics: from entrepreneurial skills or job searching strategies to communication skills, personal branding, and emotional intelligence. The empowerment element was also pointed out as very effective, deconstructing the beliefs of not being able to learn after a certain age.

According to employers, the most effective aspects were the opportunity to give visibility to participants' CVs and make them aware of employment tools, the opportunity to make companies aware of the benefits of having balanced workforces in terms of age and experience and the individualized support, providing people over 45 years old with different career options suitable to their needs.

6.9.3 Impact on participants (low skilled adults over 45 years old)

The impact that the project had on low skilled adults over 45 years old participating in the activities, seems to build on two axis:

- A. **Positive impact on participants' employability profile** in terms of acquiring skills and knowledge on the field(s) trained and on the overall functioning of the labour market, thus increasing their job readiness and their possibilities to find a job.

In this regard, according to unemployed low skilled adults over 45 years old responses:

- 95% of respondents claim that they gained sufficient knowledge on the seminar(s) / training(s)' topic(s), through their participation in the project
- 89% of respondents state that they will use the knowledge acquired to fulfil related professional tasks
- 100% of respondents feel that their participation in the project will help them in the process to find a job
- 63% of respondents feel that their participation in the project has improved their situation in the labour market

(see also figure 31 for details)

- B. **Participants' overall empowerment and indications of change in their attitudes and behaviour.**

This could be understood as an increase in their self-awareness / self-confidence / self-esteem and goal setting, a more positive and active attitude towards job search and a more positive attitude



towards training but, in some cases, it can also be extended to overall increase in motivation, confidence in their skills, positive attitude and improved situation in their family or environment.

In this regard, according to participants' responses:

- 100% of respondents state that the project had an impact on their personal development beyond the professional dimension
- 95% of respondents mention that after their participation in the project they feel more willing to participate in similar projects in the future.
- 95% of respondents mention that, after their participation in the project they feel more willing to seek training opportunities to upgrade their skills
- 84% of respondents feel more motivated, more confident in their skills and have a more positive attitude after participating in the project
- 63% of participants feel that their participation in the project has improved the situation in their family or environment

(see also figures 32-33)

Additionally, the project has contributed in **30% of participants finding a job**.

The knowledge and skills acquired through the project leading to a positive impact on participants' employability profile, include the development of soft and hard skills, depending on the case, better understanding of the labour market and better understanding of job-related processes (CV writing, interviews, selection process).

Participants' overall empowerment, and increase in their self-esteem and self-confidence has proved to be the key element throughout of the project, contributing in producing results.

These results have been achieved through the whole range of activities, individual sessions, group sessions, trainings, contact with employers, all evaluated as useful and helpful by participants (see par. XXX for details).

Beyond the quantitative information presented above, increase of self-knowledge and self-confidence seem to be the most useful aspects of the project mentioned by respondents, together with personal and professional development, breaking believes that they would not be hired because of their age and specific job-related competences.

"They have increased my personal and professional skills, strengthening my self-esteem and have provided me with tools that I did not know to achieve my goals." (participant, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for participants)

"To feel that I can keep learning things" (participant, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for participants)

This positive impact on participants on the levels of change described above, **is also confirmed by counsellors participating in the project:**



"Yes, they have improved their digital and social skills, as well as gaining in self-confidence and security when facing a selection process." (counsellor, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for counsellors)

"I think they have improved their employability by reflecting on their own competences but above all by knowing better the labor market and by the job offers and business contacts provided throughout the project." (counsellor, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for counsellors)

"I think they have greatly improved their initiative when contacting companies (instead of being more passive and waiting for us to refer them to offers) and their digital skills (some participants did not have their profile in search apps before participating in the project)." (counsellor, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for counsellors)

"I believe they have improved in their empowerment and motivation." (counsellor, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for counsellors)

"They are open to change through training, seeing training as a valuable means." (counsellor, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for counsellors)

"Absolutely. The two people who have participated have acquired new digital skills as well as the development of other professional skills and most importantly, improved attitude, motivation and empowerment." (counsellor, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for counsellors)

"Yes, in fact one of them was in a selection process to enter a professional certificate, another acquired a tablet in order to improve her knowledge in the use of applications." (counsellor, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for counsellors)

"Definitely yes, they have improved their employability. they have improved their soft skills such as: planning and time management, flexibility, communication and active listening. They have also been receptive to acquire hard skills as 3 of the 4 participants have prepared the key competencies of level 2." (counsellor, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for counsellors)

Employers and external trainers participating in the project, although they had limited interaction with participants, also mention some impact on participants noticed on their part, mainly relating to improved ways handling job searching processes and increase in confidence in communicating with employers.

"Right after the end of the day, the participants directly contacted us." A usually present fear of getting in touch with companies, is overcome when they come to you, empathize with you and show interest in you as a professional." (employer, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for employers)

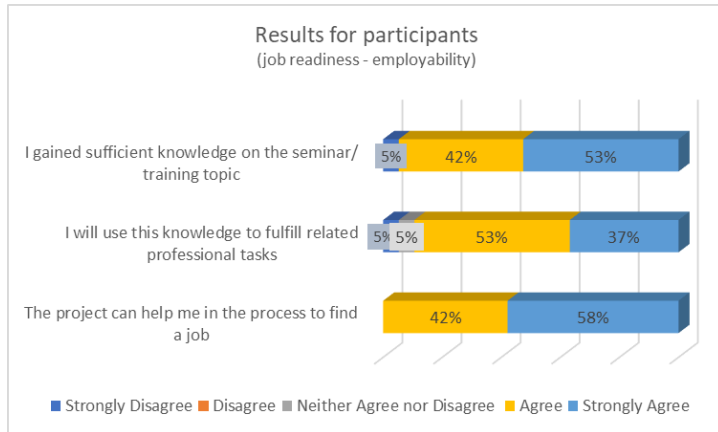


Figure 31: Spain - Results for participants – job readiness / employability

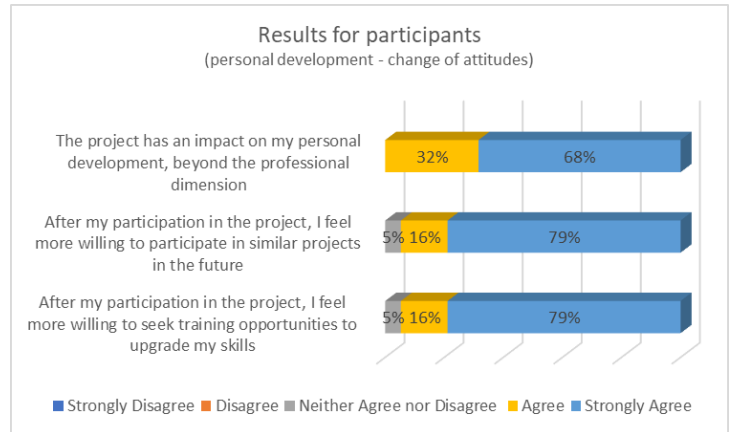


Figure 32: Spain - Results for participants – personal development / change of attitudes

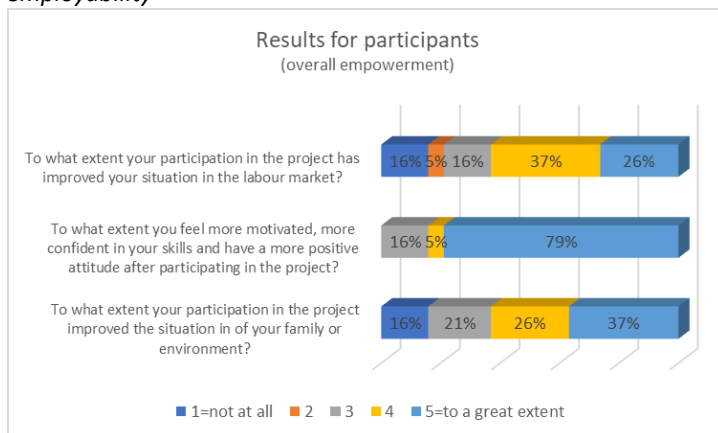


Figure 33: Spain - Results for participants – overall empowerment

6.9.4 Assessment of the impact of the project outputs on other stakeholders participating in the pilot testing activities

Through the feedback received in the pilot testing phase of the project, there are some indications that the proposed collaboration framework and tools had an impact on other stakeholders participating in the pilot test, which seems to build on the following axis:

- A. **It has provided counsellors, employers and trainers with useful tools and material, which the majority of the evaluation questionnaires' respondents state that they will continue to use in the future** (see also table below)

Possibility to use the project's outputs in the future (% of respondents scoring 4 or 5 in a scale 1=not likely at all – 5=Very likely in the following statements)	
[counsellors] How likely are you to use the proposed tools for participants in the future?	62.5%
[counsellors] How likely are you to use the proposed strategies for employers in the future?	62.5%
[Trainers] How likely are you to use the proposed tools in the future?	62.5%

Figure 34: Possibility to use the project's outputs in the future

- B. It has enhanced counsellors' knowledge on the target group and has improved their understanding of the target group needs. In some cases changes in perceptions and attitudes have been also reported.

