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Name of the project : “Development of the Key Competences of Adults by Innovation Program of Consumer Education“
Contract number : 2018-1-SK01-KA204-046393

RESEARCH REPORT ON EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF THE UNEMPLOYED

The research of the needs of the unemployed adults was carried out as a part of the implementation of the first phase of the ERASMUS + project, in which consumer organizations from Italy, Greece, Lithuania, the Czech Republic and Slovakia participated. The project aim was to improve and expand the supply of opportunities for high quality education tailored to the needs of unemployed adults up to 29 years of age with low skills or low qualifications.

The aim of the research was to identify the current state of the needs and the development of key competences of unemployed adults under 29 years of age with low skills or low qualifications, who are characterized as a risk group. Based on the results of the research of the target group, the educational program “Development of the Key Competences of Adults by Innovative Program of Consumer Education” will be proposed.

A qualitative method of the focus group was used to obtain target group data. Unemployed adults up to 29 years of age with low skills or low qualifications have been invited to the meetings in Kežmarok and Banská Bystrica, where they presented their consumer views, attitudes and experiences. The researchers obtained the data which was needed for identification of development of key competences through structured discussion.

The qualitative research by the focus groups was carried out in cooperation with the Center for Labor, Social Affairs and Family, the national authority for the execution of state administration

in the field of social affairs and employment services. The headquarters of the Labor, Social Affairs and Family have been asked to provide data on the number of unemployed adults under 29 years of age with low skills or low qualifications according to gender, age, education, time of unemployment.

The statistics allowed researchers to gain an overview of how large is a subset of all unemployed adults in this segment for which will be prepared an innovative educational program. Until 31 December 2018, 39 637 unemployed adults up to 29 years of age were registered in Slovakia, 13 882 (35%) of them had basic and lower secondary education; this is approximately one third of unemployed adults up to 29 years of age.

Stav UoZ do 29 rokov k 31.12.2018	muž	žena	Pohlavie
>= 15 do < 16 rokov	1	0	1
>= 16 do < 17 rokov	226	227	453
>= 17 do < 18 rokov	431	442	873
>= 18 do < 19 rokov	708	719	1 427
>= 19 do < 20 rokov	1 505	1 475	2 980
>= 20 do < 25 rokov	7 639	7 271	14 910
>= 25 do < 30 rokov	8 863	10 130	18 993
Spolu Vek	19 373	20 264	39 637
01 - primárne vzdelanie	1 365	1 362	2 727
02 - nižšie sekundárne vzdelanie	5 379	5 776	11 155
03 - vyššie sekundárne vzdelanie	9 908	8 532	18 440
Spolu ISCED	16 652	15 670	32 322
0-6 mesiacov	13 094	11 788	24 882
7-12 mesiacov	3 436	4 268	7 704
12-24 mesiacov	1 595	2 125	3 720
25-36 mesiacov	482	799	1 281
37-48 mesiacov	228	439	667
49-72 mesiacov	230	465	695
nad 72 mesiacov	308	380	688
Spolu Dĺžka evidencie	19 373	20 264	39 637

Table n.1 : Number of unemployed adults up to 29 years of age until December 31, 2018.

A month later, on 31 January 2019, the rate of registered unemployed adults up to 29 years of age only increased by 1% to 14,758; more than one third of unemployed adults up to 29 years of age had primary and lower secondary education.

Stav UoZ do 29 rokov k 31.01.2019	muž	žena	Spolu
>= 15 do < 16 rokov	1	0	1
>= 16 do < 17 rokov	186	202	388
>= 17 do < 18 rokov	460	455	915
>= 18 do < 19 rokov	691	741	1 432
>= 19 do < 20 rokov	1 465	1 407	2 872
>= 20 do < 25 rokov	8 281	7 480	15 761
>= 25 do < 30 rokov	9 389	10 446	19 835
Spolu Vek	20 473	20 731	41 204
01 - primárne vzdelanie	1 473	1 387	2 860
02 - nižšie sekundárne vzdelanie	5 916	5 982	11 898
03 - vyššie sekundárne vzdelanie	10 481	8 933	19 414
Spolu ISCED	17 870	16 302	34 172
0-6 mesiacov	14 230	12 365	26 595
7-12 mesiacov	3 421	4 162	7 583
12-24 mesiacov	1 601	2 152	3 753
25-36 mesiacov	470	795	1 265
37-48 mesiacov	232	415	647
49-72 mesiacov	222	466	688
nad 72 mesiacov	297	376	673
Spolu Dĺžka evidencie	20 473	20 731	41 204

Table n.2: Number of unemployed adults up to 29 years of age until January 31, 2019.

