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## Intellectual Output 3 Demographic Change

# Counsellors Study and Training Exchange Programme (C-Step)

## Unit 1: Challenges of an Older Workforce

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## Unit 1: Challenges of an Older Workforce

Aspire-igen, United Kingdom

### 1. Content of the Unit 1: "Challenges of an Older Workforce"

The unit description for all online training days in the Academia+ project should be understood as a helpful basis if you would like to hold a similar training for the covered topics within the online training days of the project. Therefore this unit description is written in present tense and anonymous (although you find names of all speakers and lecturers of the online training in the original material on Moodle) and gives you detailed information about how to use the presentations, group excersises, conference meeting tools and group work tools.

The first online training day from the third Counsellors Study and Training Exchange Programme (C-STEP) in the Academia+ project focuses on the topic „Challenges of an older workforce“. Therefore the first Unit should cover Labour market trends vs demographic trends – the past, current situation and future and the implications these changes will have for work. Furthermore the unit should focus on the specific demographics of older people (50+) and their role in the labour market and the changes faced by those over 50. Also covered is how demographic change will affect the work of careers guidance professionals and does it differ from the perspective of businesses. Barriers and stereotypes facing an older worker will also be discussed. Advisors’ knowledge gaps also feature and how guidance changes when dealing with an older client. This will be the basis for the topic „Challenges of an Older Workforce“.

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

### 2. Learning outcomes

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



- Discuss demographic and labour market trends so as to understand the changes which will occur in the workplace
- To understand how working with older clients will impact on the work of career guidance professionals
- To dispel barriers and stereotypes relating to older workers

### 3. Structure plan

Unit 1 is a whole day online training which combines input sessions with group work and self-learning sessions as well as plenary discussions.

In the morning it focuses on labour market trends, on how demographic change will affect the work of careers guidance professionals as well as some barriers and stereotypes facing an older workforce.

The afternoon acknowledges the advisers' knowledge gaps, guidance with an older client and culminates in a session exchange of knowledge and experience between the various participants, offering the possibility of establishing channels of communication and contact/networking between them.

An overview of the structure plan can be seen below and is explained in detail afterwards.


**Table 1: Overview of the structure plan Unit 1. Challenges of an older workforce**

Time	Topic	Method, media and material	Outcome	Comments
10.00	1. Introduction of the facilitator and the participants and the course topic & goals	Zoom session Plenary video session	Getting to know each other	Lecturer enters Zoom session and shows welcome slide from ppt presentation  Lecturer introduces him/herself and explains the agenda for the day  Lecturer asks for volunteers to say their name, their institution and what they would like to learn  (Time depends on the number of participants – flexibility needed)
10.15	2. Labour Market Trends vs Demographic Trends	PowerPoint presentation and discussion	Basic knowledge about age differences relevant for counselling situations	Topics to include  Longer working lives, skills, shortage, learning as an older employee, age discrimination, retaining staff, age friendly working environments
11.00	break			
11.15	3. How Demographic Change will affect the work of careers guidance professionals	PowerPoint presentation with lecture & discussion and/or group work. Questions from participants	Basic knowledge about age differences relevant for counselling situations	Age management for HR. Counselling of 50+ age group  Theories and methods for counselling experienced individuals.
12.00	Short break			
12.05	4. Barriers and Stereotypes facing an older workforce	PowerPoint presentation  Group activities in breakout rooms  Question and answer session at the end		The older worker's mindset and desire to work beyond retirement. Topics to include benefits for employers in taking on/retaining older workers. Main reasons for retirement eg illness etc  Skills gaps and retraining
13:30	lunch break			
14:30	5. Advisors' knowledge gaps, guidance with an older client	PowerPoint presentation with examples & questions & answers		What unites older employees, positive and negative or gender specific experiences  Dos and don'ts when dealing with older employees



		discussion at the end		
15.35	Break			
14:50	6. Networking session	Informal talks in breakout rooms		Participants choose whom they want to be in a room with and they can change rooms whenever they want. Suggested questions – what is the biggest challenge you have to face in your daily work routine? What is your biggest need in your daily work routine as a counsellor?
16.40	7. Wrap up and final discussion	Plenary session	Summary and sharing	Thank you to all participants and are there any other questions or points to raise
<p><b>Several people and professionals support in the design and development of the training sessions</b>, among others: guest speakers/lectures (those who do the whole presentations, in charge to provide the training input/contents); moderator/s (usually support with the introduction by the speaker, the interventions, the closure of the sessions and sometimes, with certain technical aspects...); a person who is taking care to make notes and support participants by the email (academia.info@gmail.com) and help with phone numbers; a personal technician who is in charge of recording the sessions and to split/distribute the groups in breakout rooms for the group work, etc.; a person responsible to provide links on the chat and/or other additional material, taking care of checking and answering the chat.</p>				