"Absolutely. Being able to be part of the ACT45 pilot has meant that I see the circumstances of people over 45 with different eyes, in a closer and more empathetic way." (counsellor, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for counsellors)

"Yes, it has influenced in the sense that I consider it necessary to develop specific actions that concern people over 45 (I would extend this age to 50 or more) in which their competences are explored, the value of their experience, the possible market niches, where companies that are aware of this and that propose job opportunities participate... this in terms of activities with the participants. It also occurs to me the importance of raising awareness with companies and activities that highlight the importance and need to hire people of this age group..." (counsellor, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for counsellors)

- C. **It has encouraged the creation of partnerships and collaborations with different stakeholders:** 16 collaboration agreements have been signed in the context of the pilot testing activities, while the majority of stakeholders responding the evaluation questionnaire states that they are likely to participate in a similar project in the future. (see also table below)

Possibility to participate in a collaboration scheme in the future (% of respondents scoring 4 or 5 in a scale 1=not likely at all – 5=Very likely in the following statements)	
[Employers] How likely are you to participate in a similar project in the future?	100%
[Trainers] How likely you to participate in a similar project in the future?	62.5%

Figure 35: Possibility to use the project's outputs in the future



6.10 Main conclusions / suggestions

Collaboration schemes were created in the different regions where the project was implemented. The consultants were also trainers, but collaborations were created with external trainers also. Employers were involved in the project mostly delivering workshops on issues relating to the labour market, e.g. recruitment processes and interviews' practices and all participants received individualised support, through counselling sessions. The involvement of employers in cases where there were already established relationships was soft and easy, but in the absence of such synergies the involvement of employers remained difficult.

The collaboration framework and all relevant tools and strategies created by the project have been evaluated as relevant and effective in producing their intended results by all stakeholders involved in the pilot process, while all elements of the methodology used (individual sessions, trainings, contact with employers) have been evaluated positively by the people participating in the activities.

It has been shown that the project had positive results in participants' employability profile (a) in terms of acquiring skills and knowledge on the field trained, (b) in participants' overall empowerment, improving self-awareness / self-confidence, often achieving change in attitudes towards training and job search.

The empowering aspect, the practical / experiential aspect of the trainings and the contact with employers seem to be the most important elements both in increasing motivation and commitment and in producing results for the target group.

It seems that the proposed collaboration framework and tools had also an impact on other stakeholders participating in the pilot test, in terms of (a) providing useful material which they will continue to use in the future, (b) enhancing counsellors' and trainers' knowledge on the target group and improving their understanding of the target group needs, (c) encouraging the creation of partnerships and collaborations with different stakeholders in the context of the project.

On the other hand, Covid-19 situation seems to have impacted the pilot testing to some extent, by:

- (a) causing reluctance for some companies to engage due to Covid-19 consequences in the labour market,
- (b) creating challenges related to the online implementation of activities, which, combined with the lack of participants' digital skills, did not facilitate interaction, although participants' attitude was overall participatory and enthusiastic, easing the work greatly.

Time restrictions might have also impacted the pilot testing to some extent, by:

- (a) limiting the time available to support participants both through individual sessions and through trainings
- (b) limiting the creation of partnerships with employers or the level of employers' involvement in some regions.

Regarding the collaboration framework suggested by the project, overall suggestions for improvement or future expansion of the material included:

- Need for more solid arguments and sensitization strategies to engage companies



- Need to adapt the tools for counsellors to be used online
- Need to simplify some tools, so that they are more easily understood by participants, and, in some cases, include more innovative tools, as some participants were already familiar with the presented ones

7 The pilot test in Italy

7.1 Summary of activities

In Italy, the pilot testing activities were implemented during March-July 2021. Implementation started with dissemination and networking activities to invite partners and other organisations to take part in the scheme. Online and face to face meetings took place to explain and present the piloting activities, introducing the project methodology and tools.

15 different stakeholders – training providers, CSOs and employers had been invited to participate in the project, resulting in 8 collaborations made in total.

Following the suggested methodology, the pilot testing activities for unemployed low skilled adults over 45 years old included:

Individual sessions: One individual counselling session have been carried with each participant to create specific training paths for each. 24 individual sessions held in total.

Training: Training activities have been organised to test the case studies developed by the project and to cover specific needs of the target group (e.g. gardening course, cooking course)

Contact with companies: Contact with employers has been minimal in the case of Italy, since it has been proven difficult to involve employers in the pilot process. Two local employers were marginally involved in a sensitisation session with project participants, where they talked about their companies and answered questions on labour market issues. 58% of participants were involved in this activity.

Overall:

- 15 stakeholders invited
- 24 individualized counseling sessions
- 24 people participating
- 8 collaborations made
- 4 counsellors participating
- 8 trainers participating

7.2 Participants' profile

Most of the participants in the pilot test in Italy were men (75%), as opposed to all other countries where the majority were women. The prevailing age range of the participants was 45-55 years old.

Overall, beneficiaries involved in the pilot test were mainly persons with multiple vulnerabilities (people with disabilities, people with mental illnesses, people with a past in jail, people that were drug-addicted, refugees with little knowledge of Italian language)

21% of participants responded the survey, which feeds the main results on participants drawn in this report, all in the age range 45-49 years old, the majority men. 3 participants were below 45 years old (39, 40, 41). In some cases, it has been difficult to collect responses to the questionnaires due to participants' limited literacy skills. It is worth mentioning that 80% of the respondents in the evaluation questionnaire note that they had not participated in trainings in the last 5 years.

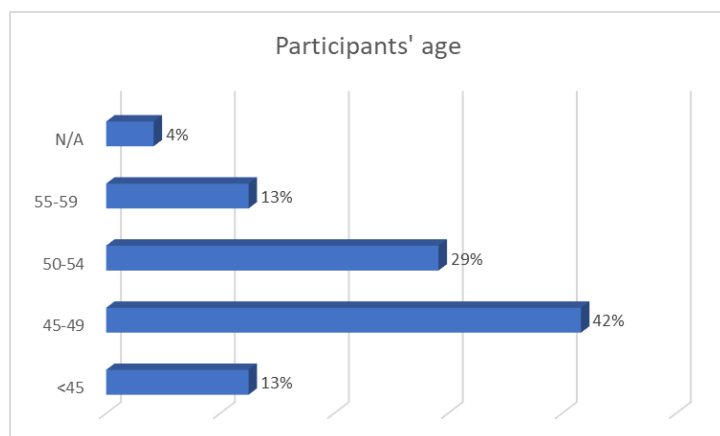


Figure 36: Italy – Participants' age

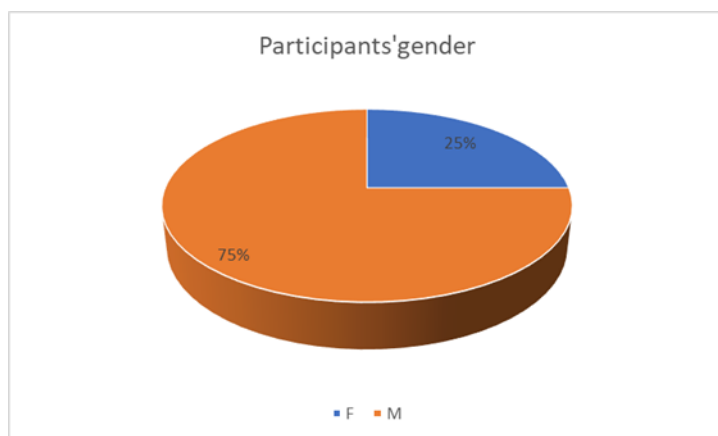


Figure 37: Italy – Participants' gender

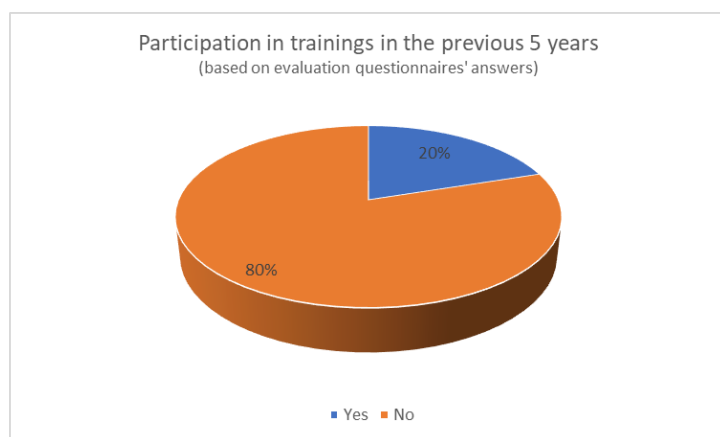


Figure 38: Italy – Participation in trainings in the previous 5 years



7.3 Evaluation of key project activities by participants

7.3.1 Individual sessions

Individual sessions were evaluated very positively by participants, highlighting the impact they have on their motivation but also as a key to explore new professional opportunities: **100% of the respondents in the relevant questionnaire noticed that individual sessions helped them to a large extent (40% scored 5/5 and 60% scored 4/5⁸).**

Higher motivation, and analysis of own needs and challenges are reported by participants as the most important results of individualized counseling. They mention that they would like to have more sessions or a longer counselling session.

