

Extrait du IRIS Europe

Information Society Academy – Project 2.1 „vocational training of the employed people”

- IRIS Europe - EN - Case studies -

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Description : Information Society Academy® is a modern, flexible and open programme of advanced vocational training enabling attendees to gain informational skills necessary at present as well as in the future in professional and private life.

Information Society Academy® programme is dedicated to all social groups regardless of its age, profession or education. One of the projects realized within the frame of the Academy is entitled vocational training of the employed people . The objective of the project was improving skills and professional qualifications of employed people, who voluntarily sacrificed their spare time and attended cycles of trainings, which adjusted their skills to the needs of the regional labor market. This project was a pilot one and was the first stage of Information Society Academy programme realization in Wielkopolska, which will be realized in all territorial self government units within the region. The programme offers tens of defined education paths comprising set of trainings adjusted to standard requirements of potential attendees, but each attendee may create his/her own path of advanced vocational training. The project entitled vocational training of the employed people was realized in less favoured area and which was under restructuring according to the measure 3.2 of IROP. The assumed number of training hours per one attendee was 60

Type of initiative : eLearning

Territory : Wielkopolskie Region

Initiator : All-Polish Foundation of Computer Education

Date of launching : June 2005

Status : Ongoing

1- Context and objectives of the project 1.1 Context and origin of the project

The project was carried out in counties: chodzieski, czarnkowsko-trzcianecki, grodziski, nowotomyski, obornicki, piilski (except The City of Pila), w growiecki and zBotowski along with other ones in the scope of specialist trainings. The area of 8 counties is inhabited by 510941 people of which 92427 people (including 43468 women) . Among the total number of employed people 49% are employed in industry or civil engineering, 5% in agriculture or forestry and 46% in services. 59% of people are 40 years old or younger, people of age 41 60 are 31% of total population. 63% of inhabitants have education of higher level than primary school. 46 out of 50 communes are rural or mixed urban rural ones. All the 50 are qualified as marginalized areas. The majority of the adult people finish their education when they are young and later do not attend any form of advanced vocational trainings for adults.

According to the supplement of the IROP measure 2.1 it is estimated that only 13% of the people aged 25-64 participate in vocational trainings. It was emphasized in guidelines of Council of Europe of June 2002, that the idea of lifelong learning is becoming the principal rule of European educational policy s directions. Undertaken efforts should be focused on supplying individuals with crucial skills necessary in their lives. In the diagnosis which was a part of the Employment Strategy of Wielkopolska Region for years 2004 - 2006 it was shown, that the phenomenon of marginalization of adult education appears particularly in rural areas and in small towns. The situation mentioned above implies the necessity of implementing brand new methods and forms of education to make education system for adults flexible and tailored to needs of the economy, particularly in marginalized areas.

Education Development Strategy in Wielkopolska Region from 2002 year assessing the then education system indicates the lack of training preparing to functioning in the knowledge based economy in educational offer, which comprises mainly trainings for traditional professions. This is the main reason of small interest in further trainings among employed and unemployed people as well.

According to the Strategy of Building and Developing the Information Society in Wielkopolska Region eWielkopolska enacted in October 2004 a rapid and constant scientific and technical progress resulting in new products and services and more and more new requirements for people employed in the sector of the Information Society, what implies the necessity of life long learning instead of current system. It is expected, that people will be changing their profession every 5-10 years. The above mentioned diagnosis and resulting from it necessity of undertaking efforts for continuing vocational training, particularly in areas at risk of marginalization and digital divide justified the need of building the system of trainings from the scope of ICTs for adults in above mentioned counties. The offered trainings were an answer on demand reported by the employed people, who were having bigger and bigger problems with maintaining their posts requiring higher and higher qualifications and knowledge, being promoted or finding a new job. Trainings were intended to stimulate vocational training activities in the region. During achieving the objectives of the project it was crucial to guarantee its compliancy with measures 1.2, 1.3, 2.3 of SOP HRD (Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development) for years 2004 2006

1.2 Objectives and challenges

The overall objectives of Information Society Academy ® are:

- ▶ Creating and using modern and complex system of vocational training
- ▶ Development of new, extraprofessional skills concerning using modern tools of communication, displaying, acquiring and processing of information
- ▶ Local societies dynamizing, popularization of the Information Society idea along with the knowledge based economy
- ▶ Popularization of the lifelong learning idea

The objective of the project Information Society Academy Project 2.1 vocational training of the employed people was improving skills and professional qualifications of employed people, who voluntarily sacrificed their spare time and attended cycles of trainings, which adjusted their skills to the needs of regional labor market.

