GOOD PRACTICE MANUAL

"Experiences and Methodologies in the Training of Vulnerable Individuals, Groups and Communities"

Grundtvig Partnerships, 2012

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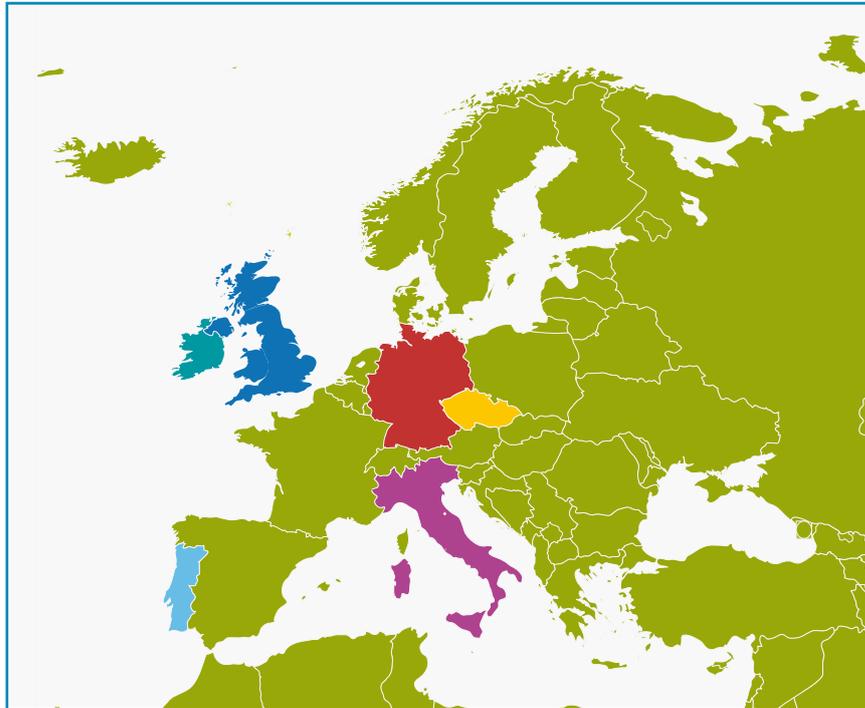
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SECTION 1 | INTRODUCTION AND FRAMEWORK OF THE GOOD PRACTICE MANUAL

Objective of this Manual

This manual presents good practices as identified by partner organisations involved in the delivery of the European project 'Experiences and Methodologies in the Training of Trainers to Work with Marginalised Individuals, Groups and Communities'.

The objective of this manual is to present examples of these good practices, which may benefit other European organisations that are either delivering or looking to deliver education to vulnerable individuals, communities, and groups.

Project Description

The project operated from September 2010 to July 2012 and involved six partner organisations from European countries: **UK, Eire, Czech Republic, Portugal, Germany,** and **Italy.** Funding for the project came through the Grundtvig stream of the European Union's Lifelong Learning Programme.

The project operated as a partnership in which the main learners were adults who work as trainers in and with vulnerable communities (for example, the long-term unemployed, socially-excluded people, financially-excluded people, economically disadvantaged communities, drug users and those at risk of drug addiction, etc.). In summary, the project compared and contrasted the experiences and methodologies used by the different partner organisations to train and support trainers to work with and deliver training to learners in particular vulnerable communities. This was achieved by learners and staff from partner organisations visiting the other partners to observe working practises. The visits comprised tours of facilities, workshops, and presentations, as well as talks, discussions, and meetings with professionals, trainers, other stakeholders, and learners. The act of comparing and contrasting each partner's operations helped to strengthen the capacity of partner organisations to deliver education and training, increasing their understanding of the impact of various cultural factors on training systems.

The motivation behind the project lay in the recognition that each partner organisation delivers training to marginalised, isolated and vulnerable communities and shares a similar aim: to help and empower individuals, groups and communities to improve their situation through the provision of education and training. The processes, procedures and methodologies used to implement the education and training, however, are different in each partner organisation.

The partnership intended to address the following subjects/questions:

» How do we best deliver training to the communities that we work in or with (including recruitment, monitoring, and evaluation)?

» What training models, methodologies, and processes do we use to train and support our learners? What do we share in common? What are the major differences?

» How do we overcome such barriers as stigma, negative attitudes to authority, low skills and expectations within the vulnerable communities that our learners deliver training to?

The Structure of this Manual

This manual comprises six sections.

Section 1, this introduction, outlines the objective of the manual, presents an overview of the project, the structure of the manual and descriptions of the six partner organisations involved .

Section 2 provides definitions for key concepts used throughout the project in order to clarify its scope.

Section 3, the most important part of the manual, presents the good practices identified by the project partners. Each good practice comprises a short summary and some practical examples from the experience of the different partners.

Section 4 contains a short conclusion.

Section 5 provides the bibliographic sources used in the writing of the manual.

Section 6 contains contact details for each of the partner organisations including a named worker.

PROJECT PARTNERS

Below is a brief description of each of the organisations that took part in the project.
Contact details for each partner are included in Section 6.

North Liverpool Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB), Liverpool, England

North Liverpool CAB provides free, confidential, independent and unbiased advice and information on a wide range of issues (for example, welfare benefits, housing, consumer rights, debt, financial matters, etc) to the communities of North Liverpool. North Liverpool CAB operates from four main sites and additional outreach locations and is a member of the national Citizens Advice Bureau network. As well as information and advice, it delivers free financial capability training to local community groups, and organisations. This group training (covering budgeting, choosing and using credit, dealing with debt, etc) reaches over 3000 people per year. North Liverpool CAB operates in some of the most economically disadvantaged city wards in England. Local citizens experience high levels of debt, and there are low levels of understanding about financial products and related issues. The local community includes a high proportion of white, working class people who are unemployed or living on low incomes. In addition, the community includes people with health-related issues, and asylum seekers and refugees, as well as high proportions of lone parents and older people. North Liverpool CAB was the coordinating partner for the project.

City of Galway VEC, Galway, Eire

The City of Galway VEC is the statutory provider of vocational, adult and community education in Galway City. The VEC has a staff of over 300 people and over 10,000 students annually engaged in programmes. The scheme has 2 second level schools, 2 further education colleges, and 6 adult education centres. The Community Education programme has almost 2000 students annually based in their own communities. The Community Education programme has a specific focus on people experiencing social exclusion and those who are educationally disadvantaged. The programme is run across the city in a number of disadvantaged areas working with a range of target groups including refugees and asylum seekers, the lesbian, gay and bisexual community, people with disabilities, people experiencing homelessness, community arts groups, older people and others. The service provides grant aid to groups, training for community education trainers, community leadership skills courses, an active network of groups and general community capacity building.

