



STRAIGHTEN BASIC SKILLS –Intellectual Output 03

Experimental phase/ country pilots/ initiatives



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Index

- Introduction: 5
- Synthesis of the country reports: Choice of indicators, initiatives and practice: 6
- 1. Austria: 7
- 2. France..... 8
- 3. Germany: 11
- 4. Norway: 12
- 5. Romania: 13
- 6. UK: 14
- A comparative analysis: 15
 - Target groups 15
 - Indicators: 15
 - Key elements by the partners: 17
 - Austria: 17
 - France 18
 - Germany: 19
 - Norway: 19
 - Romania: 20
 - UK: 21
- Key issues for the implementation of the IO4 22
 - Austria: 22
 - France: 23
 - Germany 24
 - Romania 25
 - UK 25
- Conclusion: 26
- Attachment: 28
 - Evaluation tool: 28
 - Country reports: 31
 - Austria: 31
 - France: 36
 - Germany: 41

Norway:	44
Romania:	48
UK:	52
Figure 1: Infographic of Success Indicators	56

Introduction:

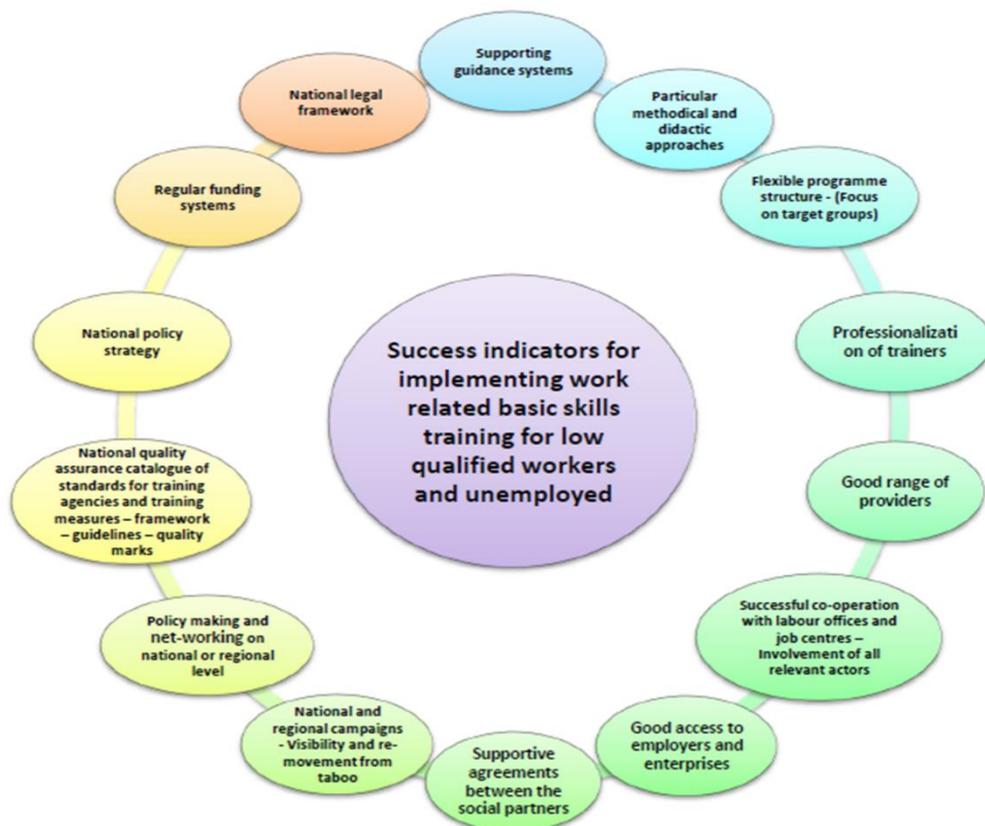
The original approach for IO3 was an experimental phase/ country pilot project with focus on one or two of the successful indicators within the framework of a small transfer project. However IO3 has changed compared to what was written on the application, due to a substantial budget reduction from French NA. The revised IO3 focused on small realistic initiatives to be implemented in each country, based on one of the indicators from IO1. The active phase of IO3 started at the 4th project meeting in Timisoara/Romania. The partners discussed possible initiatives and an evaluation tool to choose the expected indicators, initiatives and practices they were going to implement. Each consortium partner chose one or two indicators which were not well developed in his own country and tried to find some participants and stakeholders for a small transfer project. The original timetable for delivering the country reports for IO3 was changed from the end of March to the end of February. This was due to the fact that some corrections have to be expected and that the IO3 paper should be done before the next interim report has to be delivered.

The following IO3 shows the different initiatives the partner chose and a comparative analysis. For the detailed country reports please see the attachment.

Synthesis of the country reports: Choice of indicators, initiatives and practice:

At the meeting in Romania in January 2016, the partners made a pre-selection through an evaluation tool¹ to choose which kind of initiatives they were going to organize. Partners used the success indicators which were developed in the IO1 paper to decide which actions to conduct in their home countries. In addition the partners could specify their initiatives by choosing different practices out of the “practice-list” of the IO1 document.

Figure 1: Infographic of Success Indicators



¹See the evaluation tool in the attachment. Since the evaluation tools were filled out a year before the initiatives have taken place the country reports so not totally correspond to what has been really implemented by the partners.

1. Austria:

Indicator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professionalization of Trainers Flexible Programme Structure - Focus on Target Groups
Challenges	<p>We choose these indicators with a specific emphasis on work related basic skills training for unemployed inhabitants with foreign citizenship or migration/refugee background, which is – for many providers- a very current challenge in the Austrian labour market related basic skills provision. BEST will be able to validate respective approaches and involve relevant stakeholder networks, in order to encourage multiplication and sustainable implementation in the Viennese/Austrian basic skills area.</p>
Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop Network- building
Initiatives description	<p>Among the existing basic skills provision networks of the Vienna labour market programmes and initiatives “AMS Jobwerkstatt” and “Kompetenzcheckberufliche Integration”, which are targeted at unemployed clients/learners showing a migration or refugee background and which are carried out on behalf of the Austrian Employment Service (AMS), we intend to newly introduce, validate and implement the main approaches and components of the “Citizen Curriculum for unemployed inhabitants with foreign citizenship or migration background” presented by our UK partners and trained during our C1 activity (training week) in Romania (Jan 2016), from which we can learn and benefit in a very practicable and useful way. More concretely and accordingly, we want to enrich offers via the following workshops:</p> <p>Basic Skills - Der Österreichische und Wiener Arbeitsmarkt (the Austrian and Viennese Labour Market) Basic Skills - Trends am Arbeitsmarkt (trends in the labour market) Basic Skills – Landeskunde (country information) Basic Skills – Arbeitsrecht (labour law) Basic Skills – Lerntechniken (learning techniques) Basic Skills - EDV (ICT) Basic Skills - Kaufmännisches Rechnen (accounting, calculating) Basic Skills - Deutsch (Kommunikation) (German communication/conversation) Basic Skills - Deutsche Rechtschreibung (German spelling rules) Basis Skills - English Conversation Basic Skills - Netzwerke aufbauen und pflegen (building and maintaining networks)</p>
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> collaborative learning approaches; innovation in embedding basic skills into vocational qualifications; experimenting with different formats of basic skills provision; teaching and counselling as a training strategy; taking into account current developments in working life; individual support and feedback before, during and after the training; individually adapted training sessions that meet the needs of learners; intensive courses that consider the needs and background of learners; resource and feedback orientated learning
Which targets are realistic to achieve?	<p>Among the existing basic skills provision networks of the Vienna labour market programmes and initiatives “AMS Jobwerkstatt” and “Kompetenzcheckberufliche Integration”, which are targeted at unemployed clients/learners showing a migration or refugee background and which are carried out on behalf of the Austrian Employment Service (AMS), we intend to newly introduce, validate and implement main approaches and components of the “Citizen Curriculum for unemployed inhabitants with foreign citizenship or migration background” presented by our UK partners and trained during our C1 activity (training week) in Romania (Jan 2016), from which we can learn and benefit in a very practicable and useful way. More concretely and accordingly, we want to enrich offers via</p>

	<p>specific workshops. We want to engage basic skills trainers and programme managers/designers, as well as their superiors to introduce and validate these new elements in workshops, in order to better reach new target groups (migrants/refugees). Furthermore, we want to engage our existing networks of Jobwerkstatt and Kompetenzcheck providers, as well as the programme managers and funders (AMS/Austrian Employment Service, Social Ministry and ÖIF/Austrian Integration Fund), in order to foster respective further multiplication and sustainable implementation.</p> <p>Targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reach and further professionalize trainers in existing basic skills programmes and initiatives - better reach specific target groups (migrants/refugees) in the current Austrian basic skills area - engage and involve wider networks of providers/stakeholders/policy makers/funders <p>Indicate differences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improve rate and success of traineeships/job placements/integration in the labour market - improve evaluation results/satisfaction among trainers/providers and – above all- basic skills learners
Documentation	Documentation of workshops, trainer meetings, network and stakeholder meetings; Evaluation and labour market integration results

2. France

Indicator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Productive Links between Employers and Training Enterprises • Particular Methodical and Didactic Approaches
Challenges	<p>Productive Links between Employers and Training Enterprises :</p> <p>We chose this indicator because we want to achieve transition for our beneficiaries from the training/counseling period to work. In order to do so, we need to meet enterprises, to speak with them, to involve them in our activities. We need to remind enterprises of their social responsibility; make them understand that by collaborating with us they will be able to actively participate to their future employees' training and have more chances to hire motivated people, ready to get back to work.</p> <p>By this experience, we want to question enterprises about basic skills required on work and involve them in the construction/formalization of our beneficiaries' "portfolio of skills".</p> <p>Particular Methodical and Didactic Approaches</p> <p>On the other hand, we want to experience a different way of working with our trainees/beneficiaries. All along the project, these people will be actively involved in the co-construction of their "portfolio of skills". They will be coached in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learn to measure and make the most of their existing skills - Understand enterprises' needs in terms of workplace basic skills - Taking as basis a formal document proposed by INFREP trainers/counselors, make it personal, more communicative

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Dedramatise” access to work, feeling comfortable in communicating with potential employers - Be able to appreciate their improvements and to express them in a formal way
Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop • Seminar • Network- building
Initiatives description	<p>The pilot activity will be implemented in three INFREP agencies, based in different geographical localities (Aubenas, Cherbourg and Rouen). These three experiences will be very similar to each other and strongly connected. Pedagogical materials, training tools, evaluation forms (...) will be the same. Nevertheless, each INFREP agency will be able to “personalize” the experience and introduce some peculiar elements, in relation to its field of competence.</p> <p>The three pilot experiences will be implemented in the framework of three existing counseling/insertion devices, funded by French regional and local authorities :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rouen : ASTRE (Job search techniques and approaches, in group and individually) – funded by the PLIE (Local Plan for Job integration) - Cherbourg : Prioritaires à l’emploi 2016 – funded by PLIE et FSE - Aubenas : Programmes Compétences Premières – funded by the Rhône-Alpes Region <p>The experience will be focused on the construction of a portfolio of skills for the job seekers trained/coached by INFREP agencies in the framework of the three devices mentioned above.</p> <p>This action will include different stages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the help of INFREP trainers and coaches, beneficiaries reflect upon, identify and express their competences; • With the help of INFREP trainers and coaches, beneficiaries place themselves in employers’ shoes: what do employers need from them? What are they looking for? • Through a questionnaire and/or focus groups and/or face to face meetings, INFREP trainers/coaches inquire on their needs and expectations in terms of employees’ basic skills; this will be the occasion to communicate more generally on the pilot experience and on SBS project. Trainers/Coaches discuss with their beneficiaries about the results of this action • Construction of the portfolio of skills: using the same template (to be constructed), INFREP trainers/coaches help beneficiaries to realize their portfolio of skills. This document will be based on the CLEA framework, a professional certificate recently created in France by the “ComitéParitaireInterprofessionnel National pour l’Emploi et la Formation” in order to evaluate and enhance job seekers’ and employees’ basic skills • INFREP trainers/coaches help beneficiaries to make the most of this document in different occasions: job dating, company visits, while researching internships or job positions... • If a follow-up is foreseen during beneficiaries’ internship/trial period, INFREP trainers/coaches meet again the beneficiaries, make an evaluation of the experience, and invite them to update their portfolio of skills

