

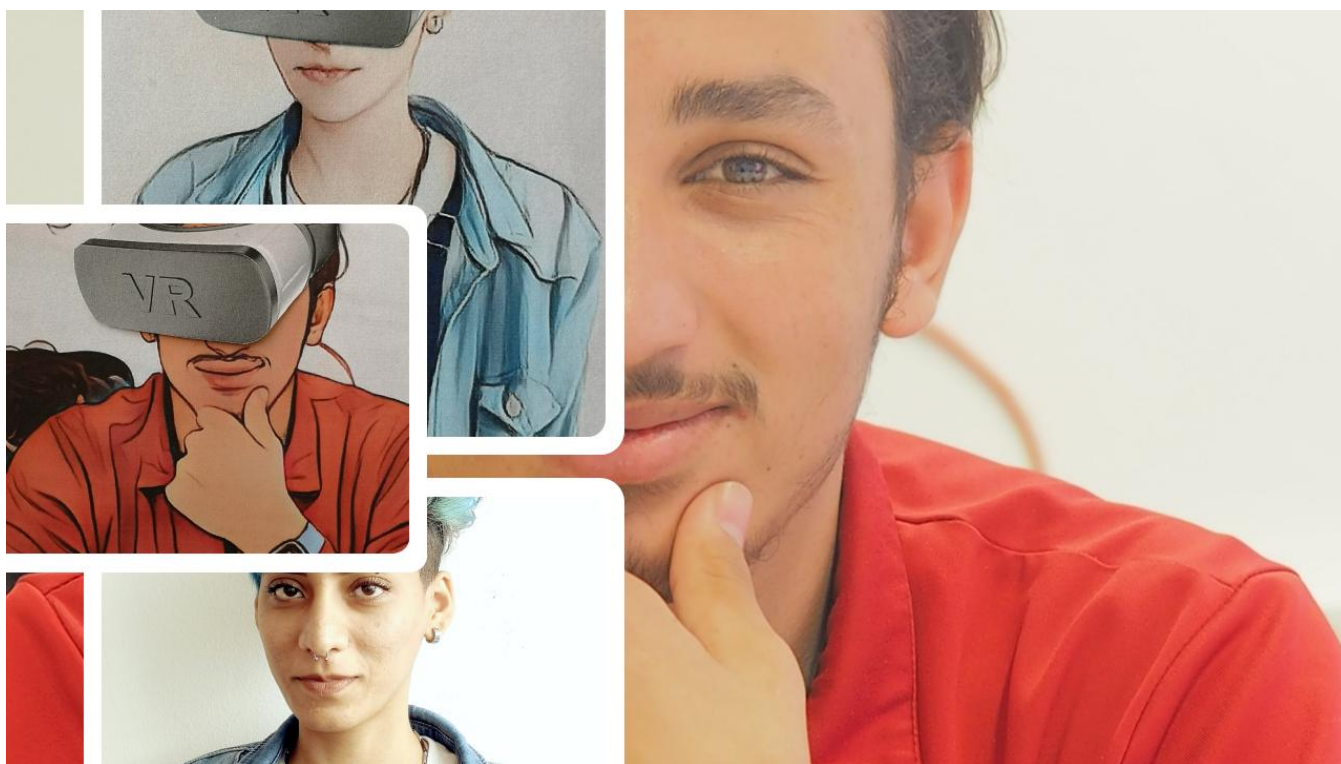
CDO-VR



CDO-VR TOOLKIT

**Handbook for professionals and consultants
implementing creative presentations**

Background information – Fundamentals - Approaches



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INTRODUCTION

This handbook was developed in close and fruitful cooperation between project partners within the CDO-VR project, which is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) under the Interreg Slovenia-Austria program. It was prepared by Slovenian partners Ljudska univerza Ptuj, Employment Service of Slovenia, Regional Office Ptuj, Art Rebel 9, and Austrian organizations ISOP – Innovative Sozialprojekte and NOWA – Training Beratung Projektmanagement.

As part of the CDO-VR project, a train-the-trainer course was held within the project team with the aim of preparing those who will be conducting workshops with VR headsets in the pilot phase in terms of content, technology, methodology and didactics. In addition, participants reflected on their own approaches and experiences in the context of career choice and provided input on the integration of gender perspectives as a cross-cutting issue. This handbook summarises the content, theoretical foundations and various background information of the six modules of this train-the-trainer course. It therefore serves as a basis for working with the VR tools that have been developed in CDO-VR specific methods and schedules for implementing the workshops with young people and job seekers can be found in the toolbox, which was also developed as part of the project, and in the various action plans.

This **TOOLKIT/HANDBOOK** is primarily intended for all professionals and counsellors who will be conducting innovative presentations for students, young job seekers, or individuals seeking new career opportunities. The handbook will help you acquire the necessary skills to use VR/AR tools when working with primary school pupils, young unemployed people, and anyone else who would like to try out this technology and methods. Additional tools that encourage self-reflection and thinking about your own career goals, interests, competencies, abilities, and skills are available in a special **TOOLBOX** and will provide you with additional support in implementing creative, dynamic, and, above all, goal-oriented workshops. However, this handbook is also freely available to anyone interested in this topic who may find its content and tools useful in their work, studies, or further research in this field. So, if you are looking for specific methods and procedures for workshop design, please refer to the CDO-VR Toolbox.

The handbook will assist professionals and counsellors in delivering **creative presentations using virtual reality**, which are carried out by counsellors in **Centre for Deficit Professions through VR in Slovenia and Austria**. With innovative approaches to career guidance, we want to inspire young people who are deciding on a career path and job seekers looking for new career opportunities to find employment in professions where there is a shortage of labour. By entering virtual reality and using VR glasses, they can try out six professions where there is a shortage of workers.

The professionals and counsellors are also part of a **mobile team** that is present in the field, in schools, especially in rural areas, at career and job fairs, job markets, career centres of employment agencies, career centres, etc., with the aim of bringing shortage occupations closer to young people and job seekers through VR glasses and creative presentations.

All tools are freely available and intended for further use. They are designed to be easily adapted or upgraded to individual target groups and activities. The gender perspective was taken into account in the compilation and development of all tools. The areas we cover are dynamic and influenced by numerous factors, primarily economic, social, and technological, and are subject to constant change and development. The content covered in the handbook and toolbox should be viewed from this perspective,

namely that it changes and adapts over time in line with the current economic and social situation and technological developments.

The project team invites you to embark on a VR adventure and discover and experience VR together with us and our tools.

Introductory remarks about the project and its goals

The labour market in both Slovenia and Austria is facing a shortage of suitably qualified personnel who are willing to take up jobs in shortage occupations. Shortage occupations are those in which employer demand exceeds the supply of job seekers (candidates) on the labour market. In the labour market, this means that the demand for workers is higher than the actual number of job seekers in a given occupation. There are various reasons for this: education policy, the reduced attractiveness and/or poor promotion of certain fields of study, poor working conditions, changes in the structure of the economy, etc. In the economy, the shortage of personnel is then reflected in the reduced competitiveness of the economy in the region, overworked and less efficient personnel, the need for foreign labour, and above all in the need for innovative, non-traditional forms of work. Skills shortages are identified on the basis of content and statistical findings, labour market surveys, and specific contacts with employers. Both countries are tackling this issue with various measures, which we have also described in a publication the Joint Report on Shortage Occupations and Related Gender Inequalities in Slovenia and Austria.

Partners from Slovenia and Austria have joined efforts within the cross-border cooperation program Interreg Slovenia-Austria 2021–2027 to address a common challenge, find joint solutions, and exchange experiences and good practices. Through the CDO-VR project, Center for Deficit Occupations with the help of Virtual Reality (VR), we want to encourage young and unemployed people, also those from rural areas, who are deciding on, choosing, or changing their career path, to get them excited about professions that are considered to be in short supply in both Slovenia and Austria through an innovative joint approach using virtual reality.

The project partners highlighted professions in the fields of Electrical engineering, Metalworking, Construction, Information and communication technology (ICT), Healthcare, Hospitality and tourism, which are most lacking on both sides of the border and are indispensable in everyday life.

In Slovenia and Austria, we established a Center for Deficit Professions with the help of VR. We have developed an application that allows young people to enter the virtual reality of professions. Using virtual reality technology and VR glasses, they can visualize the working environment and try them hand at professions such as electrician, metal technician with welding, builder, system administrator, careworker, or cook. They can see, hear, and feel the working environment as if they were really there. In this environment, they can be active and try out some of the work tasks in these professions. This gives them a first insight into the work tasks of individual professions and their first virtual work experience. The advantage of the Center for Deficient Professions with the help of VR is a mobile unit of advisors who, with VR-glasses and creative presentations, will be present in the field.

With innovative approaches to career guidance, we want to work with you to inspire young people, the unemployed, and individuals who are deciding on a career path or considering a change, to use virtual reality to get excited about professions that are currently in high demand by employers than there are on

the labour market. In a youth-friendly and tailored way, we want to raise awareness of shortage occupations and strengthen their role and importance in society.

We want to improve the position of young people and job seekers in the labour market and retain staff on both sides of the border.

The project partners set themselves the following goals:

- a) train 14 professionals from four organizations according to a common training scheme,
- b) conduct 30 presentations at schools in Austria and Slovenia (for students attending the 8th and 9th grades of a nine-year primary school in Slovenia, and for students in the 1st level of secondary school or, in the case of polytechnics, also in the 2nd level, in Austria),
- c) involve 100 unemployed people in joint pilot testing in Austria and Slovenia.

The single steps of the CDO-VR project:

- 1. Joint report on shortage occupations and related gender inequalities in Austria and Slovenia
- 2. Joint specifications for the development of VR/AR tools
- 3. Establishment of a joint VR/AR tool
- 4. Design of a joint training scheme
- 5. Implementation of a three-day workshop for participants from Austria and Slovenia
- 6. Opening of VR/AR centres for shortage occupations with the help of VR in Austria and Slovenia
- 7. Joint plan for the implementation of creative presentations of VR/AR applications in the field in Austria and Slovenia
- 8. Joint evaluation report
- 9. Study visits to Austria and Slovenia targeted workshops.

The structure of the Train the Trainer Workshops

The following document contains a summary and overview of the contents of the six modules from the Train the Trainer course on the following topics:

- ☐ Modul 1: The project and its environment
- ☐ Modul 2: Basic Modul - Our target-group under a gender perspective; Key Factors of Gender Sensitive Training
- ☐ Modul 3: Picking up and motivating our target group
- ☐ Modul 4: Outcome oriented methods and didactics in the context of CDO VR
- ☐ Modul 5: Using the VR tool
- ☐ Modul 6: Follow-up and reflection

You find the Structure of the Train the Trainer modules in the document “Common training scheme for participants: Train the trainer” which is attached as an annex at the end of this handbook.

1. THE PROJECT AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

Module 1

- Why CDO VR
- Opportunities - general use of VR
- Labour market in Austria and Slovenia with a focus on deficit occupations
- Insights into Good Practice in Counselling - Theoretical and practical approaches in the CDO-VR partnership
- Counselling and awareness-raising in the context of CDO-VR

In this module we will briefly introduce the background to the project CDO-VR and the main challenges Slovenia and Austria are facing in the deficit occupation area. More detailed information is contained in the following publications of the project: *Joint report on deficit occupations in Slovenia and Austria* and *Common specifications for the development of VR*. In the economy the lack of adequate personnel is reflected in poor competitiveness of the economy in the region. The participants in our training program will learn about the problems in the labour market and why promotion of deficit occupations is so important. They will understand how we can achieve the goal of the project – to arouse interest among young people and unemployed people who are choosing or changing their career path – with VR. It is important that we raise visibility, role and importance of deficit occupations in society.

