Intellectual Output 3
Demographic change

Counsellors Study and Training Exchange Programme (C-Step)

Didactical Framework

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April, 2020

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Preface

It is clear that the population is ageing. In 2019, 20.3% of the EU population was aged over 65, an increase from 17.8% in 2012, and in 2019, 26.2% of the population was aged 0-24, down from 27.4% in 2012. Although these changes may seem small, it shows that the overall population is ageing as fewer people are born, and people live longer. This trend is predicted to continue, which will change the way our societies work. Integral to this will be the employment of older workers, so increased attention needs to be paid to getting older people to remain in the labour market and reduce barriers to employment. In 2019, 60% of 55–64-year-olds were in employment in the EU, however this figure differs greatly across European countries, with Iceland having the highest rate at 81.2%, to Turkey having the lowest at 33.6%. It is therefore clear that a change is needed to remove any barriers and misconceptions about older workers and to create a European workforce that embraces all ages.

Those ages over 50 struggle to gain employment despite laws preventing age discrimination and this may be due to the misconceptions that employers have about older workers, and the preference for younger workers. In general, younger workers are believed to have more motivation, flexibility, ability to learn, loyalty and cost less. It has also been found that older workers hold these misconceptions as well, and because of this are less likely to apply for jobs. However, these perceptions are false as older workers also have these attributes, and having a mix of employee ages, instead of just young and middle aged, is an asset to any company. Age is another element of diversity, and employers who promote diversity, including age, promote intergenerational working which brings together different perspectives and leads to greater productivity, innovation and problem-solving.

An increase in older workers will bring its own challenges to the workforce – dealing with potential health issues, training around technology and innovation, out of date qualifications etc. - but they will also bring many assets. One of the main assets that older workers bring is knowledge. This knowledge – sector-specific knowledge, knowledge of the company, knowledge of soft skills such as working patterns, communication, leadership etc. - will mean that this knowledge can be kept and shared with younger workers, keeping vital knowledge within the industry, strengthening the company and its workers as a whole. However, this shift to incorporate older workers will require businesses to learn to accept and adapt to this new way of working, and careers practitioners can be vital in this change, as well as the government.

Career's practitioners have a vital role to play in increasing the employment rate of older workers as when people are looking to apply for jobs, change their career, get additional training etc. they will often come to careers practitioners

for help. It is therefore vital that careers practitioners understand the difficulties older workers may face, their situation within the labour market (wanting to look for enjoyable and meaningful but shorter-term careers instead of decades), and how to best market their skills and experience to employers.

Introduction

The aim of Academia+ is to provide a series of further training courses to careers professionals (counselling, coaching, guidance, information and advice practitioners) to strengthen their professional abilities. In particular, we have chosen to focus the C-STEPs (Counsellors' Study and Training Exchange Programmes) on current and emerging challenges in the labour market and field of careers guidance: counselling migrants and refugees; dealing with demographic change; and responding to digitisation. As the C-STEPs take place within the activities of the Academia Network, these topics strengthen and add to their aim of increasing the competences of careers professionals and exchanging knowledge.

The content for this C-STEP deals with the challenge of demographic change on the labour market; in particular the impact of an ageing population and how the labour market will need to adapt to better incorporate these workers as people live longer, retire later and the number of older workers increases. Currently employment amongst older workers is quite low, and there are large differences in their employment rate across the European countries. As a result, there is a lot of work to do across Europe to increase the employment rate of older workers and change attitudes held amongst the general population in relation to older workers. Career's guidance professionals are integral to this process as they can help older workers realise and receive training, as well as market the value of older employees.

The didactical framework presented in this document refers to the topic "demographic change", with the four topics covering the main challenges and knowledge gaps that careers professionals face when dealing with an older client.

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1. Content of the C-STEP 3: Demographic change

Older people may bring with them different challenges to the careers counselling, coaching and guidance process to younger people simply due to their age, experience and expectations of their future. In addition, the process may need to take a more holistic view of life, including issues and activities outside of work and after retirement, rather than being focussed purely on work, and as a result careers professionals will need additional skills and knowledge to deal with an increase of older clients. Therefore, this C-STEP covers the main challenges that careers professionals have when working with older clients and the knowledge they will need as the number of older clients increases.

The C-STEP is divided into four units, which will be delivered online through Zoom across four days. The units themselves will include a variety of speakers from different European countries who will use multiple methods of teaching: lecture, workshops, groupwork, question and answer sessions etc.