Agência Piaget para o Desenvolvimento (APDES), Porto, Portugal

APDES is a Portuguese non-profit organisation, founded in 2004 to promote integrated development. APDES works with communities and people in vulnerable situations with the aim of improving access to health, employment, and education and the enhancement of social cohesion. APDES is particularly suited to work with unemployed people, prisoners, drug users, and sex workers, amongst others, developing activities concerning employment, social integration, and civic participation. Inspired by human rights ideals, APDES promotes health through harm reduction strategies and the improvement of healthy lifestyles in different social contexts, such as schools, local communities, and prisons. APDES also aims to strengthen active citizenship and community participation through the enhancement of citizen's power to exercise their rights and responsibilities. APDES has 40 collaborators from areas as wide as Psychology, Sociology, Social Service, Anthropology, Nursing, Biology, Economics, and Management. APDES is a training entity accredited by DGERT – Directorate-General for the Employment and Working Relations. APDES has been broadening its territorial scope of intervention, extending its action to several regions of the country, such as Barcelos, Vila Nova de Gaia, Porto, Guarda, Lisboa and Viseu.

PROJECT PARTNERS

Magdalena ops, Prague, Czech Republic

Magdalena ops began in 1997. The growth of the company was very dynamic from the beginning. It started in 1998 with 8 employees and 13 clients, now there are more then 50 employees working in 4 geographical areas. The headquarters of Magdalena is located in the middle of a forest at a former military area. The organisation has at its disposal a large site (14 ha) including a farm and bio-agricultural centre. The site is located near Prague and has a strategic position, providing services not only to clients from Prague and the Central Bohemian Region, but the whole Czech Republic. The overall objective of Magdalena ops is to prevent drug abuse among vulnerable youth and to treat and re-socialise people addicted to drugs. Magdalena uses a complex system to achieve its goal, mainly: long-term prevention programmes and community awareness, street-work, contact centres (harm reduction), a therapeutic community, sheltered housing, and workshops, aftercare programmes and psychiatric ambulances. Magdalena´s mission is to offer treatment to drug addicted people who are willing to change their former destructive life style. The goal of the treatment is abstinence, personal growth, and full social rehabilitation.

San Benedetto onlus, Livorno, Italy

The Association San Benedetto onlus has been active in the field of drug addiction since 1985 (from 1985 to 2000 as Cooperative S. Benedetto). Since 1988, it has managed a daily rehab centre in the city of Livorno in collaboration with the local Health Sanitary Unit offering therapeutic, recovery, prevention, training, and support activities, aimed at people with addiction problems. The centre is framed in the typology of the therapeutic/rehabilitative services - as referenced by Italian laws (L. Reg. 1165/2002) and it pursues the psychic and physical recovery of people that live with pathological addictions, either coming from drugs or behavioural aspects (such as gambling). Professional social workers offer all cultural and recreational initiatives on a voluntary basis.

Some of the projects and actions that S. Benedetto have undertaken and hold important are:

» a training course and therapeutic apprenticeship (industrial cutting and sewing) for women with addiction problems.

» training courses on computing;

» a professional training course to volunteers and general practitioners on the prevention of addictions;

» (on the Provincial call for 'Provincia di Livorno multimisura POR 2005') a re-start project to train people in courses of naval carpentry and restaurant management, in collaboration with some recognized national network (CEIS community onlus, ARCI solidarity, CESCOT).

Starthilfe Sondershausen e.V., Sondershausen, Germany

The main objectives of Starthilfe Sondershausen e.V. are assisting and promoting unemployed youth, young adults, and other disadvantaged groups in terms of education, vocational and social integration. The organisation also aims to provide a holistic approach in conveying § 13 of the German Children and Young People Act (KJHG) by being a network and provider of vocational guidance, job preparation, vocational training, mentoring, counselling, support around social-housing and school social work. In order to help integrate different target groups into the primary labour market, Starthilfe e.V. works with entities like the Federal Employment Service, Federal Ministry of Education, the Thuringian Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure, the European Social Fund, the Social Welfare Office and the Youth Welfare Office of the Kyffhaeuser County. A close cooperation with the Institute of Vocational Education, Labour and Social Policy, the Federal Institute for Vocational Training, the German Youth Institute, and the Institute 'Synapse' Weimar promotes the use of current research results on the labour market, and in educational and social policy. Starthilfe e.V. is also a member of the PARITÄTISCHEN Wohlfahrtsverband Thüringen e.V., the Jugendberufshilfe Thüringen e.V. and a member of the regional Youth Welfare Committee.

SECTION 2 | DEFINITIONS

This section of the manual intends to approach some of the concepts that were fundamental for the project, such as educator/trainer, learner/trainee and vulnerable groups and populations. Having in mind the plurality and diversity of the methodologies carried out by the different partner organisations, it is also important to state the meaning of education and training and clarify the various types of education (formal, non-formal, informal), in order to describe in a more accurate way the different kinds of actions that are put into practice.

Educator/Trainer/Tutor

For the purposes of this manual, we will use the term trainer throughout

Persons belonging to the staff of a social project or organisation that implements strategies for education, and training among vulnerable individuals, groups or communities. Educators/trainers provide support, advice, and training so that people can live more independently in their communities. Strategies for education and training are not implemented in isolation, but are part, and parcel of a more comprehensive social intervention approach.

Learner/Trainee

For the purposes of this manual, we will use the term learner throughout

Individuals belonging to vulnerable groups, and communities, which are targets for – and active participants of – the education and training strategies implemented by educators/trainers. Examples are socially excluded people, financially excluded people, poor communities, unemployed people, drug users, etc. These individuals have a common characteristic: a set of vulnerabilities that lead to their dismissal against the normative dimensions of social life and crystallize their permanence in a situation of social exclusion.

Vulnerable groups and communities

In the context of this manual, learners belong to vulnerable groups and communities. These are the various conditions of vulnerability identified among learners, which constitute an obstacle to their social inclusion:

» In social terms: extended periods of alienation from the labour market – resulting in loss or numbness of personal and social skills, low educational levels – that are reflected in both the formal wealth of knowledge and the ability to undertake new learning, and poor adherence to various social systems - health, family, justice, tax, etc;

» In economic terms: low income levels, which result in material shortages and the inability to meet basic needs;

» In physical terms: physical and mental health weaknesses and biological addiction to substances;

» In psychological terms: low motivation, low self-confidence and self-esteem, fear of stigma and lack of trust in society.