RESEARCH METHODS

Focus group employ qualitative research approach to extract meaning from the data. A research objective is identify the key competences of unemployed adults up to 29 years of age with low skills or low qualifications to design an educational program „Development of the Key Competences of Adults by Innovative Program of Consumer Education.” A particular purpose of a focus group interview is an indepth exploration of Social and Civic Competence and Competence Communication in Mother Tongue.

A focus group meeting was concentrated on the six themes of Consumer Education (Personal Finance, The Rights and Obligations, Advertisement and Persuasion, Food, Consumption and Environment, Safety of Products and Services. The researchers Božena Stašenková and Andrea Stašenková introduced these themes by PowerPoint Presentation program. The presentation was followed by a structured format of twenty two questions. Researchers objective was to get the best and the most detailed information concerning the consumer education and key competences by using pointed and clear questions.

The first step was to transcribe the entire interview from audio recording and afterwards to transcript it into choosen categories to analyse data. General approach employed in analysis used

specific units which were determined by questions of the researchers. Analysis and interpretation of the data was a content analysis, the analysts identified important statements from words, sentences or set of sentences.

A pragmatical content was identified by classifying the signs according the their probably causes and effects. The emphasis was on why something was said. Data used in content analysis included human speech, observation of behaviour and various forms of nonverbal communication.

THE FIRST MEETING OF THE FOCUS GROUP IN KEŽMAROK

We visited Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family in Kežmarok on December 19, 2018. The aim of the visit was to ask for the cooperation in the selection of unemployed adults up to 29 years old of age with low skills or low qualifications by structured format. A Meal Voucher and Travel Reimbursement we offered for the Focus Group's participants of meeting.

Date and time of the Focus Group: February 19, 2019

Address of the venue: Dr. Alexandra 61, 060 01 Kežmarok

Name of the researchers: Božena Stašenková, Andrea Stašenková

Name of the analysts: Božena Stašenková

Duration of the event : 1,5 hour

Number of the respondents : 11

Structure of the participants:

Structure of the respondents		Men	women
Age	16-19 years	3	1
	20-24 years	2	0
	25-29 years	1	4
Level of education	ISCED 1 Primary education	3	3
	ISCED 2 Lower secondary education	2	3
	ISCED 3 Upper secondary education	0	0
Unemployment time	1-4 years	3	2
	5-9 years	2	3
	More than 10 years	0	1

Table n. 3 Structure of the respondents in Kežmarok

GROUP DYNAMICS

The researchers introduced the themes and importance of the meeting by PowerPoint Presentation and invited the participants to introduce each other. The participants did not considerably reveal their expectations about the program in the beginning of the meeting. The group discussion was characterized by a very calm atmosphere. Researchers encouraged interaction between the participants and invited them to discuss and tried to wider the statements that have been made during discussion with other participants.

The researcher had to encourage discussion by highlighting the meaning of some words and offered examples from the practice to his participants. Answers varied by themes, broad reactions of the respondents were scarce and sometimes expressed themselves by only one sentence even one word.

Participants' statements were often very brief. Nevertheless wider statements and explanations were added into discussion when participants were talking about their own experience. One woman was not involved in the discussion at all and her positive or negative attitude was only expressed by nodding her head. The opinions and attitudes were often expressed by one or several words or by repeating the researcher's words. The lack of vocabulary of several participants was counterbalanced by their sufficient non-verbal communication.

Were any issues that the respondents would prefer to avoid?

The participants did not avoid any question.

Were anticipated questions to elicit discussion a pithy sound that frustrated the moderator?

It happened many times. The participants started to talk after long pauses and moderator used this situation for explaining in which area of consumer matters they are situated.

Were any issues which arised by the respondents ?

The participants did not open any own and independent issues or themes.

Were the answers of respondents influenced by social desirability?