The **contents and the main aspects of each course units** is described consecutively:

1.1. Unit 1: The challenges of an older workforce

The first online training from the third Counsellors Study and Training Exchange Programm (C-STEP 3) in the Academia+ project focuses on the topic "The challenges of an older workforce".

As first unit is also the introduction to the course, the day will start with an introduction to the entire course, the agenda, the ways in which it will be delivered and the procedures around interactive elements.

Furthermore, this unit will summarise the current demographic and labour market situation, and counsellors' experiences of, working with older people, highlighting the challenges they bring to the labour market and to the careers counselling, coaching and guidance process, as well as misconceptions around these challenges and how they can be combatted. This will be the basis for the topic challenges of an older workforce

The complete unit will always combine determination of participants´ experience in conducting, sitting on or just hearing or reading about career guidance and counselling sessions with an older workforce with evidence on specific challenges and demands in such settings on the hand side and deliver basic knowledge on the other hand side.

By focusing on the above mentioned contents unit 1 aims to meet the following **learning outcomes**:

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- Labour market trends vs demographic trends

- Barriers and stereotypes facing an older worker

- Health and access issues

- Combatting a loss of motivation to work

- Advisors' knowledge gaps and how guidance changes when dealing with an older client

- The digital divide: support and training to increase digital skills of older workers

1.2. Unit 2: Retraining in later life

The second online training from the C-STEP 3 is about "Retraining in later life ". This course unit will focus on retraining, in particular the benefits of retraining in later life, both for individuals as well as companies, and how to promote and find retraining options suitable for each client. This will be the basis for the theme retraining in later life.

The complete unit will always combine determination of participants´ experience in conducting, sitting on or just hearing or reading about career guidance and counselling sessions with an older workforce with evidence on specific challenges and demands in such settings on the hand side and deliver basic knowledge on the other hand side.

By focusing on the above mentioned contents unit 2 aims to meet the following **learning outcomes**:

- Challenges arising from skills mismatches and a reluctance to retrain

- How to make training attractive for older people

- Work-based learning for the older generation

1.3. Unit 3: Realigning the expectations of the labour market

The third online training from the C-STEP 3 concerns to the theme "Realigning the expectations of the labour market ". The assessment of clients' potential to enter the labour market successfully is a main task of career guidance and counselling in general and requires knowledge around clients and their skills, and how they match to the demands

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and needs of the labour market. Therefore, the third learning unit will look at the challenges and misconceptions the labour market may have about older workers, why older workers should not be discouraged, as well as how the skills of older workers can fit into the labour market and how they can communicate this. This will be the basis for the issue of realigning the expectations of the labour market.

The complete unit will always combine determination of participants´ experience in conducting, sitting on or just hearing or reading about career guidance and counselling sessions with an older workforce with evidence on specific challenges and demands in such settings on the hand side and deliver basic knowledge on the other hand side.

By focusing on the above mentioned contents unit 3 aims to meet the following **learning outcomes**:

- Challenges for businesses in employing older people – stereotypes and misconceptions

- How to adapt recruitment and facilities to an older workforce

- Jobs and skills gaps where older people can add value

1.4.   Unit 4: Multigenerational collaboration: focus on different target groups and generations

The fourth online training from the C-STEP 3 focuses on the "Multigenerational collaboration: focus on different target groups and generations ". It stands that diversity is an important aspect to any successful business. Therefore, the fourth unit will explore how diversity in age can make businesses more successful, as well as help individuals learn and increase their skills. This will be the basis for the matter multigenerational collaboration focusing on different target groups and generations.

The complete unit will always combine determination of participants´ experience in conducting, sitting on or just hearing or reading about career guidance and counselling sessions with an older workforce as well as different target groups and generations with evidence on specific challenges and demands in such settings on the hand side and deliver basic knowledge on the other hand side.

By focusing on the above mentioned contents unit 4 aims to meet the following **learning outcomes**:

- The value of life experience and knowledge of older people in training provided to young people

- Developing multigenerational learning and work spaces

- The role of mentors

2. Structure Plan

The third online training week (C-STEP 3) is divided in four learning units, with 360 minutes classroom teaching/lessons each day (340 minutes for teaching and learning plus approx. 20 minutes for wrap up, questions by the lecturer/open questions from the participants or final discussion within each learning units).