7.3.2 Trainings

Group and training sessions were evaluated very highly by participants, both in terms of organisation, tools and methods used and in terms of content, correspondence to needs and knowledge gained. However, participants do not feel that the knowledge gained has improved their employability profile nor that this will help them in the process to find employment.

In particular:

- Regarding organisation, tools and methods used: At least 80% of respondents agree or strongly agree that the length and pace of the trainings were appropriate, that the seminar was well organised, that the facilitator met the requirements of the thematic area and that the tools and methods used were appropriate (please refer to figure 39 for details)
- Regarding content, correspondence to needs and results achieved:
 - 60% of respondents agree that the content of the seminar was appropriate for their needs and 80% agree or strongly agree that that they gained sufficient knowledge on the topic

However:

- only 40% feel that they will use the knowledge gained to fulfil related professional tasks and that the training will help them in the process to find employment (please refer to figure 40 for details)
- only 40% of respondents state that the trainings corresponded to their professional needs.

⁸ In a scale 1-5 where 1=not at all, 5 = to a great extent

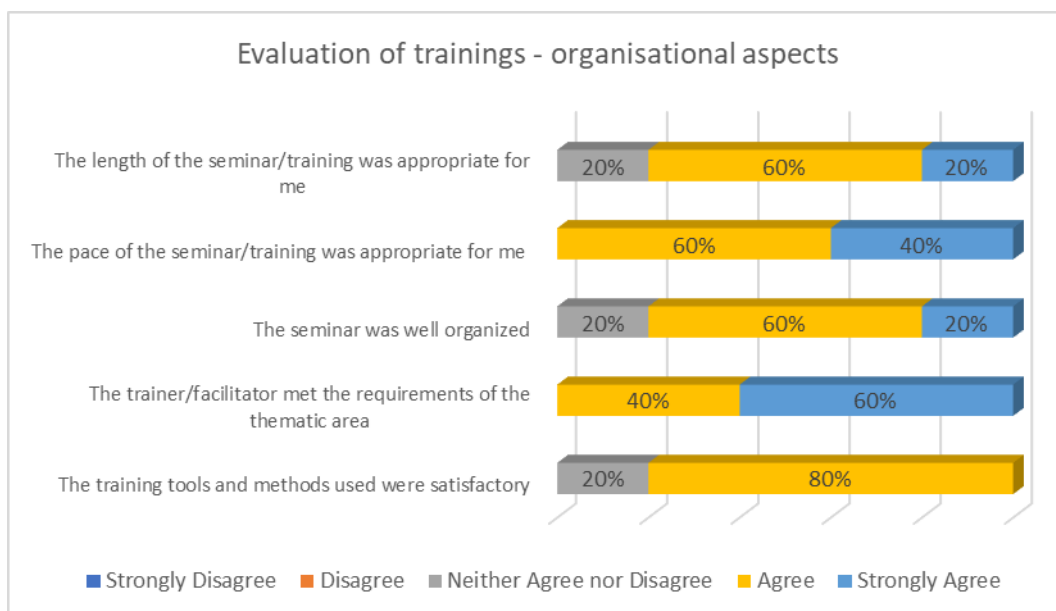


Figure 39: Italy – Evaluation of trainings: organisational aspects

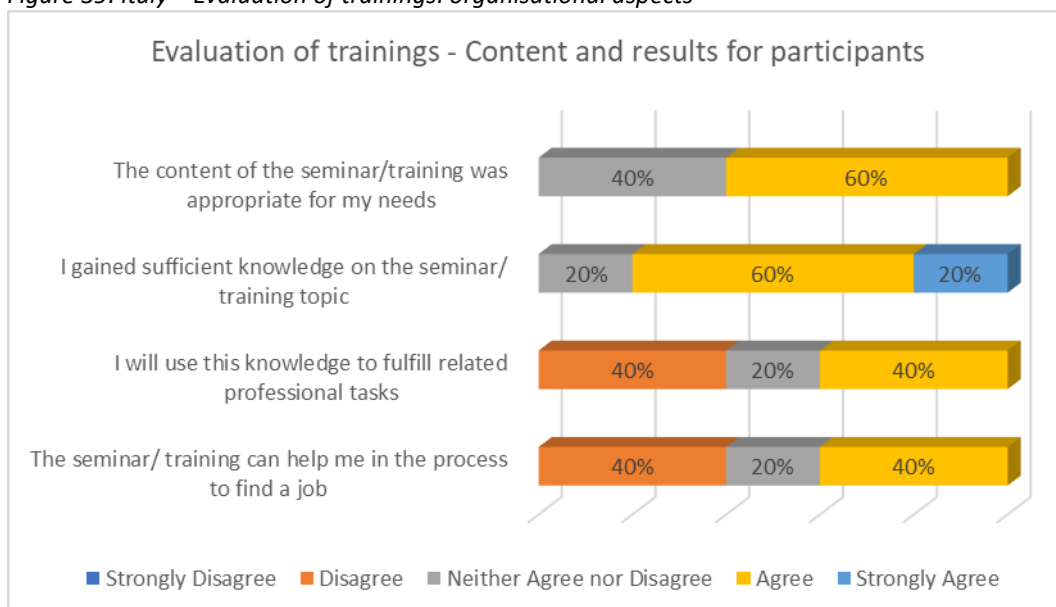


Figure 40: Italy – Evaluation of trainings: Content and results for participants

7.3.3 Contact with employers

As already stated, in the case of Italy, the involvement of employers has been minimal and only two people responding the relevant questionnaire have contacted companies in the context of the project. Their answers were mixed – one person evaluates this contact as useful and one as not useful, thus meaningful results cannot be drawn.



7.4 Evaluation of motivation / engagement strategies for participants

The partnership tested motivation / engagement strategies such as:

- Personalized guidance
- Practice based approach, through participatory and experiential methods
- Providing information for seminars that are going to happen according to participants' needs

Overall, 33% of the counsellors evaluate the motivation / engagement strategies used as ineffective⁹, while 66% evaluated them neutrally. 100% assess the requirements and factors affecting participation of unemployed low-skilled adults over 45 years old in training, as defined in IO1, as accurate.

It seems that low motivation remained for several participants, mainly due to their absence from the labor market for too many years (even 20 in some cases). In any case, 67% of project participants did finish the planned intervention.

Strategies evaluated as most effective and challenges / suggestions

The practice-based approach was the strategy evaluated as more effective for the target group.

Counsellors participating in the pilot highlighted the need for a better connection between the different trainings / training paths available at local level and participants' needs with the creation of a unified system of continuous learning for adults. It seems that participants do trainings with different training providers but not in a coherent way, so, at times, they lose confidence and they gain few skills. Opportunities for people with multiple vulnerabilities are rising, but still they do not meet, by far the number of people that need them. Thus, according to counsellors participating in the project, there is a need for a structural change in labor market, going beyond the scope of the project.

7.5 Evaluation of motivation / engagement strategies for employers

The main strategy used to engage and involve companies and potential employers was the organization of meetings and cooperation opportunities to sensitize employers. As mentioned, it has remained challenging to engage employers in the activities foreseen by the project. The limited time available for the implementation of activities, seems to have played a role in not being able to effectively engage employers in the scheme.

As expected, the evaluation heavily depends on the schemes actually created in the pilot testing, thus, **all counsellors evaluated the motivation strategies for employers as ineffective, although 66% of the respondents are stating that they are still going to use the strategies suggested in the future** (33% respond neutrally).

⁹ Based on answers in the evaluation questionnaire: % of respondents evaluating the strategies used with 2 in a scale 1 = not effective to 5 = very effective.



It has been mentioned that more solid sensitization strategies to engage companies might be needed, maybe with a role of public bodies.

7.6 Evaluation of tools for counsellors

Tools for counsellors tested during the pilot:

A. For Individualized sessions

Employment history

Professional Interests

Skills and competencies

Transferable skills

Values

Constraints

Professional goal definition

Balancing personal and professional life

B. For organization and management of training

Soft skills

C. For educational activities

Case studies

Overall, counsellors believe the tools provided by the project were useful. **33% of the respondents evaluated as effective the proposed tools**, 66% evaluated them as neither effective nor ineffective. In parallel, 100% of the respondents' stated that is likely to use the purposed strategies and tools in the future.

Tools evaluated as most effective / Challenges / suggestions

According to feedback received, to analyse your own situation works good the 'employment history' tool. Then 'skills and competencies' tool is interesting and stimulating for participants. 'Balancing personal and professional life' is another tool mentioned as precious for beneficiaries with multiple vulnerabilities.

