

EPP PROJECT (Nov 2014 – Oct 2016)

Strengthening Emergent Professional Profiles in the third sector – a way to foster innovative bridges to work and social inclusion of disadvantaged groups

Erasmus + KA 02 | Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices. Strategic Partnerships for vocational education and training

Executive summary

The EPP was a **European project** that took place between November 2014 and October 2016, with the main subject was the current challenges of the professionals working in WISEs and other intervention devices aiming disadvantaged groups towards labour market. Focusing on coaching roles and marketing functions developed by these organizations, the project debates and proposes training and advocacy instruments in the field of work integration of disadvantaged groups.

It is a **strategic partnership** coordinated by A3S Association (Portugal), in partnership with ARBEIT Plus (Austria), ENSIE (Belgium) SCF (Italy) and SEE (UK). Partners have lengthy experiences in training, consultancy, research, networking and lobbying in the fields of social enterprises, and especially on WISE (Work Integration social Enterprises). We are members of ENSIE, sharing a common mission of social and professional integration of disadvantaged groups.

The EPP is based on a **methodology** of action research focused in ten case studies and in the sharing and debate of the interim results with the key stakeholders, performed between March and June of 2016 through multiplier events (workshops and professional training).

The EPP **objectives** are the following:

- To identify commune needs and challenges of training, qualification and certification of skills of professionals working in this sub-sector of social enterprises in EU.
- Create instruments for intervention in the field of professional qualification of WISE.
- Lay the foundation for a structured and strategic intervention of medium and long term partnership for advocacy and lobbying on the qualifications of WISE professionals.

Its main results come down to four **products**:

- One study: The coaching and marketing functions in WISE - exploratory study in five European countries. In the first part of this study the historical, theoretical and conceptual basis for the understanding of WISE are thrown. Then, an update of the situation of the WISE sector in each of the partner countries is done. This is illustrated by two case studies and the main innovation

trends that can be verified are identified. Lastly, the coaching and marketing functions in the global amount of the 10 case studies are analysed, identifying the main competencies for the reinforcement of efficiency, innovation and the impacts of WISE near disadvantaged groups and of the economic and social organization in general. We highlight the appendix of this study that reunites in one document with a high support potential for professional training and advocacy, a detailed description of the five national contexts and of the 10 case studies.

- Two training packages addressed to the professionals carrying out coaching and marketing duties. These products are based in a description of the functional profile of their functions in the WISE. This description has a wide perspective, assimilating the whole range of skills identified in the case studies. Therefore, it is a baseline skills profile which is not fully filled by one single WISE but also a reference who allows us to think about different models of intervention and stimulate the development of programs and training plans accordingly adjusted to the needs of every specific context. Each one of the products further develops a training plan for one or several areas of the foregoing profile, to stimulate the creation of new training plans by the final users of these products. They are still examples of exercises and training tools that can integrate the training plans.

- One document of recommendations for the development of qualification strategies of WISE Human Resources to an European level and each partner country. In addition to this document, it was produced a baseline report to support advocacy and lobbying activities, identifying the main European documents, institutions and instruments in the field of education and professional training.

Finally it is important to highlight an unexpected product of the project, a scientific article - *Professional Development in Work Integration Social Enterprises (WISEs)* – produced by a direct participant of our activities, PhD Rory Ridley-Duff.

All of the products are available in the official websites of the five partners.

The ultimate **purposes**, or the expected impacts of the project, are contribute to strengthen and qualify the training offer aimed at the increase of professional skills of human resources of WISE and to promote effectiveness and innovation in professional inclusion of disadvantaged groups.

To reinforce, the main conclusions to enhance are:

1. WISEs are privileged instruments to fight poverty and social exclusion, a specific subsector of social enterprises and social and solidarity economy, and a set of intervention models with a history of innovation and high degree of social impact.