We saw that opinion of participant was influenced by social desirability in area of healthy food where the participants explained socially expected opinions in their diet.

What level of intensity of positive or negative emotions did you observed ?

The participants showed the greatest emotions when they were describing problems with traders that deceived them or their behaviour were disrespectful because of who they are: “ We encountered disrespectful behaviour and discrimination because we are Gypsies. We have to be very careful because they deceive us when buying goods or they charge us much money

INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSION ABOUT SOCIAL AND CIVIC COMPETENCES

The information which the researchers obtained through abstraction from the recording units (A1-A7) provided them with important data to analyse, generalize and interpret and enable them to draw conclusions and recommendations on the need to develop key competencies. The results of the survey will form the basis for the development of a consumer education program to support the development of Social and Civic competence for the target group of the unemployed under 29 with low skill levels or low qualifications.

A1. What kind of themes of consumer education were the most interested?

Participants understood the meaning and concepts of consumer issues when they were clarified and explained in relationship to their experience. They were the most interested in themes such as Finance, Food, Complaints and Advertisement. They presented a lot of experience with shopping, family services, unfair commercial practices and misleading of consumers. They did not present any experience in the field of Consumption and Environment, Safety of Products and Services.

A2. What are their consumer experiences?

The participants reported both positive and negative experiences, that arose from their own experience but also experiences of their relatives. They have no information about which institution or person which can help them with any consumer problems. For example they stated: “We can turn to police and information centres in supermarkets.”

A3. In which areas they have gained consumer experience?

The participants obtained the most experience in shopping of food, in sales and promotion activities. The participants said they had the most experience with price control while shopping and checking of their payment when they faced deceiving practices. They have got a little experience with complaints and no experiences with internet shopping because of the lack of internet access.

A4. Does the consumer need consumer education?

All participants confirmed that consumers need education. Their suggestions were: “it would be better if we knew more”, “we need to better communicate”, “we want to check out our account”, “we need to work”. The only man from this group who has internet access said: “Consumer should have learned more at school”. Only his answers during whole meeting were more comprehensive, continuous and consistent.

A5. What kind of knowledge, skills and experience does consumer need?

The participants are convinced that need more knowledge about food and the content and composition of the products. They would like to acquire the skills to check and compare the prices and get more experience to solve their complaints. All participants agreed that they would like to learn about their consumer rights.

A6. Can consumer knowledge and experience help the unemployed adults to look for work?

The question was indirectly confirmed by the expression of the participants : “We want to be experienced consumers and improve our communication to convince the employer that we want to work for him.”

A7. Are you willing to attend the courses of consumer education?

Participants' statements were optimistic and expressed their interest in consumer education courses.

INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSION ABOUT COMMUNICATION IN MOTHER TONGUE

The information which the researchers obtained through abstraction from the recording units (B1-B4) provided them with important data to analyse, generalize and interpret and enable them to draw conclusions and recommendations on the need to develop key competencies. The results of the survey will form the basis for the development of a consumer education program to support the development of competence Communication in Mother Tongue for the target group of the unemployed under 29 with low skill levels or low qualifications.

B1. Expression of opinion, experiences and attitudes in a positive and clear way

The mother tongue of participants was Gypsy language and Slovak language only as the second one. The participants were using in discussion poor vocabulary and therefore the opinions have been expressed by only sentence, by several words, sometimes by nodding their heads. The observing of their behaviour showed that they had problem to create a longer sentence and sometimes were not able to follow and understand the meaning of the questions or join the

statements of other participants. They need to develop their communication competences in Slovak language to be able to express their opinions, experience and attitudes by clear and coherent way.

B2. Conveying information to others in a simple and unambiguous way

The participants have to generally improve their communication competences in order to convey information to others participants. They need to increase their vocabulary, to acquire self-assurance in their communication to be able to communicate without fear and use suitable words, sentences and meaningful text.

B3. Distribution of messages clearly and concisely, in a way that connects with the audience

The participants were not able to followed up and disseminate the statements of other participants, therefore the researchers could not obtain more information from them. The participants need to develop their communication skills to respond adequately to other people, when they to come to contact with people they have not known before. They need to functionally handle their knowledge, experience and skills to present their personalities and the results of their work.