There are also systemic conditions, which embody and reinforce the vulnerability of these groups and communities: an economic and social system generating increasing inequalities and negative attitudes and stigmatisation from other social strata of the population.

This set of vulnerabilities makes education/training strategies a challenge, and calls for specific approaches to its design and implementation.

Training

For the purposes of this manual, education and training is referred to as training alone

The term training comprises a structured and systematic development of skills and competences to perform a task or change behaviour. Goldstein and Gessner (1998) define training as 'as the systematic acquisition of skills, rules, concepts or attitudes that result in improved performance in the work situation'. It focuses on behavioural change and learning to do something in a better or improved way. The concepts of training and education are often inter-connected in the literature and are often used inter changeably as a result.

Education

For the purposes of this manual, education and training is referred to as training alone

According to Walsh (2007) education is a 'process of gaining knowledge, developing intellectual capabilities, Education is using knowledge, theory and concepts to achieve deep insights, about using research to question existing knowledge and create new knowledge in a somewhat guided and structured manner.'

This can cover a wide variety of activities, ranging from informal and non-formal education activities to structured training courses.

In many countries, the notion of non-formal and informal education[1] is not common in internal policy debates - preferred alternatives being community education, community learning and social pedagogy. According to Combs, Prosser, and Ahmed (1996, cit in Mark, 2011), Dib (1987) and Fordham (cit in Mark (1996, 2011)):

Formal education corresponds to the hierarchically structured, chronologically graded education system, running from primary school through to university and including, in addition to general academic studies, a variety of specialised programmes and institutions for full-time technical and professional training. It is a systematic, organised education model, structured and administered according to a given set of laws and norms, presenting a rather rigid curriculum as regards objectives, content and methodology. Formal education is linked with schools and training institutions.

Non-formal education comprises any organised educational activity outside the established formal system - whether operating separately or as an important feature of some broader activity - that is intended to serve identifiable learning clienteles and learning objectives. It reveals the constant presence of two features: (a) - centralisation of the process on the student/learner, as to his previously identified needs and possibilities; and, (b) - immediate usefulness of the education for the student/learner's personal and professional growth. In this respect, the learners should preferably undertake organisation, and curriculum planning for themselves, (a 'bottom-up' approach). Non-formal education is linked with community groups and other organisations.

Informal education is a truly lifelong process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experience and the educative influences and resources in his or her environment - from family and neighbours, from work and play, from the market place, the library, and the mass media. It is mainly linked with interactions with friends, family and work colleagues. In terms of social intervention, informal education is a more spontaneous process of helping people to learn and can take place in various settings. It works through conversation and involves the exploration and enlargement of the learners' experience. It can use a variety of methods including group work, casual conversation, play, activities, work with individuals and casework.

These definitions do not imply hard and fast categories. An analysis of formal, non-formal, and informal education features suggests the existence of a range for transition from formal to non-formal education, as well as from non-formal to informal education.

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1 Non formal and informal education became part of the international discourse on education policy in the late 1960s and early 1970s, by the hand of planners from the World Bank and UNESCO. It was then recognised that formal education systems tended to adapt too slowly to the socio-economic changes around them and that educational policy making generally followed rather than guided other social trends. This inadequacy and the incapacity of formal educational models to meet the needs of individuals, and society at large lead to the search for alternatives. This was also related to the development of the concepts of recurrent and lifelong learning, which have to do with the need to extend education and learning throughout life. Within this context a tripartite categorization of learning systems emerged.

This chart clarifies the distinctions between formal and non-formal education:

Ideal-type models of formal and non-formal education

	formal	**non-formal**
purposes	Long-term & general Credential-based	Short-term & specific Non-credential-based
timing	Long cycle / preparatory / full-time	Short cycle / recurrent / part-time
content	Standardized / input centred academic Entry requirements determine clientele	Individualized / output centred practical Clientele determine entry requirements
delivery system	Institution-based, isolated from environment Rigidly structured, teacher-centred and resource intensive	Environment-based, community related Flexible, learner-centred and resource saving
control	External / hierarchical	Self-governing / democratic

(Adapted by Fordham 1993 from Simkins 1977: 12-15 *cit in* Mark (1996, 2011))

Fordham (*cit in* Mark (1996, 2011) suggests that in the 1970s, four characteristics came to be associated with non-formal education:

» Relevance to the needs of disadvantaged groups

» Concern with specific categories of person

» A focus on clearly defined purposes

» Flexibility in organization and methods

These characteristics are particularly in line with the main goal of the project, related to working with marginalised and vulnerable individuals, groups, and communities.
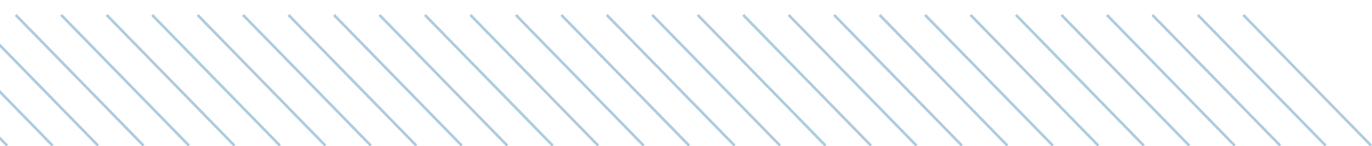
SECTION 3 | GOOD PRACTICES

This section of the manual is the result *per se* of the project. Here we intend to present a set of recommendations for the training of vulnerable populations. These recommendations must be seen as orientations for professionals, trainers and organisations that intervene with vulnerable populations and use formal and non-formal education strategies to promote the development of individuals and communities.

1. Value learners life experiences and motivate them to undertake training through a bottom up approach

Low expectations and distance from the education and training system are two important factors that we must be aware of when we plan training for vulnerable people. What can be interesting and motivating to these people? What can be used as their learning input? Their life experience and daily practices are often the most significant themes for them, permitting the possibility to share one's knowledge, and become an active part of the training and education process by contributing with their daily life experiences. For learners, the establishment of links between their own experiences and teaching develops a better understanding about the contents/subjects of the training. It also keeps learners motivated to adhere to training, because they can see these connections, and anticipate the advantages of the training process, and their use in their own future, daily lives. At the same time, the social isolation and restricted social networks that vulnerable populations experience contributes to their focus on themselves and on their personal problems. Using their life practices can also give learners support in finding solutions for their problems, but primarily we can promote their own recognition of themselves as people with value, dignity, and rights.