Geographical and organizational obstacles: there were no local educational centers offering vocational training from the scope of the professions of the new economy. Lack of the system of encouragement and promotion of further vocational training. Poor didactic and technical equipment; limited and expensive Internet access, difficult communication; local education staff lacks proper skills and technical measures for carrying out trainings. The price of trainings is a serious obstacle Personal obstacles: Low education level, low awareness and knowledge on possibilities and need of further education, daunt and resignation, finishing education at school level

2- Description and organisation of the project 2.1 The actors of the project

The realization of the project in content related and organizational aspect was carried out by OFEK (All-Polish Foundation of Computer Education) in cooperation with 38 trainers and lecturers from the area affected by the initiative. At that stage outsourced company helped in assessing results of the project. Accounting affairs and creation of the Internet management system were outsourced to companies specialized in such issues.

2.2 The services provided

Information Society Academy ® is not only a programme of trainings being realized by above mentioned actions. The main idea of ISA is enabling attendees to choose own path of education i.e. creating individualized set of courses (modules), which will improve his/her skills possibly in the best possible way. Within the frame of the Academy tens of 20 hours-long training modules were developed. These modules included issues of IT usage in everyday and professional life on different levels of advance. The attendees were able to create their path of vocational training in any useful for them and logical way.

Among proposed modules there were inter alia: A01 Using computer for beginners A05 The basics of Internet A08 Touch typing A11 Introduction to office suites B02 Word processing without secrets B03 Calculation and graphs

with worksheet B04 Introduction in creating company s databases B06 PowerPoint in the art of presenting B07 Graphics in reports, tenders or other company documents B11 Office suite in manager s work C02 Professional documents in company: tenders, accounts and reports C03 Worksheet in analyzes of company performance C07 Digital multimedia workshops S03 Advanced features of the worksheet case studies workshops S04 Advanced workshops of databases S09 Management of IT infrastructure in company Within the frame of the Academy 4 levels of education were available: Level A basic for people hardly using computer or not using it at all Level B intermediary for people knowing well how to use computer and the most popular applications Level C advanced for people wanting to be fully acquainted with the use of IT in professional work Level S - specialist for people wanting to solve during training complicated problems which they met during their everyday work

2.3 The beneficiary

Adult people living and working in Wielkopolska Region, men or women with completed at least primary education intending to sacrificed their spare time and attended cycles of trainings. The potential participants of the trainings, according to IROP and its supplement, were inhabitants of the marginalized areas, particularly rural areas and restructured industries.

46 of 50 communes included in the project were rural or urban rural ones. Bearing the above mentioned situation in mind the Trainings Framework Programme includes offer dedicated for people working i.a. in agriculture.

The process of promotion and recruitment assumed equal chances of men and women as well as people in danger of social exclusion.

2.4 The financial dimension

The total eligible costs were at the level of 631960,83 – and were covered in 100% within the frame of Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development; 75% of this sum were covered by European Social Fund. Remaining 25% came from national public funds.

3- Implementation of the project 3.1 The steps of the implementation

The core stage of the project realization was carrying out trainings within the area of Wielkopolska Region, which were preceded by information and promotion campaign addressed to potential ultimate beneficiaries of the project along with recruitment process which beside of providing the biggest possible number of attendees was intended to ensure equal chances of men and women.

3.2 Methods

The application was submitted by the board of directors of OFEK, which was the party of the contract on project realization signed with Regional Job Centre. The board of directors also supervised the realization of the project with the support of the Programme Council of the Information Society Academy comprising noted authorities. The responsibility for the project realization was held by the manager of the project employed by OFEK. Promotion, recruitment. organizing and carrying out trainings were realized by directors of the 8 county training centers supported by the organizational assistant and recruitment specialist subject directly to the project manager. The responsibility for preparing computer labs for trainings was held by the assistant in charge of organizational affairs and the specialist in charge of enrollment. Realization of the trainings involved 38 trainers and lecturers cooperating with the project managers and managers of the training centers. The responsibility for the quality and the efficiency of the project was held by the assistant manager supported by the quality specialist and an outside company which was assessing the efficiency of the trainings. Monitoring, reporting and controlling, according to the agreement signed with the Regional Job Centre, were the duties of the assistant director, who acted with the aid of the monitoring and controlling assistant. The financial affairs were handled by the manager s assistant in charge of financial affairs cooperating with financial affairs specialist. Accounting affairs were handled by the outsourced company.