It has been mentioned that following all steps of the tools, sometimes is hard. Tools are important as a point of reference, but flexibility is needed to build around the individual needs emerging during the session. It has



also been mentioned that more time to get into deeper use of the tools, also with people with a different profile, would be needed for their further evaluation.

7.7 Evaluation of tools for trainers

Tools for trainers tested during the pilot:

Case study 3: Digital skills

Case study 4: Time management

Case study 6: Stress management

Case study 10: Team work

Overall, the tools seemed interesting for the trainers that tested them and provided them with features and ideas, which could be used in their everyday work, beyond the project's activities. However, some of the trainers feel that the tools might not have been appropriate for the involved participants, mainly due to the multiple vulnerabilities those face, which raises the need to use tools, methods and services specifically designed for their case.

50% of the respondents evaluated the tools as neither effective nor ineffective and 50% evaluated them as rather ineffective for the pilot's participants. All respondents stated that they are neither likely nor unlikely to use the proposed tools in the future.

Tools evaluated as most effective / Challenges / suggestions

All tools tested worked quite good, but they might not have been appropriate for the participants' specific circumstances.

Thus, trainers feel that further conclusions cannot be drawn and testing with participants with less vulnerable profiles would be needed.

7.8 Evaluation of the collaboration framework

7.8.1 Overall

The collaboration framework foreseen by the project establishing collaboration schemes among training providers, employers and CSOs in order to motivate low skilled adults over 45 years old to participate in trainings close to the labour market needs, was translated into a scheme with low levels of employment involvement in Italy. This seems to heavily affect the evaluation of the framework's effectiveness by all relevant stakeholders.

Indeed, both counsellors and trainers evaluated neutrally or negatively the effectiveness of the collaboration framework in producing its intended results.

However, the activities have been implemented in high quality and both participants and trainers seem very satisfied with their involvement. Counsellors seem more neutral in terms of satisfaction with their participation in the project.

In more detail:



- 80% of unemployed low skilled adults participating in the project, 100% of trainers, 33% of counsellors (67% neutral) state that they are satisfied with their participation in the project
- Only 50% of trainers evaluate the proposed framework as effective in motivating adults over 45-year-old to participate in trainings which are close to the labour market needs. The rest of the trainers and 67% of counsellors feel that the framework as implemented in Italy did not prove effective.

(please also refer to figures 41-42 below)

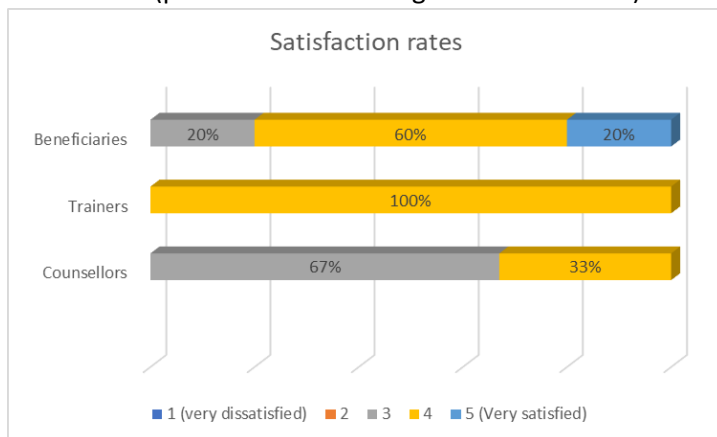


Figure 41: Italy – Satisfaction rates

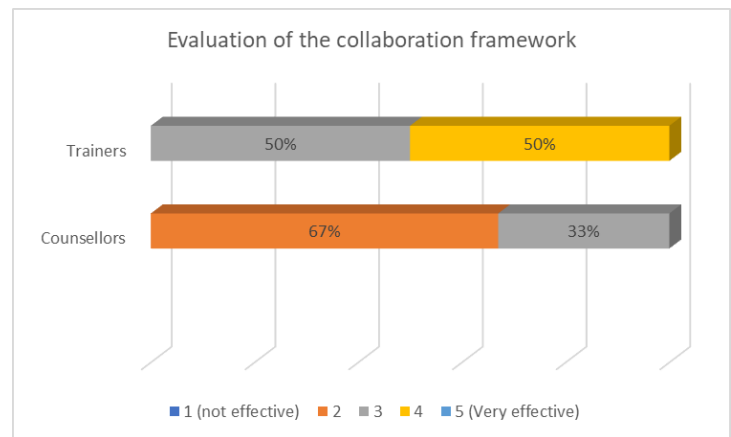


Figure 42: Italy – Evaluation of the collaboration framework

7.8.2 Most effective aspects of the framework

According to trainers and counsellors, the most effective aspects of the collaboration framework were the individual sessions to create a training path for the participants and the socialization / creation of a network of participants and other people of the neighborhood, as an important step to increase their motivation and soft skills.

Contacting potential employers seems important both for participants and for stakeholders, despite the fact that employers' involvement has proved to be marginal.

7.8.3 Impact on participants (low skilled adults over 45 years old)

The project seems to have had a **positive impact** on participants **in terms of acquiring knowledge and skills on the field trained** and on their **overall empowerment, motivation and personal development**. However, this is not directly perceived as improvement in their employability profile nor in their situation in the labour market. This seems to be related with the low levels of employers' participation in the pilot activities, the difficult connection of the training paths selected with the labour market and the personal circumstances of the participants.

In more detail:

A. Positive impact in terms of acquiring skills and knowledge on the field(s) trained



80% of respondents claim that they gained sufficient knowledge on the seminar(s) / training(s)' topic(s), through their participation in the project. However, few relate this knowledge and skills with improvements in their employability profile and an increase of the possibility to find a job:

- Only 40% of respondents state that they will use the knowledge acquired to fulfil related professional tasks
- 40% of respondents feel that their participation in the project will help them in the process to find a job
- 40% of respondents feel that their participation in the project has improved their situation in the labour market

(See also figure 43)

B. Participants' overall empowerment and indications of change in their attitudes and behaviour.

Participants seem to have increased their self-awareness / self-confidence / self-esteem and their overall motivation, confidence in their skills and positive attitude. However, this does not seem to relate to a change in their overall attitude towards training and skills development, as shown in participants' responses:

- 80% of respondents state that the project had an impact on their personal development beyond the professional dimension
- 100% of respondents mention that after their participation in the project they feel more willing to participate in similar projects in the future.
- 80% of respondents feel more motivated, more confident in their skills and have a more positive attitude after participating in the project
- Only 40% of respondents mention that, after their participation in the project they feel more willing to seek training opportunities to upgrade their skills
- Only 20% of participants feel that their participation in the project has improved the situation in their family or environment

(see also figures 44-45)

Confirming the quantitative results presented above, both counsellors and trainers participating in the project think that participants have improved their skills, but more work is needed to improve their employability profile.

“The programme developed beneficiaries hard and soft skills but they need a much more structured, deeper and specific programme to increase their concrete employability” (trainer, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for trainers)

Teamwork and socialisation seem to have been crucial in producing results, as recognised both by trainers and participants.



“Socialization and the creation of a network of beneficiaries and other people of the neighbourhood, is an important step to increase their motivation and soft skills” (trainer, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for trainers)

[What was the most important thing you gained from the project?] *“How to work in a team”*, (participant, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for participants)

[What was the most important thing you gained from the project?] *“The people I met”*, (participant, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for participants)

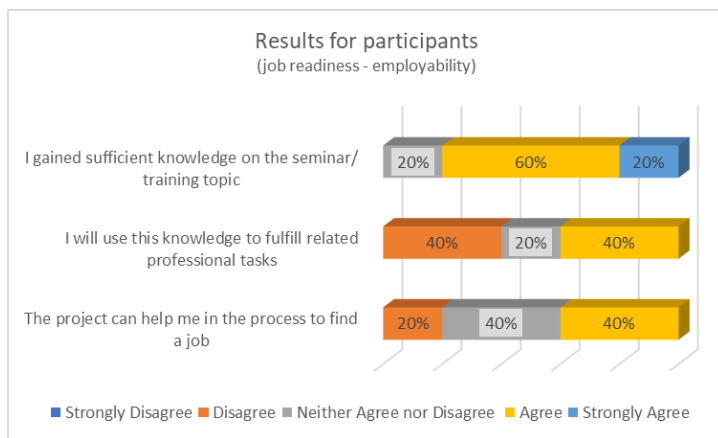


Figure 43: Italy - Results for participants – job readiness / employability

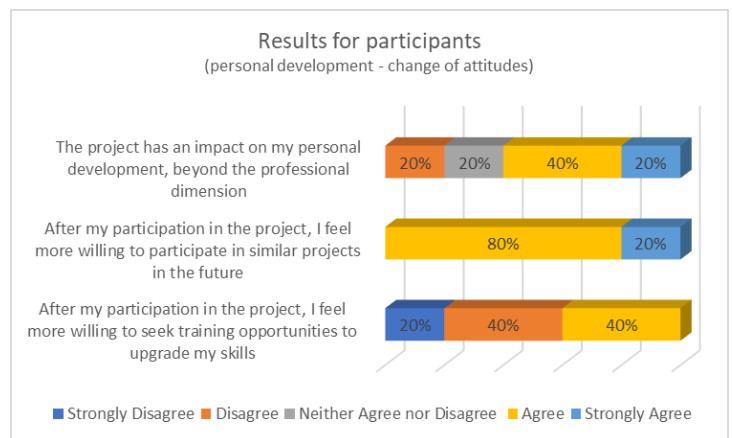


Figure 44: Italy - Results for participants – personal development / change of attitudes