#### 4. Detailed description of the structure plan

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. You can find the presentations, videos, exercises, sample solution etc., always in the respective section of the speaker. The files you can find there 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 our 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 you don't need a separate flash or media player. Sometimes we added a YouTube link on the page or on the additional material. In most cases, when our speakers have shown a video on their session, you can find this on the video (recording of the session) we prepared on Moodle. So the external YouTube link is additional; maybe if you want to watch it again or with different subtitles. You also find the links for the YouTube videos in every presentation as you work through them.

In general there are several different types of documents on Moodle.

### 1. The 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.

### 2. The presentations

On every session you can find the presentation used by our speakers in the online training. Depending on whether it is a coherent input presentation or a working session with smaller input presentations, you will find one document with the whole presentation or a splitted presentation. These include a smaller input session from our 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.

### 3. The exercises

In different sessions our 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 you have to do. Furthermore there is also a note how you need to save/ share or send the outcome of this exercise.



Depending on the situation you can share your screen or present your outcome or result on Padlet, Sticky notes, etc.

On the other hand you can find 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 you can find 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 you as a trainer want your participants to share their work results on a Whiteboard or with sticky notes, you can find a recommendation about the software we and our speakers used in the online training.

#### 4. The 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 we 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.

#### 5. Additional material (links, texts, handouts etc.)

According to the respective session of our speakers we 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. So as you can see in the Moodle structure the first part of the session will be 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.) you have two different options for asking questions while an input session. On the one hand you 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 knows that someone wants to say something.

The following is a detailed description of the structure plan, which provides an overview of the Unit 1: Challenges of an Older Workforce.

## 1. Introduction

The seminar begins with a brief introduction by the speaker (professional profile, institution, lines of research, etc.) in order to get closer to the group (lecturer enters Zoom session and shows welcome slide from ppt presentation) and explains the agenda for the day. Moreover, lecturer asks for volunteers to say their name, their institution and what they would like to learn.

The lecturer then presents a few brief indications on how to make the course a success. To this end, he/she mentions that they are a large group and it is assumed that this is a new experience for everybody (that is why a technical test with participants and speakers in advance is highly recommend).



As mentioned above in the Preparation before the unit section, the lecturer proposes to turn off the participants' microphones, except when they want to contribute and say something. Moreover, it is suggested, if possible, switch on participants' camera, at least during group work.

Participants are welcome to use the chat, but they should be aware that the speaker will not be able to read their comments on the chat while he/she is speaking. So the participants in the chat can raise their hand symbol with which they can indicate that they have a question or want to say something. The questions asked in the chat can then be answered in special Q&A sessions. In addition, to keep discussions alive participants will be invited to share with the team afterwards.

### General information

As it was already pointed out, in order to put the group of participants into contact with each other right at the beginning (Getting to know each other), it is worthwhile to start the online training day with an interaction exercise.. The participants have to do a short introduction of themselves (name, place of work and what their job involves, etc.)

## **2. Labour Market Trends vs Demographic Trends**

The introduction session is followed by a PowerPoint presentation which leads on to discussion re longer working lives, the skills shortage and labour force development, age discrimination and training and retaining of staff. Participants can also make comments and ask questions.

Labour market trends will be discussed – the EU has a goal to raise the retirement age to 67, which is already the case in the United Kingdom. Another EU goal is to have the rate of employment for those over 55 years of age at more than 50% to ensure that economic productivity is maintained. An example of a skills shortage is explained in a slide relating to the construction industry. Future challenges to be addressed are to end negative stereotypes and prejudices relating to older workers and to promote a mutual understanding across the generations.

Other areas which will be discussed are the need for employees to update their knowledge to adapt to labour market needs – lifelong upskilling. Also training methods need to be adjusted to the age and ability of each individual employee.

Comments on this session were that maybe more could be mentioned about the future work shortage in Lithuania, as it will be the biggest in the EU. Where could more information be found about counselling of the 50+ age group.