Organization and project management were based on:

- ▶ Centralized data processing in Internet Management System (developed by IT company)
- ▶ Decentralized management on the level of training center by the representatives in the counties
- ▶ Content related division of roles and competences at all levels of management
- ▶ Advanced standardization of education schemes, lessons scripts and modules of courses or trainings

The control of the education process s quality was carried out by standardization of the education process embracing education materials, education schemes, multimedia materials, education schemes, the system of test and polls filled after trainings as well as by deferred evaluation.

All the undertaken decisions were instantly inputted in electronic management system and thus were visible to other participants of the management process, who were in need of it

3.3 Technical means

The organization of the education was based on 2 types of centers:

- ▶ 8 permanent centers working at the level of county all the time during the project realization along with one centre in Poznan (the capital city of the region)
- ▶ temporary centers at the communal level

OFEK owes one of the most modern training centers in the region equipped with 4 computer labs and all server platforms (Novell/Microsoft/Linux/Unix). Moreover it is an authorized Microsoft and Novell training centre, teachers vocational training centre inscribed into the registry of the Ministry of National Education. In the region OFEK cooperates with local partners i.e. colleges and secondary schools, Vocational Training Centers and private partners. During realization of the project OFEK utilized computer labs rented from those entities.

3.4 Human ressources

OFEK cooperates with 2230 trainers from the whole country, including 315 of them in Wielkopolska Region. 64 trainers work in the counties affected by the project .

3.5 Communication on the project

During realization of the project, to reach selected group of the ultimate beneficiaries, following measures were undertaken:

- ▶ Repetitive advertisements in local press of each county
- ▶ Announcements on posters in public places like counties offices, communes offices, parishes, post offices, local health centers, bus stations, signboards)
- ▶ Leaflets distributed primarily in rural areas by OFEK representatives in counties
- ▶ Announcements on webpages of counties, communes and OFEK as well. All the above mentioned promotional materials contained precise information concerning trainings, methods of recruitment, circumstances of attendance and address of the project s webpage. Moreover those materials contained information about benefits from improving qualifications and thereby encouraging to participation in the trainings. The ultimate beneficiaries were inscribing themselves for chosen training dates in Trainings Service System via telephone or Internet Utilized method of the recruitment (with use of a telephone infoline) was the result of the experiences gathered during realization of the Rural Areas Dynamizing Programme and was caused by limited availability of Internet in marginalized areas. Informational and promotional activities were carried out in accordance to Commission Regulation (EC) No 1159/2000 of 30 May 2000 on information and publicity measures to be carried out by the Member States concerning assistance from the Structural Funds and the book of IROP sign. Information about UE financial contribution contained: name and logo of ESF, logo of IROP and flag of EU. It was placed in press announcements, on posters, leaflets, webpages of counties offices, communes offices and OFEK, on webpage of the project, in Internet

Trainings Service System and on the front pages of the training materials for the attendees, on certificates and timesheets.

In the beginning of each training the attendees were informed by the lecturer about part financing of the project from the ESF

4- Conclusion and perspectives 4.1 Elements of conclusion

Elimination of geographical and organizational obstacles came about by carrying out local training at the level of counties and communes, using modern hardware, training local lecturers as well as providing lecturers for advanced trainings; all the trainings were free. An important role in eliminating personal obstacles was played by the promotion of the training programme, which was intended to overcome these obstacles and to ensure the ultimate beneficiaries that further vocational training increases their chances for personal development and promotion. Realization of the trainings, particularly gained knowledge, working and communicating in group, proper relations among lecturer and attendees resulted in the increase of the awareness of possibilities and necessity of further trainings as well as in improving interpersonal skills along with increasing professional activeness.