APDES in their peer training programme implemented with drug users, ensured that their life experiences could be shared during the training. Trainers were expecting this kind of sharing, and focused on taking advantage of these materials and integrating them into the training process. This strategy was important, but not sufficient. In the evaluation process, APDES discovered that the trained peers that were then working within some organisations retained the need to explore their life experiences and maintained a significant self-centredness, finding it difficult to use their knowledge to help others. Based on this discovery, APDES reformulated its peer training programme for drug users, integrating focus groups throughout the training. These focus groups explore the peers' life experiences and the relation between training and working as peer educators.

In the **City of Galway VEC**, groups of learners are considered full partners. The VEC develop courses in response to and with the support of the group. The group of learners are involved in all aspects of the course from identifying what course to complete, what course content to include, where and when the course is held, and organising a venue and tutor, through to evaluating the final outcomes of the course. This bottom up approach ensures that learners' life experiences and existing knowledge dictates what course is provided, and that it is the course that learners need rather than the course that the trainer wants to deliver.

North Liverpool CAB start many financial capability training sessions with an exercise or activity that allows learners to express what they know about some aspect of the subject of the training session. For example, a training session on 'Choosing Affordable Credit' might start with learners in small groups listing the names of different credit providers in their local area. Subsequent exercises then require learners to list the credit providers that they have identified by type and/or describe the pros and cons of taking credit from each provider. The trainer is there to correct any inaccuracies, add additional information, and facilitate discussion, but the majority of the content for the session comes from the learners' own experiences and knowledge. The trainer always thanks the learners for their participation and acknowledges the importance in having them share their experiences. This makes the sessions more relevant to learners, makes them feel valued, and encourages them to take part in other training sessions.

Starthilfe e.V. runs a programme of intensive assistance for the long-term unemployed. As part of this programme, learners make a presentation on a specific topic of their choice. This means the learner has the possibility to talk about what is affecting them, their experiences or a specific topic of interest/concern for them. Following this presentation to the others in the group, the learner has to moderate a discussion about the topic. In this context, the learner is in effect the trainer and creates the lesson for other learners. The professional trainer stays in the background, but provides guidance or intervention when necessary. This is a positive way for the learner to share their knowledge and experience, collect information and knowhow, present themselves to the group and communicate with others; they can discuss problems and find solutions. Furthermore, they can listen to different views and opinions on a topic, which can help them to become open to other options.

2. Professional profile of trainers

Professionals and trainers should accumulate on their profile two kinds of expertise. On one hand, they should have experience with working with vulnerable populations and manage strategies to establish empathy and trust with them. On the other hand, they require expertise in a certain area of knowledge and must be capable of teaching and developing a learning process with the learners on specific contents/subjects, such as citizenship, communication, peer work, financial matters, etc.

The main personal and social characteristics and competences are:

» Capacity for communication and interaction with the learners (to know how to listen, to empathise, to gain trust), and with the community (to facilitate contacts, to mediate conflicts)

» Problem solving competencies

» Affirmative and comprehensive posture/body language

» Non-judgemental attitudes or prejudices

» Capacity to manage and integrate learner experiences into the training

» Capacity to motivate the group

» Capacity to listen, manage and negotiate subjects/contents

» Capacity to observe and analyse needs (expressed directly, or indirectly by learners, groups, and community representatives

» Capacity to create and visualise networks, to act as a 'connection' between different territorial resources and realities

S. Benedetto teaches techniques and activities for HIV/AIDS prevention to active drug users, young people who use alcohol, sex workers, clubbers etc. This training occurs in 'street' settings, and the skills that trainers require include the ability to: rapidly assess a situation; appear as 'believable' while not perceived as a threat; build 'weak link' relationships based on mutual trust (and roles); and encourage 'peer' education dynamics. These skills are paramount in order to initiate a 'snowball' effect and positively impact the target groups.

S. Benedetto: Workers from European partner Organisations at a community garden, Pisa, May 2011

In **APDES**, trainers developing formal training programmes for vulnerable populations (particularly drug users, inmates, etc.) use slang to help ensure that the subjects of the training are understood by the learners. The training content is also related to the life experiences of the learners. This strategy helps trainers to establish a more horizontal relationship with the learners. The trainers also establish a flexible structure for the training contents, frequently using the inputs of the learners to discuss their topics of interest.

Starthilfe e.V. offers young learners the chance to participate in a gap year/voluntary social service. Learners have to attend seminars, activities to improve social skills, share knowledge and gain expertise. Trainers working with the young learners must have an understanding of youth culture, and be up to date on their learners' interests, special needs and problems. The trainer should be authentic, have a broad knowledge, be willingly to participate in group activities with the young people, and accept that he/she will also learn from the learners. The trainer must also have an expertise in experiential education and this helps them to experience the youth training as the young learners do, and become a part of the group. So, for example, when the group does climbing, the trainer goes climbing too. This has a very positive outcome as it leads to a good relationship with the learners.

Starthilfe Sondershausen e.V.: Building trust with young people through activities

3. Peer Education

Some subjects may lend themselves to peer education, which can have a greater effect than training delivered by professional trainers. Peers are individuals who are part of the learner group and share the same characteristics and/or experiences as the learner. Examples of peer education include: a young mother training a group of expectant mothers; a former or active drug user training drug users in harm reduction techniques for using drugs; someone who has experienced debt training people about appropriate forms of credit; and so on. In these situations, the peer trainer acts as not only a trainer, but a role model. They are proof that applying the knowledge that they deliver can work for the learners. The peer trainers can anticipate the questions, fears and hopes of the learners and provide real, direct and meaningful content and messages on how to deal with problems and resolve situations, which the learners can easily identify with and understand. Development of peer education dynamics - with the aim of training peer trainers as amplifiers and multipliers of believable messages to their peers - can be a good practice when working with vulnerable populations and tackling stigma and social exclusion.