The overview of topics addressed in the learning units that make up the CSTEP3 are presented into the following flowsheet of the one-week online training:

Table 1: Overview of the learning units in C-STEP 3

Learning Units	Unit 1. The challenges of an older workforce	Unit 2. Retraining in later life	Unit 3. Realigning the expectations of the labour market	Unit 4. Multigenerational collaboration: focus on different target groups and generations
Contents	1. Introduction of the facilitator and the participants and the course topic & goals 2. Labour market trends vs demographic trends 3. How demographic change will affect the work of careers guidance professional's 4. Barriers and stereotypes facing an older worker and the ways in which these aren't always true 5. Advisors' knowledge gaps and how guidance changes when dealing with an older client 6. Networking session 7.Wrap up and final discussion	1. Introduction of the facilitator and the participants and the course topic & goals 2. Challenges arising from skills mismatches and why keeping skills up to date is important 3. How to make training attractive and useful for older people and strategies to retrain older workers 4. Work-based learning for the older generation 5. Mentor training 6. Digital training (The digital divide) 7. Wrap up and final discussion	1. Introduction of the facilitator and the participants and the course topic & goals 2. Challenges for businesses in employing older people 3. How to be inclusive to all regardless of age or responsibilities (policies around flexible working, caring responsibilities, health, access issues etc.) 4. Jobs and skills gaps where older people can add value 5. Wrap up and questions by the lecturer	1. Introduction of the facilitator and the participants and the course topic & goals 2. The advantages of having a multigenerational workforce (to businesses as a whole and the workforce regardless of age) 3. Women returning to workplace after undertaking caring responsibilities and the challenges they face 4. The Thorny Issue of Career Counselling and Social Justice: Mission Impossible? 5. Young people's mental health project 6. Wrap up, open questions and final discussion

All learning units are structured to fit in the one-week-C-STEP. The lessons can follow the pictured schedule pattern in Table. 1. A different structure of the whole C-STEP 3 is possible.

3. Didactical principals for procedure of learning units

As the course will be delivered to careers counsellors, coaches and guidance practitioners, the content needs to be delivered in a way that increases their practical knowledge, skills and experience to help them fulfil their jobs properly[1] and help older clients engage with the labour market. As a result, the course units must address general principles of adult learning and vocational training. Besides the content-based knowledge pointed out above in chapter 2, the course units will refer to a competence-based approach (Cedefop, 2009) and addresses the following questions:

- What can the practitioner learn from the topic for her or his practical work?

- What competencies does the practitioner have and need on this topic for their career development?

- How can practitioners reflect transnational topics of the courses on a national level for their practical field?

- How can practitioners transfer the acquired knowledge and competencies by this training to their professional practice? – "what can I take to my practice?"

- How can the speakers bring in important topics and knowledge derived from a national perspective that will be relevant and useful for practitioners?

- How will the delivery methods be organised to ensure active engagement with all topics? E.g., work in groups, lecture, question and answer sessions etc.

- How can we ensure that the international competence model of Career Guidance and Counselling[2], is included in the C-STEP?

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[1] The model based on **Lifelong Guidance** entails the assumption of new methods, forms of organization, resources and innovative materials which involves the confluence of different core competencies in professional work (Schiersmann, et al., 2012).

[2] The development of **common European Competence Standards (ECS)** for the academic training of career practitioners in Europe and how to implement and establish such competences in the practice is required. Hence, quality standards of guidance services and the professional profile of guidance practitioners should be framed according those ECS for the academic training of career practitioners (NICE, 2016).

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- Critical reflection

Prior to attending the C-STEP, all participants will have their own opinions on older clients and older workers based on their own experiences and the attitudes held within their culture and country towards older people in the workforce. Therefore, it is important that we emphasise the importance of critically reflecting individual views and ensuring that personal views, biases, stereotypes of misconceptions are not brought into the careers counselling, coaching and guidance process.

