

## **Womback – adaptation of the permanent training for women wishing to re-enter the labor market**

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### **Abstract**

National and European Training policies have as a goal the adaptation of permanent training system to the needs of specific target groups. That is the case for women that, after leaving totally or partially the labor market, due to familiar responsibilities, wish to re –enter the labor market, and find their competencies and skills obsolete. They need, considered as a specific target group, that training actions and programs adapt to their needs and characteristics. The goal of the project is to propose an adaptation of the methods, devices, tools and implementation ways of Permanent Vocational Training (PVT) to the needs and characteristics of this group. It means to propose the best way to use programming and planning of PVT to reach the goal of re-entering the labor market, and to adapt the management and methodology of training actions to this group. Together with this, a series of proposals will be centered in the adaptation of vocational guidance tools to this group.

Keywords: Counseling, coordination, Permanent Vocational Training (PVT), planning, programming.

### **I. Introduction**

The project started in October 2004 within the European program Leonardo da Vinci and takes place during 36 months, having as promoter the organization “IFES” from Spain.

The multinational partnership is composed of 10 organizations from 7 European countries: Spain, Finland, Portugal, Germany, Bulgaria, Italy and Romania.

The partnership is composed of entities developing their activity in the field of vocational training, programming, planning and managing training activities, and developing specific training tools (technical partners); social partners, active in the field of the implementation of gender policies in the labor market issues and public authorities in the field of training (this second group is considered, too, as political partners) and, finally, academic partners, University departments developing their activities in the field of training and educational research.

The partnership will propose the best way to use programming and planning of PVT to reach the goal of re-entering the labor market, and to adapt the management and methodology of training actions to this group. Together with this, a series of proposals will be centered in the adaptation of vocational guidance tools to this group

Then, the goal of the project is to propose, starting with the transnational analysis of the target group and of the current PVT systems, a number of specific methodological adaptations, making reference to programming, planning, managing and development of training activities, as well as vocational guidance.

#### **1.1. Target groups**

The target group is made of women that after leaving the labor market to take care of children or older relatives, wish to re-enter the labor market.

It is a group that, different from active workers or even unemployed people, have gone through a process that meant, at the end, that they left for a long period the labor market, with no idea of turning back, at least in a short term (this is the main the difference with unemployed, that left the labor market, but that seek for re-entering it as soon as possible, not being, then, at least in a passive way, out of the market).

### **II. Objectives of the project**

The general goal of the project is to make a series of proposal to adapt methods, devices and tools for programming, planning, management, development and evaluation of permanent training actions, as well as those related with training and labor guidance, to cope with specific needs of the target group of the project: women wishing to re-enter the labor market after a total or partial leave due to familiar reasons.

To make proposals, based on the analysis of good practices, to adapt the Permanent Training systems and devices to the specific needs and characteristics of the target group, in the different elements of training:

- Programming. Set up of the broad lines of training systems.
- Planning. Establishment of a training plan, including organizational issues common to different training actions.
- Management of training actions. Issues related with the organization of concrete training actions.
- Pedagogical issues. Including issues such as the teaching methodology, structure and contents of training materials, etc.
- Evaluation of training actions. Giving a feedback for future programming, planning, management and pedagogical issues.
- Labor and training guidance. As a way to enter a training action or, after it, finding a job.

### **III. Work methodology**

#### **Research field**

Permanent training, addressed to active or unemployed workers, either organized in a public system or not, allowing the trainee to acquire the skills and competences needed to:

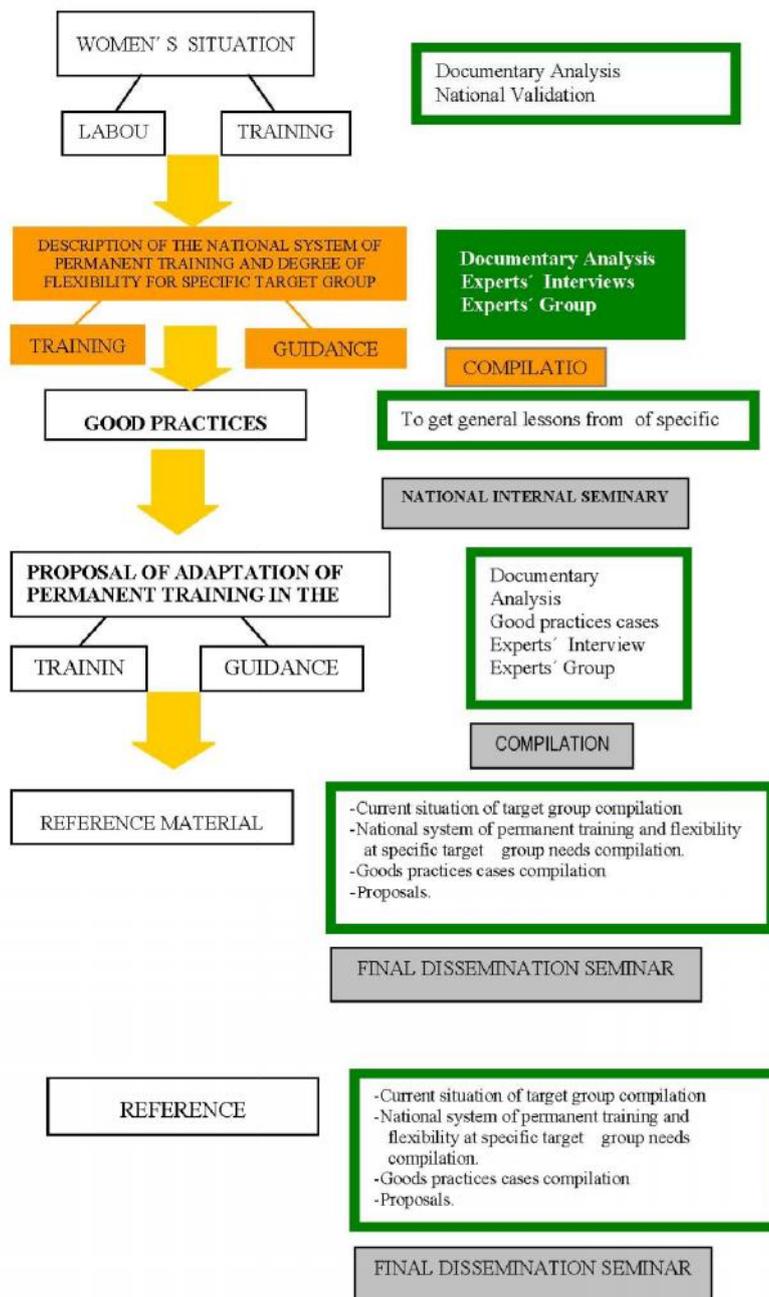
- Qualify for a new job.
- Re-qualify for his or her current job.