<p>Practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'learning to learn' initiatives; • collaborative learning approaches; • integrating basic skills programmes in the workplace; • teaching and counselling as a training strategy; • integrating learning into workplace scenarios; • mapping reading and writing skills; • individual support and feedback before, during and after the training; • integrating a positive attitude towards training into a company's ethos; • individually adapted training sessions that meet the needs of learners; • training at work using real employment scenarios; • embedding personal and social development (PSD) within learning; • recording, tracking and reporting of basic skills performance;
<p>Which targets are realistic to achieve?</p>	<p>Target : Job seekers</p> <p>Results :</p> <p>Since the experience is really focused on beneficiaries' self confidence, awareness of their skills and lacks, capability to adapt to the job market and to evaluate their progress, we will measure the project's result directly through the beneficiaries.</p> <p>At the beginning of the experience, INFREP trainers/coaches take some time to present the experience to the beneficiaries. When they are sure that beneficiaries have understood the aim and the program of the experience, they submit to beneficiaries a questionnaire in order to collect data on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Their current job situation - Their fears - Theirs expectations - Their impression on the experience - ... <p>Another questionnaire is submitted to the beneficiaries at the end of the experience in order to measure project results.</p>
<p>Documentation</p>	<p>A feedback on the experience will be given by each INFREP agency in the form of a short document. On the basis of these feedbacks, a synthesis report will be produced by INFREP on the global experience. All relevant material used during the experience will be annexed.</p>

3. Germany:

Indicator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Legal Framework • Regular Funding Systems • Successful Cooperation between all Organizations Involved in Work-Related Training
Challenges	<p>We followed the general objective of IO 3: “Each consortium partner will choose one or two indicators which are not well developed in his own country and try to find some actors and stakeholders for small transfer project using the experience of the other consortium partners in countries that showed a lot of good practice in this field.” It is our understanding of a “small transfer project” to start some initiatives in those success indicators where we noticed essential lacks and problems. Therefore we will start four different initiatives to find new points of reference – with uncertain outcomes.</p>
Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop • Network- building
Initiatives description	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Workshop in co-operation with the Ministry of Education and Further Education in North Rhine-Westphalia, some locally adult education centers and other members of the Alphanetz NRW (http://alphanetz-nrw.de/startseite/), the North Rhine Westphalian networking in the field of basic skills. Thematic focus: Funding structures regarding work related basic skills training in European countries – what can we learn from other countries? 2. Contact meeting with representatives of the educational centre of the North Rhine-Westphalian construction industry. This sector is one of the very few branches who have a binding funding system for all companies in this sector to support the vocational training (http://www.soka-bau.de/soka-bau_2011/desktop/de/Arbeitgeber/Berufsausbildung/). We want to discuss, in what way this funding system could be open for further education measures regarding basic skills training. 3. Contact meeting with representatives of the regional directorate of the Federal Labour Office regarding a new legislative initiative to support basic skills training for the unemployed in the context of regular support measures. We will make a suggestion for a pilot project with three to five pilot projects with local job centers. 4. Workshop with representatives of the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research and the new executive board of the national coordination unit for the German Decade of Alphabetization. We will present our European expertise, in particular the SBS project and the EBSN Special interest group “Workplace basic skills”, bbb is responsible for.
Practice	political influence in structures and policies regarding work related basic skills training
Which targets are realistic to achieve?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Workshop could be realized – about 25 participants 2. Contact meeting could be realized. Next steps could be arranged 3. Contact meeting could be realized. The options for the realization of pilot projects are examined 4. The workshop could be realized – about 10 participants as a maximum.
Documentation	Report

4. Norway:

Indicator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Policy Strategy • National and Regional Policy Making and Networking
Challenges	<p>FU will organize a national conference where the target groups are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. politicians / minister 2. VOX possibly SIA (national institutions) 3. People who work with basic skills in Norway 4. All in FU who are working within this field
Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop • Conference • Seminar • Network- building
Initiatives description	<p>We are planning a national conference in the field of basic skills. Apart from the classical form of the lecture holder on the first day, the participants should work out new concepts in this subject on the second day. The second day will be organized in different workshops. In addition, the conference aims to that the participants can exchange experiences and enlarge their network.</p>
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learning to learn' initiatives; • blended learning; • innovation in embedding basic skills into vocational qualifications; • integrating basic skills programmes in the workplace; • teaching and counselling as a training strategy; • integrating learning into workplace scenarios; • taking into account current developments in working life; • mapping reading and writing skills; • individual support and feedback before, during and after the training; • integrating a positive attitude towards training into a company's ethos; • individually adapted training sessions that meet the needs of learners; • intensive courses that consider the needs and background of learners; • contextualisation of learning in real-life scenarios; • training at work using real employment scenarios; • embedding personal and social development (PSD) within learning; • qualifications that support sustainable skills development; • appropriate support for learners with a specific learning disability (SpLD); • recording, tracking and reporting of basic skills performance; • resource and feedback orientated learning
Which targets are realistic to achieve?	<p>Improvement of the following subjects: certificate of apprenticeship; social mission (out of isolation immigrant); vocational training in prison, businesses who work daily with the BKA, strategic cooperation, VGX</p>
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status reports (organizing process) • Final report

5. Romania:

Indicator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Policy Strategy • Productive Links between Employers and Training Enterprises
Challenges	<p>We chose these indicators because a fundamental problem in Romania is the national policy strategy that can be helpful in providing objectives for national training initiatives. We want the piloting result to be a public policy proposal on this issue, as a starting point towards a better lawmaking.</p> <p>Also we want to strengthen the link between Employers and Training Enterprises and IREA through their experience and expertise can get involved in this.</p>
Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop
Initiatives description	<p>The pilot experience will be implemented by organizing two workshops for the two indicators chosen in partnership with West University of Timișoara and Youth Foundation.</p> <p>We want participants in these workshops to include stakeholders, providers and practitioners, representatives of companies, trainers, policy makers, with which we can make a change regarding this issue.</p> <p>On the basis of a presentation of policy and good practices in other EU countries the SBS project has collated in IO1 and IO2, the pilot experience will be focused on drafting a policy brief and collecting needs of employees and employers, for the training providers to take into account</p>
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'learning to learn' initiatives; • innovation in embedding basic skills into vocational qualifications; • integrating basic skills programmes in the workplace; • teaching and counselling as a training strategy; • mapping reading and writing skills; • integrating a positive attitude towards training into a company's ethos; • intensive courses that consider the needs and background of learners; • contextualisation of learning in real-life scenarios; • resource and feedback orientated learning
Which targets are realistic to achieve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40- 50 attendees • collecting feedback will be done through a survey
Documentation	A summary report will collate feedback and impact.

6. UK:

Indicator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular Funding Systems • National Policy Strategy • National and Regional Policy Making and Networking
Challenges	On paper, the policy and funding conditions for basic skills in the workplace are favorable. However, recent research by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills shows that in England, 85% of employers do not offer basic skills training in the workplace and 90% do not consider there to be a need for this. The L&W IO3 initiative will explore this apparent contradiction and explore how policy might be made more effective.
Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop
Initiatives description	L&W propose to run 4 workshops between June 2016 and Mar 17 on the theme of workplace basic skills. 3 of these will run in conjunction with (i.e. on the same day, in the morning before or afternoon following) our Impact Forum meetings planned as part of L&W's work as UK National Co-coordinator for the European Agenda for Adult Learning (EAAL). The first Impact Forum workshop (England) is planned for June 9 th . The impact forum meetings involve key actors including policy makers, stakeholder groups, providers and practitioners and take place across the 4 UK nations, supporting the sharing of practice between England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales and thus extending the reach of the SBS project beyond England. The 4 th workshop will take place at our annual national English and Maths conference, planned for October 2016. Each workshop will consider the ways in which national policy could be improved, on the basis of a presentation of policy and good practices in other EU countries the SBS project has collated in IO1 and IO2.
Practice	We do not propose to implement practices; references to use of these practices e.g. by providers, practitioners will be noted at the workshops and linked to those identified in SBS.
Which targets are realistic to achieve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 workshops • 50 attendees • 4 workshop summaries • 1 summative report <p>An evaluation of the workshop by each delegate will enable feedback on the impact on participants, and the difference made. A summary report will collate feedback and impact from the 4 events.</p>
Documentation	Key discussion points, feedback and recommendations will be recorded by L&W researchers at each workshop and a summary produced. A summary report will collate feedback and impact from the 4 events.

A comparative analysis:

Target groups:

One of the very positive outcomes of the IO3- phase is that the different initiatives in the partner countries covered a good range of the three main target groups who need more basic skills training:

- 1) Unemployed inhabitants with foreign citizenship or a migrant/ refugee background
- 2) Younger people; school dropouts
- 3) More skilled workers- adults who already work

Even though not all partner countries focused on each of the three groups, we can assume that all partner countries have challenges with all of them. That is an advantage for our Erasmus + project because we can exchange our experiences for the whole field. The same applies to the indicators. See below.

For example, the **Austrian** initiative where BEST as a provider carried out the Vienna labour market program “AMS Jobwerkstatt” can be adapted in the same way immediately i.e. in **Norway**. The main objective with the programme is “to offer individual counselling and guidance, combined with a wide variety of workshops that unemployed clients can select according to their interest and career plans.” The same applies to the second Austrian project “Kompetenzcheck” which focused on “the integration of migrants/refugees into the Austrian Society and, particularly, into the Austrian labour market.

Indicators:

Due to the heterogeneity of the partner group we managed to cover a wide range of the different success indicators with our initiatives. The large selection of applied indicators makes the IO3 document a helpful and useful evaluation tool and work paper, which the partners can also use in the future. During one of their initiatives the **UK** took up the expedient discussion around our success indicators and the related challenges: *“It was felt that the indicators chosen were comprehensive, but some*

were difficult to implement practically at a provider level. It was suggested categorising the indicators thematically could help implementation, as providers could then focus on indicators relevant for them.”

Strengthen the link between employers and training institutions:

One indicator **France** and **Romania** focused on was “Productive Links between Employers and Training Enterprises. It showed that it is a challenge to define the term “basic skills” to all involved participants. What are the employers expecting? What do the employees understand under “basic skills”, and what are the training institutions offering in basic skills. For example the initiative of Romania showed that companies understand basic skills as a range of IT knowledge, interpersonal skills, problem solving and analytical skills.

France indicated the need for an intense cooperation between training institutions and employers: *“We need to remind the enterprises of their social responsibility; make them understand that by collaborating with us they will be able to actively participate to their future employees’ training and have more chances to hire motivated people, ready to get back to work.”* Furthermore: *“More precisely, we wanted to question enterprises about basic skills required at work and involve them in the construction/formalization of our beneficiaries’ portfolio of skills.”*The French approach agrees one of the results of the initiatives of the **UK**: *“The research also found that many employers have a poor understanding of the basic skills elements at workplace tasks, and the skills levels of their employees.”²*

National Legal Framework, National Funding systems and National Policy Strategy

The three indicators mentioned above are closely linked to each other and are difficult to separate in a discussion. **Germany** and **Norway** focused their initiatives on these indicators. Both countries organized workshops as initiatives to involve a lot of stakeholders in various institutional contexts to improve the cooperation between the

²Tu, T., Colachan, M., Hale, C., D’Souza, J., McCallum, A., Mallows, D., Carpentieri, JD. And Lister, J (2016) Impact of Poor Literacy and Numeracy on Employers, BIS, UK.

state level and different educational organizations. *“From the German perspective it is currently necessary that work based basic skills becomes more strongly anchored in the rule system. This requires binding and long-term secure network structures as well as the intelligent exploitation of existing support and support structures.”* Compared to Germany, the Norwegian government is already focusing on the improvement of basic skills education but in practice it is still a long way to go before all the policies are implemented in the different training organizations. It still requires a close cooperation between all stakeholders.

Key elements by the partners:

Austria:

Key elements related to BEST experience in relation with other partners' experiences

- The Austrian experimental phase and piloting initiative has been settled within an existing framework among currently active basic skills provision networks of the Vienna labour market programmes and initiatives (“AMS Jobwerkstatt” and “Kompetenzcheckberufliche Integration”), which are targeted at unemployed clients/learners showing a migration or refugee background and which are carried out by several providers (one of them being BEST) on behalf of the Vienna Employment Service (AMS Wien). By this, comparable to the work of INFREP, we could work with stakeholders, trainers, experts, but –above all- also directly with trainees, in order to evaluate their level of understanding and applying basic skills, as well as their feedback regarding the project work.

- Similar to the French IO3 work, BEST, decided that the organizing team should introduce, validate and implement main approaches and components of the “Citizen Curriculum for unemployed inhabitants with foreign citizenship or migration background” presented by our UK partners and trained during our C1 activity (January 2016, Timisoara/RO):

<http://www.learningandwork.org.uk/our-work/life-and-society/citizens-curriculum/>

Concretely, in the experimental phase, a selected number of workshops were offered and enriched in addition to existing contents, based on suggestions derived from the UK partners' presentations and trainings.