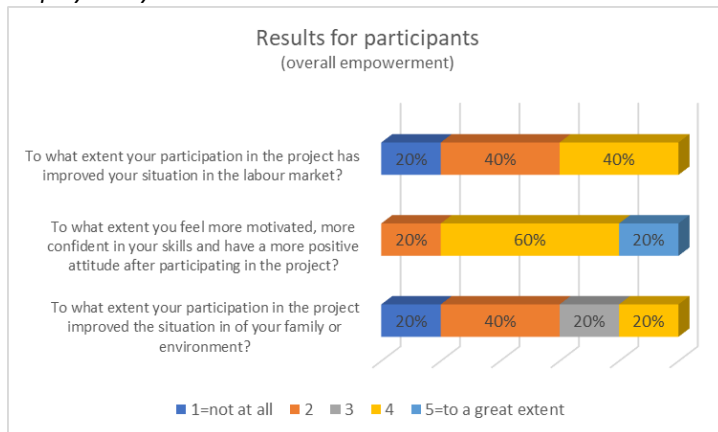


Figure 45: Italy - Results for participants – overall empowerment



7.8.4 Assessment of the impact of the project outputs on other stakeholders participating in the pilot testing activities

Through the feedback received in the pilot testing phase of the project, there are some indications that the proposed collaboration framework and tools had an impact on other stakeholders participating in the pilot test, which seems to build on the following axis:

- A. **It has provided counsellors and trainers with useful tools and material, which** the majority of counsellors responding to the evaluation questionnaires state that **they will continue to use in the future. Trainers respond rather neutrally on this** (see also table below)

Possibility to use the project's outputs in the future (% of respondents scoring 4 or 5 in a scale 1=not likely at all – 5=Very likely in the following statements)	
[counsellors] How likely are you to use the proposed tools for participants in the future?	100%
[counsellors] How likely are you to use the proposed strategies for employers in the future?	66%
[Trainers] How likely are you to use the proposed tools in the future?	0% (100% answered neutrally)

Figure 46: Possibility to use the project's outputs in the future

- B. It has enhanced counsellors and trainers knowledge on the target group and has improved their understanding of the target group needs. For trainers it is reported that they realized that a different approach is needed, and testing of new tools is an important way to find possible changing path.
- C. **It has encouraged the creation of partnerships and collaborations with different stakeholders:** 8 collaboration agreements have been signed in the context of the pilot testing activities, while 100% of the trainers responding the evaluation questionnaire state that they are likely to participate in a similar project in the future.

7.9 Main conclusions / suggestions

The collaboration framework foreseen by the project was translated into a scheme with low levels of employers' involvement in Italy. This, together with the fact that the pilot participants were people with multiple vulnerabilities seem to have heavily affected the evaluation of the framework's effectiveness by all relevant stakeholders.

Indeed, both counsellors and trainers evaluated neutrally or negatively the overall effectiveness of the collaboration framework in producing its intended results. Similarly, the engagement strategies suggested for participants and employers and the tools suggested for counsellors and trainers were evaluated either neutrally or as ineffective.



However, the activities have been implemented in high quality and both participants and trainers seem very satisfied with their participation in the activities. Counsellors seem more neutral in terms of satisfaction with their participation in the project.

The basic elements of the methodology used (individual sessions and trainings) have been evaluated positively by the people participating in the activities. Furthermore, it has been shown that the project had a **positive impact** on participants **in terms of acquiring knowledge and skills on the field trained** and on their **overall empowerment, motivation and personal development**. However, this is not directly perceived as improvement in their employability profile nor in their situation in the labour market. This seems to be related with the low levels of employers' participation in the pilot activities, the difficult connection of the training paths selected with the labour market and the personal circumstances of the participants (mostly people with multiple vulnerabilities).

The most effective aspects of the collaboration framework were the individual sessions to create a training path for the participants, the practice-based approach and the socialization / creation of a network of participants and other people of the neighborhood, as important steps to increase their motivation and soft skills.

It seems that the proposed collaboration framework and tools had also an impact on other stakeholders participating in the pilot test, in terms of (a) providing useful material which they will continue to use in the future, (b) enhancing counsellors' and trainers' knowledge on the target group and improving their understanding of the target group needs, (c) encouraging the creation of partnerships and collaborations with different stakeholders in the context of the project.

Time restrictions might have impacted the pilot testing to some extent, by:

- (a) limiting the time available to support participants both through individual sessions and through trainings
- (b) limiting the creation of partnerships with employers

The situation in the labour market might have also impacted employers' level of engagement.

Furthermore, using the project's framework as a starting point, the need for national-specific context arrangements has been raised in the case of Italy, e.g. with the creation of a unified system of continuous learning for adults or a structural change in the labor market creating opportunities for people with multiple vulnerabilities, which go beyond the scope of the project.

Regarding the specific strategies and tools suggested by the project, overall suggestions for improvement included:

- Need for more solid arguments and sensitization strategies to engage companies



- Need to simplify some tools, so that they are more easily understood by participants or use the tools as a reference and build around the individual needs of the participants emerging during the session
- Tools suggested by the project might have not been always appropriate for the participants' specific profile / circumstances.



8 The pilot test in Bulgaria

8.1 Description of activities

As envisaged in the grant agreement, SZREDA tested the Ac+45 experiential training materials on basic and soft skills in Bulgaria through the organisation of seminars and built a collaboration scheme mainly serving this purpose but also sharing the project outputs and measuring results. The pilot testing activities took place from March to Jul-Aug 2021.

Having identified that the most common place to reach when people from the target group are in difficulty or in need of job and assistance is the regional Labour office, SZREDA has reached the Labour office of Stara Zagora to create a partnership. In Bulgaria, the Labour office provides job offers, counselling and trainings under certain conditions. Among the other benefits that a partnership with the Labour office had, was their knowledge of training providers and VET providers in the region.

After setting up the framework of the partnership with the managing body of the Labour office (due to national elections, there were two changes of the Director, thus there was a 3–4-week delay in the start of the activities), SZREDA started the operational activities with Labour office's team of psychologist. The main idea was to select the case studies that would fit the best the potential beneficiaries. 5 case studies were selected that would be used during the core activities with the target group.

Thus, in Bulgaria, the pilot testing activities for unemployed low skilled adults over 45 years old included training activities, using the material developed in the context of the project. Two training sessions were organized in the Labour office premises and one in SZEDA office, all addressed to low skilled adults over 45 years old. The Bulgarian-German Vocational Educational Training Center also joined the collaboration scheme, presenting in one of the training sessions organized in the Labour Office, the training course they were organizing and which was about to start in the following months and was suitable to the participating people's profile.

Overall:

- 41 people participating
- 3 collaborations
- 41 individualized counseling sessions (done by the Labour office as part of their usual activities)
- 4 trainers involved

8.2 Participants' profile

63% of the participants were women, while people of all ages between 45 and 64 years old participated in the activities. Participants were more or less equally divided between the different age categories (please refer to charts below for details). None of the participants had a higher education degree and only half of them had a secondary education degree. It is very important to mention that the vast majority, 93% of the participants/respondents in the evaluation questionnaire note that they had not participated in trainings in

the last 5 years. All training participants responded the survey, which feeds the main results on participants drawn in this report.