1.1 Why CDO-VR

VR provides realistic, risk-free environments to assess problem-solving, decision-making, and hands-on skills. Modern VR is delivered through a headset, which allows the user to see and hear the 3D environment. In this way the user is totally immersed in the virtual environment, as it replaces the physical environment around them.

Virtual reality benefits participants, girls and boys in the career orientation phase or young job seekers planning their future on the job market by creating new employment opportunities that meet individual's needs. VR allows all three of learning styles visual–auditory–kinaesthetic to be targeted in one application. CDO VR training programs are designed to simulate real-life situations in a controlled environment. This allows candidates to assess their skills without the risk of making costly and time-consuming mistakes.

In VR participants practice new skills in a safe environment. Testing their skills in VR centres allows interested individuals to gain experience in a work environment. So, before students decide to study for a deficit occupation an unemployed worker makes a big decision about transferring their career to another field, they have the opportunity to test their skills in a VR work environment. As a result, candidates gain more confidence when performing tasks in the workplace or they get the advice about their competences and suggested working field for them.

CDO VR can identify interests and strengths of participants explore a diverse range of opportunities to build experience and clarity about their goals, and empower them to pursue paths they find personally meaningful. CDO VR centre is very useful tool not only for participants, also for schools, organisations who work with young people on their future planning on the labour market, it could be useful for companies and it is useful for employment service because they gain more predictive and accurate results about candidates' skills.

1.2 Opportunities – general use of VR

Virtual training is education of the future. Virtual reality in general enables ways of learning that simply cannot be shown to users with a traditional approach.

With virtual reality and simulations, we can conduct much better user testing without having to visit an employer. We can also get faster feedback, which can lead to better job planning for job seekers and more accurate career advice for students.

The use of virtual reality is also more and more common in employee training. Many large companies are using virtual reality to train their staff in both technical and customer-facing skills, ensuring that their teams are prepared for everything: from planning to delivering superior customer service.

During a VR-based virtual assessment we can collect performance data on the user. Data from virtual assessments can give us deeper insight into candidate and employee awareness, expertise, and skill. Over time, this kind of data can help us understand patterns - for example, whether certain groups prefer one type of work over another, or how engaged they are in the experience.

The application developed within the CDO-VR project is informative. It is designed to inform people about the occupation and to observe how they participate in different tasks in VR - for example, whether they complete them, how much help they need and how they react to a short self-assessment at the end. Over time, this kind of information can help us understand patterns — for example, whether certain groups tend to prefer one type of job over another, or how engaged they are in the experience.

1.3 Labour market in Austria and Slovenia with a focus on deficit occupations

In the Interreg project CDO-VR we implemented the research about deficit occupations and have produced a publication *Joint report on deficit occupations in Slovenia and Austria*. But the data is changing quickly. For further information about the labour market in Slovenia and Austria the trainers will stay up to date by checking fresh for example, via these links and other available sites:

- <https://www.ess.gov.si>
- <https://www.stat.si>
- <https://www.ams.at>
- <https://www.statistik.at>

The overall objective of the CDO-VR project is to stimulate the interest of young and unemployed people, especially from rural backgrounds, who are making a decision and choosing/changing their career path. In CDO VR, they get information and experience professions that are considered to be in deficit in both Slovenia and Austria, through an innovative and collaborative approach using virtual reality. Furthermore, the partners aim to raise the visibility, role and importance of deficit occupations in society, thereby improving the labour market position of the target groups and potentially retaining staff on both sides of the borders. On the basis of a joint report on Deficit occupations, we have identified occupations that rank high in both countries. We have selected six professions for which a virtual environment is developed in the project. The occupations were selected from the following sectors: Electrical engineering,

Metalworking, Construction, Information and communication technology (ICT), Healthcare and Hospitality industry.

Industry	Occupation
Electrical engineering	ELECTRICIAN
Hospitality and tourism	COOK / CHEF
Construction	BUILDER
Healthcare	CARE WORKER / NURSING
Metalworking	METAL TECHNICIAN WITH WELDING
Information and communication technology (ICT)	SYSTEM ADMINISTRATOR / TECHNICIAN

In both Slovenia and Austria, the labour market is facing a shortage of people with the right skills and willingness to take up jobs in deficit occupations. This is due to various factors: education policy, less attractiveness and/or less promotion of certain courses of study, working conditions, structural factors such as changes in the structure of the economy, etc. In the economy, the shortage of staff is then reflected in the less competitive regional economy, congestion and reduced efficiency, the need for foreign labour, and above all the need for innovative, non-traditional forms of work. The occupational deficit, which is identified on the basis of substantive and statistical findings, labour market soundings and through concrete contacts with employers, is addressed similarly in both countries, but requires a joint search for solutions and an exchange of experience to improve the situation.

Technology to stimulate the interest of the project's target groups in deficit occupations, is a pioneering step towards innovative labour market solutions. By providing comprehensive experiences that illustrate the skills, environment and day-to-day realities of these professions, the project aims to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of professions that are currently undervalued and understaffed. Key findings from focus groups conducted in both countries reveal a shared enthusiasm for VR technology as a tool for career exploration, but also highlight gender stereotypes in career choices. These findings underline the importance of tailored strategies that not only harness technology to improve career guidance, but also address the underlying social norms that influence career decisions.

1.4 Insights into Good Practice in Counselling - Theoretical and practical approaches in the CDO-VR partnership

In this subsection, we present a brief overview of approaches in the field of counselling, as implemented by individual partners according to their field of activity.

1.4.1 GOOD PRACTICES IN COUNSELLING AT THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OF SLOVENIA

The role of the Employment Service of Slovenia in the labour market is to ensure the fastest possible transition of unemployed persons and job seekers into employment and at the same time to effectively cover employers' needs for labour.

The Employment Service fulfils this role by implementing actions on the labour market – with lifelong career guidance and job placement services, by implementing Active Labour Market Policy (ALMP) measures and by ensuring unemployment insurance rights.

Our services are intended for: unemployed persons and jobseekers, pupils and students who need professional help in the fields of employment and career guidance, employers, providers of active employment policy programmes and social partners, professional institutions and general public.

Lifelong career guidance activities are carried out on the basis of the Labour Market Regulation Act, regulations and instructions. The method of providing services and the intensity of treatment are adapted to the individual unemployed person and job seeker with the aim of increasing employment and employability.

Employment service of Slovenia provides career counselling - developing career where individual with the help of a counsellor, decides on career goals and makes career decisions based on their desires, needs, abilities, characteristics, knowledge, interests, values, and development opportunities, and also implements the set career plan. Depending on the type of counselling, Employment of Slovenia provides basic, in-depth, health and rehabilitation career counselling and also career management tools for job seekers to consider when planning and managing their career.

Basic career counselling:

- is carried out individually or in groups as assistance in developing an employment plan.
- the aim is to strengthen the individual's proactivity and autonomy and to assume responsibility for planning and managing their own career.
- unemployed persons and job seekers with threatened employment receive help and support in identifying professional interests, skills, knowledge and competences acquired through work experience and formal and informal education.
- the basis for effective basic career counselling is the establishment of a good counselling relationship, based on the positive acceptance of the unemployed person and the job seeker, and their equal and autonomous inclusion in the career planning process.
- an unemployed person or job seeker whose employment is at risk, within the framework of basic career counselling, agrees with the counsellor on employment goals and activities leading to the desired employment.
- the agreements reached are recorded in an employment plan.

In-depth career counselling

is intended for unemployed persons and job seekers whose employment is at risk. Priority is given to persons who face difficulties in formulating employment goals and making career decisions or who need support in overcoming situational and other complex obstacles related to employment. They receive assistance in planning and managing their careers. In the counselling process, the job seeker explores his or her interests, competencies, characteristics and acquired skills, as well as career development opportunities in the environment. Based on this, he/she formulates short-term and long-term career goals

and makes decisions and plans for their achievement. In-depth career counselling, counsellors can use psychodiagnostics tools, various questionnaires, and counselling methods and techniques that establish a new perspective on the problem and activate the individual to make career decisions and overcome obstacles. The counselling process can take place over a longer period of time with several consecutive counselling sessions.

Health-related employment counselling,

depending on the needs of the users, meaningfully complements other forms of in-depth career counselling. As a rule, it is carried out by occupational medicine specialists, and in the case of prevailing mental health problems, also by a psychiatric specialist. It is carried out to help unemployed.

The Center for Deficit Occupations through Virtual Reality (CDO-VR)

The aim of establishing the center is to use innovative approaches to career guidance to inspire young people who are deciding on a career path and job seekers who are looking for new career opportunities to seek employment in shortage occupations. In a way that is tailored to young people, we want to raise awareness of shortage occupations, strengthen their role and importance in society, and overcome stereotypes.

As part of the CDO-VR project, we have developed a VR application that allows young people to enter the virtual reality of occupations. The use of virtual reality can have many advantages for young people, the unemployed and the wider labour market:

- VR technology can be used to give users an insight into the professions such as electrician, metal technician with welding, builder, system administrator, care worker, or cook, in occupations that are in high demand on the labour market. Users can interactively test skills in occupations for which there is a lot of demand in the labor market and so we are **increasing motivation and interest for deficit occupations**,
- the use of virtual reality allows realistic simulation of work tasks that the user can try out, thus gaining a better understanding of the competences required and learning about professions that are otherwise less well-known or attractive,
- **cross-border cooperation and joint approach** – prepared analysis of the labor market, education systems and policies of both countries – Slovenia and Austria,
- the **project addresses the deficit of qualified labor** and promotes career guidance, and it helps to raise the visibility and reputation of shortage professions in society and so it is contribution to reducing structural mismatches in the labor market.

More information: CDO-VR TOOLKIT ATTACHEMENT 1 - LIFELONG CAREER GUIDANCE ZRSZ.

1.4.2 GOOD PRACTICES IN COUNSELLING WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AT ISOP

Career guidance and perspective work in the project described below takes place in individual and group counselling sessions and as part of the training. The following section presents group counselling and, above all, the development of a results-oriented curriculum for the design of individual modules on the topics of skills assessment, career guidance and orientation on the labour market as an example of best practice.

ISOP project STEIRISCHES JUGENDCOLLEGE¹

The educational project supports young people (aged 15–25) at risk of exclusion, especially those with a refugee background. An individual educational path is developed through specific qualification programmes in the areas of literacy, language acquisition (DaF/DaZ), basic education, career orientation and socio-educational support, as well as through the completion of internships. The aim is to improve integration into the labour market and social participation. The maximum duration is one year with 20 hours per week.

Contents

Based on individual assessments and skills evaluations, individual educational pathways are organised and implemented in the following areas:

- Literacy,
- German (A1 – B1),
- Basic education in mathematics, English and information technology,
- Introduction to the areas of competence required for compulsory school leaving qualifications,
- Career prospects,
- Career and labour market orientation,
- Training planning,
- Internships in companies,
- Placement support,
- Support with the recognition of existing training qualifications,
- Political education.

WHY GROUP COUNSELLING IN CAREER GUIDANCE?