2. The WISE models vary from country to country and in some countries of EU (i.e. Hungary) they are instruments which are not implemented. Our sample of five European countries shows similarities between Austria, Belgium and Italy. These are countries where WISE are more institutionalized, have longer historical traditions and stronger corporate organization. Nevertheless the models of work integration vary substantially between countries. Portugal and the UK emerge as eccentric examples for different reasons and opposite, in some aspects. Portugal has a unique situation. Having had a top down WISE law in 1998, (a replica of the French model of enterprises d'insertion), finds today a situation where the law was abolished in the beginning of 2015. In the UK, there is a vibrant social entrepreneurship in a wide range of activities, including the search for new solutions for the work integration of disadvantaged groups and decreasing engagement by the state.

Some of the innovative trends in the WISEs models are the following.

In the transition models for the regular labour market

- In Italy the model of work integration traditionally followed by social cooperatives type b (i.e. WISE) has been towards permanent employment. The cases illustrate the progress in adapting the models of work integration. In the regions where they are based (Veneto, Emilia Romagna, etc.), which has a high level of economic and social development, the transition model (initially developed in France and Belgium) seems to make sense, for a labour market with the potential for absorbing labour.
- In Austria the Job TransFair model, is the business market model of temporary employment agencies, but with the objectives and mission of WISE and employment public policy.
- In the UK the two cases are a test of new models of work integration, with very distinct and unique components when compared to other models.

In the models for permanent employment:

- The two Belgium cases underline the value of networks. The regional WISE Network (RES – Réseau d'Entreprises Sociales) is training and delivering high quality job coaching services to their members.
- In Belgium the Groupe Terre is an interesting case of the development of a participated human resources management policy. This policy and its practices are part of the integration pathway for their target groups as well as for all workers (i.e former and new individuals in integration itinerary. Groupe Terre is interesting because all staff is included in the management decision making processes of the organization

In other models

- *miEnterprise*, in the UK, is a case of collective and cooperative solutions to support self-employment.

3. The main needs and challenges for the training and qualification of professionals in WISE must take into consideration several key issues:

- Models of work integration are continually evolving, fostering effectiveness in their results and innovation in their methods and mission. Finding ways to share knowledge, experience and tools is a basis for better results and more social innovation. Thus strategies to develop long-life learning initiatives must include, whenever possible, debate on WISE achievements, diversity and progress in the creation of innovative solutions for work integration of disadvantaged groups.
- There are countries where the challenges are around the awareness of WISE in civil society and in VET systems, in social enterprises and social economy networks and at the public policy making level (namely Portugal).
- There are countries where the WISE subsector is more established and opportunities for life-long learning activities are more structured. The development and acknowledgement of human resource qualifications and certification is needed in the WISE subsector.
- There are countries are (particularly the UK) where WISE face urgent challenges other than qualification and training, such as (de)regulation and austerity.

Thus there are two key guidelines to ensure the development of training and qualification:

- Promote European diversity and exchange of best practice, enabling a more innovative ecosystem
- Produce flexible training packages adapted for different needs.

4. Key skills for WISE professionals

Coaching: Meeting people needs	Marketing: Meeting WISEs needs
<p>Life coaching, practices associated with personal development and employability (including support to those with without adequate health and housing or social, educational or vocational skills). Transversal to all coaching activity</p> <p>Job coaching practices associated with learning a profession and/or a job position (mentoring, training in real work context, conventional vocational training)</p> <p>Employment coaching; practices related to active employment search of individuals in the context of the regular labour market</p> <p>Self-employment coaching</p> <p>Participatory methodologies in human resources management</p>	<p>Conventional marketing of products and services and institutional marketing (including ICT)</p> <p>Social Marketing (advocacy for causes)</p> <p>Employers coaching, practices that target employers and their human resources management needs related with the integration of the disadvantaged groups.</p>

5. As a DNA function, coaching in WISE reveals a wide range of competencies, skills and knowledge, taking into consideration the European diversity. There are several levels of qualification to consider: i) academic degree – universities; VET providers (initial and continuous professional training); WISEs networks (continuous professional training); WISE organisations (continuous professional training).