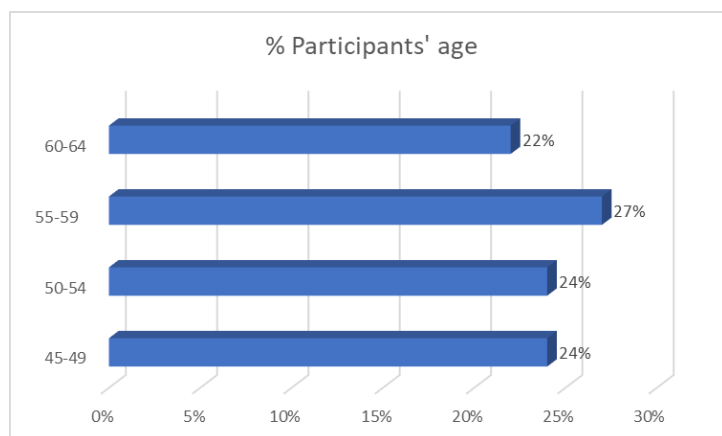


Figure 47: Bulgaria – Participant's age

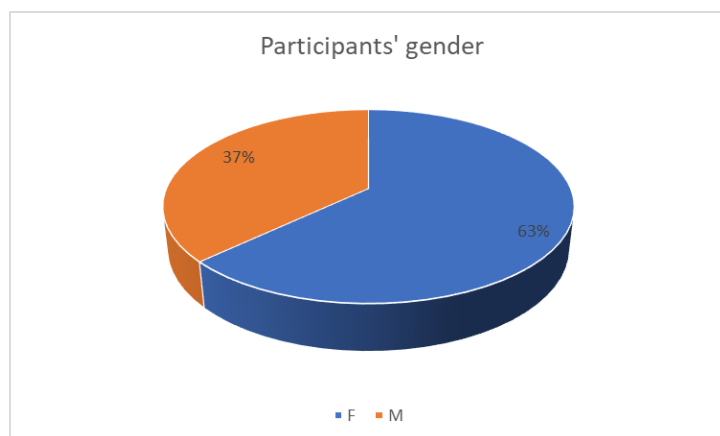


Figure 48: Bulgaria – Participant's Gender



Figure 49: Bulgaria – Participation in trainings in the previous 5 years

8.3 Evaluation of key project activities by participants

8.3.1 Individual sessions

Not applicable in the case of Bulgaria

8.3.2 Trainings

Training sessions were evaluated very highly by participants, both in terms of organisation, tools and methods used and in terms of content, correspondence to needs and results achieved in strengthening participants'



employability profile. The beneficiaries stated that case studies were based on real scenarios that some of them have even encountered during their professional and personal life.

The majority of respondents/ participants stated that the trainings were relevant to their professional needs and that, after the trainings, they will be able to build on the knowledge gained to either find a job or fulfil related professional tasks.

In particular

- Regarding organisation, tools and methods used: Over 90% of the participants agree or strongly agree that the length and pace of the trainings were appropriate, that the seminar was well organised and that the facilitator met the requirements of the thematic area and 90% of the participants stated that the tools and methods used were appropriate (please refer to figure 50 for details)
- Regarding content, correspondence to needs and results achieved:
 - 100% of respondents agree or strongly agree that the content of the seminar was appropriate for their needs, 98% that they gained sufficient knowledge on the topic, 85% agree or strongly agree that they will use the knowledge gained to fulfil related professional tasks and 98% stated that the training will help them in the process to find employment (please refer to figure 51 for details)
 - All respondents state that the trainings corresponded to their professional needs.

Furthermore, according to trainers involved, almost all of the participants have developed a common feeling with their peers and have contributed to the process, which can be seen as a positive outcome and suggests that the tools used during the activities are well developed for their needs and are understandable and serve their purpose.

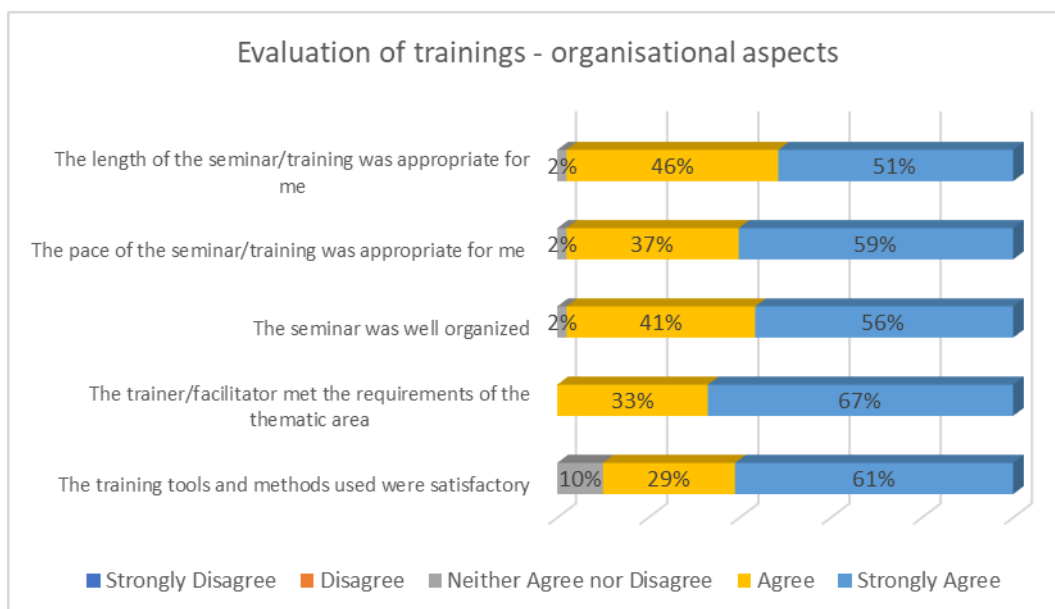


Figure 50: Bulgaria – Evaluation of trainings: organizational aspects

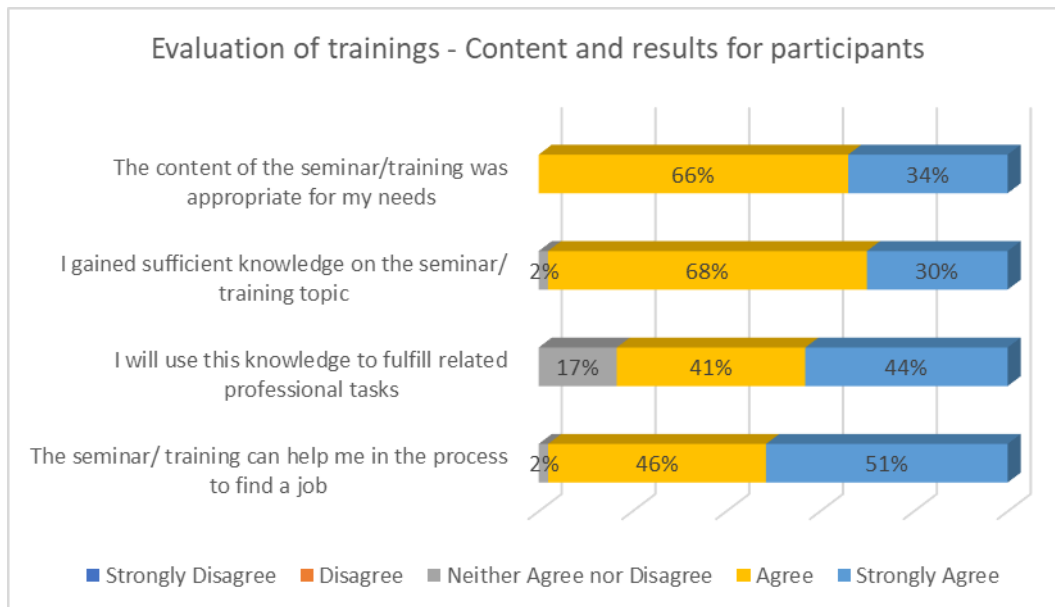


Figure 51: Bulgaria – Evaluation of trainings: Content and results for participants

8.3.3 Contact with employers

Not applicable in the case of Bulgaria.

8.4 Evaluation of tools for trainers

This section involves feedback received by the trainers using the tools developed by the project during the pilot. The trainers were mainly satisfied with the tools that they used. Probably, this is also because some of them were taking part in the design and evaluation of the tools in the previous stages of the project.

Tools for trainers tested during the pilot:

Case study 1: Work efficiency

Case study 6: Stress management

Case study 7: Adaptability

Case study 12: Communication

Case study 15: Willingness to learn

Overall, the feedback regarding the tools was positive and big challenges have not been reported.

100% of the trainers evaluated as effective the tools and 100% stated that it is likely to use the tools proposed by the project in the future.

Two case studies were tested in each session, so that as much tools as possible would be tested with the target audience and flexibility would be ensured, allowing to propose different exercises in case some participants didn't feel comfortable with the first one. The tools selected to be tested were the ones seemingly the most appropriate for a group of people meeting each other for the first time. They all worked well and no challenges were encountered. The tools proved to be adaptable to be used in a shorter timeframe



than originally anticipated and still achieve good results. The fact that the examples were close to the beneficiaries' experience, was an additional positive aspect.

"The tools are well developed. We easily adapted the chosen one for a shorter time and we were still able to achieve good results from the groups that we were working with. This flexibility is something that we have never thought about beforehand." (trainer, pilot test evaluation questionnaire for trainers)

8.5 Evaluation of the collaboration framework

In Bulgaria the scheme created involved, by design, trainings for the target group to test the experiential training material created by the project. The activities took place in partnership with the regional Labour office, which also provides counselling and networking with companies in the context of its role. The evaluation of the framework included here contains feedback from the direct users of the project material in the context of the pilot, i.e. trainers and low-skilled adults over 45 years old.

In this perspective, the collaboration framework foreseen by the project was evaluated as effective in producing its intended results by the trainers participating in the scheme, while both trainers and participants, including the target population, i.e. low skilled adults over 45 years old, seem to be very satisfied by their participation in the project.