- As most of our partners, we decided -inter alia- to work on the indicator "Productive Links between Employers and Training Enterprises". Doing this, we altogether involved 24 experts from 5 operative organizations, collected feedback from pedagogic experts/trainers/coaches, policy makers and from trainees themselves.

France:

Key elements related to INFREP experience in relation with other partners' experiences

- As BEST, we worked directly with trainees, in order to measure their level of understanding of basic skills, as well as their feedback regarding the Cléa framework
- As BEST, we took inspiration by the Citizens' Curriculum, developed in the UK by L&W: <http://www.learningandwork.org.uk/our-work/life-and-society/citizens-curriculum/>
Indeed, the Cléa framework on which the French experience is based can be compared to the Citizens' Curriculum regarding the holistic approach proposed; moreover, the Citizens' Curriculum is characterized by the direct implication of the learners in the co-designing of the curriculum content. During our experimentation, we tried to better take into account the learners: by introducing them to the notion of basic skills, by measuring their feedback regarding the Portfolio of Skills, by pushing them to use it in concrete work situations...
- As most of the partners, we also chose to work on the indicator: "Productive Links between Employers and Training Enterprises". However, we did not organize formal meetings and workshops but bilateral and less formal meetings, notably with internship tutors who expressed a positive feedback on the portfolio.

Germany:

Key elements related to bbb experience in relation with other partners' experiences

- As our Partner FU from Norway we selected initiatives without short-term results where we involved a lot of stakeholders in various institutional contexts with complex coordination requirements.
- Work based basic skills need to be more strongly anchored in the rule system where needs to be a binding and long-term secure network structure.
- However one can note: The broad awareness and the overall acceptance for offers of work based basic skills trainings for employees and jobseekers has increased.

Norway:

Key elements related to Folkeuniversitetets experience in relation with other partners' experiences

- Folkeuniversitetet chose to have the same focus as our German partner bbb with its initiative on stronger cooperation between the involved stakeholders. Our conference was targeted at lifelong learning practitioners, experts, policy makers, and other stakeholders that would like to discuss lifelong learning opportunities in Norway. The goal was to share experience, to learn from others and to promote examples of good practice. Furthermore the initiative hoped to improve the strategic cooperation and networking between governmental organizations like Kompetanse Norge (former VOX) and employees of adult education centers that offer certificates and basic skills (adult education, labor market enterprises, others). As well as training managers/administrators, skills officers in municipalities, companies and unions and trade associations.

- Similar to the British IO3 work, FU sees the need of extending the definition of basic skills. FU as a provider is working together with several institutions to contribute to the development of provision for individually adapted training.

Romania:

In our case there have been no changes to the proposed plan for implementing IO3 with what has happened; everything has been done as we have planned.

- We chose these indicators because a fundamental problem in Romania is the national policy strategy that can be helpful in providing objectives for national training initiatives and also we wanted to strengthen the link between Employers and Training Enterprises which is deficient in Romania.

What we wanted from these workshop sessions was primarily to make a needs awareness campaign, and as a result we realized that people are more aware of the state of affairs than we imagined, what they lack is the motivation to do something. Following this experience we realized the continuing effect of recent history, including political, economic and social changes and the transition from communism to democracy. Among all these things how we can see how communication has been affected, and that fear of having an opinion has persisted. We also have difficulties related to competencies such as: communication in foreign languages, cultural awareness and expression, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, learning to learn and so on. On the other hand, we are pretty good at digital competences, we've adapted pretty well and we have succeeded in acquiring the following skills; empathy, a key component to customer service, effective communications and teamwork.

UK:

Key elements related to Learning and Work's experience in relation with other partners' experiences

- Similar to most partners, L&W ran workshops with key stakeholders, including policy makers, providers and practitioners, on the theme of workplace basic skills.
- As part of L&W's first workshop, colleagues from Folkeuniversitetet presented their approach in relation to Basic Competencies in Working Life in Norway; this was found to be very useful by the stakeholders who attended.
- The indicators L&W focused on were also chosen by other partners: "Regular Funding Systems" by bbb, "National Policy Strategy" by Folkeuniversitetet and IREA and "National and Regional Policy Making and Networking" by Folkeuniversitetet. These indicators were addressed by presenting and discussing good policy and practice in partner countries as collated in IO1 and IO2.
- As part of the workshops, L&W discussed the entire collection of SBS indicators with key stakeholders; bbb did similar in their online EPALE workshop on the Straighten Basic Skills project hosted by EBSN. Feedback on the indicators was gathered and collated in L&W's IO3 report.

Key issues for the implementation of the IO4

Austria:

- It is of particular importance to actively involve enterprises and employers into existing and future labour market related programs including workplace basic skills, in order to achieve maximum benefit for the final target group of trainees/learners/employees. This involvement, as the Austrian example shows, is very efficient in the form of traineeships, giving both employers and trainees the chance to actively reflect on existing challenges and progress (to be) made.
- In order to efficiently reach employers and enterprises, it is particularly important to use clear and appropriate language/terminology to attract their attention (“employers’ language”, avoidance of pedagogical terms that show negative connotation, such as “basic skills” or “deficits”).
- Projects on workplace basic skills delivery should be characterized by an effective communication strategy throughout all their phases of planning and implementation. These communication strategies should include respective awareness raising and aim to address all relevant stakeholders and recipient groups.
- As shown in the UK Citizens’ Curriculum, contextualisation (i.e. embedding) of basic skills work is most relevant for success.
- By promoting workplace basic skills initiatives, it is always helpful to show and explain relevant and concrete success factors and good/best practice examples from other European countries to stakeholders (in the Austrian case, Scandinavian practices are of particular interest to relevant decision makers).

France:

- Importance to precisely define what is meant by basic skills. **Clarity of the speech...**
- In order to implement a **precise and effective communication strategy** targeting employers and learners
Words that one uses are very important.
- It is important **to include the voice and point of view of the learners**, not only regarding the success indicators (as already pointed out by L&W) but also about their needs and obstacles in terms of basic skills training
- The **appropriation work** (towards the learners) as well as the **contextualization work** (see the Citizens' Curriculum experience) are also very important
- Much still has to be done **to raise awareness among enterprises:** necessity to find the proper words/speech, and to create more occasions of communication and rapprochement
- It might be better to distinguish between an offer specifically targeting migrants and another targeting more generally people with a low level of basic skills - these could be considered as two different things and that to mix them would create confusion
- It would be also useful to find **new techniques** to involve learners and make the learning progress. In this sense, the Norwegian experience (digital learning) is very interesting

Germany

- A point that seems crucial is the fact that trying to have an impact on national legal framework, national funding systems or national policy strategies takes time and that the long-term-effects might only be felt when SBS project is over (Austria, Germany, Romania, Norway).
- Work based basic skills is an offer that requires explanation, it is not self-explanatory. Therefore an implementable and precise communication is needed and a communication strategy that links work based basic skills to business strategy and personal management strategy. Amongst this it is important to show the variety of the educational canon fitting to requirements for the workforce.
 - **oral communication (with clients, colleagues, supervisors)**
 - **written communication (dealing with documentation systems)**
 - **mathematical competencies (calculation, calculation of loss, purchasing, sales, time management)**
 - **digital competencies (EDP, online competence, handling of new work technologies)**
 - **oral and written basic knowledge English (Focus on work)**
 - **basic health (ergonomics, diet, stress / relaxation, addiction, hygiene)**
 - **financial basic education (dealing with money, debts, avoiding payment of wages)**
 - **key qualifications (cooperation and conflict capability, intercultural competences, Learning strategies, self-organization and work organization, Knigge)**
- The bbb experience has shown that it is still necessary “to drill thick boards” in order to achieve long-lasting change on a structural level. More networking and a clearly structured cooperation among the relevant stakeholders is needed.

Romania

- Some key issues for the implementation of the IO4, which will be integrated in a separate paragraph, within the comparative analysis: What should be retained? What lessons have been learned? This chapter will be a bridge between IO3 and IO4
- In conclusion we noticed following the experimental phase/country pilot that people are not only trying to become aware of the training needs for professional success, the major foreign companies in the country operate according to these necessary skills at the workplace and propose their assimilation and development among the employees; things happen, just on a fairly small scale.

This change can happen from bottom to top and not from top to bottom, as we have been accustomed to now. The employers and Training Enterprises can come up with a pilot proposal model regarding “How to straighten work related basic skills training”, which then serves to adopt a legal framework and a public policy.

UK

- As identified by other partners, the workshops emphasised the importance of a clear definition of basic skills acceptable to employers. This may involve expanding the definition to include oral communication and digital skills.
- It may be useful for the ‘success indicators’ to take the social context of individual countries into account, and to be considered more as ‘enablers’ or ‘prerequisites’ of success. The inclusion of language specific to those who have additional needs should also be considered.
- It may be difficult for providers to implement the indicators as they are currently presented; a thematic categorisation may be helpful in this regard.
- As found by INFREP, the inclusion of learners’ views is important – especially as learners and employers may want different things from basic skills training. In addition, some groups, such as unemployed people, may have less access

to practicing work-related basic skills than others. There may also be barriers for some employers in the provision of basic skills, such as the identification of low literacy and numeracy and the affordability of releasing employees for training.

- The use of non-traditional digital platforms (e.g. Facebook) can be a good technique for engaging adult learners in basic skills training.

Conclusion:

The various initiatives in the partner countries have contributed very well to the picture of the situation in Europe. Our Erasmus project can make a significant contribution to bringing individual countries to a common level, highlighting problems as well as good systems. The partners implemented their initiatives systematically and closely to the structure of IO1 and IO2 we developed. The overall result is a good one. The implementation and subsequent reporting of the pilot projects can also be used by the individual partners as a template for further projects in their own country. All in all, a kind of initiative catalog was created, which can be used as an aid even after completion of the SBS Project.

Nevertheless, in summary, there are still challenges in the partner countries:

- Some of the initiatives can't be measured in a short term perspective and have to be followed up even when the project is done, for example, in Germany. Establishing good network structures to anchor more basic skills trainings will take time. This applies to all the initiatives which have been focused on in cooperation and networking.
- France pointed out that the term "basic skills" is not known well enough in the society in general but also by employees who are meant to participate in basic skills programs. It is a challenge to make scientific language understandable to all. Therefore it is often not clear what is meant by Basic Skills.
- A clear definition would also be helpful for all who are working with this term. UK: *"There is a need to discuss what is meant by basic skills, and work-*

related basic skills – should a broader “life skills” conception, including digital, health and other capabilities be adopted, or should it be broader in the sense of including basic vocational training?”

The implementation of an improvement of basic skills in the individual European societies is a living and constantly evolving process and will require further cooperation between the European countries in the future.

Attachment:

Evaluation tool:



IO3: Experimental phase/country pilots/ initiatives

“The emphasis is on approach to important, relevant stakeholders in the field of work related basic skills training which have to be convinced and to be obtained to participate in a new measure in the area focused on by the programme objectives. This implies the analysis of the specific circumstances for each partner organization.”

«Each consortium partner will choose one or two indicators which are not well developed in his own country and try to find some actors and stakeholders for small transfer project using the experience of the other consortium partners in countries that showed a lot of good practice in this field”

“Reminder: IO3 has changed compared to what was written on the application, since there was an important budget reduction from French NA. (...). The IO3 has now become small realistic initiatives to be implemented in each country based on one of the indicators from IO3”.

Timetable: The partners agreed on to deliver their proposals for their initiatives to the end of Mars 2016.