In Romania, there are dedicated projects in which older people receive guidance but this field is quite new in the country and in small towns it is very hard to do this.

It was mentioned that there are stereotypes about younger workers as well and that a holistic approach for both younger and older generations may be welcome in the future.

### **3. How Demographic Change will affect the work of Careers Guidance Professionals**

This session will be a PowerPoint presentation with a lecture and the chance for participants to offer feedback and questions. Participants will be able to contribute to the discussion and ask questions. Topics to include the role of Human Resources teams in age management, counselling of those approaching retirement. Also discussed at this session will be the importance of keeping up with profession in later life and the wellbeing of older employees. Curricular consequences for the qualification of counsellors will be included.

An interesting topic on the Powerpoint presentation is the life spans and life phases – childhood 0-13 years, then youth, post youth, early adults and adults, senior adults, pensioners and seniors 75+..., the next slides concentrate on the professional life cycle.

There is also reference to the Covid pandemic in this presentation regarding older workers – unemployment in Germany in older workers rises only slightly and labour force participation has not suffered due to the pandemic.

Another topic is the motivation, needs and expectations of older workers plus the opinions of career counsellors and HR specialists of those aged over 50.

### **4. Barriers and Stereotypes facing an Older Worker**

This session will include a PowerPoint presentation which initially looks at the older worker's mindset and the desire of some to work beyond retirement and the barriers faced when intending to do this. How to help older clients not to stereotype themselves will be covered and will include topics such as how to consider health and access issues and how to take in to account flexible working due to these issues plus caring responsibilities which older workers may have. Prejudice due to age will be discussed and the misconceptions



that older employees are not motivated to go for promotion and new learning opportunities. The session will include two breakout rooms with feedback when the groups come back together.

Powerpoint slides show a changing time for the workforce, older employees have adopted a different mindset and they are living longer due to advances in medicine and they are far more active. With this in mind, half of adults plan to work past retirement and just under half would work past the age of 70, if possible. Powerpoint slides will discuss the potential barriers to this – stereotypes, no allowance for health or caring responsibilities.

One question to be posed will be at what age might someone be perceived as an „older worker“ and why?

The responses from the groups re this question were 45, 45+, maybe 50+ and 40-50 35+. Interesting points raised were that employers could be concerned that they would have less time to develop their employees, older workers may not up to date with social media and they might be less connected to the younger generation. It was cited that across different cultures and countries, different level of ages count to older people and also different levels of respect.

One group discussed how it was hard to judge when someone may be classed as an older worker. A comment was „I believe old is not negative, I think it is mostly positive“.

### **5. Advisors' Knowledge Gaps and how Guidance Changes when Dealing with an Older Client**

This session begins with a PowerPoint lecture and examples of how to offer specific support for those age 50+ to get back in to the labour market and to progress in their career and also how to plan for retirement.

Powerpoint slides will first ask how can we bring together what people in the same age group have in common and where are the differences. Then what to do and what not to do when dealing with older workers, as well as finding out what older workers need and what are the obstacles for them such as health or access issues and responsibilities such as caring.

Another issue which will be raised will be the differences between the generations – which are prepared to work longer hours and who places value on the work life balance. Towards the end of the presentation the question why do some people go on working longer even when financially they do not need to.

Regarding careers practitioners, a discussion will include the key competencies which they need to fulfil their roles in terms of counselling on the key challenges of the European labour market. They will discuss how they



can keep up to date with current guidance themes for those aged 50+ A question and answer session will be included either from the chat or by the raising of hands.

Questions posed will be:

- How do we combine the perspectives of generational affiliation, common experience of certain historical events in similar life cycles phases and dealing with typical age related ailments and challenges
- What to do and what not to do when dealing with older employees, using practical examples to strengthen employability and company commitment.

## 6. Networking session

This will take the form of informal discussions in breakout rooms, whereby participants select whom they would like to join in a room and which includes the chance to move rooms. Therefore up to 15 breakout rooms may be required. Questions could be what is the biggest challenge or need you face in your daily working life as a counsellor. A mutual discussion will take place regarding what the participants could offer and suggest which might help other participants in their daily work.

## 7. Wrap up and Final Discussion

This plenary session will include a summary of the day and sharing of feedback, general discussion of the day. The seminar concludes with thanks from the moderator to each of the participants, lecturers and experts by focusing on the highlights of the day.