4. Anticipated learning outcomes

The participants should develop the following competencies and close knowledge gaps within the C-STEP3 or afterwards with the help of the online sources:

- Participants are aware of the demographic situation of their country and Europe, as well as main trends in the labour market including skills needs and shortages.
- Participants know and are aware of the wide range of specific challenges, topics and needs in career guidance settings with older clients when looking for work or training opportunities. This includes specific barriers for older people looking for work, as well as barriers to promotion within a company.
- Participants are aware of the different opportunities and support available for retraining in later life in their country as well as the challenges and opportunities they may offer clients.
- Participants are aware of the stereotypes and misconceptions held by businesses, and the challenges they may have when incorporating older workers, but they will also be aware of how to tackle these misconceptions and how to create a more inclusive work environment
- Participants are aware of the benefits of multigenerational working and the benefits that older workers can bring to businesses – e.g., mentors, and increased sector knowledge and soft skills etc. Based on this, practitioners are aware of how to help older workers communicate key skills they have and benefits they can bring to a business based on their experience and wealth of knowledge.
- Participants are aware of a holistic way to support older clients in their lives that incorporates labour market issues, such as finding a job, but also wider issues such as their overall career and retirement plans, retraining, health and associated issues, how they can have a successful retirement etc.

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5. Organisational aspects

Although we planned to host 4 separate face-to-face meetings, this will be combined into one larger online course with participants from a variety of European countries attending. The following characteristics should be common though and will be collected as part of the registration process:

- Modality: online training

- Use of common platforms: delivered online through Zoom or Microsoft Teams, guest speakers will deliver lectures, videos, group work, practical examples and reflexive exercises.

- Temporality: each training unit is developed in one week

- Schedule: the online training week (C-STEP) is divided in four learning units, with 360 minutes classroom teaching/lessons each day

- Group size: at least 40 participants per day, up to a maximum of 60

- Age of participants: 18-65 years

- Sex of participants: Mixed group, experience is that most participants will be female.

- Educational background of participants: Participants can be those interested in careers counselling/coaching/guidance (so recent high school and university graduates) to experienced careers practitioners. Most careers practitioners have undergraduate or postgraduate degrees with additional career counselling/coaching/guidance qualifications.

- Participants´ experience in counselling (theoretical and practical): All participants will have at least an insight into the (theoretical) basics of career guidance and counselling. The majority may also have broad practical experience stemming from internships in counselling institutions or through their own careers and careers practitioners.

- Organisation/Institutions of origin: Public Employment Services, Vocational Educational Training centres, Euroguidance Network, Universities, Psycho-pedagogical offices/departments, Associations, NGOs, Social services, etc.

- Sustainable Training Concept based on a systematic evaluation and discussion of the pilot training, a final training concept for the qualification of teaching and counselling staff will be developed.

5. Methods and Material

Due to the COVID-19 crises, the third C-STEP "Demographic change" has been converted into a four-day online training taught by a series of webinars[3].

With the intention of performing an active, interactive and dynamic methodology with the class participants, so that the entire group is kept on board without the risk of possible dropouts due to lack of interest or motivation, lack of awareness, etc., various are the activities and dynamics addressed in these learning units.

The four units that make up the third CSTEP are a whole day online training, which combines input sessions with group work and self-learning sessions as well as plenary discussions. Thus, a mix of lectures, presentations, videos, group work, practical examples, text analysis, reflexive exercises, conference meeting tools and group work tools are proposed.

All the material are provided via the Moodle learning platform of Academia + project. More information on: https://www.academiaplus.eu/moodle/course/view.php?id=6&section=1

▪ The Moodle Structure

Moodle was chosen as the platform on which all the material is provided. One of the advantages of Moodle is a clearly arranged overview with which the material can be presented.

The chosen structure on Moodle follows generally the respective structure of each day of the online training. Every speaker with his or her session have their own section on the course page. One can find the presentations, videos, exercises, sample solution etc., always in the respective section of the speaker. The files can be found there, they are always numbered in ascending order. So the session can be worked through like a learning module. There are longer input presentations, exercises on various aspects and also smaller contributions from the speakers.

▪ How to use the documents on Moodle

The provided documents are always available as PDF files to ensure a usage on most devices. Videos are inserted as a stream directly from the Moodle page so one does not need a separate flash or media player. Sometimes it is added a YouTube link on the page or on the additional material. In most cases, when the

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[3] https://academiaplus.eu/c-step-1/

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speakers have shown a video on their session, can be found this on the video (recording of the session) was prepared on Moodle. So the external YouTube link is additional; maybe if one wants to watch it again or with different subtitles. Can be found the links for the YouTube videos in every presentation as one works trough them.

In general, there are 7 different types of documents on Moodle.