Indicator	Tick the indicators you want to work with	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ National Legal Framework○ Regular Funding Systems○ National Policy Strategy○ National Quality Assurance Standards – Frameworks, Guidelines and Quality Marks○ National and Regional Policy Making and Networking○ National and Regional Campaigns - Visibility and Social Stigma
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supportive Agreements between the Social Partners ○ Productive Links between Employers and Training Enterprises ○ Successful Cooperation between all Organisations Involved in Work-Related Training ○ Wide Range of Providers ○ Professionalization of Trainers ○ Flexible Programme Structure - Focus on Target Groups ○ Particular Methodical and Didactic Approaches ○ Supporting Guidance Systems
Challenges	Please describe why you choose these indicators:	
Initiatives	Tick the initiatives you are planning to process (those are just examples and the list can be extended)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Workshop ○ Conference ○ Seminar ○ Network- building ○ Others
Initiatives description	Please describe the initiative you want to perform	
Practice	Tick the practices you are planning to use concerning the initiatives you want to process. (those are just examples and the list can be extended)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 'learning to learn' initiatives; ○ blended learning; ○ collaborative learning approaches; ○ 'bite-sized' approaches to delivery; ○ innovation in embedding basic skills into vocational qualifications; ○ integrating basic skills programmes in the workplace; ○ experimenting with different formats of basic skills provision; ○ teaching and counselling as a training strategy; ○ formative and summative evaluation of training; ○ integrating learning into workplace scenarios; ○ taking into account current developments in working life; ○ mapping reading and writing skills; ○ individual support and feedback before, during and after the training; ○ integrating a positive attitude towards training into a company's ethos; ○ individually adapted training sessions that meet the needs of learners; ○ intensive courses that consider the needs and background of learners; ○ contextualisation of learning in real-life scenarios; ○ training at work using real employment scenarios;

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ embedding personal and social development (PSD) within learning; ○ qualifications and personal development as incentives for high achievers; ○ qualifications that support sustainable skills development; ○ appropriate support for learners with a specific learning disability (SpLD); ○ recording, tracking and reporting of basic skills performance; ○ resource and feedback orientated learning
Which targets are realistic to achieve?	Please describe your targets and how you want to measure the results. How to indicate the differences before and after your initiative?	
Documentation	In which form do you want to document the initiative process?	

Country reports:

Austria:

- **Time Plan**

The experimental phase and piloting initiatives organized and carried out by BEST within the “Straighten Basic Skills” project took place in Vienna, in the period from April 1st and September 30th 2016.

- **Initiatives and Indicators**

BEST decided for initiatives characterized by a specific emphasis on work related basic skills training for unemployed inhabitants with foreign citizenship or migration/refugee background, which is (for many comparable providers) a very current challenge in the Austrian labour market related basic skills provision. BEST has aimed to validate respective approaches and involve relevant stakeholder networks, in order to encourage multiplication and sustainable implementation in the Viennese/Austrian basic skills area. This active involvement has been considered to be crucial for the success of the initiative.

More concretely, the Austrian experimental phase and piloting initiative has been settled within an existing framework among currently active basic skills provision networks of the Vienna labour market programmes and initiatives “AMS Jobwerkstatt” and “Kompetenzcheckberufliche Integration”, which are targeted at unemployed clients/learners showing a migration or refugee background and which are carried out by several providers (one of them being BEST) on behalf of the Vienna Employment Service (AMS Wien).

The project “AMS Jobwerkstatt” offers individual counselling and guidance, combined with a wide variety of workshops that unemployed clients can select according to their interest and career plans. Clients are also guided within a network of other counselling institutions and companies (i.e. potential employers), in order to speed up the job-finding process. The average duration of participation/person is five weeks (every day, full time).

The main objective of the project “Kompetenzcheck” is the integration of migrants/refugees (many of them newly arrived, e.g. from Syria) into the Austrian society and, particularly, into the Austrian labour market. The 10-week course programme consists of a so-called

“clearing” (diagnostics), individual coaching sessions and workshops on Basic Skills/life skills contents.

In the programme “AMS Jobwerkstatt West”, BEST closely cooperates with the education provider “Weidinger& Partner” (www.weidinger.com) and the training organization “murad und murad” (www.muradundmurad.at), whereas the programme “Kompetenzcheckberufliche Integration” is carried out in close cooperation with the “Berufsförderungsinstitut (BFI) Wien” (www.bfi.wien), one of the largest adult education providers in Austria, and the “Berufspädagogisches Institut Mödling (BPI) - Institut für Berufsbildung der Österreichischen Jungarbeiterbewegung” (www.bpi.ac.at/de/). All these operative organisations are members of the Austrian Association of Private Educational Providers (“Berufsvereinigung der ArbeiterInnen Privater Bildungseinrichtungen, BABE), which comprises more than 50 members (mostly larger organisations) and serves as an active operative and strategic platform that is relevant for sustainable implementation of innovative and practicable components of the “Straighten Basic Skills” project.

Correspondingly, experts from this wide network, as well as other representatives of the Austrian educational and labour market area (above all, representatives of the Austrian Employment Service AMS itself) have been actively involved in the experimental phase and piloting initiatives organized and carried out by BEST, in order to obtain valuable feedback and respective results.

Initiatives first level:

Within this network, BEST organized several workshops for different pedagogical and labour market experts, i.e. trainers, counsellors, coaches, job mediators, policy makers, managers, company representatives etc. (dates: April 8th, April 28th, May 25th, June 17th, September 1st, September 29th 2016), in which experts involved were sensitized and informed about aims and details of the experimental phase and piloting initiatives with the SBS project and, consequently, contents and procedures were fixed, discussed and analysed.

Initiatives second level:

It was decided that the organizing team should introduce, validate and implement the main approaches and components of the “**Citizen Curriculum for unemployed inhabitants with foreign citizenship or migration background**” presented by our UK partners and trained during our C1 activity (January 2016, Timisoara/RO) among existing basic skills provision

networks of the Vienna labour market programmes and the initiatives “AMS Jobwerkstatt” and “Kompetenzcheckberufliche Integration” targeting at unemployed clients/learners showing a migration or refugee background. By this, we want to engage basic skills trainers and programmer managers/designers, as well as their superiors to introduce and validate these new elements for existing and new programmes, especially in terms of their value for everyday work and practice.

Concretely, in the experimental phase, the following workshops were offered and enriched in addition to the existing contents, based on suggestions derived from the UK partners’ presentations and training:

- Basic Skills - Der Österreichische und Wiener Arbeitsmarkt (the Austrian and Viennese Labour Market)
- Basic Skills - Trends am Arbeitsmarkt (trends in the labour market)
- Basic Skills – Landeskunde (country information)
- Basic Skills – Arbeitsrecht (labour law)
- Basic Skills – Lerntechniken (learning techniques)
- Basic Skills - EDV (ICT)
- Basic Skills - Kaufmännisches Rechnen (accounting, calculating)
- Basic Skills - Deutsch (Kommunikation) (German communication/conversation)
- Basic Skills - Deutsche Rechtschreibung (German spelling rules)
- Basis Skills - English Conversation
- Basic Skills - Netzwerke aufbauen und pflegen (building and maintaining networks)
- Basic Skills - Gender Mainstreaming & Diversity Management

Specific practices used concerning the initiatives:

- collaborative learning approaches;
- innovation in embedding basic skills into vocational qualifications;
- experimenting with different formats of basic skills provision;
- teaching and counselling as a training strategy;
- taking into account current developments in working life;
- individual support and feedback before, during and after the training
- individually adapted training sessions that meet the needs of learners;
- intensive courses that consider the needs and background of learners;
- resource and feedback orientated learning

Indicators

Quantitative indicators

Number of organizations involved: 5 operative (plus appr. 10 on strategic level)

Number of experts involved: 24

Qualitative indicators

Feedback from pedagogic experts/trainers/coaches: the additional contents and approaches do provide a valuable enrichment to existing workshop programmes, especially in terms of their practicability and conciseness; also good to improve one's own resources and competences.

Contents serve to further professionalize teachers/trainers/coaches and are very suitable for flexible and tailor-made programme adaptations, e.g. by focusing on various target groups.

Feedback from policy makers/labour market expert: content elements very relevant in relation with current trends and challenges in Austrian society and labour market
Feedback from trainees (as far as possible due to language issues): very interesting workshop elements, good to learn (more) about Austrian society and trends in living together, as well as useful elements for future personal job life.

The usefulness of these SBS elements has particularly been pointed out for programmes/modules by programme managers and funding authorities of the AMS/Austrian Employment Service, Social Ministry and ÖIF/Austrian Integration Fund, who have expressed their readiness to foster respective further multiplication and sustainable implementation. Effects of this, however, can rather be expected on a medium or long term basis than with immediate effect.

All feedback was collected by observation sub group in form of interviews, group reflection/discussion and (partly) questionnaires.

- **Targets and how to measure the results**

Targets:

- reach and further professionalize trainers in existing basic skills programmes and initiatives
- better reach specific target groups (migrants/refugees) in the current Austrian basic skills area
- engage and involve wider networks of providers/stakeholders/policy makers/funders

Indicate differences:

- improve rate and success of traineeships/job placements/integration in the labour market
- improve evaluation results/satisfaction among trainers/providers and –above all- basic skills learners

- **Financing**

The experimental phase and pilot initiative has been solely financed by the “Straighten Basic Skills” project.

However, it has been settled within an existing framework among currently active basic skills provision networks of the Vienna labour market programmes and initiatives “AMS Jobwerkstatt” and “Kompetenzcheckberufliche Integration”, which are targeted at unemployed clients/learners showing a migration or refugee background and which are carried out by several providers (one of them being BEST) on behalf of the Vienna Employment Service (AMS Wien)

Number of BEST staff involved: 8 (2 managers, 5 pedagogic, basic skills/labour market experts, 1 administrative support)

France:

- **Initiatives and Indicators**

INFREP chose to work on two indicators:

1. Productive links between employers and enterprises

We chose this indicator because we want to achieve transition for our beneficiaries from the training/counseling period to work. In order to do so, we need to meet enterprises, to speak with them, to involve them in our activities. We need to remind enterprises of their social responsibility; make them understand that by collaborating with us they will be able to actively participate to their future employees' training and have more chances to hire motivated people, ready to get back to work. More precisely, we wanted to question enterprises about basic skills required on work and involve them in the construction/formalization of our beneficiaries' portfolio of skills.

- **PORTFOLIO OF SKILLS: what is it?**

- A document to assess trainees' skills, already used by INFREP trainers
- In the framework of SBS pilot project, this document has been enriched and "standardized". This is a kind of extended CV, a tool that people can use in order to better identify their strong points and scopes for improvements and be more confident when they meet a potential employer. It allows people to present themselves, trace their professional path, allow them to measure their basic skills and to record their improvements, it is a tool to facilitate first contacts with professionals and employers, also in order to better define one's own personal project
- This document is based on the CLEA framework, a professional certification recently created in France by the Comité Paritaire Interprofessionnel National pour l'Emploi et la Formation", in order to evaluate and enhance job seekers' and employees' basic skills

2. Particular methodical and didactic approaches

On the other hand, we wanted to experience a different way of working with our trainees/beneficiaries. All along the project, these people have been actively implicated in the construction of their portfolio of skills. They have been coached in order to:

- Better understand the concept of basic skills
- Identify their existing skills and needs for improvements

- Make the portfolio more personal, more communicative
- “Dedramatise” access to work, feeling more comfortable in communicating with potential employers
- Be able to appreciate their improvements and express them in a formal way

For the implementation of our experience, we also took inspiration from the Citizens’ Curriculum, developed in the UK by our partner L&W and presented during the training activity in Romania.

Initiative description

The pilot experience has been simultaneously implemented in three INFREP agencies based in different geographical localities (Aubenas, Cherbourg and Rouen). These three experiences have been very similar and strongly connected. Pedagogical materials, training tools, evaluation forms... were the same. Nevertheless, each INFREP agency was able to personalize the experience and introduce some peculiar elements, in relation to its field of competence.

The three pilot experiences have been implemented in the framework of three existing counseling/insertion devices, funded by the French regional and local authorities:

- Rouen: CQP périscolaire (course for playworkers)
- Cherbourg: Réussir, 6 months guidance to validate a professional project and get into a training course
- Aubenas: « Programmescompétences premières »: FLE, exploration, élaboration et stabilisation du projetprofessionnel – French for foreign people, development and confirmation of a professional project

In total, we involved about 25 trainees.

The experience focused on the construction of a portfolio of skills for the job seekers trained/coached by INFREP agencies in the framework of the three devices mentioned above.

The action began with the construction of tools (spring-summer 2016): INFREP staff finalized a common portfolio of skills, to be submitted to the trainees, together with: an introduction session to the notion of basic skills in order to present the project of the portfolio, a questionnaire for the trainees in order to measure their knowledge and level of basic skills,

an evaluation questionnaire on the global experience for the trainees and a questionnaire for the companies and employment agencies in order to collect their opinions on the portfolio of skills.

Then, the experience started in the three agencies (autumn-winter 2016). It was divided in different steps:

- An introduction session: trainees were informed about the overall project and objectives. They were introduced to the notion of “basic skills” and started to reflect about it. They filled a questionnaire on their expectations regarding the project
- Work on the portfolio of skills: with the help of INFREP trainers and coaches, beneficiaries reflected upon, identified and expressed their competences; they placed themselves in employers’ shoes: what do employers need from them? What are they looking for? They started filling the portfolio of skills and continued to complete it at home. In order to do this, they also had to conduct some field surveys/investigations on the ground (call with professionals in order to better discover the job sector in which they were interested)

The idea is that the document is completed, the beneficiaries could use it in different occasions: job dating, company visit, while researching internships or job position.