When entering or re-entering the labour market or pursuing vocational training, professional skills, technical professional skills and transversal professional skills are becoming increasingly important for matching job seekers with companies using artificial intelligence. The skills assessment works extremely well in a group setting, not least because of the effects within the peer group. The work was carried out in groups of six to eight participants and the basis for the design of the group counselling sessions was a so-called outcome-oriented curriculum. A curriculum, i.e. a learning and teaching plan, can also be used in simplified form for individual modules or group counselling sessions. The procedure is described in detail below, but as mentioned above, it can be adapted. The approach, in which the content of thematic counselling units or learning/teaching units is based on a description of the field of activity and the desired learning/teaching outcomes, considering the specific needs and resources of the target group, is the best method for preparing group counselling sessions.

¹ <https://www.isop.at/projekt/steirisches-jugendcollege/>

HOW TO CREATE AN OUTCOME-ORIENTATED CURRICULUM: STEPS, GUIDELINES, AND TAXONOMY

Defining Learning Outcomes

The outcome of a learning process comprises the knowledge, skills, abilities and competences acquired in this process as well as the changes in attitudes and values triggered by the process.

Learning outcomes in curricula and learning units should be described in such a way that they are **specific, observable/measurable, achievable** and **at the right level**.

Cognitive and Affective Skills in Bloom's Taxonomy

<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Assessment○ Synthesis○ Analysis○ Application○ Understanding○ Skills/knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Internalisation of values○ Value system○ Valuation○ Responding to values○ Respect for values
COGNITIVE SKILLS	AFFECTIVE SKILLS

Fig. 2: Bloom's taxonomy of learning objectives (CEDEFOP 2009a, p. 49).

Action Verbs for Defining Learning Outcomes

1) **Knowledge - verbs:** state, write down, enumerate, record, perform, name, describe, designate, represent, reproduce, complete, draw, show, reproduce

2) **Understanding - verbs:** justify, describe, interpret, classify, explain, explain, interpret, organise, specify, describe, translate, transfer, paraphrase, distinguish, clarify, compare, reproduce

3) **Application - verbs:** estimate, connect, apply, set up, execute, justify, calculate, determine, prove, carry out, classify, create, develop, interpret, formulate, solve, modify, quantify, realise, translate, distinguish, paraphrase, clarify

4) **Analysis - verbs:** derive, analyse, resolve, describe, set out, encircle, recognise, contrast, structure, identify, isolate, classify, prove, examine, compare, infer, assign

5) **Synthesis - verbs:** compose, build, set up, elaborate, define, design, develop, explain, create, combine, construct, solve, optimise, organise, plan, compose, compile

6) **Assessment - verbs:** express, select, evaluate, judge, assess, differentiate, decide, conclude, weigh, measure, check, qualify, judge, simplify, compare, represent, evaluate, refute

Steps for Designing an Outcome-Oriented Curriculum

Step 1: Narrowing down and describing the field of activity

- What tasks/objectives are associated with the activity?
- In which environment does the activity take place?

Step 2: Identify action situations

- What is at the beginning of a typical action situation (enquiry from a client client, assignment from a superior, etc.)?
- When does the situation end (results, etc.)?
- What tasks are associated with it?
- What intermediate results are available and what are the requirements placed on them?
- Which other actors (colleagues, superiors, target groups, etc.) are involved? involved?

Step 3: Orientation of the curriculum: Determining the target group(s)

- Determine the target group/s
Available resources: Infrastructure, personnel, quantity and also qualifications, teaching materials, etc.

Step 4: Grouping learning requirements

The focus here is on the learning requirements associated with the tasks and not - as in the creation of the requirements profile - on the processes of the action situations identified Which learning requirements result from the action situations described above?

Step 5: Deriving intended learning outcomes

Kennedy et al. (2006, p. 18) provide a somewhat more detailed approach:

- Begin each learning outcome with an active verb, followed by the object to which the verb refers as well as the context.
- Use only one verb per learning outcome.
- Avoid imprecise terms that refer to learning objectives rather than learning outcomes, such as 'know', 'understand', 'learn', 'be aware of', etc.
- Avoid complicated sentences. If necessary, use more than one sentence for clarification.
- Check that the learning outcomes of the module are consistent with the overall outcomes of the programme.
- Check that the learning outcomes are observable/measurable and can be assessed.
- When writing the learning outcomes, consider the time within which the learning outcomes must be achieved and the resources required to achieve them.
- When writing the learning outcomes, think about the assessment and how to determine whether the learner has achieved the learning outcomes. (Learning outcomes that are too general are difficult to check, while learning outcomes that are too precise make for an unwieldy list).
- Before finalising the learning outcomes, ask colleagues and previous students whether the learning outcomes make sense to them.
- For students in higher semesters, use learning outcomes that correspond to the upper categories of Bloom's taxonomy ('application', 'analysis', 'synthesis', 'evaluation').

Modules/learning units/training sections

A module should contain a realistic number of learning outcomes. Too many learning outcomes are neither achievable nor verifiable in the specified time. Five to eight learning outcomes per module or one learning outcome per 16-30 hours seems practicable. (Parker 2005, p. 1).

1.4.3 GOOD PRACTICES IN COUNSELLING WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AT LJUDSKA UNIVERZA PTUJ

Counselling activities in adult education in Slovenia are carried out as a public service by public adult education organizations. All residents of Slovenia have access to information and counselling, as 35 organizations throughout Slovenia are involved in this field.

As a public adult education organization, Ljudska univerza Ptuj strives to ensure access to education and learning guidance for all adults, especially vulnerable target groups, to provide high-quality counselling services for education and learning, and to implement effective measures to increase the inclusion and success of adults in lifelong learning. It provides counselling services in adult education, the purpose of which is to enable and offer adults information and counselling on various opportunities for learning, education, career planning and development, evaluation of already acquired knowledge, and independent learning.

Good experience and knowledge in using the model of *Adult education guidance and counselling (IGAE; Slovene ISIO/SDIO Model)*, which we present below, also plays an important role in achieving the goals we have set ourselves within the CDO-VR project.

ADULT EDUCATION GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING (IGAE; SLOVENE ISIO/SDIO MODEL) - A comprehensive overview and relevance for the development of adult learning

Adult learning guidance and counselling (ALC) is one of the key elements in supporting individuals on their educational journey. It includes information, guidance, counselling and support, with the aim of promoting lifelong learning and facilitating access to a range of educational and career opportunities. SDIO helps individuals to overcome various barriers related to education and encourages them to take an active approach to their own development.

Description

The development and establishment of adult education advisory centres started with the theoretical model of an adult education advisory centre - **Guidance Activity in Adult Education (IGAE; Slovene ISIO/SDIO model)**. The first centres were set up in 2000-2001 (following a call for tenders by the then Ministry of Education and Sport). By 2017, 17 ISIO centres had been set up and were operating at this scale up to and including 2020.

From 2021 onwards, IGAE counselling activities are provided as a public service in all public IGAE organisations - public universities (34 in 2021 and 35 from 2022), thus being accessible to all adult population in Slovenia. Two of the three areas of advisory activity are brought together in the IGAE Hub: in the integration and continuation of education, and in the identification and documentation of adults' knowledge and skills. The third area, the advisory activity on self-directed learning, is located in the Centre for Self-directed Learning (more at <https://portalssu.acs.si/>).

The IO advisory activities carried out in the IGAE centres are aimed at all adults, with a particular focus on disadvantaged, harder to reach, less educated and less educationally active groups of adults in the local environment. The activity is free of charge for the adults who benefit from it.

In order to make the counselling activity accessible to as wide a range of adults as possible, the IGAE Centres also carry out information and counselling activities outside the headquarters, in the field: at the so-called "dislocations", with a mobile counselling service and with the help of the IGAE Info Points.

Purpose and objectives of the IGAE

Adult education guidance and counselling has multi-faceted objectives that relate to the individual, society and the labour market. Key purposes of the IGAE are as follows:

- **Increasing access to education** - many adults lack information about further education opportunities and how to finance courses. Advisory services help them to find and choose appropriate courses.
- **Decision support** - adults often don't know which education pathway is best for them. Advisers guide them based on their interests, abilities and past experiences.
- **Overcoming barriers to learning** - the advisory service offers help with organising learning, overcoming concentration problems, learning to learn and using digital tools.
- **Career development** - counsellors help identify competences, write CVs, prepare for interviews and guide you towards promising careers.
- **Social integration and active citizenship** - counselling promotes the inclusion of vulnerable groups and enables greater social cohesion through education.

Organisation of the IGAE in Slovenia

Various organisations and institutions in Slovenia provide counselling services in adult education. Key actors in implementation of the IGAE are:

- **Andragoški center Slovenije (ACS)** - as a national institution, the Andragoški center Slovenije (ACS) directs and coordinates the development of counselling activities, ensures their quality and provides professional support to counsellors.
- **Public Universities (Ljudske univerze)** - offer individual and group counselling on education, learning and careers.
- **Self-Supported Learning (SSL) Centres** - provide support for learning using modern technologies and personalised methods.
- **Career Centres** - work mainly with jobseekers, offering guidance on career development.
- **Various projects and programmes** - such as the Core and Vocational Competences (CVC), social activation programmes and other initiatives involving advisory support.

Types of counselling activity

The counselling activity is tailored to the individual needs and objectives of the participants. Various forms of counselling are provided:

Information counselling	It offers general information on education, funding opportunities and available programmes. It helps navigate the education system and identify relevant resources.
Guidance and counselling in education	The focus is on tailored advice for the individual, based on their past experience, preferences and goals. The counsellor helps people make decisions about enrolment in formal and non-formal programmes.
Support for learning	Helping to improve learning strategies, motivation and managing learning-related stress. Guidance on time management and the use of teaching aids.
Career counselling	Help with writing CVs, simulated job interviews. Competence analysis and identification of career development opportunities.

Psychosocial counselling	Focused on improving self-confidence, overcoming fears and developing personal skills. Counsellors provide support to help overcome personal and social barriers to education.

Methods and approaches in counselling

Professionals use a variety of approaches to help participants as effectively as possible. Key methods of counselling are:

- Individual counselling - in-depth work with the participant, tailored to their needs.
- Group counselling - workshops, seminars and interactive activities.
- E-counselling - support via online platforms, video calls and email.
- Field counselling - visiting workplaces, businesses and providing advice on the ground.

Challenges in implementing the IGAE

Despite its many advantages, the consultancy sector faces many challenges, such as:

- Low motivation for adult learning - many adults have negative experiences of their school days, which affects their willingness to continue learning.
- Access to counselling for vulnerable groups - the low-educated, unemployed and migrants are often unaware of counselling opportunities.
- Digitalisation and new forms of counselling - the use of digital tools is becoming a necessity, but some adults do not have sufficient digital competences.
- Funding - consultancy activities often depend on calls for tenders and project funding.

Funding and support of the IGAE

In Slovenia, advisory services are financed from several sources. Main sources of funding are

- National budget - the Ministry of Education supports advisory activities.
- European Social Fund (ESF) - projects such as TPK and social activation provide counselling.
- Municipalities - support the operation of advice centres at local level.
- Employers - invest in counselling services for their employees.

The importance of the IGAE for society and the individual

Counselling plays a vital role in fostering both individual growth and broader societal development. On the societal level, it contributes significantly to increasing adult participation in education, which is essential for building a more informed and skilled population. By equipping individuals with new skills and competences, counselling directly supports the development of a more adaptable and resilient workforce. In addition, it promotes equal opportunities and fosters social inclusion by helping individuals from diverse backgrounds overcome barriers to learning and employment.

From the individual's perspective, counselling can be transformative. It helps people build self-confidence and rekindle their motivation to engage in learning, especially those who may have faced setbacks or lacked support in the past. Through the guidance process, individuals are able to acquire key competences that enhance their employability and career prospects. Beyond the professional domain, counselling also contributes to a better quality of life by empowering individuals to take control of their

personal development and by encouraging the expansion of their social networks, thus fostering a sense of belonging and connectedness.