Table 2. Documents on Moodle

Moodle learning platform of Academia + project	
Videos	Each session has at least one video that consists of the recording of the online training day. As these are made available directly on Moodle, every participant/ interested party can access the videos directly on the platform. No extra software or similar is necessary, so that easy access can be guaranteed
Presentations	On every session can be found the presentation used by the speakers in the online training. Depending on whether it is a coherent input presentation or a working session with smaller input presentations, can be found one document with the whole presentation or a splitted presentation. These include a smaller input session from the speaker or preparations for a group work or an exercise. These documents are always named with 'presentation' and the specific name of this short session
Exercises	In different sessions the speakers prepared some exercises and group work. These documents are named with 'exercise' and the specific name of this exercise and they contain two different didactic levels. On the one hand they are prepared for participants and interested people who want to work through the material for themselves. For those there is a small introduction into the exercise and the numbered tasks one has to do. Furthermore there is also a note how one needs to save/ share or send the outcome of this exercise. Depending on the situation one can share his/her screen or present his/her outcome or result on Padlet, Sticky notes, etc. On the other hand can be found a didactic level prepared for potential trainers, speakers or lecturer who want to host further education/ training, maybe in their own institution or company. For those people and for such use of the material can be found italic additional information in the exercises which are marked with 'Editorial note'. These notes includes hints, tips and instructions only for lecturer or teacher. For the most part these are didactic hints or assistance, which software can be used for the presentation of the work results, etc. These notes also contain information on what needs to be prepared in advance of the session/ training. As an example if one as a trainer want his/her participants to share their work results on a Whiteboard or with sticky notes, can be found a recommendation about the software we and the speakers used in the online training
Sample solutions	Safeguarding of work results is extremely important for the success of a further education session/ training. When your participants come from different countries, backgrounds or at least cities/ companies etc. you will receive a huge mass of productive work results and outcome. In addition to the exercises we provide a specific sample solution. On one side the sample solution is provided on the Moodle platform are the main work results of our participants from the online training. According to privacy policy it's needed to blurry all personal data etc. On the other side, these sample solutions are only intended as additional information. They are not all-encompassing or to be seen as the only solution of the exercise
Additional material (links, texts, handouts etc.)	According to the respective session of the speakers it is provided additional material like links, additional texts or handouts. If additional material be available for the specific session, it will be referred to at the respective place in the video or presentation

Preparation before the unit

It is important for a good start to the training, whether it takes place in presence or online, that there is enough time for getting to know each other. In the Moodle structure the first part of the session is an introduction part where the participants introduce themselves and get a first overview about the schedule for the session. After a short introduction made by the speaker it is also necessary to establish some rules for the session. Especially for an online training with many participants some specific rules of conduct can structure the session and thus contributes to the success. It is necessary to mute/ turn off all the microphones while the speaker is talking. Otherwise, the connection will deteriorate, background noise and any interference will cause anxiety and poor understanding. Depending on the number of participants it is also necessary to turn off the video signal while the speaker is presenting. More video signals means more data consumption, which may affect the quality of the conference. In small groups or for group work and discussions in several groups it's useful to switch on the video signal.

While using the common platforms (Zoom, MSTeams, etc.) there are two different options for asking questions while an input session. On the one hand one can use the chat. It is very helpful to collect and channel the questions during a longer input session. The questions asked in the chat can then be answered in special Q&A sessions. On the other hand, Zoom and MSTeams provide different actions for participants who want to say or ask something. There is a raise your hand symbol with which you can indicate that you have a question or want to say something. The little hand will then pop up at the speakers desktop so he/she knows that someone wants to say something.

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- o 6. Collaborative working (p. 36-41)

- o 7. Flexible working (p. 42-46)

- o 17 Spaces to collaborate (p. 108-119)

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- 2. Zwick, T.: *Training effectiveness- Difference between younger and older employees* (p. 36- 54)

- 5. Schmid, K.: *Barriers to and benefits of further vocational training for older employees* (p. 106- 133)

- 6. De Baets, S. & Warmoes, V.: *Learning later in life: the olders worker's perspective* (p. 134-156)

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- 2. Taylor, M.A.: *Recruiting and Retaining older Employees: Planning, Designing, Implementining, and Evaluating Programs* (p.13-33)

- 5. McDermott, E. & Goldberg, C.: *Legal Issues and the Aging Workforce* (p. 102- 122)

- 7. Barnes-Farrell, J. et. al: *Age(ing) and Work Attitudes* (p. 146 171)

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Links

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