Some participants also involved their internship tutor who helped them complete the portfolio, especially the part regarding their improvements during and after the work experience.

At the end of the experience:

- Through a questionnaire, INFREP trainers/coaches measured trainees’ feedback on the portfolio and on the overall experience
- Through a questionnaire, INFREP trainers/coaches contacted some enterprises or temporary employment agencies in order to ask them for their opinion on the portfolio of skills and to question them about which basic skills are the most required in their sector; this was also the occasion to communicate more generally on SBS project.

- **Challenges:**

The meaning/concept of “basic skills” was not clear to all participants.

Not all the participants were able to identify their basic skills.

In the three INFREP agencies where the experience has run, trainers are working with young people who are far (or very far) from employment. Therefore, it was not easy for the staff to involve them in the project. First of all, it seems that they have a very vague idea of what a “basic competence” is. If we add the notion of “knowledge”, “know-how-to-do” or “soft skills”, some of them get completely lost, so the trainer has to carefully explain the meaning of each word. Nevertheless, the Cléa framework (that we adapted for the Portfolio) seems easy for them to understand, which proves, we think, the efficiency of this tool.

The majority of the participants have difficulties in describing their past experiences and the competences that they gained. Sometimes, they feel quite ashamed to speak about this to other people or to their colleagues, they feel that they cannot express themselves.

The oral and written communication in French together with computing are the skills which are the less mastered.

Most of the participants, because they have a low self-esteem, have difficulties in valorize a document which present them, however most of them considered the portfolio as a useful tool for people having difficulties in valorizing themselves during a self-presentation in front of an employer. In fact, this tool gives them the opportunity to put precise words on what they are able to do or not to do, on what they already know and on the scopes for improvements.

The participants also say that this tool pushes them to make interviews with the professionals (we call them “investigations on the ground”), which in general they don’t like to do because it scares them a lot.

The work on the portfolio of skills was particularly useful and stimulating for them when they succeeded in involving their tutors who gave them a feedback and helped them to appreciate their week/strengths points and needs for improvements.

Finally, the overall experience allows them to work in small groups and they seem to like this group dynamic a lot.

The internship tutors very much appreciated the portfolio, which they consider an innovative, very exhaustive and useful document, more complete than a CV, allowing an employer to save time and better know the job-seekers. However, some of them remarked that it is a long document, with many written parts, and that the employers do not necessarily take the time to read it.

Feedback from the trainers involved in the experience

The trainers were satisfied but a little bit disappointed about the shortness of the experience: organized in 4 stages of half a day, these pilot experiences were too short to allow a proper accompanying and deep monitoring of the participants.

- **Conclusions**

Some conclusions can be underlined:

- Basic skills are most of the time unknown by people who have serious difficulties in identifying and expressing their skills, it seems then important to continue to work on this issue with people who are far/very far from employment
- Communication seems to be the weakest skill amongst our participants. That represents a big obstacle to overcome in order to find a job
- The work on basic skills is generally interesting, but it is much more interesting and useful if trainees can do it with the help of the tutors: this kind of interactions are very appreciated by the youngsters. When a relationship of collaboration and trust is established, it is very rewarding for the trainees
- The portfolio of skills is certainly a useful tool to assess one's skills and prepare for an interview but not necessary a tool which could be submitted to all employers, who most of the times prefer to read a short and more classical CV. This depends on the employers and certainly requires to raise awareness among employers, especially in low-skilled sectors
- Also, the portfolio of skills can be perceived as "diminishing" by some people. It needs to be adapted depending on the person: each person should be able to personalize it and each person should feel free to use it as they want.

Negative points

Productive links between employers and enterprises > unfortunately, we only partly met this objective. Just a few numbers of temporary employment agencies and tutors answered to our questionnaire: lack of time, maybe lack of interest?

Germany:

- **Action Plan, Initiatives and Network:**

1. Workshop in co-operation with the Ministry of Education and Further Education in North Rhine-Westphalia, some locally adult education centers and other members of the Alphanetz NRW (<http://alphanetz-nrw.de/startseite/>), the North Rhine Westphalian networking in the field of basic skills. Thematic focus: Funding and organizational structures regarding work related basic skills training in European countries – what can we learn from other countries?

First contact meetings had been done in summer 2016 by phone and personal encounters and conversations have taken place. Binding appointments were planned to follow after summer holidays.

bbb made an appointment with the North Rhine-Westphalian Adult Education Association to organize a workshop in the first quarter of 2017. A conception meeting took place at 15th Nov. 2016 The aim was to conceive a workshop under the title: Workplace basic skills: How can it be achieved in Volkshochschulen? What is needed to become a business? Concrete agreements were made with regard to format (one day), organizer: bbb together with LV VHS NRW and Alphanetz NRW, financed by Ministry of Education (request LV VHS NRW) and potential impulse providers (Austria as SBS partner), the deposit process and the place and date. Current state: Waiting for the Northrhine-Westfalian Ministry of Education to respond.

2. Contact meeting with representatives of the educational centre of the North Rhine-Westphalian construction industry. This sector is one of the very few branches who have a binding funding system for all companies in this sector to support the vocational training (http://www.soka-bau.de/soka-bau_2011/desktop/de/Arbeitgeber/Berufsausbildung/). We want to discuss, in what way this funding system could be open for further education measures regarding basic skills training.

First contact meeting of with bbb and the managing director of the educational centre of the North Rhine-Westphalian construction industry has taken place at June 6th. Next step will be the establishment of contact to the “SOKA-BAU “Urlaubs- und Lohnausgleichskasse der Bauwirtschaft (ULAK) - Zusatzversorgungskasse des Baugewerbes AG (ZVK)“ - We made

an appointment with the staff member Marcel Macherey in Wiesbaden for a meeting on February 2017, 13th

3. Contact meeting with representatives of the regional directorate of the Federal Labour Office regarding a new legislative initiative to support basic skills training for the unemployed in the context of regular support measures. We will make a suggestion for a pilot project with three to five pilot projects with local job centers.

First contact meeting with the division manager of the Agentur für Arbeit Solingen-Wuppertal has taken place at June 7th..The new law will come into force at August 1st. We are currently reviewing the opportunities for the realization of some pilot courses funded by the Agentur für Arbeit (employment agency). We have had another meeting with the staff member Thomas Kleine on October 2016, 24th - It is not clear whether a pilot project could start. We are rather sceptical. Nevertheless we are planning to develop a reference model for the new public funded measures called "basic skills" (funded by employment agencies / job centers)

4 Workshops with representatives of the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research and the new executive board of the national coordination unit for the German Decade of Alphabetization. We will present our European expertise, in particular the SBS project and the EBSN Special interest group "Workplace basic skills", bbb is responsible for.

bbb has participated in the kick-off event of the German Decade on November 2016, 28/29 in Berlin. A first feedback has shown that they are interested in some cooperation but not before autumn 2017.

5. bbb was responsible for the online discussion about workplace basic skills on EPALE. From Wednesday 14th to Friday 16th September the European Basic Skills Network (EBSN) hosted an online discussion about Workplace Basic Skills on EPALE moderated by Rosemarie Klein and Dieter Zisenis of the German research and consultancy organization Büro für berufliche Bildungsplanung (bbb). The starting point for the discussion was the success indicators for the implementation of work-related basic skills training for low qualified workers and the unemployed produced by the Straighten Basic Skills project. See: <https://ec.europa.eu/epale/en/blog/what-works-workplace-basic-skills> - bbb is also responsible for the ongoing EBSN special interest group about workplace literacy. 22 participants from 15 EBSN members are involved in this SIG.

- **Conclusion:**

It is already clear that we selected initiatives without short – term results. We have to involve a lot of stakeholders in various institutional contexts with complex coordination requirements. All initiatives have taken longer than planned.

From a German perspective it is currently necessary that work based basic skills becomes more strongly anchored in the rule system. This requires binding and long-term secure network structures as well as the intelligent exploitation of existing support and support structures. In this direction, we have understood and launched our "pilot initiatives". As a result, it can be said that the basic acceptance for offers of work based basic skills trainings for employees and jobseekers has increased significantly in all policy - makers, in the social partners, business associations and trade unions as well as in the adult education and training system. Work based basic skills training and coaching can be implemented more particularly in cooperation with companies. In our Gruwe project, for example, 34 very individualized training and coaching sessions with 26 companies were realized in 2016. There has also been a marked increase in the level of professionalism and professionalism of providers' trainers, consultants and adult education institutions. Nonetheless, our pilot initiatives have also shown that for a real structural protection of work based basic skills trainings "thick boards have to be drilled". However, SBS has provided good links for the establishment of new network structures (basic education networks at the state and federal level, employment agency for work, company association in the construction industry), which we will continue to use.

Norway:

- **Timetable:**

In March 2016 Folkeuniversitetet started with the planning and organizing phase for two initiatives – a conference and a workshop which both took place in the beginning of November 2016.

- **Initiatives and Indicators:**

1. Initiative: National conference: “We will not be able to meet future needs for more skilled workers without mobilizing the adults who already work”.

Target:

This conference was targeted at lifelong learning practitioners, experts, policy makers, and other stakeholders that would like to discuss lifelong learning opportunities in Norway. The goal was to share experience, to learn from others and to promote examples of good practice. Furthermore the initiative hoped to improve the strategic cooperation and networking between governmental organizations like Kompetanse Norge (former VOX) and employees of adult education centers that offers certificates and basic skills (adult education, labor market enterprises, others). As well as training managers/administrators, skills officers in municipalities, companies and unions and trade associations.

Indicators:

“National and regional policy making and networking” and “Successful Cooperation between all organizations involved in work-related training”: Folkeuniversitetet has a successful cooperation with Kompetanse Norge which is “the Norwegian Agency for Lifelong Learning and belongs to the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, which also gets commission from Ministry of Justice and Public Security”. Networking and the exchange of experience is important for Folkeuniversitetet. Therefore, FU invited different institutions and stakeholders to a conference to improve our cooperation and knowledge.

Initiative description:

The conference took place in Oslo on 1st November 2016 and the agenda included a panel discussion and presentations of the different stakeholders.

NHO skills barometer (2016) shows that about 60 percent of companies report that they need employees with a certificate. The future need for more skilled workers will not be achieved without mobilizing the adults who are already working. Good basic competency skills and a certificate are an important tool against exclusion.

The participants in the conference discussed the three major challenges facing the Norwegian labor market:

1. One of three teenagers does not finish school
2. Many receive social assistance due to health problems
3. The integration of refugees into the Norwegian labor market.

In addition, there were massive job cuts in the oil sector.

This results in a large group of adults who have only weak basic knowledge in reading, writing and arithmetic. Without concrete immediate action this phenomenon will not disappear. The Norwegian state has recognized the problem and has issued a new subsidy initiative. Via "Kompetanse Norge", educational institutions which impart basic knowledge (in reading, writing, calculating, IT and Norwegian) will receive more support. The goal is to get as many adults as possible to participate in further education programs. This will ensure that they are better able to participate in both work and social life. It was important that two governmental bodies, VOX and NAV, participated in a panel discussion. For educational institutions such as FU, which are often between these two statutory organizations, it is important to show that these two organizations must work together more closely. This was clearly conveyed.

0930- 1000	Registration	Lead
10.00 – 10 15.	Opening	FU
1015-10.35	lifelong learning	Researcher from "ForskningsstiftelsenFafo"
10.35 – 1200 (kort pause underveis)	Et arbeidsliviendring – «Working in a changing world» New competence requirements : What do companies, trade unions and labor authorities do so more adults are able to obtain a certificate? What can	Representatives of NAV (the Norwegian welfare office), NHO - (NHO is the main representative organization for Norwegian employers); Labour Union

	the state, via Kompetanse Norge (VOX), contribute? Short posts (10 min) + panel discussion and questions)	
1200 – 1300	Lunch and networking	
1300 – 1345	3 examples from different companies that have completed a basic skills project which is also the springboard to a certificate	- Process Industry Dag Madsen, HR manager Bilfinger - Food industry: Helge Arild Olsen, QA Coordinator Mesterbakeren - Healthcare: Gro Østmoe Greenland Held, professional development Finstad nursing
14.00-14.30	Good basic competency skills and a certificate are important tools against exclusion and should be given high priority. National policy about basic skills. Which industries are using it?	Margrethe Marstrøm Svendsrud, Department head of Kompetanse Norge (VOX)
14.30 – 14.50	Erasmus cooperation: an opportunity to increase inspiration and insight also in terms of basic skills	Representative from SIU (National agency)
15.15 – 15.30	Summary and conclusion	

2. Initiative: Workshop

Folkeuniversitetet's second initiative was an internal workshop which took place November 2nd 2016 in Oslo. Folkeuniversitetet (FU) in Norway is a group of 8 separate companies. Although they all bear the name "FU", each company has their own individual board and economy. Each company offers their services within a geographic area not overlapping each other. Due to the cross-company communication within FU, it is essential for ensuring effective use of to support "basic skills training." (BST). Five out of the eight regional FU companies were represented. Participants represented different rolls such as sales staff, student counselors, department managers as well as a regional director. Representatives from three different regions gave presentations.