Counselling in adult education is an indispensable part of the modern education system. Its role in promoting lifelong learning, career development and social inclusion of adults is crucial for the progress of individuals and society. The importance of the IGAE will only increase with the further development of adapted methods and digital solutions.

More detailed information about the model can be found on the following websites:

- <https://www.acs.si/en>
- <https://svetovanje.acs.si>

Transfer of knowledge in the field of consultancy from the IPS4NEETS project

We also drew additional knowledge and experience in the field of consultancy from the project *Individual Placement and Support for NEETs through Education Youth Technology Platform (EYTP)*, through which we strengthened the competencies of counsellors in Slovenia for working with young NEETs (youth who are not in employment, education, or training), as their unemployment rate remains high in many EU countries. The project is based on the *Individual Placement and Support (IPS)* model, proven effective in integrating vulnerable groups into the labour market, and the *Maturing Model (MM)*, which helps counsellors assess an individual's abilities and the time needed for full inclusion in the program. A total of 20 counsellors from public universities and the Employment Service of Slovenia, working with young people, were trained in the use of these models.

More information about the project *Individual Placement and Support for NEETs through Education Youth Technology Platform (EYTP)* - IPS4NEETS:

- https://www.lu-ptuj.si/images/2016-vsebinske/projekti/IPS4NEETS_Web-page-POST.pdf,
- <https://www.lu-ptuj.si/87-projekti/mednarodni-projekti/416-ips4neets>

1.5 Counselling and awareness-raising in the context of CDO-VR

Career counselling is a service in which an individual, with the help of a professional, decides on career goals and makes career decisions based on his or her wants, needs, abilities, qualities, skills, interests, values and development opportunities, and puts the career plan into practice. Career counselling highlights career development opportunities and helps individuals identify additional education and training to help them achieve their career goals.

Professionals help individuals through the career development process, as they plan their professional, personal and/or educational path. The process can be carried out independently or with the help of a professional. It is a lifelong process of managing learning, work and transitions, with the aim of achieving a personally stable future and a future that will develop in the desired direction.

The trained professionals provide different forms of counselling, such as:

- Individual counselling using VR as a complement to traditional approaches.
- Group counselling using VR as a complement to traditional approaches.
- Using different methods (interview, questionnaires, various career guidance tools - see Toolbox).

The professional interprets the VR experience and relates it to the user's competences.

The different forms of consultancy work, good practices and experiences of professionals, supported by tools developed specifically for this purpose within the project CDO-VR, allow professionals to plan, organise and implement consultancy before, during and/or after creative presentations using VR. All detailed information, explanations, tools and materials are freely accessible and available to professionals for further use and can be found in the manual Toolkit, Toolbox and other.

In the framework of the CDO-VR project, we have developed a form, based on practical experience gained in the context of proven models and projects such as the model Guidance Activity in Adult Education (IGAE; Slovene ISIO/SDIO model) and the project *Individual Placement and Support for NEETs through Education Youth Technology Platform (EYTP) - IPS4NEETS*, which contains a set of possible questions and topic areas to support individual career and vocational counselling. The questions are designed as guidelines that can help the counsellor to obtain relevant information about the participant, his/her experience, competences, interests and goals.

They are a tool and not a mandatory sequence of questions. The counsellor can:

- use all or part of the questionnaire,
- adapt the content according to the needs, circumstances and objectives of the counselling,
- supplement with additional questions that make sense for the specific situation of the individual.

The form is designed to be a flexible tool that encourages a structured yet personalised approach to the counselling process (see the attachment - CDO-VR TOOLKIT ATTACHEMENT 2 - COUNSELLING FORM).

Through innovative approaches to careers guidance using virtual reality, the CDO-VR partners aim to inspire young people, the unemployed and individuals considering a career change to careers that are currently in higher demand from employers than on the labour market. We want to showcase deficit occupations in a youth-friendly and personalised way, to reinforce their role and importance in society and to break stereotypes. We want to encourage them to think about their own career paths, setting career goals, planning their own career paths, the importance of lifelong learning, and to raise their awareness.

2. OUR TARGET-GROUP UNDER A GENDER PERSPECTIVE - KEY FACTORS OF GENDER SENSITIVE TRAINING

Module 2

- Stepping into the topic with a quiz
- Gender Basics - Definition und Status Quo
- Dimensions of gender-reflective methodology and didactics
- Groupwork – together we work on Differences and similarities
- The Dimension of Content in Gender-Reflective Training
- The Dimension of General Conditions in Gender-Reflective Training
- Groupwork – together we work on methods
- The Dimension of Methods in Gender-Reflective Training
- The Dimension of people involved in Gender-Reflective Training

Participants will learn key concepts of gender equality. They will receive information on the background and causes of labour market segregation. They will explore what it means to integrate a gender perspective into career guidance in general and specifically in the use of VR tools. Together, methods and tools for gender-sensitive methodology and didactics will be developed.

These module supports trainers and teachers in the implementation and use of VR Environment developed in the CDO-VR Project under a gender perspective.

2.1. Stepping into the topic with a quiz

The module begins with a quiz on facts and figures relating to the labour markets of the EU, Slovenia and Austria. The quiz aims to raise awareness of, and highlight, existing inequalities in the world of work. It also highlights the effects of gender-specific segregation in the labour market and the importance of gender-reflective career information.

Note on the method: A quiz is an effective way to introduce a topic. By actively engaging with the different facets of a topic, awareness of the issues is created, and important information is acquired. If facts, figures and data are presented in a quiz, they become exciting rather than boring, as all participants want to know if they have answered the questions correctly. As an added bonus :) facts that you have worked out yourself are better remembered.

2.2. Gender Basics - Definition und Status Quo

First of all, we have to understand that there is no universal recipe for implementing the gender perspective and equality-oriented attitude in different kinds of processes. These processes are based on goals, framework conditions, environment and possibilities of the respective project, measure, activity... Nevertheless, a common understanding is required with regard to a basic attitude to the topic, terminology and procedure.

As an introduction, the following terms are explained as the basis for dealing with the topic of gender equality and gender mainstreaming.

Sex	biological term
Gender	means in contrast to the biological term "sex" the social term "gender" - different roles and norms that are assigned to women and men in our society. Because it is learned and not innate, gender can be changed.
Stereotype	A stereotype is a description of people or groups that is present in everyday knowledge. It is memorable and pictorial and refers to a simplified view that is considered typical. In contrast to prejudice, which expresses a general attitude, stereotypes are part of an unconscious and sometimes even automatic cognitive assignment.

Gender stereotypes	attribute certain characteristics and behaviors to people based on their identifiable sex/gender. These attributions are acquired during the whole life and permanently activated through self and external perception, so that they appear "natural".
Equality between women and men	the participation of both genders in all areas of society based on equal rights and equal resources.
Equality	is achieved when all structures and decision-making processes are designed in a way that women and men based on their gender roles in relation to individual lifestyle, distribution of power, resources and work are neither preferred nor disadvantaged.
Equal rights	equality between women and men within a legal system.
Equal treatment	the right to be treated in the same way in the labor market as other people and groups of people in a comparable situation.
Gender competence	includes knowledge of gender relations and their reasons as well as the ability to apply this knowledge in everyday activities and to reflect on it on an individual level. Gender-competent action aims at the individual and societal analyses of gender constructions and inequalities and is the basis of equality between women and men. Gender competence is required in order to be able to consistently implement measures and decisions in line with gender mainstreaming. It leads to an optimization of the competence of persons and organizations.

GROUPWORK - together we work on:

- Reasons for underrepresentation of women and girls in technical professions and qualifications
- Reasons for the underrepresentation of men and boys in the care sector and the service sector

Note on the method: Reflecting on and critically analysing one's own experiences and perceptions from a gender perspective creates the opportunity to adopt other perspectives and discover new approaches... It is important to draw on the experience and knowledge of all participants. Afterwards, the work developed in the groups is collated and underpinned with theoretical input. This creates a win-win situation for everyone, facilitating learning from and with each other.

2.3. Dimensions of gender-reflective methodology and didactics

To organise our training, workshops and activities from a gender-reflective perspective, we consider the following dimensions:

- Content
- Methods

- General conditions
- People involved

This is important so that we can address, engage with and activate everyone in our target group. To do this, we naturally need information about our target group in advance. Then we can consider what they need, in which form, who should provide it and what format it should be (these again are our four dimensions).

We start by taking a look at our target group

2.4. Groupwork – together we work on Differences and similarities

- What differences do we perceive between girls and boys in behaviour / speaking / communicating / acting etc. (!!describe without judging!!)
- What differences do we perceive between girls and boys in career choice behaviour, interests etc. (!!describe without judging!!)

Note on the method: We are all used to evaluating and categorising perceptions and observations very quickly. However, many things get lost as a result. By simply trying to describe perceptions and observations without judging them, we may be able to broaden our perspectives and insights. It's definitely worth giving it a try ;).

2.5. The Dimension of Content in Gender-Reflective Training

In gender-reflective training, the selection and presentation of content plays a central role. The goal is to create an inclusive and equality-oriented learning environment that acknowledges and values diverse life experiences and perspectives.

The content dimension of gender-reflective training requires a conscious and critical approach to all learning materials. The aim is to avoid discrimination, represent diversity, and open up new perspectives on gender relations for participants.

Selecting Appropriate Content

When planning content, it is important to choose topics and examples that reflect both female and male (as well as non-binary) life realities. This means representing a range of professional and personal experiences rather than reinforcing traditional gender roles.

Reflecting on Gender Implications

All content should be critically examined for implicit or explicit gender implications. For example, using uncritical role representations (e.g. “men repair something and women are cooking”) can reinforce stereotypes. Even seemingly neutral statements, such as income comparisons (“Mr. M earns €3,000, his wife earns €1,200”), can reflect social inequalities that should be discussed and contextualized.

Gender-Sensitive Representation of Professional Fields

Examples drawn from various fields—such as technology or social services—should be presented in a gender-sensitive way. Avoid reinforcing clichés by, for instance, only showing men in technical roles or women in care work. Instead, strive to highlight diversity and offer alternatives to stereotypical portrayals.

Gender-Inclusive Language and Materials

Language used in the training should be inclusive and gender-aware. This applies to both spoken and written communication, as well as to materials such as case studies, handouts, and worksheets. Visual content—including images and graphics—should also depict gender diversity without relying on clichés.

Considering Different Learning Styles

Training content should account for differences in how participants process and absorb information. A gender-reflective approach also means recognizing and accommodating a variety of communication and learning preferences—for example, by incorporating visual, auditory, and interactive elements.

2.6. The Dimension of General Conditions in Gender-Reflective Training

A key factor for the effectiveness of gender-reflective training is ensuring low-threshold access. To reach a diverse group of participants, various structural framework conditions must be inclusive and carefully considered.

Scheduling and Timing - The time at which trainings are offered has a significant impact on who can participate. To accommodate people with different life circumstances—such as working individuals, single parents, or students—trainings should be offered at various times of the day and possibly on weekends.

Accessibility and Transportation - The training location should be easily reachable. Venue accessibility, central location, and parking options are also important. Offering hybrid or digital formats can further reduce participation barriers and promote equal opportunities.

Cost Structure - Costs should not be a barrier to participation. A transparent, socially scaled fee structure or the possibility of covering fees through funding programs can help remove financial obstacles.