In more detail:

- 100% of the trainers evaluate the proposed framework as effective in motivating adults 45 to participate in trainings which are close to the labour market needs
- 100% of the trainers and 100% of participants (low skilled adults over 45 years old) are satisfied with their participation in the project (please also refer to figure 52 below)

Things mentioned as most valued by project participants were: learning new things, the exercises, teamwork, talking in front of public, materials provided, information on job opportunities, knowledge gained and contacts made.

Most effective aspects of the scheme for trainers were the face-to-face contact and the work in small groups instead of personal sessions, which seems to increase motivation and willingness to participate.

It seems that the scheme created has achieved some impact on participants, in the sense that they participated in a training corresponding to their professional needs, gaining sufficient knowledge of the topic (98% of respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement), which they will use to fulfil related professional tasks (85% agree or strongly agree) and which will help them in the process to find employment (98% agree or strongly agree).

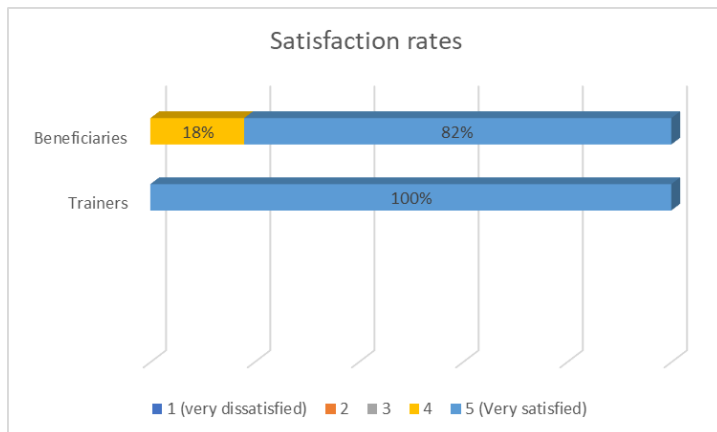


Figure 52: Bulgaria – Satisfaction rates

The proposed collaboration framework and tools had an impact on trainers / partners participating in the pilot test, which seems to build on the following axis:

- A. **It has provided trainers with useful tools and material, which they will continue to use in the future.**
- B. **It has encouraged the creation of partnerships and collaborations with the** collaboration agreements signed in the context of the pilot testing activities

8.6 Main conclusions / suggestions

The collaboration framework and all the tools created for trainers have been evaluated as relevant and effective in producing their intended results by the trainers involved in the pilot process in Bulgaria. The project had positive results in participants' employability profile in terms of acquiring skills and knowledge on the field trained and they were all very satisfied with their participation in the activities.

Most effective aspects of the scheme according to trainers were the face-to-face contact and the work in small groups instead of personal sessions, which seems to increase motivation and willingness to participate, while all the tools tested seem to have worked well and have proved to be flexible for adaptation in case this was needed.

It seems that the proposed collaboration framework and tools had also an impact on trainers/partner participating in the pilot test, in terms of providing useful material which they will continue to use in the future and encouraging the creation of partnerships and collaborations with different stakeholders.

Although the scheme created in Bulgaria achieved its results as planned, it has still been noted that Covid-19 situation and time limitations are inhibiting factors for the creation of collaboration schemes, given the fact that, usually, organisations need time in order to get the decision to be involved. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has created additional challenges, which should also be taken into consideration.



Annex 1: Pilot test quantitative Indicators

	ACH	RETE	SZREDA	AAH
Quantitative KPIs				
Input				
Nb of beneficiaries invited	242	36	41	36 persons from AAH Center beneficiaries & outreach to 8 organizations
Nb of stakeholders invited	94	15	2	18
Nb of individualized counselling sessions	80	24	41 (done by the Labour office as part of their usual activities)	127
Output				
Nb of people that have agreed to enter the project/ signed the agreement	40	24	41	40
Nb of people that have participated at least at one activity	40	24	41	40
Nb of people that have finished the intervention planned	38	16	41	26
Nb of hours in workshops/ seminars	N/A	56	6	206
Nb of stakeholders involved	16	9	2	16
Nb of motivation strategies used with beneficiaries	6	3	1	7
Nb of motivation strategies used with employers	3	1	Not Applicable	4
Nb of collaborations made	16	8	3	13
Outcome				
% of people that have participated at least at one activity who had job interviews, meetings with employers or other contact with employer	85%	58%	Not Applicable	68%
% of people that have participated in trainings that give official certification who obtained the certification	68% (17/25) (official and unofficial)	5 unofficial 21%	Not Applicable	N/A (no training with official certification conducted)
% of people that have participated at least in one activity responding the survey who express satisfaction with the project	Beneficiaries: 89% Employers: 100% Trainers: 100% Counselors: 75%	Beneficiaries: 80% Employers: no response Trainers: 100%	Beneficiaries: 100% Trainers: 100%	Beneficiaries: 76% Employers: 100% Trainers: 100% Counselors: 100%



		Counsellors: 33%		
% of people that have participated at least at one activity who have finished the planned intervention	95%	66%	100%	65%
Impact				
% of people that have participated at least at one activity who have been empowered by the programme (beneficiaries) =number of people expressing positive attitude (average response ≥ 4) / total number of respondents	Average 3,9 16 out of 19 respondents scored 3 or more= 84,21%	2,9 40%	Average – 4,62 100% (the lowest average is of 3,67)	Average 3.8 81%
% of people that have participated at least at one activity who responded to the survey	47,5%	21%	100%	60%
number of people that have participated at least in one activity who have found a job	30%	0	N/A	40%

Annex2: Pilot testing – Questionnaire for employers

*General information***Company****Name of respondent****Role in the company****Contact details:***Contribution to the project and expectations***How did you contribute to the project?****(Multiple choice)**

Co-designed experiential training material	
Organised / facilitated training seminars	
Participated in job fairs / speed interviews	
Organised adult apprentices and on the job training schemes	
Validate and recognise non-formal and informal learning outcomes (e.g. certification of training)	
Participated in other CSO's activities connected to labour market issues (e.g. participated in an event as invited speaker etc, participated in a focus group)	
Other (Please specify)	
.....	

What motivated you to participate in the project?**(multiple answers)**

To have access to a pool of suitable candidates	
To have access to free matching / placement services	
To minimize recruitment and training costs	
To address specific needs in recruitment	
To communicate a good social image	
To obtain tools and know-how on recruitment and training processes adapted to the target group	
To develop my company's knowledge and skills regarding the target group	
To have access to candidates to contribute to the diversification of my company's staff profile	
Other (please specify)	
.....	

To which extent were your expectations fulfilled in a scale of 1-5 (1=not at all, 5=very much)?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very much

Evaluation of tools for employers

Which tools suggested to be used by employers have you used?

(multiple answers)

Job description (instructions and template)	
Job interview evaluation (template)	
Job shadowing (guidelines)	
Mock interview (guidelines)	
Speed interview (instruction and tools)	
Portfolio of employer (guidelines and template)	
None	

According to your experience, what do you think worked well and which difficulties have you encountered using the tools?

According to your experience what could be improved / changed / developed on the proposed tools? (if you have additional tools to suggest please include them here)

Overall, how would you rate the effectiveness of the tools you have used until now?

Not at all effective 1 2 3 4 5 Very effective

How likely are you to use the proposed tools in the future?

Not likely 1 2 3 4 5 Very likely

Impact on beneficiaries

Did you have any direct contact with beneficiaries during your participation in the programme?

YES	
NO	

According to your observation of / experience with beneficiaries participating in the programme, do you think they have developed their employability profile (i.e. soft skills, digital skills, technical, language and /or other hard skills)? Please describe, also including examples / stories of change.

Can you see a difference in beneficiaries' attitude, behaviour, approach towards training and professional integration? Please describe, also including examples / stories of change.

Have you observed any other project intended or unintended impact on beneficiaries?



Overall project evaluation

Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you concerning your participation in the project?

Very dissatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 Very satisfied

How likely are you to participate in a similar project in the future?

Not likely 1 2 3 4 5 Very likely

The project foresees the collaboration among training providers, employers and CSOs in order to motivate adults 45 to participate in trainings which are close to the labour market needs. How would you evaluate the effectiveness of this framework?

Not at all effective 1 2 3 4 5 Very effective

Has your participation in the project influenced your overall attitude and actions towards engaging low skilled adults over 45 years old in training? Please explain:

Overall, what do you think that works well?

Do you have any suggestions on aspects that could be improved / changed / developed?

Annex 3: Pilot testing – Questionnaire for training providers

General information

Training provider

Name of respondent

Contact details

Contribution to the project and expectations

How did you contribute to the project?

What motivated you to participate in the project?

To which extent were your expectations fulfilled? (1=not at all, 5= to a great extent)

1	2	3	4	5

Evaluation of tools for trainers

Which tools suggested for the engagement of low skilled adults over 45 years old in training have you used until now?