Target:

- Sharing of best practice in basic skills training
- Discussion on how to create productive cooperation with the workplace in order to increase the number of people taking part in basic skills training – CompetencePlus (A Kompetanse Norge program)
- Sharing of training material for language/Norwegian training

- How to ensure high quality and unified communication and applications with Kompetanse Norge (government funding agency)
- How do we understand the 2016/2017-updated rules and regulations from Kompetanse Norge on CompetencePlus?
- How to do BST / CompetencePlus within voluntary groups

Reason for choice of method:

FU chose a combination of lectures and workshops. The topics 4-7 were presented in a short lecture followed by group discussions. The main focus was put on the sharing of information and best practice in the different companies, and the setup for the day was done to facilitate this goal.

What is BST within the Norwegian system?

As mentioned before, Kompetanse Norge is the Norwegian Agency for Lifelong Learning and belongs to the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research. Their main goal is to contribute to supporting active citizenship, improving employability and increasing participation in education. Kompetanse Norge promotes access and participation in formal, non-formal and informal adult education through research, basic skills, integration, career guidance and programs and subsidies.

Programmes and subsidies:

Kompetanse Norge administrates governmental subsidies for the operational costs of study associations, distance learning institutions and study centers. KN also administrates financial support for pedagogical development in study associations and distance learning institutions. In addition, the institution manages CompetencePlus, a program directed towards developing basic competence for working life, and directs subsidies for the operation of peace centers and human rights centers. Kompetanse Norge contributes to the development of provision for individually adapted training in literacy, numeracy, ICT skills and oral communication skills for adults. In co-operation with education providers and enterprises they develop methods based on established competence goal descriptions for adult basic skills. They also contribute to the development of screening tools. Kompetanse Norge works to establish further education options and continuing professional development for teachers and facilitators in this field.

- **Conclusion:**

The primary conclusion from “2. Initiative: Workshop” was described by one of the participants at the end of the workshop: “We need to establish more arenas for sharing best practice and exchange ideas”

As we shared best practice, exchanged training material and heard different departments description of dealing with the application procedure of Kompetanse Norge, it became evident that communication is vital for ensuring maximum quality in BST programs. Even though all participants came from FU, there were still differences in how effectively the possibilities for Kompetanse Norge were utilized. Komtepanse Norge within voluntary groups was for instance only used by two groups and left the remaining groups with new insight of opportunities. Some groups had successfully applied for training programs that others had failed to get approved. Sharing of tips and tricks in the application process with Kompetanse Norge was useful in ensuring new BST training opportunities in 2017.

Romania:

- **Timetable**

The experimental phase and piloting initiatives organized and carried out by IREA within the “Straighten Basic Skills” project took place in Timișoara in the period from October - December 2016. It was necessary to start in October, because this is the start of the the academic year in Romania, West University of Timișoara is in cooperation with our institute for IO3.

- **Indicators & Initiatives description**

Romanian Institute for Adult Education chose these indicators: National Policy Strategy and Productive Links between Employers and Training Enterprises because a fundamental problem in Romania is the national policy strategy that can aid the provision of objectives for national training initiatives. We've wanted the piloting result to be a public policy proposal on this issue, as a starting point towards better lawmaking.

Also we aimed to strengthen the link between Employers and Training Enterprises and IREA through their experience and expertise can get involved in this.

For the first indicator, **National Policy Strategy**, that we have chose, we had an initial discussion with pedagogues and researchers from the Sciences Education Department of the Sociology and Psychology Faculty at the West University of Timisoara. The discussion was organized as a focus group attended by 6 people. The focus group was aimed at awareness of needs on this topic, searching the national policy on basic skills correlated to work and organizing a workshop in order to develop experimental and piloting phase.

First time, the IREA team presented the SBS project aims and objectives and the experiences and activities until then, including C1 activity, Train-the-trainers workshop, hosted by IREA in Timisoara, January 2016. The focus group conclusions were:

- lack of legislation to regulate these aspects of basic education and basic skills is imperative;
- preoccupation of the key actors on this issue is minimal;
- validation of prior learning and basic skills is required.

The feedback received for the SBS project was positive, hopeful, the work and involvement of all partners in this project was highly praised, manifesting a desire to disseminate this project.

At the end of October we organized in partnership with the West University of Timisoara a workshop on basic skills in Romania. The topic of debate was the Romanian national policy on basic education and basic skills, degree of knowledge regarding this subject, solutions proposed to optimize this aspect.

Invitees included people from the Ministry of Education and Research, people from the Institute of Education Sciences Bucharest, people from local and county council, key people of different NGOs, stakeholders, researchers in pedagogy, all people who showed interest in this issue.

The major policy challenges in this area revolve around four broad issues:

1. Securing the first job and then being able to progress in the labour market, both of which require core work skills as well as the technical skills to perform specific tasks.
2. The need to improve access to innovative, good-quality secondary education and training, a prime site for the transmission of core work skills, and to ensure that more young people take part in and complete their courses.

3. Opening up opportunities to acquire core employability skills to disadvantaged young people, including those who have dropped out of school or never attended, and those who are working in the informal economy under poor conditions. These young women and men often lack not only access to training, but also the professional or personal role models who could nurture essential employability skills. 4. Obtaining recognition of the core employability skills acquired outside the workplace, through regular activities in the home, the community, the classroom or recreationally.

The workshop topics were:

- Why is a national skills policy important?
- What are the key principles of a sound skills development policy?
- What can be achieved by developing a national skills development policy?
- How can these key policy principles be incorporated in national skills policies?

The workshop closed with an outline of important aspects of this theme, important issues in order to propose a public policy, preparing a model for policy brief.

Conclusion: The policy that grows out of this increased interest in skills development as an important means of addressing economic, social and developmental concerns is usually called a National Policy (or Strategy or Plan) for Skills Development, TVET (technical and vocational education and training), HRD (human resources development) or Lifelong Learning. The policy is separate from, though often linked with, general education or labour policies. It focuses not only on young people who have completed their formal schooling, but also on adult workers, school drop-outs, workers in the informal economy and disadvantaged groups.

For the second indicator **Productive Links between Employers and Training Enterprises** we chose to hold a workshop within which we have invited employers, different companies, the main collaborator was Continental Automotive Romania, we have invited persons from training enterprises, on the other hand we have invited representatives of possible employees in collaboration with Youth Foundation.

In this workshop was listed main competencies that the employer wishes the employee to have and that trainers should keep in mind:

- Communication (written and verbal) – You don't have to speak professionally or write a book. Employees do need to know basic grammar and sentence construction.
- IT - Companies today expect employees to know how to apply for a job online and take computer-based training. They also expect employees to have introductory word, spreadsheet, and presentation processing skills.

- Customer Service – The majority of jobs being created today are in the services industries. Understanding the value of customers is essential.
- Learning –Employees should be open to new learning experiences, aware of how they prefer to learn, and prepared to articulate their learning style to management.
- Math – Employees should know basic arithmetic.
- Teamwork – Employees must be able to work with others. This means communicate effectively with them. Empathize with their issues. And learn from them. Virtual workers are not exempt from this.
- Making Decisions - Valued by employers for many reasons, being able to make decisions is key to getting on in life. Sometimes the actual decision doesn't even matter; what matters is that you have made one and moved on.
- Interpersonal skills - The ability to work in teams, relate to people and manage conflict is a valuable asset in the workplace.
- Problem-solving covers the analytical skills required to evaluate information or situations and decide on the most appropriate ways of addressing problems. These skills include awareness of long-term consequences of actions taken and the capacity to assess and adapt plans of action.

Specific practices used concerning the initiatives:

- 'learning to learn' initiatives;
- innovation in embedding basic skills into vocational qualifications;
- integrating basic skills programmes in the workplace;
- teaching and counseling as a training strategy
- mapping reading and writing skills;
- integrating a positive attitude towards training into a company's ethos;
- intensive courses that consider the needs and background of learners;
- contextualization of learning in real-life scenarios;
- resource and feedback orientated learning

Indicators

Number of organizations involved: 5

Number of experts involved: 15

- **Financing**

The experimental phase and pilot initiative has been only financed by the Straighten Basic Skills project.

Number of IREA staff involved: 3 (1 project manager, 2 researchers)

UK:

- **Indicators, methodology & Initiatives description**

The evaluation methodology implements a mixed methods approach. The seminars were observed, with qualitative discussions and feedback recorded throughout the activities by a researcher. Feedback from the seminar was collected at the end of the activities, through a paper seminar evaluation form. The evaluation form collected both qualitative and quantitative data, through a series of open and closed questions. We received 8 responses from the first seminar, and 20 full responses, and 2 half responses from the second seminar.

Seminar ACTIVITIES:

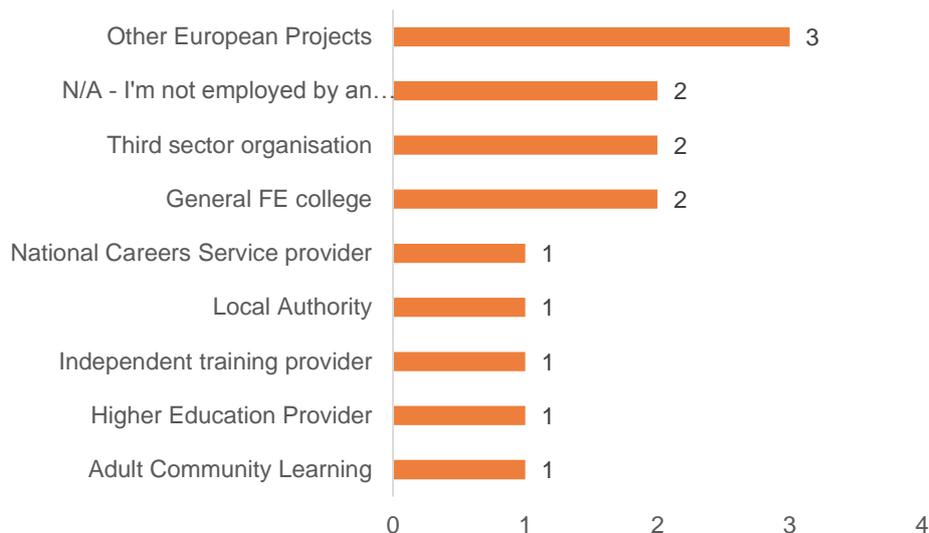
SEMINAR 1, 9TH JUNE 2016

The first seminar coincided with the England Impact Forum, which Learning and Work holds as part of our role as UK National Co-ordinator for the European Agenda for Adult Learning (EAAL). This had the dual advantage of ensuring high-level attendance and linking with the forum's work influencing policy development in the UK. The seminar focused on work-related basic skills and was 2 hours in length.

About the Participants

The seminar was attended by were 14 representatives from a good range of organisations involved in adult learning in England. Organisations represented included further education colleges, adult learning services, a major UK-wide third sector organisation, the National Careers Service, EPALE UK, the chair of the EAAL England Impact Forum, and local authority / government.

Figure 1: Breakdown of participants by organisation type



Base: All 14 participants

There were a wide range of motivations for attending the seminar. The majority of participants came to gain greater knowledge and understanding about work-related basic skills practices, both in the UK and Europe. Two came to discuss how to define work-related basic skills, particularly in regards to meeting employers’ needs, and others came to keep informed about progress in the sector. One participant was looking to see how they could provide a volunteer framework that could incorporate basic skills to improve outcomes for their volunteers.

‘[I came to] gain more knowledge and understanding about work-related basic skills both in UK and Europe.’ Participant questionnaire

‘To gain a better understanding of how basic skills are defined and incorporated into work-based learning.’ Participant questionnaire

Of the eight evaluation forms received from participants, the majority knew ‘a little’ or ‘a fair amount’ about work-related basic skills practices in Europe prior to the seminar. Only one person did not know anything about work-related basic skills practices in Europe before the event.