Many of the financial capability training subjects delivered by **North Liverpool CAB** are relatively simple to learn. These subjects are ideal for MoneyActive volunteers (mainly local people who have previously experienced debt or other financial crises) to deliver to other people in the local community. MoneyActive volunteers receive 'Training Skills for Financial Capability Training' and can go on to attain a formal teaching qualification (City & Guilds PTLLS, level 3 or 4). They also

receive a thorough grounding in financial capability topics in order to deliver the training sessions, but the messages that they deliver are often much stronger than those of professional trainers as these volunteers are examples of how individuals can deal with debt and move on with their lives.

In Portugal, the training and integration of peers is a practice being followed by APDES in several areas of their harm

City of Galway VEC: Learners on the Diploma in Community Development & Community Education course enjoying a cup of tea between training sessions

reduction work (drug use, sex work, prisons, etc). The first APDES peer education project, InPAR (English translation, InPEER), funded by the National Institute of Drugs and Drug Addiction, trained and promoted the integration of eight peer workers in harm reduction teams in the field of drug use. After fifteen months of work, these trainers achieved what professionals could not have done alone: 30% of the new drug users contacted by the harm reduction teams where achieved by the peer workers; 9 new drug scenes opened by the peers to the outreach teams; several referrals of resistant clients to blood analysis and infectious diseases treatments; and so on.

The **City of Galway VEC** recognises the vital role that peers play in providing community education. Research conducted by the VEC in 2005 identified that many learners had skills and experiences they wanted to share within their community, but they lacked the confidence and basic training skills to become community trainers. In order to address this need the VEC in partnership with the local University developed an accredited 'train the trainer' programme. The programme, known as the Diploma in Community Development and Community Education, seeks to build the training skills and confidence of participants to work within their own vulnerable community groups. The focus is on facilitation, community development and social analysis. The Diploma course is part-time over one year and carries 30 ECTS credits. Over 80 people from vulnerable communities have now trained as community educators and are actively engaged in working back in their own communities.

4. Delivery of short and/or flexible training sessions that fit around the daily living patterns of learners

When training vulnerable groups that have low educational achievements, negative experiences of formal education or where individuals have been out of education or training for a considerable time, there is often a need to ensure that group or one-to-one training sessions are short. But, how can we set a training course if the learners complain about their difficulties in relating training to their daily life activities? 'Afternoons are

impossible for me because I have to pick up my daughter at 5 pm...' or 'It is difficult for me to join the training... How will I get my daily dose of methadone?...' Training sessions should fit into the activities and/or timetable of the vulnerable individuals receiving the training. So it is important to assess the learners needs and be aware of them when establishing the training calendar. If the topic is large and complex, additional sessions can be added or introduced to the group over time.

As part of it's Horizons programme for lone parents, **North Liverpool CAB** delivers financial capability training to parents from economically disadvantaged working class communities via schools and children's centres (which support families with children under that age of 5 years old). Sessions are often no longer than 40 minutes long and can be delivered while parents are with their young children or just after dropping off their older children at school, and before shopping and their other daily tasks. Each session is stand alone, but can form part of a longer course. The first session generally covers budgeting, and subsequent sessions cover topics such as debt, choosing affordable credit, safe savings, how to get cheaper energy, etc. Parents would be far less inclined to attend the sessions if they did not fit into their daily schedules.

APDES built a modular training structure for teaching peer education and harm reduction subjects to drug users so they could assume the role of peer workers. The contents and the workload of the course were initially discovered to be too challenging for most of the learners. So, trainers established a flexible weekly calendar for the training sessions, adapting the structure of the course to three training sessions of three hours each per week. This better suited the learners and allowed them to fit the training around their other routines.

Starthilfe e.V. recruits learners for it's domestic service training programme who have a wide variety of backgrounds, but they have one common characteristic: they all are fed up with school

North Liverpool CAB: Workers from European partner organisations at County Children's Centre, an outreach location for the Horizons programme, June 2011.

or have been out of education for years. It is therefore not appropriate to use long lessons as in many schools. The trainer delivers short theory sessions and then the learners immediately go into practice. For example, learners are taught a lesson about healthy food. They then fix up a menu together in the classroom and go to prepare it in the kitchen.

5. Rewarding learners for participating in training

Training vulnerable populations (for example, drug users or long term unemployed people) implies dealing with a set of conditions that can push some vulnerable people into social exclusion through their fear of failure, low expectations, fear of stigma and lack of trust in the system and society, low levels of education, lack of self-confidence, etc. One of the most important factors in the adherence of learners to training is their motivation: What makes them attend the training? Particularly at the beginning of the process when they have no relationship to the education process, or the professionals or trainers involved? The existence of some kind of reward can facilitate and increase their motivation levels. So, instead of using negative reinforcement, such as 'If you don't attend to the training sessions we will cut your unemployment benefit!' we could think about using other compensations. In fact, if socially excluded people engage in the training process, perhaps compensation for their efforts and work is justified.

This is, however, a contentious issue, as the majority of employment and social work professionals believe the contrary. They see training as an opportunity, and people funded by the government (i.e.: through unemployment and other welfare benefits) should be obliged to do training without any kind of reinforcement.

Other professionals also point to the fact that paying for training means that learners value it more. In their view, being paid, or otherwise compensated, to attend training might mean learners are not attending for 'the right reasons.'

For those that see rewarding learners from vulnerable groups as a positive action, however, one attractive reward can be the payment of a scholarship or financial support for getting involved in the training. With some populations, the absence of this kind of compensation would become an obstacle for recruiting learners.

APDES created a peer training and work program for people that use drugs to learn to act as peers, either informally in their groups and communities, transmitting harm reduction messages, or formally, operating as peer workers within organisations. The payment of a scholarship for participation in the training was an integral part of the legal framework of the project, and was almost equivalent to the minimum wage in Portugal. Most of the learners were already receiving support from the government, approximately less than half of this amount, and this scholarship was an important incentive for peers to participate in the training.

S. Benedetto rewards learners for engaging in training, when it is deemed appropriate to the vulnerable target group. For example, sex workers attending health education training received a 'reimbursement,' which was legally recognised as an incentive in the project framework. This was important, because the payment recognised that these learners lost earnings by taking the time to attend the training (especially true for those who had sex work as their only income). The payment also valorised the time learners spent in training as a 'valuable' tool for the development of safer behaviours.

Conversely, the Community Education Service (CES) within the **City of Galway VEC** do not provide payment for any learners to attend courses and have in fact began to charge learners a very low fee for attending courses. The City of Galway VEC

believes that receiving the training, and having an opportunity to socialise and build confidence is the reward from their training. They feel that paying learners to learn creates a false expectation of learning and can become the only reason for participating. Furthermore, they have found that the charging of learners for attending courses has increased attendance and completion rates by 35% in the last six months.