Outreach and Target Group Communication - Gender-reflective training should be promoted in diverse and targeted ways to reach a wide range of potential participants. Communication must be inclusive, non-discriminatory, and in plain language. Working with multipliers (e.g., community organizations, migrant associations, youth centers) can help open access to marginalized groups.

Admission Requirements and Selection Procedures - Open participation formats without complex application procedures encourage broader access. If selection is necessary, the process must be transparent, fair, and discrimination-sensitive. The focus should be on participants' motivation rather than formal educational qualifications.

2.7. Groupwork – together we work on methods

Exchange and collection What methods do we know

- to address boys
- to address girls
- to address girls and boys equally

Note on the method: When selecting methods, it sometimes makes sense to use different methods for specific groups within my target group to ensure that everyone can get involved and benefit. In any case, a variety of methods supports participation opportunities for everyone.

2.8. The Dimension of Methods in Gender-Reflective Training

In gender-sensitive educational work, methods play a central role as they shape the framework for learning processes and participation. Methods in gender-reflective training go beyond knowledge transmission—they help establish equitable learning environments. The living conditions of women, men, and people beyond the binary gender spectrum must be considered at every stage of educational work.

Creating Opportunities for Learning and Participation - A primary goal is to open up learning spaces where all participants – regardless of gender – can be actively involved. This requires selecting methods that foster interaction, reduce hierarchies, and allow different approaches to learning.

Considering Learning Cultures and Gender Research - People learn differently based on their social experiences and backgrounds. Gender-reflective training critically examines dominant learning cultures. The aim is to avoid exclusion and enable diverse learning paths.

Using a Variety of Methods - A wide range of methods – from individual and group work to creative and reflective techniques – addresses the diverse needs and learning styles of participants. This methodological diversity helps avoid reinforcing gender-stereotyped learning formats.

Gender Perspective in Planning - When planning the structure and flow of a training session, the gender perspective should be taken into account: What topics are being addressed, and how? Who speaks, and for how long? How are roles distributed within the group? These questions help identify and challenge unconscious gender roles.

Exercising Steering and Moderation - Facilitators play a key role in guiding group dynamics and balancing gender-specific inequalities. This includes creating spaces for reflection and open dialogue, and intervening when necessary to ensure equitable participation.

Gender-Sensitive Assessment of Performance - Performance evaluation must also reflect a gender-sensitive approach. Different forms of expressing competence should be recognized, and stereotypical expectations must be consciously avoided.

2.9. The Dimension of people involved in Gender-Reflective Training

In gender-reflective training, the individuals involved—both trainers and participants—play a crucial role. Their attitudes, behaviours, and interactions significantly influence the learning process and atmosphere. The success of gender-reflective training depends greatly on the behaviour and awareness of those involved. It requires attentiveness, a willingness to reflect, and the skills to create an inclusive learning environment that respects diversity and promotes equal participation.

Awareness of the Participants - Participants should be recognized as individuals with diverse experiences and identities. At the same time, the gender dimension must not be ignored, as it is a central part of social reality that affects learning behaviour, communication, and self-perception.

Taking Responsibility for Interactions - Trainers hold responsibility for maintaining respectful and discrimination-free interactions within the group. This includes actively addressing and countering sexist behaviour—such as derogatory jokes or gender stereotypes—when it arises.

Using Gender-Inclusive Language and Communication - Conscious use of gender-inclusive language expresses values and promotes visibility. It signals respect for all genders and encourages awareness within the group.

Addressing Gender Stereotypes - Training environments often involve gendered assumptions or expectations, communicated through behaviour, speech, or body language. All actors, especially the facilitator, should be aware of these dynamics and intervene to challenge stereotypical roles and narratives.

Trainers are Rolemodels - Trainers need to be conscious of their own positioning and impact. A clear and authentic self-presentation—especially regarding one's stance on gender issues—can provide orientation and build trust.

Understanding and Addressing “Token” Effects - When a participant is the only person representing a particular gender, background, or identity—a so-called “token” position—there is a risk of overexposure or isolation. Trainers should be aware of these effects and take steps to reduce pressure on the individual while fostering group awareness of diversity and inclusion.

3. PICKING UP AND MOTIVATING OUR TARGET GROUP

Module 3

- Key factors for creating meaning, enthusiasm, motivation in career guidance
- Lifeworld orientation
- Encouragement to shape the future
- Reflection on own wishes and identification of influencing factors
- Role models

The content focuses on promoting meaning, enthusiasm, and motivation in career orientation for young people. Key elements include life-world orientation, encouragement for future planning, self-reflection on personal goals and influences, and the use of role models.

The methods are designed to be age-appropriate, emphasizing respect and treating young people as adults. The goal is to teach trainers how to engage and motivate their target audience. Topics include creating personas based on life-world orientation, reflecting on personal career paths, identifying key influences, and addressing the concerns and aspirations of young people. Trainers are guided to understand, connect with, and build confidence in working with their target group.

Key factors for creating meaning, enthusiasm, motivation in career guidance

- Lifeworld orientation
- Encouragement to shape the future
- Reflection on own wishes and identification of influencing factors
- Examples and role models, idols
- Methods must be age-appropriate
- Work at eye level
- Also treat young people as adults

OBJECTIVE:

We want to teach and learn trainers how to pick up and motivate their target group

Teaching and Learning outcomes:

- Deal with the potential target group
- Understand, reach and take on board the target group
- Reduce insecurity / increase confidence in dealing with the target group

Contents:

ad Lifeworld orientation:

Creating personas: The trainers/participants create personas (young adults and adolescents) in accordance with the following specifications

- Name, Age, gender of the person
- Where does the person live
- Interest
- Consumer behaviour
- Leisure activities
- Media use
- Access to technology
- What keeps them busy
- Wishes
- Fears / worries
- Social environment
- What are their role models and role models

- Where and how do they get relevant information (information behaviour)

Personas are ideal-typical models that describe people in a specific target group. Based on a developed Persona, demands and offers can be derived and the real life situation of a target-group can be met.

ad to encourage them to shape their future

Trainers reflect on their own professional careers. They reflect on milestones that led to their career choice and key moments in their professional lives. They present their professional career graphically, taking the following points into account

- Have their own career path mapped out (from kindergarten to 30)
- Have them look at their own career path
- What was at 14/15 then at 18/19...
- Is there a common thread?
- What was particularly formative
- Who or what have you orientated yourself towards
- Key experiences
- Find a title / headline (if your path was a film, what title would it have)

Concrete steps to pick up and motivate the future target groups

After reflecting on our own career paths, we ask ourselves the following questions:

- What does this mean for the specific work with our target groups
- What do we take away for the specific work with our target groups

4. OUTCOME-ORIENTED METHODS AND DIDACTICS IN THE CONTEXT OF CDO-VR

Module 4

- Getting to know methods and trying out methods
- Simulating discussions
- Group settings
- Visualising learning outcomes
- Practical play-through (e.g. finding a positive conclusion)

In this chapter, the participants learn about different methods, and try them out in individual, pair and group work. He/she integrates the acquired knowledge and experience into a meaningful whole by drawing up an action plan for creative demonstrations, which constitutes the practical part of the programme and guides the professionals in the implementation of the creative demonstrations.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the Importance of Group Work
- Identify Benefits and Challenges of Group Work
- Develop Interpersonal Group Work Skills
- Enhance Process Management Skills
- Implement Strategies for Effective Group Dynamics

- Apply Tools and Techniques for Successful Group Projects

Content:

- Getting to know methods
- Trying out methods
- Simulating discussions
- Group settings
- Visualising learning outcomes
- Practical play-through (e.g. finding a positive conclusion)

4.1 The Importance of Group Work

Group work refers to learning experiences in which students work together on the same task. Group work can help build a positive and engaging learning community through peer learning and teaching.

Promoting peer interactions can positively affect learning experiences by preparing students for work beyond the classroom. According to Constructivism, when students work together to solve problems,

they construct knowledge together, rather than passively absorbing information. Students learn more effectively working cooperatively in diverse groups as opposed to working exclusively in a heterogeneous class, working in competition with other students, or working alone. Some benefits include:

- Collaborating to break apart and solve complex tasks
- Deepening understandings and clarifying misconceptions with peer support
- Improving 21st century skills such as:
 - *self-regulation and self-reflection*
 - *communication and time management*
 - *project management and conflict resolution*

4.1.1 ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

While working collaboratively has the potential to improve student outcomes, it requires the instructor to carefully organize, guide and maintain a positive and productive work environment. Despite the substantial benefits group work offers, there are also disadvantages, especially if not implemented effectively.

Advantages (when done effectively)	Disadvantages (when done ineffectively)
More can be accomplished than working alone	Time wasted waiting on others
Less work than working alone	More work than working alone
Share knowledge and skills	Unequal support of ideas
Equal exchange of information	Conflict over roles and responsibilities

Team commitment and social support is motivating	Unequal participation is demotivating
Supportive and productive collaboration	Lack of productivity and miscommunication

For group work to be successful, you need to thoughtfully plan and organize how it will benefit your students. Group work must be designed to enhance student skills and abilities towards achieving learning outcomes.

4.1.2 GETTING TO KNOW METHODS

This page will inform you about the nature of group work, about what you should expect and the expectations teachers have of you in group learning situations.

Learning and working effectively as part of a team or group is an extremely important skill, and one that you will refine and use throughout your working life. Group projects should be among the most valuable and rewarding learning experiences. For many students, however, they are also among the most frustrating.

Here are some pointers to help you work effectively on your group tasks and assignments. These are mostly general principles that you should apply to group work here, in other courses and in the workplace.

4.1.2 WHY WE USE GROUP LEARNING TASKS

Learning in groups means that you need to share your knowledge and ideas with other participants. There are two principal ways that you benefit from doing this:

- you need to think carefully about your own ideas in order to explain them to others
- you expand your own awareness by taking account of the knowledge and ideas of others.

When you work as a group on a project or assignment, then you have the opportunity to draw on the different strengths of group members, to produce a more extensive and higher quality project or assignment than you could complete on your own.

To do this effectively you need to learn group work skills, which are an extremely important part of your professional development. In most professions people are required to work in multidisciplinary project teams or teams with a responsibility for a specific task.

Many professional organisations and employer groups stress the importance of interpersonal and group skills, such as communication, negotiation, problem solving, and teamwork. These skills can be as important as your subject knowledge in enabling you to be an effective professional.

This kind of group work is actually an ongoing process of generating ideas and planning as a group, working as an individual to carry out parts of that plan and then communicating as a group to draw the individual components together and plan the next step.

Stimulating Discussions

Activities that promote group dynamics, active listening and the expression of opinions are crucial to successfully engage young people in reflecting on their career paths and personal development. Counsellors can use a variety of methods to engage young people in structured yet creative discussions on topical issues related to education, employment and the future of work. The common denominator of the activities is the development of soft skills, communication, cooperation and self-awareness, the development of critical thinking, reflection, the promotion of argumentation - key competences for the successful integration of young people into the labour market.

Skills in group work

Group work requires both interpersonal and process management skills. Group work is included in a course to provide a safe environment in which you can try out new ideas and practices and learn some group skills. Some of the skills you need to develop are outlined here, you will discover some others for yourself.