Seminar

After introductions and a brief discussion of the policy context, the seminar comprised of two parts, each following the same format: a presentation, question and answer session, discussion and a summary of key points.

Part 1: Summary of Research

Part one looked at recent research on work-related basic skills in England before outlining the work of SBS. The presentation highlighted the changes in the work-related basic skills sector over the last 10 years, focusing on the re-prioritisation of funding towards apprenticeships and policy shifts which appear to limit the role of discrete workplace literacy and numeracy provision. However, workplace basic skills training has once again become a priority. The presentation also highlighted the difficulty defining work-related basic skills. For example, does this refer only to discrete workplace literacy and numeracy provision (as was promoted under the Skills for Life policy in England), or a wider focus on basic vocational training, perhaps even including Apprenticeships. The latter seems closer to the current understanding by policy makers in England, but not necessarily by practitioners, many of whom still see a need and role for discrete provision.

The OECD *Survey of Adult Skills*³ (2013) and the second England country report *Building Skills for All*⁴ (2016) made recommendations highlighting the importance of basic skills, particularly focusing on literacy, numeracy and 'solving problems in a technology rich environment' skills. The presentation focused on the key findings of both reports. It emphasised the skills needs of young adults, who performed below the EU average in England⁵, but also noted that the recommendations fail to consider the need for policies to address the skills needs of adults in the workforce.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills⁶ commissioned research from the National Research and Development Centre and Ipsos Mori, on the *Impact of Poor Literacy and Numeracy on Employers*⁷ (2016). The research was based on a study of over four thousand workplaces. In total, 12% of workplaces reported a gap in basic skills, with at least one employee unable to perform certain literacy or numeracy tasks at the level required for their day-to-day role. The research also found that many employers have a poor understanding of the basic skills elements of workplace tasks, and the skills levels of their employees. The skills gap impacted employers through increased errors, constraints on the introduction of new or more efficient processes, the reduction in quality and impacted workplace flexibility.

³ OECD (2013) *OECD Skills Outlook 2013: First Result from the Survey of Adult Skills*, OECD. Pdf: [http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/Skills%20volume%201%20\(eng\)--full%20v12--eBook%20\(04%2011%202013\).pdf](http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/Skills%20volume%201%20(eng)--full%20v12--eBook%20(04%2011%202013).pdf)

⁴Kuczera, M., Field, S., and Windisch, H.C. (2016) *Building Skills for All: A Review of England*, OECD. Pdf: <https://www.oecd.org/unitedkingdom/building-skills-for-all-review-of-england.pdf>

⁵Kuczera, M., Field, S., and Windisch, H.C. (2016) *Building Skills for All: A Review of England*, OECD. Chapter 2, p 37.

⁶ The lead government ministry for work-related basic skills for adults over the age of 19 in England.

⁷Tu, T., Colachan, M., Hale, C., D'Souza, J., McCallum, A., Mallows, D., Carpentieri, JD. And Lister, J (2016) *Impact of Poor Literacy and Numeracy on Employers*, BIS, UK.

Other research touched upon during the presentation also highlighted the change in focus in learning and skills policy in England, to emphasise employers needs and skills gaps in the workforce. This was concluded by briefly looking at the *2014 European Survey of Skills and Jobs* by European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, which summarised the state of the skills needs in Europe and different types of skills gaps.

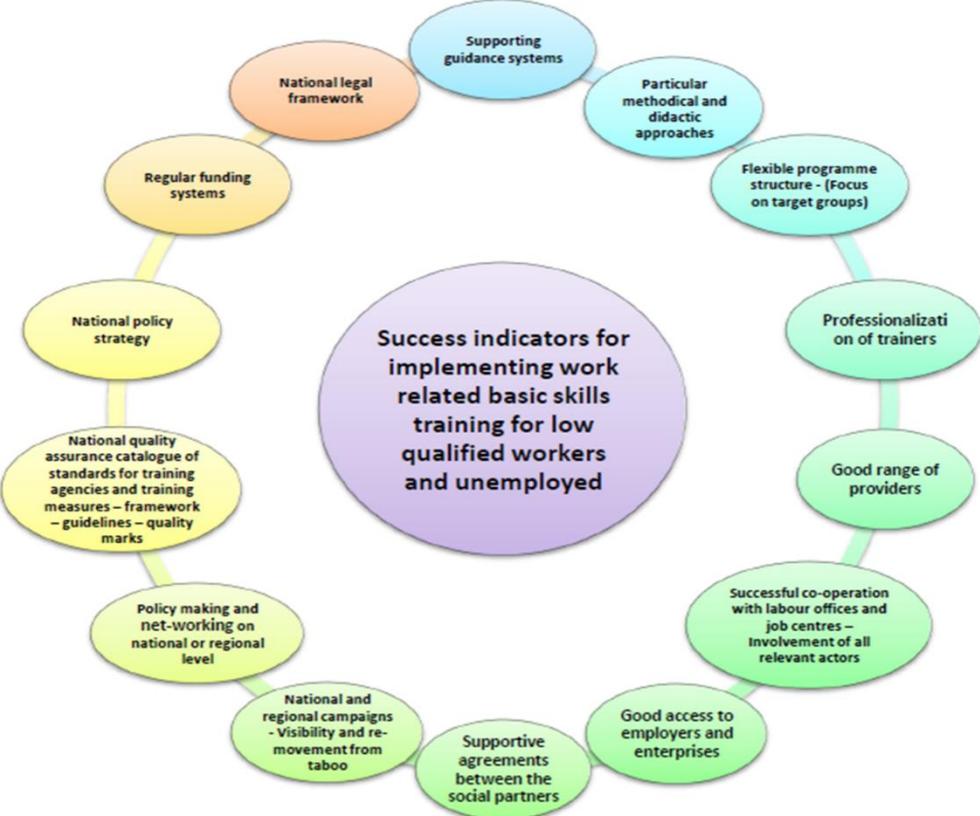
The presentation then went on to discuss the role of STRAIGHTEN Basic Skills project in addressing the issues highlighted by this research. It presented the success indicators for work-related basic skills, created during the Intellectual Output 01.

Key discussion points

Much of the discussion in part one of the seminar centred around the 'Success Indicators'. The discussion looked at how the 'Success Indicators' had been chosen, their practical implementation, and whether there was anything missing in the approach.

It was felt that the indicators chosen were comprehensive, but some were difficult to implement practically at a provider level. It was suggested categorising the indicators thematically could help implementation, as providers could then focus on indicators relevant to them. It may also help to reflect this in the design of the infographic (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Infographic of Success Indicators



The discussion looked at whether the term ‘Success Indicators’ was appropriate. Some felt that they provided more of a systemic overview, mapping the systemic landscape of the work-related basic skills sector as a whole, rather than being a measurable construct for providers. It was recommended that the ‘Success Indicators’ could be renamed to reflect the descriptive systemic nature of the chosen factors, with one suggestion being that the indicators were prerequisites or enablers for success, rather than success indicators in their own right.

The discussion around the systemic nature of the current ‘Success Indicators’ led onto a discussion around their suitability in different social contexts. It was highlighted that there was a large difference between different countries’ social contexts, within which basic skills delivery is taking place. These differences mean that some of the ‘Success Indicators’ may not be applicable to the context some providers work in. As such, it was felt that taking into account the social context of the country the provider is working within, was an important factor when setting ‘Success Indicators’ across nations.

There was considerable discussion around the inclusion of the learner voice within the success indicators. It was raised that the success indicators, in their current form, focus largely on the provider perspective, and may have overlooked the learner perspective. It was

discussed that learners in the workplace had different needs and barriers to accessing basic skills training, which needed to be reflected in the success indicators. The culture of learning in the workplace, for example, would be an important systemic descriptor which could be seen as a success indicator for implementing work-related basic skills training.

Engaging potential learners with basic skills training, particularly after the statutory initial education phase (in England to age 18), was also discussed. Many of those present gave examples of learners being resistant to learning basic skills, even if they themselves have identified a skills need. Prior negative education experiences and the difficulty in accessing basic skills training whilst working, all play a role in preventing work-related basic skills uptake by some learners. It was also highlighted that unemployed people had less access to practicing work-related basic skills, and less opportunities to access training to improve skills. This was particularly in relation to the 2016 OECD country report findings that showed those of working age had higher literacy and numeracy skills on average, than young people in England.

Part 2: Basic Competences in Working Life – presentation by Folkeuniversitetet, Norway

During the second part of the seminar, two colleagues from the STRAIGHTEN Basic Skills partner Folkeuniversitetet, presented its approach in relation to Basic Competences in Working Life in Norway. The presentation first looked at the national context of work-related basic skills training in Norway. It then went on to give information on how Folkeuniversitetet delivered its work-related basic skills training.

The team highlighted that over the last few years there has been a shift in industry from traditional manual labour to modern digital work processes. This has led to a skills gap, with employees needing the right qualifications and knowledge to adapt to the new processes. The result has been a push to up-skill workers, with basic skills being seen as an important foundation to further education within companies. This has been provided with government funding through VOX⁸, in order to support people to actively engage in society and to learn the basic skills required for work. Enterprises can apply for this funding for training employees. Interestingly, many learning providers are helping enterprises apply for this funding.

VOX has created a number of tools for both learners and providers to help implement the policy addressing the up-skilling and formalising needs of the labour market. These tools can

⁸Vox-Nasjonaltfagorgan for kompetansepolitikk is the Norwegian Agency for Lifelong Learning and belongs to the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research.

be used for self-learning or for tutor guided learning. Work-related basic skills in Norway is considered to consist of literacy, numeracy, ICT and oral communication competencies.

The Folkeuniversitetet team went on to describe how they deliver their work-related basic skills in the Norway context. Folkeuniversitetet has delivered 43 work-related basic skills courses in 2016⁹. The courses themselves are tailored to both the learners and the workplace context.

The training is enterprise based, with staff sometimes spread across a number of different sites. The courses are provided through blended learning: mixing classroom based learning with digital learning. This provides a low cost and accessible learning model for adults to access. The online portion of the learning requires a laptop, speakers and an internet connection. The course is supported by the active use of Facebook as a communication platform. Videos, media and course materials can be posted on the course Facebook page, whilst learners can communicate via the messenger app with their tutor when they require clarification and support. The classroom based learning occurs at their workplace, outside of office hours. The lectures are recorded, which allows those absent to catch up with the learning of their peers.

The Folkeuniversitetet team emphasised the importance of having motivated learners, particularly for adults with little formal education qualifications. They found using Facebook as a learning platform helped engage learners, as well as allowing them to access learning on the move through their phones. The use of interactive chat using Facebook, a tool most were familiar with, allowed the learners to post questions on a group chat at any time. The tutor is then able to respond to the group generating an online classroom discussion.

Folkeuniversitetet explained that many of their learners were middle-aged¹⁰, of an equal gender split, looking to formalise skills or upskill to improve their employability in the labour market. Most of the learning was not compulsory.

Discussion

There was a question and answer session at the end of the presentation. One area of interest was the use of a blended learning approach, with questions around how well this was received by both the employers and the learners. Further discussions as to whether learners got time off work to complete the qualifications in Norway, with the team informing the seminar that many of the learners having to complete it in their own time or make up time, led to a debate around employer attitudes towards learning. This included a discussion

⁹As of 9th June 2016

¹⁰No precise age range was given during the presentation.

about incentives, as colleagues at Folkeuniversitetet highlighted that learners who completed their qualifications tended to gain a pay rise and increase their job security or employability. There were also questions around the how the government tracks the success of its spending, and the difference in approach between the two countries (England and Norway).

After colleagues at Folkeuniversitetet left the group, there further discussion around an interest in the inclusion of oral communication and writing skills into basic skills. Many highlighted that when asking employers what they wanted from basic skills, they tended to automatically include these skills. There was a feeling that the definition of basic skills in the UK should be extended to include these key skills.

The focus on older learners was also interesting to many of the participants. The idea of upskilling older employees and formalising qualifications was considered important. It was felt that the government funding was key to reaching these learners, as many seminar participants did not consider employers willing or in a position to fund these learners. An issue was raised around employers putting employees onto learning paths, such as apprenticeships, on the basis of formalising existing competences, rather than developing new skills. This was a concern of a number of participants.