Magdalena ops believe that specific incentives are unnecessary for learners as long as the organisation provides services and training that clients need and demand. This relates specifically to any kind of remuneration – financial or in kind. Within their training courses and services, however, clients who are drug users can access certain facilities such as showers and bathrooms, a laundry service to wash their clothes, health services, a kitchen for basic nutrition (soup, tea, etc), and a needle exchange programme.

To conclude, certain groups may need incentives to participate in training activities (for example, people who use drugs or sex workers). In these instances, political and legal frameworks within training projects should integrate a specific budget for the payment of learners to attend training. For other groups or in different contexts, the payment of learners is not necessary as their intrinsic motivation is enough to enrol and participate in the proposed training activities.

6. Work with pre-established groups of learners

If the vulnerable community that you wish to access already has established groups that meet regularly, accessing them to deliver training can save a great deal of time and effort. These groups may have a leader or facilitator who acts as both the contact for the group and a conduit to reach group members. Maintaining good relationships with these key individuals is important. The group will have its own agenda and priorities, but (providing that the subject matter of your training is relevant to them) it will probably be relatively easy to work with the group members (rather than working with unknown individuals). The group members already know each other and feel safe in the regular environment where they meet, and have a leader or facilitator that can introduce your trainers to them. Starting a group from scratch, particularly with regard to the delivery of very short training sessions or courses, might be overly time-consuming or problematic on various fronts: recruiting learners from the target vulnerable community, building trust, finding accessible and appropriate venues, and so on.

Conversely, however, vulnerable people are hard to reach, and many individuals are not members of pre-established groups, or even known to organisations and services. How do you access these individuals? In addition, some vulnerable groups by their nature constantly move, change their activities and alter their membership meaning that terms such as 'new' and 'pre-established' are not always useful descriptions.

North Liverpool CAB engages with a wide range of existing community groups and organisations to access potential learners for their short financial capability training sessions. For example, North Liverpool CAB work with several community-based groups that help homeless people into accommodation. These groups often provide their own training or support around 'managing your own home' or 'becoming a responsible tenant.' Rather than try to set up a new group for homeless

people, North Liverpool CAB deliver courses on budgeting and related issues within the pre-existing homeless groups.

Conversely, the **City of Galway VEC** traditionally only worked with established groups in delivering their community-based training. This has been successful in the past as the group are more comfortable together, and focus more on the topic of the
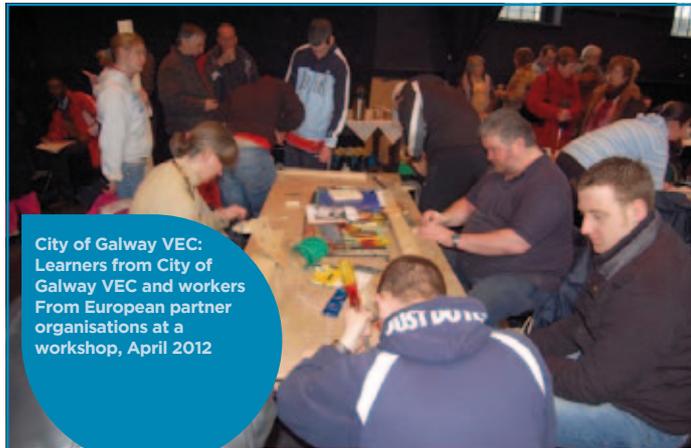
City of Galway VEC: Learners from City of Galway VEC and workers From European partner organisations at a workshop, April 2012

training. In recent years, however, the City of Galway VEC found that there are many learners outside of established groups, and many others who are not ready to join an established group. They have therefore developed 'introductory' courses, which focus on engaging people who are not involved in anything in their community. These courses aim to engage these people and progress them onwards to join more established community learning groups.

S. Benedetto has found that it is not always easy or useful to use terms such as 'new' or 'pre-established' with regard to groups of drug users or sex workers in outreach situations. These vulnerable target populations are hard to reach, because they tend to hide (due their 'shady business,' fear of stigma, police pressures, etc), and groups frequently change locations, alter their activities, and/or change their membership. It is therefore necessary for professionals and trainers to periodically review activities, and engage with other services in an area to verify the new locations of the target population(s) and find new ways to reach them. These changes require continual adjustments in the trainers' practice to 'keep track' of the target learners and the modifications in how and where they meet.

Mgadalena ops work with both new groups of individuals and established groups depending on the specific situation. In terms of low threshold services, reaching people addicted to drugs can be a challenge and therefore they provide informal training in the field (i.e. in the street, parks, etc). In the case of residential or ambulant after care services (high threshold services) they usually work with established groups for a certain (longer term) period of time. The attributes of this training are very different from low threshold ad hoc training.

In conclusion, while training to established groups might be easier to organise and save considerable time and resources, you might not reach vulnerable individuals that do not usually engage with or join community groups. The type of training, the needs of the vulnerable group and the context in which training is delivered will also determine whether you should engage with new or established groups.

7. Communities of interest and geographic communities

You can undertake the targeting of learners to engage in learning activities in their community in two ways. The first is the 'geographic community model', where all members of a specific area are targeted or offered the

Magdalena ops: Primary prevention staff making a presentation, to workers From European partner organisations, Prague, March, 2012

opportunity for training. This method targets all the people in a particular location and does not focus solely on particular 'categories' of people. The second approach to community training is through the 'communities of interest model'. This approach seeks to provide training to people who share a particular characteristic or life experience, for example: a community of ex drug users; the lesbian, gay and bisexual community; people living with a particular illness or disability; and so on. This general and more specific targeting of learners has implications for the approach to the training provided.

When the **City of Galway VEC** set up the Community Organic Garden in the city, the aim of the project was for people to come along to learn about gardening, have a cup of tea, chat to others in their community, enjoy the outdoors and relax. This approach is open to the entire geographic community as the City of Galway VEC want to offer people an opportunity to work together and achieve something positive for the entire community.

Conversely, **North Liverpool CAB** delivers 'Energy Best Deal' training sessions to help economically disadvantaged individuals gain cheaper prices from energy providers. Attempts to deliver these short training sessions to members of the local geographic community have not been as successful as delivery to specific communities of interest - even though the content of the sessions is the same no matter the group. North

City of Galway VEC: Ballybane Community Garden, April 2012

Liverpool CAB gained greater interest in the sessions through marketing them at specific groups such as the lesbian, gay, and bisexual community, disabled people, older people, and parents. Individuals from these different communities of interest, feel safer with their peers.