(multiple answers)

Case study 1 : Work efficiency	
Case study 2 : Numeracy skills	
Case study 3: Digital skills	
Case study 4 : Time management	
Case study 5 :Problem solving	
Case study 6 :Stress management	
Case study 7 : Adaptability	
Case study 8 : Analytical skills	
Case study 9 : Interpersonal skills	
Case study 10 : Team work	
Case study 11: Litteracy skills	
Case study 12 : Communication	
Case study 13 : Decision making	
Case study 14: Work independently	
Case study 15 : Willingness to learn	
Other (Specify)	

According to your experience, what do you think worked well and which difficulties have you encountered using the tools?



According to your experience what could be improved / changed / developed on the proposed tools? (if you have additional tools to suggest please include them here)

Overall, how would you rate the effectiveness of the tools you have used until now?

Not at all effective 1 2 3 4 5 Very effective

Please add any relevant comments if needed:

How likely are you to use the proposed tools in the future?

Not likely 1 2 3 4 5 Very likely

Impact on beneficiaries

According to your observation of / experience with beneficiaries participating in the programme, do you think they have developed their employability profile (i.e. soft skills, digital skills, technical, language and /or other hard skills)? Please describe, also including examples / stories of change.

Can you see a difference in beneficiaries' attitude, behaviour, approach towards training and professional integration? Please describe, also including examples / stories of change.

Have you observed any other project intended or unintended impact on beneficiaries?

Overall project evaluation

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you concerning your participation in the project?

Very dissatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 Very satisfied

How likely are you to participate in a similar project in the future?

Not likely 1 2 3 4 5 Very likely

The project foresees the collaboration among training providers, employers and CSOs in order to motivate adults 45 to participate in trainings which are close to the labour market needs. How would you evaluate the effectiveness of this framework?

Not at all effective 1 2 3 4 5 Very effective



Has your participation in the project influenced your perception, attitude or actions towards engaging low skilled adults over 45 years old in training? Please explain:

Overall, what do you think that works well?

Do you have any suggestions on aspects that could be improved / changed / developed?



Annex 4: Pilot testing - Questionnaire for participants

General info:

Gender:	
F	
M	
Other	

Age:	
45-49	
50-54	
55-59	
60-64	
65+	

Educational level:	
Illiterate	
Primary Education	
Secondary Education	
University Graduate	
Other:	

Have you attended any other training seminar in the last five years?

Yes (please specify the kind of training)	
No	

In which kind of project activities have you participated in?

Individual sessions	
Training activities	
Contact with employers (e.g. interview, job placement...)	

Incentives & expectations

What motivated you to participate in the project?

To find a job/ Increase possibilities to find a job	
To learn new things	



To meet other people and improve my social network	
To participate in a seminar adapted to the labour market needs	
To have direct contact with employers	
Other:	

Individual Sessions/ Career Counselling

To what extent do you think that individual counselling helped you (please rate from 1 to 5)

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Greatly

What were the most useful aspects of individual sessions?

What changes should be made to improve the individual sessions?

Evaluation of trainings/ seminars

Please state below to which extent you agree or disagree with the following

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The content of the seminar/training was appropriate for my needs					
I gained sufficient knowledge on the seminar/training topic					
I will use this knowledge to fulfill related professional tasks					
The length of the seminar/training was appropriate for me					
The pace of the seminar/training was appropriate for me					
The seminar was well organized					



The trainer/facilitator met the requirements of the thematic area					
The seminar/ training can help me in the process to find a job					
The training tools and methods used were satisfactory					

To what extent did the content of the seminar/training correspond to your professional needs?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Greatly

Additional information:

Employers/ Companies

Have you met potential employers during your participation in the program so far?

YES	
NO	

If yes, please state which activity was implemented.

Interview	
Training/ seminar	
Internship	

To what extent do you find useful your contact with employers in the context of the project:

Not at all useful 1 2 3 4 5 Very useful

Overall evaluation of the project and its impact

Please state below to which extent you agree or disagree with the following

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
--	----------------------	----------	-------------------------------	-------	-------------------

The project met my expectations					
The project can help me in the process to find a job					
The project has an impact on my personal development, beyond the professional dimension					
Through the project I met people who can help me to enter the labour market					
I have the necessary material equipment to participate effectively in the process/ project					
My environment encouraged/ supported me for my smooth participation in the project					
The coordinators [Name of Implementing Agency] encouraged/ supported me for smooth participation in the project					
After my participation in the project, I feel more willing to participate in similar projects in the future					
After my participation in the project, I feel more willing to seek training opportunities to upgrade my skills					

How satisfied are you with the project?

Very dissatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 Very satisfied

What was the most important thing you gained from the project?

What would you suggest for the improvement of the project?

Empowerment Index

To what extend do you think that your participation in the project has improved your situation in the labour market?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Greatly

To what extend you feel more motivated, more confident in your skills and have a more positive attitude after participating in the project?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Greatly

To what extend your participation in the project improved the situation in of your family or environment?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Greatly



Annex 5: Pilot testing – Questionnaire for counsellors

Please answer the following questions based on your experience in the whole project implementation period.

General information

Organisation

Name of respondent

Contact details

Evaluation of motivation strategies & tools for unemployed low skilled adults over 45 years old involvement in training

Which motivation strategies for the involvement of unemployed low skilled adults over 45 years old in training have you used?

(multiple answers)

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. Inform every beneficiary about seminars/trainings that exist	
Training designed by professionals of the labor market, direct contact with the enterprises, targeted to the labor market needs	
Design seminars and educational programs that recognize the qualifications gained through the participation	
Use distance learning methods to encourage flexibility of the program	
Other (please specify)	

Which motivation strategies worked well according to your experience?

Which difficulties have you encountered?

Is there something that would help in overcoming those difficulties?

According to your experience what could be improved / changed / developed on the proposed strategies?
(if you have additional strategies to suggest please include them here)

Overall, how would you rate the effectiveness of the strategies you have used?

Ineffective 1 2 3 4 5 Very Effective

Which tools for low skilled adults over 45 years old training have you used?

(multiple answers)

Individualized sessions	
Employment history	
Counselling process calendar	
Professional Interests	
Occupational Photos	
Opportunities for career development	
Working conditions	
Life curve	
Skills and competencies	
Transferable skills	
Values	
Personality self-report questionnaire	
Constraints	
The wheel	
Discover a new profession	
Identify network and allies	
Interview with expert	
Decision making	
Professional goal definition	
6 thinking hats	
GROW model	
Personal action plan	
Balancing personal and professional life	
Group sessions	
Job search methods self-questionnaire	
Job search record	
Organization and management of training	
Recruitment process	
English Language	
Internet skills	
Soft skills	
Training assessment template	
Evaluation cards	



Final assessment	
Educational activities	
Case studies	

Which tools worked well according to your experience?

Which difficulties have you encountered?

Is there something that would help in overcoming those difficulties?

According to your experience what could be improved / changed / developed on the proposed tools? (if you have additional tools to suggest please include them here)

Overall, how would you rate the effectiveness of the tools you have used?

Ineffective 1 2 3 4 5 Very Effective

How likely are you to use the proposed strategies / tools in the future?

Extremely unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely likely

Evaluation of motivation strategies for employers

Which motivation strategies for the engagement of employers in training schemes have you used?

(multiple answers)

Designate a person of reference for networking activities with labour market	
Create an engagement strategy plan presenting all the benefits for the employers	
Organize opportunities to meet and work together-meetings, events, focus groups	
Translate intent to action- create a partner's agreement	
Develop transformational partnerships- adapt to employer's motivations and together create new projects or collaborations	
Follow up and readjust the engagement strategy plan	

Which motivation strategies worked well according to your experience?

Which difficulties have you encountered?

Is there something that would help in overcoming those difficulties?

According to your experience what could be improved / changed / developed on the proposed strategies? (if you have additional strategies to suggest please include them here)

Overall, how would you rate the effectiveness of the strategies you have used?

Ineffective 1 2 3 4 5 Very Effective

How likely are you to use the proposed strategies / tools in the future?

Extremely unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely likely

Impact on beneficiaries

According to your observation of / experience with beneficiaries participating in the programme, do you think they have developed their employability profile (i.e. soft skills, digital skills, technical, language and /or other hard skills)? Please describe, also including examples / stories of change.

Can you see a difference in beneficiaries' attitude, behaviour, approach towards training and professional integration? Please describe, also including examples / stories of change.

Have you observed any other project intended or unintended impact on beneficiaries?

Overall project evaluation

Overall, to which extent are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the programme?

Very dissatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 Very satisfied

In your experience with the project, how accurate or inaccurate did you find the requirements and factors affecting participation of unemployed low-skilled adults over 45 years old in training, as defined in IO1?

Very inaccurate 1 2 3 4 5 Very accurate



The project foresees the collaboration among training providers, employers and CSOs in order to motivate adults 45 to participate in trainings which are close to the labour market needs. How would you evaluate the effectiveness of this framework?

Not effective at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very effective

Has your participation in the project influenced your perceptions, overall attitude and actions towards engaging low skilled adults over 45 years old in training? Please explain:

Overall, what do you think that works well?

Do you have any suggestions on aspects that could be improved / changed / developed?