Key Points

The key points coming out of the discussion were:

- There is a need to discuss what is meant by basic skills, and work-related basic skills – should a broader ‘life skills’ conception, including digital, health and other capabilities be adopted, or should it be boarder in the sense of including basic vocational training?
- Extending the definition of basic skills to include oral communication and digital skills engages with employer needs more effectively. In a recent survey of employers, undertaken as part of the reform of Functional Skills English and Maths qualifications in England, employers placed considerable importance on speaking and listening skills.
- Social context should be taken into account when discussing ‘Success Indicators’.
- The possibility of renaming the ‘Success Indicators’ of IO1 to reflect their use as systemic descriptors should be considered.
- Including the learner voice into the ‘Success Indicators’ should be considered.

- The use of non-traditional digital platforms (e.g. Facebook) as a learning platform is a good example of engaging adult learners in education.

Impact findings Seminar 1

All those who participated in the seminar found the seminar to be quite useful or very useful, with more than half of the survey respondents finding it very useful. When asked what part of the seminar they found most useful the majority focused their answer on the Norway presentation. Hearing from Norway colleagues about their delivery model was considered particularly useful to the provider's present.

'Hearing practice from the delivery aspect was useful. Understanding how work-related basic skills is delivered in Norway and learning from that.' Participant questionnaire

'The discussion after the presentation from Norway provided lots of things to think about.' Participant questionnaire

Two participants felt that the seminar could have been more useful through the inclusion of more information around the context the training was taking place in, in Norway's presentation, and more information on how providers in Norway assess the impact of their work.

'More about the context of the training itself: the role of the employer, pre-training and supports for the unemployed' Participant questionnaire

After the seminar, all respondents felt more informed around policy on work-related basic skills, with half reporting they were more informed by a 'fair amount', and a further three respondents reporting they were a 'great deal' more informed about policy.

The majority felt they were a 'fair amount' more informed about different approaches to delivering work-related basic skills, with two respondents feeling a 'little' more informed, and two respondents feeling 'a great deal' more informed.

The majority felt a 'fair amount' or a 'great deal' more informed about work-related basic skills practices around Europe at the end of the seminar.

'Generally a useful and informative event that will hopefully add to useful sharing of information and policy formulation.' Participant questionnaire

Looking to the future, many of the participants wanted to find more information and examples of work-related basic skills delivery models. Two of the respondents were looking to

disseminate what they had learnt during the seminar throughout the organisation, and to formulate policy to help develop their approach to work-related basic skills. One was considering looking at ways to develop the model for the UK context.

'[Planning] to find further examples of work-related skills models. To consider as a provider, how we work more closely with local employers and their workforces.'

Participant questionnaire

'[Planning to] use information to feed into our organisation's policy formulation responses, specifically on careers IAG.' Participant questionnaire

'To find out more about how we can develop this in the UK.' Participant questionnaire

When asked what challenges they foresaw in implementing these changes, participants highlighted the need to contextualise and embed work-related basic skills policy within employers' culture and the wider legislative context. Engaging employers was also considered a potential challenge to implementing work-related basic skills policy in the UK context.

Seminar 2, 3rd November 2016

The second seminar formed one of the workshops offered as part of Learning and Work Institute's [annual English, maths and ESOL conference](#). The workshop was titled *The workplace and basic skills: opportunities for adult literacy*, and was well attended. As the conference focused on English, maths and ESOL there was a lot expertise present within the workshop, which allowed for in depth discussion of the challenges delivering work-related basic skills. The workshop ran for an hour and a half.

About the Participants

The seminar was attended by 25 participants from a range of organisations, including: government departments, third sector organisations, Adult Community Learning organisations, employers and Awarding Organisations.

They attended for a variety of reasons. As with the first seminar, half wanted to gain greater knowledge and understanding about delivering basic skills in the workplace. Five came to discuss with colleagues and get ideas for embedding basic skills into the workplace, particularly looking for practical suggestions. A further, two participants wanted to get an update on the research, challenges and current thinking within the sector.

'[I came for] an update, hoping that some of the barriers have been overcome since I worked in the field.' Participant questionnaire

'[I came for a] general overview of the climate and current thinking around work related literacy and numeracy' Participant questionnaire

Of the twenty full responses received, half knew only 'a little' about work related basic skills, a further nine knew a 'fair amount', with one knowing a 'great deal', before taking part in the workshop.

Seminar

The seminar was led jointly by Alex Stevenson, Head of English, Maths and ESOL at L&W and Dr Sam Duncan, Senior Lecturer in Adult Education and Literacies at UCL Institute of Education. The session looked at the relationship between the workplace and adult literacy specifically, and the changes in policy context and research developments in this area. The seminar was delivered through a presentation, with time for discussion provided throughout the session.

The seminar began with a series of statements, by which participants responded in agreement or disagreement. This stimulated discussion, with several participants highlighting that there are real barriers for people trying to access literacy and numeracy provision within the workplace. These barriers include: a lack of understanding from employers around identifying people with low literacy and numeracy, small employers not being able to afford to release people to attend learning provision, and individuals themselves not wanting to admit to having low literacy or numeracy skills.

'We deliver a lot to NHS [National Health Service], they are proactive around developing functional skills [literacy and numeracy courses] in the workplace, but smaller employers struggle as they can't release people. We need to be more imaginative about delivery to smaller employers' Participant.

'No one wants to own up to it (having a literacy or numeracy need). People don't want to do it outside of working time, and employers can't afford to release people to do it.' Participant.

The seminar considered employer attitudes to learning provision within the workplace. It highlighted that employers want basic skills provision to be only relevant to the individual's role in the workplace. Their employees, on the other hand, do not want to only focus on work. Learners wanted a mixed curriculum to meet their other needs outside of work. This makes it difficult to provide a course which is interesting to the learners but meets employer's needs. Challenges around small employers having a training budget or the time to allow employees to attend basic skills provision was discussed.

Dr Sam Duncan presented the research carried out by the Institute of Education on behalf of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. Outcomes from the research included that the relationship between literacy and the workplace was complex. They found that many employers did not have a strong sense of the English and maths requirements for different roles. As a result, many employers did not think there was a literacy skills gap, but when discussed in further detail this revealed that the literacy skills gap had been identified as a different type of skills gap. For example, a literacy skills issue could be considered a clerical issue by an employer.

From the research, it became apparent that oral skills were most valued by employers. This isn't usually covered in normal basic skills delivery. This point was also raised in the first seminar, where it highlighted that oral skills might need to be included in basic skills provision to meet employer needs.

The importance on terminology was discussed during the session. Particularly around how providers and employers communicate, and the language providers use when engaging with employers. One participant highlighted that this is not a new phenomenon. Outlining that previous research also found that by coming at the issues from a different angle, rather than just a literacy angle, the outcomes can be more positive.

'10 years ago, in my project on Basis Skills in low skilled work, the findings were very similar ... we found coming at it as a literacy angle was not useful, but it was more productive if employers were encouraged to come at the issues using their own systems.' Participant

Another participant, representing an employer, also highlighted that when an employer was looking at delivering skills within the workplace, it was difficult to engage with learning providers. They found that when trying to discuss the provision of bespoke discreet courses for employees, it was difficult to set up provision which met their needs. They felt that a 'relationship manager' role within the local FE college or training provider may encourage employers to consider having skills provision within the workplace, by making it easier to communicate employer requirements and co-ordinate the delivery.

An interesting point mentioned during the workshop related to the impact the Government's policy focus on apprenticeships has had on workplace basic skills delivery. Concern around how English and maths functional skills are included in all apprenticeships as mandatory, means that those apprentices with the most skills needs might not be completing their apprenticeship as they might be unable to complete the qualification within the set guided learning hours. This puts apprentices in a vulnerable position with their employer, as their

employment may be conditional on completing the apprenticeship programme in the set time frame.

Towards the end of the session there was a discussion about STRAIGHTEN Basic Skill's success indicators. Several points for development were noted: firstly, the importance that supporting advice and guidance systems were inclusive of learners with disabilities and additional needs. The success indicators and road map needs to include language specific to those who have additional needs, so no-one is excluded from basic skills provision. Secondly, it was important to make sure the success indicators were not too prescriptive. Concern was raised by participants that the indicators, as they are, might stifle innovation and grass roots development. Lastly, it was felt that the workplace should be more integral to the provision of basic skills.

Key points:

- Employers find it difficult to identify skills gaps.
- Terminology used by adult education providers can be a barrier to engaging employers.
- Building relationships between providers and employers should focus on employer needs, as well as the learners needs.
- Supporting advice and guidance systems need to be inclusive of learners with additional needs and disabilities.
- Success indicators are quite prescriptive, and need to allow for more flexibility.

Impact Findings: Seminar 2

All but one of the participants found the workshop 'very useful' or 'quite useful'. The majority found the most useful part of the workshop was the discussions and hearing different views from both providers and employers. Discussions particularly around relationships with employers, and the research in this area were particularly welcomed.

'The most useful part was listening to colleagues and other participants regarding their own experience and ideas' Participant questionnaire

'Talking through barriers to working with employers was really useful' Participant questionnaire

When asked what participants felt was missing from the workshop, all said that they would have liked more time for the workshop. Particularly more time for discussion with other participants.

'Perhaps a little more time for the small group discussions.' Participant questionnaire

'More time, more discussion: it was sadly cut short due to timescales.' Participant questionnaire

At the end of the workshop, 12 participants reported feeling 'a fair amount' more informed about work-related basic skills, with a further 5 reporting feeling 'a great deal' more informed. However, 3 felt only 'a little' more informed, whilst another did not feel more informed having completed the workshop.

Similarly, 13 participants reported feeling 'a fair amount' more informed about approaches to delivering work-related basic skills, with a further 2 feeling 'a great deal' more informed. Again, one felt no more informed about the approaches to delivering work-related basic skills. Both the responses saying they did not feel more informed, could be a reflection on the level of expertise present at the workshop.

Many participants had plans they were looking to instigate after the workshop. Many were considering exploring different ways of engaging and managing relationships with employers. In particular, participants were looking to think about designing more bespoke offers, and considering ways to help employers identify skills gaps. Others were considering ways to promote informal learning in the workplace, and feeding back to colleges what they had learnt.

'Relationship management with employers to support them to identify and address skills gaps.' Participant questionnaire

'Discuss different models - not just generic maths and English but discreet and bespoke basic skills in all work-place.' Participant questionnaire

'Contact local employers and start to engage with them more.' Participant questionnaire

The main challenge identified by participants to achieving their plans was considered to be funding. Other challenges considered included the need for more time, support from senior management teams and the opportunity to be flexible in approaching skills delivery.

Other comments from the workshop included:

'Thanks for a very stimulating workshop!' Participant questionnaire

'Well planned and timed and stimulating, thanks.' Participant questionnaire

- **Conclusion**

STRAIGHTEN basic skills project aims to improve the accessibility of learning opportunities for adults through the promotion of good practice in work-related and workplace based basic skills.

This report was based on two seminars on work-related basic skills for the IO3 of STRAIGHTEN basic skills project. The aim of the England seminars was to inform participants about current policies and research on work-related basic skills, provide examples of delivery models, and to promote discussion around work-related basic skills.

The first seminar consisted of two presentations followed by a question and answer session and discussion. The first presentation was on the current research and policy landscape in the UK and Europe. The second presentation provided a case study from Norway on delivering work-related basic skills to adults via blended learning. Both generated deep discussion around the definition of work-related basic skills, success indicators and engaging learners and employers.

In the first seminar, many participants found the practical delivery example from Norway very useful. The example of work-related basic skills practices generated lots of questions and discussion, with many going away at the end, looking to find out more about other delivery models. Many considered the seminar could have benefited from more time for the question and answer session with colleagues in Norway.

The second seminar consisted of one presentation, with opportunities throughout for discussion and participation by attendees. There was a lot of discussion about engaging employers, the barriers to literacy and basic skills provision and opportunities for providers to explore. Key discussion points included: improving the relationship management between providers and employers, the inclusion of oral skills within basic skills, and employers understanding of the skills needed by employees.

In this seminar, participants found the discussion with other participants, particularly with the employers present, very useful. Many participants reported that they would have liked more time for these discussions.

Overall, the majority felt more informed because of attending the seminars, and benefited from the discussing of work-related basic skills. There was some discussion at both seminars around the inclusion of different skills within work-related basic skills in the UK, and how providers could incorporate these to better meet employer needs. So far, both seminars have generated a lot of discussion about different approaches to work-related basic skills. Several

participants went away from the seminars, to disseminate what they had learnt in the seminars throughout their organisations, with the hope that they can better deliver work-related basic skills to learners more effectively. Many participants were looking at ways to build relationships and work in collaboration with employers, in order to meet their skills needs in the future.