Starthilfe e.V. delivers training to both geographic communities and communities of interest at the same time. The catchment area for their project is the Kyffhaeuser county. All learners come from this area. The employment agency which is responsible for the Kyffhaeuser county allocates learners to Starthilfe e.V. So, residence is the first priority. On a second level, however, all the learners experience the threats of social exclusion, or unemployment or else they are already long term unemployed, and are also therefore a community of interest.

8. Train people in the places where they frequent or feel most at ease

It is not enough to provide training sessions at the premises of your organisation or venues located away from the vulnerable community you wish to engage with. How can we reach people that in most cases do not contact the formal services or social structures? Training sessions should therefore be provided at venues visited, used by or close to the vulnerable people you wish to access. This will increase trust and mean that individuals are more likely to access your training.

All **City of Galway VEC** community training is provided in community-based centres, the benefit of this for local people is that they can walk to the venue, they are usually familiar with the venue so will feel more secure and happy. Many learners have left school at an early age, usually due to bad experiences in the education system. The advantage then of using a community venue is that it is not like a school or a classroom and learners are more likely to learn in such an environment.

City of Galway VEC: Male learners attending an engineering training session in a local community centre or 'shed'

S. Benedetto's harm-reduction outreach activities are an example of training people in the places that they frequent. Rather than buildings, the places might be outdoor areas or streets where drug users actively use drugs. And when approaching a drug using group in these locations it is necessary to understand where 'the movements' are going on. Equally, when approaching sex workers a flexible definition of 'place' must be expected (a series of secondary streets, a long peripheral road, the area around/inside a park, etc). In these cases, it is necessary to carefully observe the area, in order to avoid dangerous spots, while at the same time choosing the right ones to meet the targets; not too far away for the 'interception', but not too close to be perceived as a threat.

For **Magdalena** ops, a large part of their work (low threshold services) involves walking through locations and places where drug users visit. These vulnerable individuals are not yet ready to contact a formal service provider on their own. It is best to seek them out and bring services and training to them. Therefore, Magdalena ops provide their training, information and other services (for example, needle exchange, health services, etc) in the usual environment of drug users. This also increases the chances to develop trusting relationships and connect vulnerable individuals to other follow-up services.

Magdalena ops: Staff from Magdalena ops making a presentation to workers from other European partner organisations, Erfurt, Germany, December 2011

9. Make links to other services/ organisations to complement or add value to training

Training can be more effective or easier to deliver if the training provides links to a range of other services or supports individuals in more than one way. Most organisations provide a range of services that are broadly complementary. If the training to vulnerable groups helps them to access other services that will benefit them, the learners will develop trust and will be more inclined to value the training and services of the training organisation and/or any partner services or organisations.

Magdalena ops provides a wide range of services, which are complementary. Services range from primary through to secondary and tertiary prevention within the Central Bohemian region, but some services are national (for example, a therapeutic community may be accessed by vulnerable clients from all over Czech Republic). This system is very unique, and important, because learners can be referred from one

programme to another follow-up programme. Partnerships and other referral organisations, however, are essential too. A broad network of partners is a guarantee of a quality and professional support for vulnerable learners.

The **City of Galway VEC** approach to community training is a partnership approach. For example, they offer a money management course in the city. For this course, they have linked with the local money advice and budgeting service (a local charity that visits people in their homes), the local banks, and the local social welfare offices. This joined up approach to training means that people accessing the course can get all the information and support they need to deal with money concerns effectively.

Starthilfe e.V. work closely with the Jugendberufshilfe in their work with young people aged under 25. Starthilfe e.V. provides training, assistance, counselling, and mediation services to these vulnerable young learners. If special needs occur, the trainer arranges contact with an advice and/or counselling service. This can include the social workers of the Jugendberufshilfe who provide support around the social life of the young learner. They visit the young person at home and assist with the tasks of daily life. This is a holistic approach and recognises that young learners require mentoring. Often, because of their lack of education and unemployment, the young people have massive problems with debt. Without the support of the social workers at the Jugendberufshilfe they would not contact or access debt advice services.

10. Make sure that the connection between your organisation and any stakeholders or funding bodies is clear

Some communities might be suspicious of particular funding bodies, statutory agencies, partners, government, or non-government bodies. This may mean that any direct or indirect connection with your organisation makes it harder to access particular vulnerable communities. It can be an obstacle if populations start to distrust your organisation or project because 'You are not independent, you are the same as them'. If this is the case, explain the connection with the funding body, or other stakeholder, to the vulnerable communities you engage with. In some cases, if the connection to a funder or stakeholder is unacceptable to the vulnerable community, it might be necessary to work with another stakeholder or funder. Alternatively, some stakeholders and funders might seem particularly appropriate by certain vulnerable communities.

The community programmes of some UK financial institutions such as Barclaycard and Nationwide fund **North Liverpool CAB** to deliver financial capability training. Most individuals accept this and feel that it is right that financial institutions should help vulnerable people in debt or financial crisis. Some vulnerable people who access North Liverpool CAB's financial capability training are, however, in debt to these institutions and may initially feel suspicious about the connection. Consequently, trainers explain that although these financial institutions fund the training, North Liverpool CAB is an independent charity and does not provide the personal details of learners to the financial institutions.

APDES has developed several partnerships linked to specific projects on a local territorial basis. Networking is important and permits the accessibility of the vulnerable populations to

different structures and services. At the same time, occasionally the partner organisations do not share the same principles, having different points of view and acting in different ways. In these cases, clients and populations view these partnerships with distrust. On a specific local based harm reduction project, the proximity between clients, and organisations is very close and everyone is well known by the community members. Therefore the team often needs to differentiate its principles from the other partners' roles, showing for example that what the clients do on this project is not going to be used against them by the partner organisation that provides treatment measures to drug users.

When a learner comes to **Starthilfe e.V.** for the first time, the trainer provides information and instructions covering ground rules, details of the project, safety issues and so on. The trainer also informs the learner about the funding of the project and the organisation. This avoids mistrust and helps learners to understand that Starthilfe e.V. is an independent, non-profit association. The information provided to learners is standardised by the organisation's Quality Management team, which makes sure that every learner is provided with the same information.