Interpersonal skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Building positive working relationships● Communicating effectively in meetings● Negotiating to agree on tasks and resolve conflicts● Accommodating people with different cultural orientations and work habits
Process management skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Identifying group goals and dividing work● Planning and complying with meeting schedules and deadlines● Managing time to meet group expectations● Monitoring group processes and intervening to correct problems

Interpersonal skills and considerations

Take some time early on to chat with and get to know each of your group mates. The better you know one another and the more comfortable you are communicating with one another, the more effectively you will be able to work together. The online discussion set up for your group can be used to exchange information about backgrounds and interests as an icebreaker that elicits information that may not normally be available. The online discussion often helps people who are shy or reluctant to speak in a conversational way.

Build a culture of mutual respect within your group. You probably had little or no choice of your group mates, and you may have to produce several pieces of work in this group. It is best to get over these differences quickly: you will not have much choice of your team mates in the workplace and you will be under considerably more pressure there to be productive. Group members must:

- feel comfortable voicing their opinions, and feel that these opinions will be listened to.
- feel that all group members are contributing positively to the tasks by keeping to agreed procedures and plans and producing good quality work, on time.
- feel that their feelings are being considered by team members, yet the goals and objectives of the group are not being compromised to accommodate the whim or the wants of a few members.

Make sure that you both express your views and listen to others. There is nothing wrong with disagreeing with your group mates, no matter how confident they may seem to be about what they are saying. When you disagree, be constructive and focus on the issue rather than the person. Likewise when someone disagrees with you, respect what they are saying and the risk that they took in expressing their opinion. Try to find a way forward that everybody can agree to and that isn't the opinion of just one confident or outspoken member.

Managing the process

Effective group work does not happen by accident. It involves deliberate effort, and because there are many people involved it must not be left up to memory; good note taking is essential. Following these steps will help you and your group to work effectively together.

Have clear objectives. At each stage you should try to agree on goals. These include a timetable for progress on the project as well as more immediate goals (e.g. to agree on an approach to the assignment by Friday). Each meeting or discussion should also begin with a goal in mind (e.g. to come up with a list of tasks that need to be done).

Set ground rules. Discussions can become disorderly and can discourage shyer group members from participating if you don't have procedures in place for encouraging discussion, coming to resolution without becoming repetitive, and resolving differences of opinion. Set rules at the outset and modify them as necessary along the way. An interesting rule that one group made was that anybody who missed a meeting would buy the rest of the group a cup of coffee from the coffee shop. Nobody ever missed a meeting after that.

Communicate efficiently. Make sure you communicate regularly with group members. Try to be clear and positive in what you say without going on or being repetitive.

Build consensus. People work together most effectively when they are working toward a goal that they have agreed to. Ensure that everyone has a say, even if you have to take time to get more withdrawn members to say something. Make sure you listen to everyone's ideas and then try to come to an agreement that everyone shares and has contributed to.

Define roles. Split the work to be done into different tasks that make use of individual strengths. Having roles both in the execution of your tasks and in meetings / discussions (e.g. Arani is responsible for summarising discussions, Joseph for ensuring everybody has a say and accepts resolutions etc.) can help to make a happy, effective team. See Sharing and organising work for more information.

Clarify. When a decision is made, this must be clarified in such a way that everyone is absolutely clear on what has been agreed, including deadlines.

Keep good records. Communicating on the online discussion for your group provides a good record of discussion. Try to summarise face-to-face discussions and especially decisions, and post them to the online discussion so that you can refer back to them. This includes lists of who has agreed to do what.

Stick to the plan. If you agreed to do something as part of the plan, then do it. Your group is relying on you to do what you said you would do not what you felt like doing. If you think the plan should be revised, then discuss this.

Monitor progress and stick to deadlines. As a group, discuss progress in relation to your timetable and deadlines. Make sure that you personally meet deadlines to avoid letting your group down.

Set up a contract

A useful tool to help with the steps above is a contract. Within the first week of each group task you and your group will need to negotiate and agree to a contract. In this signed agreement, you will outline what you are going to do, who is going to do what, and by when. As a guide to negotiating your group contracts a contract proforma is reproduced at the end of this document.

Visualising Learning Outcomes

Visualising learning outcomes in group work is a powerful approach that helps students clearly understand and internalize what they are expected to achieve by working collaboratively. This method transforms abstract goals into tangible, observable outcomes, thereby enhancing motivation and guiding effective teamwork.

Importance of Visualising Learning Outcomes

Visualisation acts as a roadmap, providing clarity and shared understanding within the group. It helps students:

- Clearly identify and internalize their individual and collective goals.
- Maintain motivation by offering a tangible representation of progress.
- Align their activities and communication effectively towards achieving targeted outcomes.

Techniques for Visualising Learning Outcomes

Mind Mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Groups can collaboratively create mind maps at the beginning of the task to visually outline objectives, tasks, responsibilities, and connections between ideas.• Mind maps serve as ongoing visual references throughout the project.
Flow Charts and Diagrams	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flowcharts can represent sequential steps required to achieve outcomes, clearly illustrating process management and role distribution.• Diagrams, such as Venn diagrams, can illustrate how individual contributions overlap and integrate to form a cohesive project.
Project Timelines and Gantt Charts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These visual tools clearly depict deadlines, tasks dependencies, and individual responsibilities.• Enhance accountability and time management by providing clarity about task sequence and duration.
Visual Goal Boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical or digital boards displaying group objectives, deadlines, progress checkpoints, and milestones.• Continuously updated to reflect ongoing progress, challenges, and completed stages.

Conceptual Posters and Infographics

- Groups summarise their key outcomes visually using posters or infographics.
- Encourages synthesis of information, ensuring deep learning and effective communication of outcomes.

Benefits of Visualising Learning Outcomes in Group Work

- Enhances clarity and reduces confusion regarding objectives.
- Facilitates ongoing self-assessment and reflection within groups.
- Improves communication by providing a common visual language.
- Encourages active participation and equal contribution from all group members.

Implementing Visualisation in Practice

To effectively visualise learning outcomes, instructors and students should:

- Begin each group activity by collaboratively deciding how outcomes will be visualised.
- Regularly update visual tools to reflect real-time progress and adapt to emerging challenges.
- Periodically review visualisations in group meetings to ensure alignment and accountability.

Through these practices, visualising learning outcomes becomes an essential component in maximising the effectiveness of group work and fostering deeper, more meaningful learning experiences.

Practical Play-through

Check the TOOLBOX and find the most suitable tool for your activity or simply create few exercises that cover:

- Scenario-based Activities
- Interactive Role Assignments
- Guided Reflection Sessions
- Example Case Studies
- Facilitator Guidelines
- Troubleshooting Common Issues
- Practical Checklists and Templates

5. USING THE VR TOOL

Module 5

- Introduction to the technology
- Trouble shooting

In this module, participants will be equipped with both theoretical knowledge and practical hands-on experience to explore the full potential of Virtual Reality (VR) using the Meta Quest 3 headset. They will gain insights into the fundamental principles of VR, understand its applications in various fields, and

become familiar with the CDO-VR application. Additionally, they will learn how to effectively troubleshoot common issues, ensuring a smooth and immersive VR experience.

5.1 Introduction to CDO-VR with Meta Quest 3

Objective:

Equip participants with the knowledge and hands-on experience to explore the potential of Virtual Reality (VR) using the Meta Quest 3 headset. By the end of the workshop, participants will be able to:

- Understand VR technology and its applications.
- Set up and navigate the Meta Quest 3.
- Use CDO-VR Application
- Address most common problems.

Virtual Reality (VR) Overview

Virtual Reality (VR) is a technology that enables users to immerse themselves in a digitally created environment that can either replicate real-world locations or present entirely fictional settings. This is achieved through the use of specialized headsets, often referred to as VR goggles, which display three-dimensional visuals and respond to the user's head movements. In some cases, additional motion sensors or controllers are used to enhance interactivity, allowing users to engage with the virtual environment through gestures and actions. VR creates a strong sense of presence, making users feel as though they are truly inside the simulated world. It is widely applied in various sectors, including gaming for immersive entertainment, education for interactive learning experiences, medicine for training and therapy, and architecture for 3D visualization and design.

Applications of VR and the Meta Quest 3

Virtual Reality has a wide range of applications across various fields. In entertainment, it is most commonly used in gaming and immersive movie experiences, allowing users to feel as though they are inside the game or film. In education and training, VR provides realistic simulations for learning

complex skills, such as medical procedures or flight training, in a safe and controlled environment. In healthcare and therapy, VR is used for pain management, mental health treatment, and physical rehabilitation, offering patients engaging and personalized therapeutic experiences. In the field of design and simulation, VR enables architects, engineers, and artists to visualize and manipulate 3D models, improving creativity and collaboration.

The Meta Quest 3 is one of the most advanced VR headsets available, offering a range of powerful hardware features. It boasts high-resolution displays for sharp visuals, ergonomic controllers with haptic feedback, and advanced hand tracking that allows users to interact without the need for physical controllers. What sets the Meta Quest 3 apart is its standalone functionality, meaning it does not require a PC or external sensors to operate, and its mixed reality capabilities, which blend virtual elements with the physical world to create a more interactive and flexible experience. These features make it a versatile and user-friendly device suitable for both beginners and advanced users.

Hardware Orientation

When using a Virtual Reality (VR) system, understanding the hardware is essential for a smooth and immersive experience. The headset is the central component and typically includes sensors that track head movement, buttons for power and volume control, and lenses that display the virtual environment. These lenses must be properly aligned to ensure clear visuals. Most modern headsets also include built-in speakers or headphone jacks for audio immersion.

The VR controllers are handheld devices used to interact with the virtual world. They usually feature multiple buttons, thumbsticks, and triggers that allow for various inputs during use. Controllers need to be charged regularly and must be paired with the headset, either automatically or through a simple pairing process in the settings menu.

Setting up the VR device begins with powering on the headset and following the initial configuration steps. This typically involves connecting to Wi-Fi, logging into or creating a user account, and setting up a Guardian boundary, which defines a safe play area to prevent collisions with real-world objects.

For maximum comfort, the headset should be properly adjusted to fit the user's head. This includes tightening or loosening straps and ensuring that the device sits securely and comfortably on the face. Adjusting the IPD (Interpupillary Distance) is also important, as it aligns the lenses with the user's eyes for optimal clarity and reduces eye strain. Taking the time to fine-tune these settings enhances both comfort and visual quality during VR use.

Navigating the VR Interface and Safety in VR

Navigating the VR interface involves using either handheld controllers or hand tracking technology, depending on the capabilities of the headset. Controllers allow users to point, click, grab, and interact with virtual elements through buttons, triggers, and thumbsticks, while hand tracking enables users to use natural gestures to select and move within menus. Within the Meta Home environment, users can explore a customizable virtual space that acts as the main hub for accessing apps, games, settings, and social features. This home environment is designed to be intuitive and user-friendly, making it easy to navigate and personalize.

Safety and best practices are crucial for a comfortable and healthy VR experience. It is important to take regular breaks to avoid fatigue and eye strain, especially during long sessions. Motion sickness can affect some users, particularly when moving in virtual environments without corresponding physical movement, so starting with shorter sessions and choosing comfort settings can help minimize discomfort. In small spaces, setting up a clear Guardian boundary is essential to prevent bumping into walls or furniture. Ensuring the play area is free of obstacles and staying aware of your surroundings can greatly enhance both safety and enjoyment in VR.

Sharing Your Meta Quest 3 Experience via Casting

Casting allows you to share what you see in your Meta Quest 3 headset with others on a TV, phone, or computer screen in real time. This is especially useful when demonstrating VR to friends, guiding new users, or showcasing content during presentations or events. By casting, you make the experience more inclusive and interactive, allowing others to follow along and engage with what's happening in the virtual world. It's a simple way to bridge the gap between the user in VR and the audience outside it. We will

explore the available casting options and take a closer look at the pros and cons of each method. This will help you choose the setup that best fits your environment and needs.