It includes both training and guidance actions. Therefore, we considered as permanent training:

- Public organized training programs and plans.
- Private organized training programs and plans.
- Enterprises training actions, always related with the acquisition or updating of professional skills and competences.

The steps followed in attaining the objectives of the project are:

- Determination of the research field: target group and PVT national systems;
  - National and comparative analysis of the situation of the target group;
  - Analysis of the systems, following a division in three fields: programming and planning of PVT; management and development of training actions and vocational guidance;
  - Detection and analysis of good practices, cases in which the PVT devices have been successfully adapted to the target group.
  - Following the lessons from those good practices, a series of proposals will be developed to adapt PVT systems, following those three fields.
  - Finally, a Reference Material will be elaborated, with the conclusions of the research and proposals
- The applied methodology and the obtained results are presented in the following graphics:



1. With the documentary research partners defined the formal framework of PVT in their countries.

The documentary research contains information on:

- Legal instruments defining the formal framework of Permanent Training, including, if it is the case, instruments coming from the social dialogue.
- Documents issued from public authorities, managing the PVT system or related with it, such as Ministries for Employment, for Training, for Education, Public Employment Services.
- Statistics on Permanent Training
- Documents from any reliable source.

2. Personal interviews on the PVT system framework.

In order to complete the contents of the document on the PVT framework, partners made different interviews, following the questionnaires and protocols proposed by IFES. The interviews were made to:

- A representative of a public authority on permanent training.
- A representative of a social agent (Trade Union or Entrepreneurs' organization), expert on training.
- A representative of a public authority on employment.

3. Experts' group.

Once the documentary analysis and the interview were closed, partners organized an experts' group in each country, following the instructions provided by IFES, to validate and complete the results of the research.

4. Personal interviews on PVT system degree of flexibility.

In order to determine the degree of flexibility allowed by the systems to adapt to the specific needs of the target group in the project, the partners made four interviews. The flexibility analysis focused on the following elements:

- Programming,
- Planning.
- Management.
- Development of training actions.
- Evaluation of training systems.
- Guidance.

The interviews determine whether these elements allow the adaptation of training devices to the needs of specific target group.

In the last part of the project we will develop an analysis on the good practices at European level where a series of proposals will be developed to adapt PVT systems, following those three fields.

Finally, a Reference Material will be elaborated, with the conclusions of the research and proposals.

#### **IV. Products of the project**

1. Analysis of the situation of the target group on the labor market and in the permanent vocational training at the national and European level;
2. Analysis of the situation of permanent vocational education at the level of the countries partner in the project;
3. Analysis of the good practices at national level and their adaptation to the international partnership;
4. Developing the reference materials that will include conclusions and proposals resulted from the project.

#### **V. Discussion**

National and European Training policies have as a goal the adaptation of permanent training system to the needs of specific target groups.

Training policies may be seen as a specific device in the equality of gender policies, which is a mainstreaming element in all social and employment policies, including training ones. Permanent training is a key element in policies aiming to improve the presence of women in the labor market.

Women having left the labor market find specific barriers and obstacles to re-enter it, which means the training has to be adapted to their needs.

Conciliation of labor and family life means the need to provide women with permanent training instruments adapted to their needs.

#### **VI. Conclusion**

Knowing the situation in the other partner countries, the steps made and the problems they faced, as well as the way in which they overcame certain obstacles can represent a basis for the reform of training in Romania as this reform is actually being adapted at present to the new needs determined by the adhering of our country to the European Union.