11. Provide evidence of the effectiveness and impact of training

Monitoring and evaluation of the proposed outcomes of a training programme or activity should occur throughout its life. The importance of being able to identify and explain why a training intervention is effective or is having an impact on a vulnerable group is vital. Evaluation is not simply about 'summary judgements of pass or fail, rather it should emphasise the importance of learning or adaptation' (Majone, 1988). Most of the time, evaluation means bureaucracy, paperwork, counts and boring statistics: What is the meaning of this? How can we, and the population, take advantage of evaluation processes? The important thing is that you focus on your training objective: ask yourself - and the group of people that you work with - questions about what you want to do and why, what do you want to change or to find out? Develop an evaluation model or methodology that is participative (involves all the stakeholders and learners) and provides critical and specific evidence instead of dozens of documents full of meaningless words. Create your own model and keep to the track that you designed, use initial evaluation/assessment, process, impact and follow-up evaluation instruments and make the necessary changes to achieve your evidence. Use the evidence that you create as a political argument with decision-makers, or as a support, or advocacy instrument for the maintenance of your project services to the populations that need them in the future. It can serve as a background structure for other projects and it can prove your transparency and worth.

InPAR, the drug users peer education project that was developed by **APDES**, is funded by the National Institute of Drugs and Drug Addiction, and is an experimental project based on the principle of action-research. One of the objectives of the project was to show the community and the participants involved that the integration of peer educators in harm reduction teams could be a great benefit for the teams, promoting new employment opportunities for drug users. APDES created specific indicators: for example, the number of new contacts made by the peers. The result was that 30% of the new client contacts made by the teams were achieved by the peer educators (in 100 hundred new contacts, 30 were

done by the peers themselves without team help). This outcome supported APDES' aim and resulted in the firm commitment of the project funder to study/adopt a criterion for new applications evaluation, where the inclusion of a peer in the harm reduction team can have an extra value.

As part of the Horizons programme, which supports lone parents **North Liverpool CAB** delivers financial capability training sessions on budgeting, debt, and related issues. Lone parents who engage with these training programmes complete evaluation forms at the end of each training session. If they are willing to provide contact details on the evaluation forms, individual learners will be contacted several months after the training session by an independent evaluator to ask questions about any actions that they have undertaken as a result of the training. Impact reports based on this feedback provide a guide to the effects of the training and act as justification for the continued delivery of the programme. This evidence is more persuasive to funders and stakeholders than simply collecting comments from training evaluation forms.

Starthilfe e.V. has built up a Quality Management system to standardise processes like evaluation, and documentation. They use the same evaluation forms in every project. Throughout the journey of the learner, the trainer keeps records about the whole process. This ensures that the process is transparent to other trainers and agencies, which require the records. The learner and the trainer draw up aims and objectives as part of the process, which show the learning procedure and its development. After training, trainers provide an evaluation and gain feedback from the learner. There is in addition, always a closing meeting with the learner to talk about their personal perception of the training. The trainer also asks for feedback at the end of each session, which is a good chance to detect problems and provide possibilities for intervention.

12. Use informal techniques to negate the need for more formal initial assessment, testing, evaluation and other tasks within the learning cycle

Professional trainers might be fixated upon formal procedures and the use of written forms for initial assessment, testing of knowledge/learning, evaluation and other elements within the learning cycle. This might deter individuals with lower educational qualifications or those with negative experiences of the educational system. How can we deliver training, which ensures that levels of motivation and engagement are high, but allows initial assessment, testing, and evaluation? Quizzes, games, discussion and other techniques offer ways of gaining initial assessment, testing what has been learnt, and provide evaluation without the need for formal procedures and written forms. These techniques can also introduce an element of fun, which can help learners to bond with each and the trainer and help to retain information/knowledge.

North Liverpool CAB will often deliver training sessions to groups that have not undergone formal initial assessment and that the trainer has not previously met. In this situation, the session may begin with a simple yes/no quiz. The trainer offers a small prize for the winner and the questions will be relevant to the subject of the training session. This will indicate the level of knowledge within the group as well as literacy and numeracy levels and the trainer can pitch the session at the right level for the group. Similarly, a game toward the end of

Informal training techniques: Ice breaking with workers from partner

Organisations in Qualificar para Incluir (QPI) during their visit to APDES,

Portugal, October 2011

the training session that involves learners recalling facts from the session is a way of checking what learners have learnt or retained. Where learners have poor literacy skills engaging them in a discussion about what was positive and negative about the training is a more appropriate way of getting feedback at the end of the session rather than completing evaluation forms.

APDES, on its 'Vanguarda' prison project funded by the National Institute of Drugs and Drug Addiction, implemented workshops based on animation and puppet theatre for training inmates and developing their personal and social skills related to their life experiences inside and outside prison. The empowerment through non-formal education by producing collective constructions - animation videos - enabled the participation in the social life of prison and facilitated the implementation of training avoiding formal strategies and instruments.

On the domestic training programme of **Starthilfe e.V**., the trainer uses quizzes about the region, food, or general topics. This approach creates a more relaxed learning environment. The learners enjoy it and so they learn by playing. The positive side effect is that knowledge is transferred and retained better in the long-term, because the learner relates it to a positive, funny or exciting learning situation. Some games can also be used as ice-breakers. Trainers use these games (developed in the field of experiential education) to bring groups of learners that do not know each other together and 'break the ice', which facilitates the rest of the training.

Mixed Fruits (Translation to English), 2010, Animation Video developed

by inmates with APDES 7th Dimension Project, during Vanguarda Prison Project

SECTION 4 | CONCLUSION

This manual is a good practice tool for others wishing to deliver training to vulnerable communities. Although the manual does not provide an answer to all questions, the good practices rest on the concrete experiences of six European organisations with many years of experience of working directly with a variety of vulnerable communities in a variety of contexts. We feel confident that the examples of good practice provided will be of practical use and relevance to most organisations wishing to deliver training to any particular vulnerable community.

The contact details for each partner organisation are in section 6 of this manual. Based upon the examples of good practice listed in section 3, we encourage you to contact any project partner that you feel might have particular insights or relevance to your particular work.

The project partners have noted the recent 'Report on the EU-wide consultation concerning the promotion and validation of non-formal and informal learning' with interest. In particular, 'the focus on EU actions and possible policy priorities' within the report identified unambiguous support for *awareness raising* and *the exchange of good practices.* In this respect, this project obviously has a role and the project partners are keen to further promote and disseminate the outcomes of the project to a wider audience through other partnerships or activities within and outside the EU Lifelong Learning Programme.

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