B4. Understanding, instructions, making requests, asking questions

There was an empty space during the group discussion, which arose from a lack of understanding of the questions. Researchers had to reformulate and simplify the questions, explain them in the context of everyday life. Insufficiently developed communication competence has restricted participants in group discussion, in understanding new information, receiving instructions, storing texts in memory and reproducing them in new contexts and situations.

INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSION

FROM THE FIRST FOCUS GROUP IN KEŽMAROK

1. Participants in the group discussion in Kežmarok expressed their interest about themes of Food and Complaints and are willing to participate in future consumer education programs.
2. Participants believed that consumer knowledge can help them find work. They assume that there is a correlation between the consumer's knowledge and experience and can help them find a job.
3. Based on the results of this survey, we recommend developing a consumer education program to support the development of key competences Communication in Mother Tongue and Social and Civic Competences.

THE SECOND MEETING OF THE FOCUS GROUP IN BANSKÁ BYSTRICA

We visited Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family in Banská Bystrica on January 23, 2019. The aim of the visit was to ask for cooperation in the selection of unemployed adults up to 29 years of age with low skills or low qualifications. A Meal Voucher and Travel Reimbursement were provided for the participants of the meeting of Focus Group in Banská Bystrica.

Date and time of the Focus Group: February 20, 2019

Address of the venue: Úrad práce a sociálnych vecí a rodiny, ČSA 7, 974 01 Banská Bystrica

Name of the researchers: Božena Stašenková, Andrea Stašenková

Name of the analysts: Božena Stašenková, Andrea Stašenková

Duration of the event : 1,5 hour

Number of the respondents: 9

Structure of the respondents		Men	Women
Age	16-19 years	0	0
	20-24 years	3	0
	25-29 years	4	2
Level of education	ISCED 1 Primary education	0	1
	ISCED 2 Lower secondary education	6	1
	ISCED 3 Upper secondary education	1	0
Unemployment time	1-4 years	1	1
	5-9 years	6	1
	More than 10 years	0	0

Table n.4 : Structure of the respondents in Banská Bystrica

GROUP DYNAMICS

The researchers introduced the themes and importance of the meeting by PowerPoint Presentation and invited the participants to introduce each other. Researchers encouraged interaction between

the participants and invited them to discuss and tried to wider the statements that have been made during discussion with other participants.

Two respondents expressed their opinions on the program of this meeting: “We do expect nothing new from this meeting”. Those participants tried to turn the subject into the political discussion, then apologized their leaving from the meeting and after forty minutes went. This situation had positive effect because a climate of the meeting changed positively. The participants started to feel more comfortable and began to be more engaged in discussion.

Men versus women expressed better knowledge and skills in consumer matters and were more experienced in the market. Contributions to the discussion have shown that they are better educated and have a broader view of everyday life. They confessed that they had worked with several employers and even had worked abroad. Involvement of women and their participation in the discussion was rare. Their opinions and attitudes were expressed by several words, repeating the researcher's words or by nodding their head. The researchers observed non-verbal communication of the participants, which was complemented by deficiencies in their ability to express themselves.

Were any issues that respondents would prefer to avoid?

The participants did not face any issues or any questions which they would have to avoid.

Were there anticipated questions to elicit discussion or a pithy sound that frustrated the moderator?

No, there were not. Moderator had to rather deal with the intervention of the participants in the discussion and their pressure to politicize.

Were any issues which arised by the respondents?

Two participants would like to discuss about next election of the president in Slovakia.

Were the answers of respondents influenced by social desirability?

We did not observe any answer which could be influenced by social desirability.

What level of intensity of positive or negative emotions did you observed?

The participants showed a lot of positive emotions when describing their ability to act as experienced consumer and negotiate with traders. They explained many positive and negative

experiences to solve complaints and disputes. One participant even stated: “I have to raise a voice to I achieve replacement of the defective products.”

INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSION ABOUT SOCIAL AND CIVIC COMPETECES

The information which the researchers obtained through abstraction from the recording units (A1-A7) provided them with important data to analyze, generalize and interpret and enable them to draw conclusions and recommendations on the need to develop key competencies (A1-A6). The results of the survey will form the basis for the development of a consumer education program to support the development of Social and Civic Competences for the target group of the unemployed under 29 with low skill levels or low qualifications.