CDO-VR Application Overview

The CDO-VR application is designed to support creativity, innovation, and 3D design within a virtual environment. Its main purpose is to provide users with an immersive space where they can visualize ideas, build digital models, and engage in creative problem-solving. The app is commonly used for educational purposes, design thinking workshops, and collaborative projects where users can experiment with shapes, structures, and concepts in three dimensions.

A walkthrough of the key features includes an introduction to the user interface, navigation tools, and the virtual workspace. Users can manipulate objects, draw in 3D space, and access a variety of design tools to build and customize their creations. The app may also offer features like object duplication, color changes, and collaboration tools that allow multiple users to work in the same virtual environment.

During the hands-on problem-solving activity, participants engage with the application by tackling common challenges that arise during use, such as object alignment, scaling issues, or unresponsive tools. These problems are addressed with the support of the instructor, who guides users through practical solutions and demonstrates effective techniques. Through this interactive practice, participants gain confidence and competence in using the CDO-VR application for creative and educational purposes.

Materials Needed:

- Meta Quest 3 headsets (ideally one per 2-3 participants).
- Charging stations or fully charged headsets.
- Clean and safe VR space (large room with minimal obstructions).
- Projector or large screen for introductory presentations.

5.2 Instructions

Interreg-CDO-VR-User Manual for professionals performing creative presentations through VR contains:

- Introduction
- Getting Started
- Navigation and Control
- App-Specific Gestures and Interactions
- Casting Your Meta Quest 3 to PC via Oculus Website

Link:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1r2EtTInF5WWWhMTinRKlqRh2JMIhu9nTj_oKiyvUT4z8/edit?tab=t.76372dqtq6k7#heading=h.ydk2re2uca45

6. FOLLOW-UP AND REFLECTION

Module 6

- Monitoring, evaluation and reporting
- Improvements and further development
- Reflection on experiences
- Transfer

Participants learn about the process and methods of evaluation, assessment and monitoring of a project. Based on the evaluation, assessment and monitoring, and study visits to both centres in Slovenia and Austria, we monitor whether there has been an increase in knowledge of and interest in deficit occupations among unemployed and students in Slovenia and Austria. The target groups in the project give feedback on the application of VR and also receive feedback and evaluation on their involvement and success, at, during and after their involvement in the programme.

The project partners need to ensure adequate monitoring, evaluation and reporting, as well as the transfer of knowledge, lessons learned and materials produced for further use. During the events, workshops/creative presentations the professionals collect feedback from the user about the experience, expectations, satisfaction, desires... Some of the monitoring and evaluation is done in the app itself, but we also have to use various monitoring and evaluation tools (1ka, google forms, padlet, mentimeter, etc.), some of which are based on or support artificial intelligence.

Feedback comes in form of questionnaires, online questionnaires (QR code), expression of feedback in other formats (flipchart, etc.) - depending on the possibilities, accessibility to mobile and other devices. Based on user feedback and his/hers own observations and findings, the professional formulates reports.

6.1 Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

Analysing user behaviour and performance using VR:

This information can be used to improve the design of the app and make it more engaging for users. We track the user's performance in the virtual reality simulation and monitor how quickly users complete tasks relative to the expected time, identify which tasks cause problems (more help = more complexity or unclear instructions), we can check whether users actually read the instructions. We can also evaluate session performance, whether user's complete sessions and how much time they spend. We can also see career potential and behavioural patterns - the popularity of the profession among users.

Over time, this kind of data can help us understand patterns — for example, whether certain groups tend to prefer one type of occupation over another, or how engaged they are in the experience.

Analysing user feedback:

We monitor feedback and opinions from participants about the virtual reality application, the activities carried out (creative presentations, workshops, presentations at trade fairs, etc.), their experiences, interest. This includes analysing user opinions, comments and survey responses to identify areas for improvement and satisfaction.

Feedback comes in form of questionnaires, online questionnaires (QR code), expression of feedback in other formats (flipchart, post-it notes, etc.) - depending on the possibilities, accessibility to mobile and

other devices. Based on user feedback and his/hers own observations and findings, the professional formulates reports.

We also monitor the interest in deficit occupations, in terms of conversions, enrolment in courses, schools, ...

Employment Service of Slovenia is also gathering information about:

- determine deficit occupations,
- number of unemployed persons who started working in deficit occupations,
- number of unemployed persons who retrain in a deficit profession.

General access to the design of the evaluation, especially the questionnaires

In order to give all participants the opportunity to provide their feedback in an appropriate manner, it must be ensured that the questions are formulated in a clear and simple way. It is also recommended that feedback can be given both verbally and non-verbally. For example: "What did you particularly like? Draw or write your answer here..." / "Which profession did you particularly like? Tick the pictures of the professions that you found interesting..."

When it comes to rating, different symbols (e.g. thumbs up, smileys, VR glasses...) can be used instead of numbers (e.g. 1-5).

In order to assess the level of knowledge and interest in the context of the individual professions, the level of knowledge and interest in the individual shortage occupations can also be briefly assessed at the beginning using a questionnaire or flipchart survey (e.g. assigning sticky dots to the professions).

Evaluation and follow-up of the workshop satisfaction as a practical example:

The project partners provided a thorough evaluation of the three-day workshop. The evaluation was carried out in several phases, as the aim was to obtain as much feedback as possible from the participants in order to further improve the application, the program itself, and the workshop, and to gather important information for the continuation of our project.

• EVALUATION EXAMPLE 1

Throughout the 3 days of the workshop, participants had the opportunity to give their opinions, thoughts, ideas and comments. There were 6 flipcharts on the wall, single flipchart represented single module. At any time, participants could give feedback and share their thoughts, comments on the topics written on the single flipchart. All participants could also follow, read these comments.

At the end of the workshop, these comments were presented in plenum, commented on and used for further work on the project.

The following topics were presented on flipcharts:

- Module 1 - Demand of labour market in AT/SL
- Module 2 - Gender equality; Gender reflective approach
- Module 3 - Picking up and motivating our target groups
- Module 4 - Outcome Oriented methods and didactics
- Module 5 - CDO-VR Applications
- Module 6 - Follow up; reflections, User feedback

- **EVALUATION EXAMPLE 2**

At the end of each day of the Train the Trainer workshop and the end of the modules of that day, an online questionnaire was used to ask questions about the content and methods presented in the module. Feedback was provided anonymously.

Questions for participants after Day 1

- What impressed you most about the workshop?
- In which area would you say you gained the most knowledge at the workshop?
- How would you rate the workshop?
- How would you rate the lecturers?
- What would you like to share with us (ideas, suggestion, your thoughts...)?

Questions for participants after Day 2

- What impressed you most about the workshop?
- In which area would you say you gained the most knowledge at the workshop?
- Which profession did you try out on VR glasses (multiple possible answers)
- How did you feel about learning about the profession using VR glasses?
- Did you experience any problems using the VR headset?
- How would you rate the workshop (5-highest)?
- How would you rate the lecturers (5-highest)?
- What would you like to share with us (ideas, suggestion, your thoughts...)?

Questions for participants after Day 3

- What impressed you most about the workshop?
- In which area would you say you gained the most knowledge at the workshop?
- Which profession did you try out on VR glasses (multiple possible answers)
- How did you feel about learning about the profession using VR glasses?
- How will preparing an action plan help you and in which extend?
- How would you rate the workshop (5-highest)?
- How would you rate the lecturers (5-highest)?
- What would you like to share with us (ideas, suggestion, your thoughts...)?

- **EVALUATION EXAMPLE 3**

At the end of the 3-day workshop, we also asked participants for final feedback, as we were interested in their overall experience of the 3-day workshop.

On the last day we used 3 flipcharts containing the following questions

- What was your overall experience? What did you like the most?
- Which content / exercise was useful to you and how will you use it?
- If you could change anything, what would it be?

The results, feedback, suggestions, comments we have received have helped us to improve the application and the implementation of the content of the manual, the workshop and to gather important information for the continuation of our project.

6.2 Reporting

In the context of the CDO-VR project, we need to ensure adequate reporting, as follows:

- a report for the individual in the form of a personal career path plan, drawn up by the individual himself
- a general report on the creative presentation carried out, including observations for schools and
- a general report for the evaluation of the project activities.

The **report for the individuals** (their *personal career path plan*) contains:

- which deficit occupation they tried with VR-glasses,
- which deficit occupation they liked the most,
- what opportunities for career development do they see in this area,
- their goals,
- their obstacles,
- next steps,
- their essential competences.

Documents:

- *Personal career path plan for students/pupils*
- *Personal career path plan for adults/unemployed*

The information contained in this report is not collected, it is personal and the property of the individual.

The **general report for schools** for the teacher/school counsellor for further use contains:

- which deficit occupation they tried with VR-glasses,
- which deficit occupation they liked the most,
- what opportunities for career development do they see in this area,
- other relevant observations.

The **general report about the event** for the evaluation of the project activities should contain:

- date, location, target audience
- were attendees interested,
- what were specifics about workshop,
- observations,
- what to improve,
- other relevant remarks.

6.3 Improvements and further development

Based on data collected through monitoring, evaluation, and user feedback, the CDO-VR project partners identify opportunities for improvement and adjust content, methods, and tools accordingly.

These insights serve as a foundation for the ongoing optimisation of activities and the development of upgraded solutions that better meet the needs of target groups. This approach enables iterative development, enhances the relevance of results, and ensures the long-term sustainability and transferability of project outcomes.

6.4 Reflection on experiences

Reflection on the CDO-VR experience allows professionals and participants to critically evaluate the learning process, the responses and the practical relevance of the activities. This reflection fosters deeper understanding, personal growth and professional development, while contributing valuable qualitative insights to improve future implementations. Creating a space for structured reflection strengthens the link between experiences and learning outcomes, supporting more meaningful engagement and long-term impact.

6.5 Transfer

In the context of monitoring, evaluation and reporting, the transfer is the last targeted step, focusing on the application of the results, knowledge or experience gained from the CDO-VR project and the tools and materials developed in new contexts - whether with participants, institutions, partners or future projects.

Transfer refers to the application or dissemination of knowledge, skills, methods, results or good practices created or identified in the framework of a CDO-VR project to wider practice or new contexts. This can happen at the individual level (e.g. participants applying new knowledge and skills in their everyday life, school, work, ...), the organisational level or the system/policy level.

SOURCES

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ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHEMENT 1: Lifelong career guidance ZRSZ

COUNSELLING ZRSZ:

LIFELONG CAREER GUIDANCE

- a) Information on the labour market
 - General information
 - Information on employment opportunities
 - Information on employment outside the Republic of Slovenia
- b) Independent career management
- c) Basic career counselling
- d) In-depth career counselling
- e) Learning career management skills

CAREER COUNSELLING FOR UNEMPLOYED

Career counselling is career choice counselling in which an individual, with the help of a counsellor, decides on career goals and makes career decisions based on their desires, needs, abilities, characteristics, knowledge, interests, values, and development opportunities, and also implements the set career plan. When making career decisions, it also considers opportunities on the labour market. Each counselling process is based on cooperation between the counsellor and the client.

Group workshops for learning career management skills

Learning career management skills includes various forms of work aimed at acquiring skills for getting to know one's own interests and competencies, opportunities in the environment, formulating and achieving employment and career goals, and finding a job. The objectives of workshops conducted for the purpose of learning career management skills are as follows:

- formulating employment and career goals,
- learning job search skills and support in finding a job,
- assistance in lifelong learning.