4.2 Appreciation of the project supporter

Assessment of the project done by attendees show, that the project was well appreciated by them. There are doubts, if the notes are too high; maybe people attended such a training for the first time or they were afraid that the lecturer will know who and how rated him/her and for that reason they gave him/her better score. On the other hand training materials were also rated well what improves the reliability of the notes given to lecturers.

About 40% of attendees originated from rural areas it is a remarkable success of the Information Society Academy @, for which one of the most important ideas is carrying out the trainings as close to the workplaces of attendees as possible.

A numerous group of people were those in their fifties or older, who according to a common opinion are rather passive on labor market it turned out that they willingly participate in trainings, if they see profits coming from it for them. It was reported that people aged 26 36 are proportionally underrepresented comparing to population structure by age. The most probable reasons of such a situation are:

- ▶ Proportionally higher expectations in the field of training offer (scope, level)
- ▶ Lack of the need of further trainings (I have just finished my education) along with the belief in the certainty of the employment The questions about the reasons of such situation were not stated in the polls, so the above mentioned reasons are only conjectures. It is planned to collect information also from people who resigned from the attending the trainings within the frame of the Information Society Academy.

No specific correlations were found between education of the attendees and types of trainings chosen by them so far difficult training were not popular among the attendees. Maybe in the future this situation will change and the correlation will be more visible.

The organizational issues affected the time of attendees waiting for commencing the trainings cycle this will be improved in the future. Summarizing the realization of the project was carried out well and main ideas of the Information Society Academy were verified positively.

5- Criteria of evaluation 5.1 Innovation

The classes were carried out in modern computer labs which were compliant with the standards of the Ministry of Education for years 2003 2004, equipped with multimedia projectors and broadband Internet access. The labs were rendered available by cooperating educational entities from within the communes and counties included in the project. The attendees were provided with technical and content related support in the scope of the vocational

guidance during the recruitment process and fixing dates: possibility of direct contact with the a local adviser; access to the hosting platform and the possibility of inscribing 24h/day, telephone access to consultants.

Moreover, the participants of the project were provided with: professional training materials in the volume exceeding 120 pages, CD with electronic version of the handbook, presentations used during trainings and exercises and examples.

The higher mentioned elements constitute the brand new quality and innovativeness of the trainings carried out in big scale and in numerous training centers, what makes it difficult to compare with typical single band trainings for traditional professions, including computer skills training.

The innovativeness of the project also comes from the possibility of creating individual development path by choosing up to 3 modules, each 20 hours long, tailored to participants needs.

5.2 Impact

The hard results of the trainings carried out are as follows:

- ▶ The number of trained people: 2772 including 1303 women
- ▶ The number of people who positively assessed the aid gained within the frame of the project: 2630
- ▶ The number of employed reporting the will to change a job: 60
- ▶ The number of hours of the training carried out: 166320
- ▶ The number of courses carried out: 231

The soft results of the trainings carried out are as follows:

- ▶ Gaining key abilities for the employees e.g. working in group, solving the problems, using communication technologies, communicating skill, improving motivation and self confidence along with the sense of responsibility and self evaluation, higher aspirations etc.
- ▶ The increase of the abilities of using IT tools in work will be a durable result of the project, allowing keeping current post or promotion as well as changing the job or launching one s own enterprise. The additional result of the training will be stimulating the need of further training and learning along with preventing the unemployment among the people in the risk of losing job because of insufficient qualifications.
- ▶ The project is neutral regarding environment protection.
- ▶ The project directly realizes the idea of Information Society and inscribes itself into
- ▶ Building and Development of Information Society Strategy of Wielkopolska eWielkopolska from October 2004 by improving citizens skills in the field of using modern ICTs.

5.3 Reproducibility

The training system, which is a result of the project, may be fully popularized on other areas, particularly those in the risk of marginalization and social exclusion because of unequal conditions of the access to knowledge. Hard and soft results can be attained by realization of the training programme basing on organizational and technical component of the project.

Duplication of the project is expected in remaining counties of the Wilekopolska Region and later maybe in other regions of Poland (Kujawsko Pomorski, Malopolska Region)

5.4 Durability

The training structures in the counties included in the project and the system solutions developed during the project realization will keep on working within the frame of the Information Society Academy on a self -financing basis, in cooperation of All-Polish Foundation of Computer Education, local partners as well as local territorial self government authorities.

Post-scriptum :

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For additional information

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