A1. What kind of themes of consumer education were the most interesting?

The most interested themes of the participants in the second Focus Group were Food, Diet, Prices Comparison, Internet shopping and Consumer Complaints. The participants discussed about prices and quality of food, unfair commercial practices, proceeding how to solve disputes with traders and where we can ask for help.

A2. What are their consumer experiences?

The most positive experiences were in shopping in general and the most negative were experiences with the quality of food, goods and telecommunication services. Men expressed their positive experiences in internet shopping. They were able to solve consumer disputes but they didn't not know where to get suitable information, neither advice or some counselling. They only looked for information on the Internet and one participant even asked for the help the police.

A3. In which areas they have gained consumer experience?

The most participants expressed their personal experience in solving of consumer complaints. However, the comments of these participants on the individual issues pointed out that they have limited knowledge in these areas. One of the participants claimed: “Durable foods cannot go wrong.”

A4. Does the consumer need consumer education ?

The most of participants confirmed that consumer has to be educated: "To be better prepared to choose products". One participant enunciated: "If I were younger I would like to get this education in secondary school." " Consumer has to know his /her way of self-defence."

A5. What kind of knowledge, skills and experience does consumer need?

The participants expressed their opinions that consumer need to cope with comparing of the prices, to deal with complaints, be able to write a letter to company, be able to compare the quality of products, etc.

A6. Can consumer knowledge and experience help unemployed people to look for work?

Only one man in this group tried to persuade other participants that the knowledge and experience of consumers would not help them in finding a job. The other participants in the discussion did not question him, but consistently expressed their belief that the acquisition of consumer knowledge and experience would help them to find a job.

A7. Are you willing to attend the courses of consumer education? The participants of this meeting unanimously confirmed that would like to attend.

INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSION ABOUT COMMUNICATION IN MOTHER TONGUE

The information which the researchers obtained through abstraction from the recording units (B1-B4) provided them with important data to analyze, generalize and interpret and enable them to draw conclusions and recommendations on the need to develop key competencies. The results of the survey will form the basis for the development of a consumer education program to support the development of competence Communication in Mother Tongue for the target group of the unemployed under 29 with low skill levels or low qualifications.

B1. Expression of opinion, experiences and attitudes in a positive and clear way.

The participants of this focus group had very different communication skills. The mother tongue of the women was Gypsy language , Slovak language was the second one. In order to women speak clearly and to be able to express their opinions, experiences and attitudes they need to improve communication skills in Slovak language.

B2. Conveying information to others in a simple and unambiguous way.

More interactions we observed between men and less between women. We suppose that they need more self-confidence to avoid the stress to communicate in Slovak language. They also need more support and an opportunity to communicate with variety of people to get self-confidence.

B3. Distribution of messages clearly and concisely, in a way that connects with the audience.

Development of key competences in communication requires development of ability to understand the views of others. Participants respected ideas, views and attitudes of others even they were different from their own.

B4. Understanding instructions, making requests, asking questions

Development of communication competency requires not only training in listening and understanding but also keeping a key information. The participants need to practice active listening, attention to what was said by other participants, clarify important points, rephrase what was said and whether they understood correctly.

INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSION

FROM THE SECOND FOCUS GROUP IN BANSKÁ BYSTRICA

1. Participants in the group discussion in Banská Bystrica expressed their interest about consumer themes of Food, Nutrition and Complaints and are willing to participate in future consumer education programs.
2. Participants believed that increasing of consumer knowledge and experience can help them find work. They confirmed that exists a correlation between increasing of consumer knowledge and experience and job search assistance.
3. Based on the results of this survey, we recommend developing a consumer education program to support the development of key competences Communication in Mother Tongue and Social and Civic Competences.

CONCLUSIONS

FOR THE CONTINUATION OF THE PROJECT

Research into the needs of the target group of unemployed adults under 29 with low skills or low qualifications confirmed their interest to voluntarily participate in consumer education programs. The participants selected the most important consumer themes with which they already have some experience, and are motivating and attractive to continue in their education.

Selected consumer themes is needed to elaborate into case studies based on real life of consumers. In the next phase of the project, the case studies will be complemented by interactive learning methods to develop Social and Civic Competences and Communication in Mother Tongue.