Learning career management skills is effective if it takes place in a group, as participants learn from each other by exchanging opinions and experiences. The group also enables participants to support each other and increase social competences. In the group, the participant participates in the exchange of knowledge, experiences and opinions and acquires the skill of negotiation or reaching consensus.

CAREER CENTRES

The purpose of career centres:

- providing effective support to unemployed people and other job seekers who independently manage their careers and actively seek employment,
- providing current information on job vacancies in Slovenia and the EU,
- the possibility of using tools for independent career management,
- promoting the employment of unemployed people and job seekers through mini-job fairs, presentations of PDM in cooperation with employers, speed dating, and the like.

The career centre provides links to the following information:

- about job descriptions Job descriptions - <https://www.ess.gov.si/iskalci-zaposlitve/poklici-in-kompetence/opisi-poklicev/#/>
- about secondary, higher and college schools, faculties and academies,
- about vocational training and study abroad opportunities,
- about possible financial assistance for education and training,
- about job vacancies,
- about student dormitories,
- computer programs for independent planning of educational and career paths.

KNOWLEDGE QUALIFICATIONS

The Slovenian qualifications system consists of three subsystems:

- qualifications obtained through educational programmes in basic level education, which end with the acquisition of a certificate, diploma or other evidence of publicly recognized education (programmes in basic level education have already been presented in previous points within the education system),
- the NPK certificate system, which enables the acquisition of professional or professional qualifications and the recognition of informally acquired knowledge with a publicly recognized document,
- supplementary education, through which an individual deepens their knowledge and develops competences for life, work, mobility and career advancement, and after which they obtain a certificate that can be a condition for employment or further performance of work.

Mutual recognition of qualifications in the EU

The free movement of persons, which is one of the main objectives for increasing mobility within the EU and is already set out in the founding treaties of the European Community, includes, in addition to the free movement of workers, the coordination of social security systems and citizens' rights, also the mutual recognition of qualifications.

To this end, the European Community has adopted common rules or directives on the recognition of qualifications, which enable citizens of EU Member States to access and pursue regulated professions or regulated professional activities in other Member States under the same conditions as those applicable to citizens of the host Member State.

Thus, upon joining the EU, Slovenia also began to implement a system of mutual recognition of qualifications for pursuing regulated professions or professional activities.

ACTIVE EMPLOYMENT POLICY

Labour market analyses indicate that the gap between the knowledge and skills of those who find themselves in the ranks of the unemployed and the requirements of newly created jobs is increasing year by year. Labour market development strategies have therefore been focused on the development of human capital for many years. The key to success cannot lie in maintaining passive entitlement systems, but in introducing effective systems that help both the employed and the unemployed to manage changes and transitions in the labour market.

Measures represent an intervention intended to directly address problems in the labour market, but which must achieve synergistic effects with systemic solutions and measures of other sectoral policies:

- educations and training means acquiring new knowledge and competencies with the help of registered training providers.
- employment incentives are implemented in the form of employment subsidies. Financial incentives for employers are intended to increase employment opportunities for vulnerable groups of unemployed persons.

- job creation is aimed at promoting work and social inclusion and improving the qualifications and work skills of vulnerable groups of unemployed people. It takes place as a subsidy for temporary employment and may be linked to training. It is carried out mainly by non-profit employers or in the public sector.
- promotion of self-employment - the measure is intended to promote the implementation of entrepreneurial ideas and the creation of jobs in micro-enterprises, as defined by the law governing companies, and to promote the pursuit of independent activity. It is implemented as assistance for self-employment and as its subsidization

CAREER COUNSELLING FOR PUPILS

Lifelong career guidance for young people

Choosing further education, a profession and acquiring basic knowledge about managing one's own career also have a preventive function (reducing structural discrepancies in the labour market, avoiding personal dissatisfaction and poorer performance in pursuing an unsuitable profession, etc.), which is why it is important to involve the Institute in the career planning process also for schoolchildren. For this purpose, lifelong career guidance services are also provided to pupils, students and their parents as prevention and support for the career guidance programme of the school or faculty. It includes activities that enable learning about the labour market and career planning:

Information materials:

- on labour market trends - unemployment, demand for workers - where is the shortage, balance and surplus of personnel in certain professions (occupational barometer),
- with descriptions of professions,
- with descriptions of educational programs at home and abroad,
- with descriptions of educational institutions,
- with deadlines and conditions for obtaining financial incentives for education.
- **Services that enable young people to learn about careers and the labour market:** earning about careers includes lectures on the labour market and career management factors, job and career fairs, and similar events that present content that helps with career development or job search
- **Career Management Tools:** include a methodology that guides individuals on their career decision-making journey. The key points of career management are:
 - getting to know themselves (questionnaires to identify interests, competencies, characteristics, motives, values),
 - obtaining information from the environment (labour market and employment opportunities, education and training offerings, etc.),
 - decision-making (evaluating alternatives, setting short-term and long-term goals),
 - skills for achieving goals,
 - self-evaluation of goal achievement.

Individual career counselling for pupils, students and students

- Individual career counselling has all the characteristics of in-depth career counselling, as it encourages the individual to discover their interests, abilities, qualities and competencies through a comprehensive approach, and helps in shaping career goals, whether it is a choice of education or employment. Individual career counselling for school-age youth is carried out after the pupil, student or student has previously registered for counselling.
- It is carried out at those regional services where they have a qualified specialist for this purpose.

Group forms of learning career management skills

- The purpose of the group form of learning career management skills is to acquire skills for learning about one's own interests and competencies, opportunities in the environment, forming and achieving career goals, and motivating for their achievement. It is carried out exceptionally, in agreement with schools or within the framework of an agreed visit to career centres.

REPORTING ZRSZ

- Survey questionnaire about the experience QR code (expectations, satisfaction, desires...).
- Report about implementation of the workshop

- Participants from workshop report
- Information's about unemployed - how many people leave ESS:
 - they get employed,
 - they go to school,
 - they go to trainings to the employer,
 - they get new certification.

- Some people need more career guidance so EES provides them with **in-depth career counselling**.

In-depth career counselling is intended for unemployed persons and job seekers whose employment is at risk. The unemployed person agrees to participate in in-depth career counselling with the counsellor during a counselling interview, and the agreement on inclusion is recorded in the employment plan. Priority is given to persons who face difficulties in forming employment goals and making career decisions or who need support in overcoming situational and other complex obstacles related to employment. Within the framework of in-depth career counselling, unemployed persons and job seekers whose employment is at risk receive assistance in planning and managing their careers. In the counselling process, the job seeker explores his or her interests, competencies, characteristics and acquired skills, as well as career development opportunities in the environment. Based on this, he or she forms short-term and long-term career goals and makes decisions and plans to achieve them. Counsellors in in-depth career counselling may use psychdiagnostic tools, various questionnaires, and counselling methods and techniques that establish a new perspective on the problem and activate the individual to make career decisions and overcome obstacles. The counselling process may take place over a longer period of time with several consecutive counselling sessions. Only certified experts can carry out these counselling, so we will not use in-depth career counselling is for participants in CDO-VR project. Participants that will need in-depth career counselling will be monitored separately due to the privacy of personal data.

- In ZRSZ for CDO-VR project we will **provide learning career management skills counselling in career centres** – additional workshop on topic creating "Lifestyle" with the unique way how each person approaches life's challenges. Draft for goal and cooperative oriented sessions:
 - small steps on achieving goals
 - daily motivation
 - habit tracker
 - prioritization of the tasks
 - analysis of the goals
 - deep focus on goals
 - progress
 - readiness to change

- leaving comfort zone.

ATTACHEMENT 2: CDO-VR counselling form for individual career and counselling

1. General

1. General information	
First and last name	
Phone number/email	
Gender	
Date of birth	
Place of birth	
Citizenship	
Adress	
Complited education	

2. Career and educational interests

2. Career and educational interests	
Short-term career goals:	
Long-term career goals:	
Which of the deficit occupations are you most interested in? (electrician, cook, care worker, metal worker, system administrator, builder):	

Are you also considering other occupations? Which ones?	
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3. Counselling "before deciding on a deficit occupation"

Possible questions for conducting a counseling interview.

3. Counselling "before deciding on a deficit occupation"	
Which of the deficit occupations are you familiar with?	
Which occupation currently appeals to you the most and why?	
How well do you know the tasks, responsibilities, and working environment of this occupation?	
Have you had the opportunity to learn about this occupation in practice?	
Which of your qualities, knowledge, and skills would be an advantage in this occupation?	
Have you had the opportunity to learn about this occupation in practice?	
Do you have any limitations that could affect your ability to perform this occupation?	
What motivates you most about this occupation?	
What are your expectations regarding salary, working hours, and working conditions?	

Willingness to enter education/training (0–10):	
What information helped you make your decision?	
Would you like to meet people in this profession or visit a company?	
What steps will you take in the next month to get closer to your decision?	
How do you think your advisor can help you?	

4. Counselling "during training or education for a specific profession"

Possible questions for conducting a counselling interview.

4. Counselling "during training or education for a specific profession"	
What new skills and knowledge have you acquired so far?	
What works best for you in training/education?	
Which tasks or topics do you find most difficult?	
Are the education/training conditions adequate?	
Do you need additional learning support?	
Have any adaptations been necessary?	
Motivation (0–10):	

What motivates you most at the moment?	
Do you feel included in the group/learning process?	
Have you had contact with employers or internship providers?	
What work tasks have you already tried?	
Have your expectations about the profession changed? How?	
Have your expectations about the profession changed? How?	
What will you do in the next period to improve your knowledge and employment opportunities?	
What support do you need from your advisor or others?	

5. Counselling "after completion of training or education for a particular profession"

Possible questions for conducting a counselling interview.

5. Counselling "after completion of training or education for a particular profession"	
Have you found a job after completing your training?	
If yes: where, in what position, and since when?	
If no: what stage of the job search are you at?	
Which of the skills and knowledge you have acquired are you already using?	
Did the training prepare you well for the job?	

Which content or knowledge would be useful to reinforce further?	
Do you need help connecting with employers?	
Do you need further education or specialization?	
Are there any barriers to employment?	
Adaptation to the job (0–10):	
Biggest challenges at work:	
Support from colleagues and superiors:	
Short-term goal (6 months):	
Long-term goal (2–3 years):	
Plan for monitoring progress:	

6. Identifying barriers

6. Identifying obstacles and solutions	
Personal barriers (e.g., health problems, lack of skills, language, family obligations, etc.):	
Organizational barriers (e.g., unsuitable schedule, distance, unsuitable working conditions, bureaucratic barriers, etc.):	
Other barriers:	

Possible ways to overcome the listed obstacles or what I can do to avoid them:

7. Plan for the next steps

Target date	Target	Strategy/ activity	Responsible person	Deadline	Achieved (YES/NO)

8. Consent

I agree that the counsellor may use my personal data within the framework of the project exclusively for the purpose of providing professional and career counselling and monitoring my progress.

Participant's signature: _____

Date: _____

Interreg



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EVROPSKA UNIJA
Kofinanciert von
der EUROPÄISCHEN UNION

Slovenija – Österreich

CDO-VR

Project title: Centre for deficit occupations through Virtual Reality

Project partners: Ljudska univerza Ptuj (Slovenia), Zavod za zaposlovanje RS – Območna služba Ptuj (Slovenia), Art Rebel 9 d.o.o. (Slovenia), NOWA (Austria), ISOP (Austria)

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