



AUTONOMOUS PROVINCE OF TRENTO

'LEONARDO DA VINCI' PROJECT

FLEXIBLE APPROACHES TO WORKERS' TRAINING

**FLEXIBLE TRAINING FOR WORKERS AT RISK OF EXCLUSION
BASIC ASSUMPTIONS, DIMENSIONS, FACTORS,
OPERATIONAL SUGGESTIONS**

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Foreword

This paper constitutes one of the products of the ‘Flexible approaches to workers’ training’ project, realized by a partnership in which are involved:

- *The Autonomous Province of Trento (project coordinator)*
- *Euromasc LTD (Norvegia)*
- *3S Unternehmens (Austria)*
- *Unite the Union (United Kingdom)*
- *Konrad Associates International (United Kingdom)*
- *Ecap Consulenze (Switzerland)*

The purpose of the document is to identify the referential principles and practical indications to develop effective interventions of “flexible training” dedicated to workers that are at risk of exclusion.

As we may observe looking at the partial gap between the project title and the title of this document, the partnership – beginning from the first meeting in Trento – has decided to define in a very accurate and punctual way the final aim and the referential area of the project.

In particular, the crisis scenario – that has pervasively involved Countries, economics, societies, labour markets and production sectors, oriented the partners’ analysis to a specific target group: namely, the group of ‘workers’ at risk of exclusion’, which social and occupational vulnerability became the phenomenon we aspire to prevent and contrast.

This focus arises from different, but converging, reasons:

- The phenomena connected with the globalization and the related socio-economic, productive and occupational changes, on one hand constitute a resource, on the other hand in the meantime they represent a threat and a growing, extremely relevant, risk. This risk is particularly high for workers that present less (or weaker) resources (that may be financial, occupational, social, professional, cultural, relational, familiar, etc... resources)
- The EU Commission has established that a priority for the EU program documents is to counter the risk of social, occupational, professional exclusion (see the (see ESF 2007-2013)
- The crisis scenario increases the quantity and quality of possible and probable exclusion phenomena (these phenomena vary on the basis of the target, the Country, the territorial field, the productive sector), and this produces remarkable effects (‘critical mass’) which negative impact is emphasized by the rapidity with which the phenomena occur
- The training constitutes, as largely acquired (among Countries, political parties and institutions, Unions, experts), one of the most powerful instruments in order to contrast the risk of exclusion (even if other tools are relevant, as the policies aimed at the sector-based, territorial, business development, or economic support measures; contractual norms; active and passive work policies; guidance services, etc.). This instrument works:
 - Both in a ‘preventing’ logic (through a precocious diagnosis and interventions that permit to ‘anticipate’ the needs)
 - And in a framework of cure (diagnosis afterward and intervention of recovery/re-establishment and counteracting)

In this framework, Leonardo project is intended to analyze partners' experiences related to experimentation of 'flexible approaches' to the training finalized to workers' exposed to that risk; and to confront their approaches and models of intervention (translated into "good practices" that were presented, analyzed, discussed, and in some cases 'visited' through the meetings realized in each one of the partners' Countries) in order to obtain referential principles, recommendations and indications that is important and useful to share, in view of implementing even more effective practices, in a logic of reciprocal learning.

The project path has involved several meetings, managed by the hosts: Trento, Oslo, Chichester, Vienna, Birmingham, and finally Trento again), and has been supported by a solid activity of predisposition of materials and contributes:

- *Presentations* of experiences, evaluations and suggestions on behalf of the partners during the meetings;
- *Fact Sheets* about the best practices elaborated by partners on the basis of the format supplied by the scientific coordinator;
- *Documentation* for further integrations, supplied by partners regarding their contexts and best practices (ie. research relations, monitoring relations etc);
- "External" *testimonies* organized by each partner during the meetings realized in their countries
- *Guided visits* to companies, organized during meetings held in their countries
- *Slides* regarding presentations, testimonies, guided tours carried out
- *Documents, formats and slides* elaborated by the scientific coordinator
- *Material for individual considerations* suggested by some single members of the partnership

As we can see in the list above, this final synthesis constitutes just one of the products oh this complex work, and is finalized to resume the acquisitions of the partnership on the meaning we attribute to 'flexible training' for workers' at risk of exclusion, and on what could be the more relevant 'success factors' in order to realize interventions inspired by this principle. Finally, the document resumes the dimension and variables of intervention in order to maximize the efficacy of the proposed solutions (and by what kind of subjects these could be used: institutional, social, professional subject).

This document is the result of a work in progress realized by the partners through the analysis of some 'draft documents', elaborated by the scientific coordinator starting from the materials and Fact Sheets produced during the development of the project, and from the discussions emerged in the meetings. In particular, this version of the document (that will have to be discussed and definitively validated by the partner of the project during the final Seminar in Trento) is based on the discussion that has already been realized in the contest of three meetings, and referring to three semi-finished documents:

- The scheme for the analysis proposed by the scientific coordinator during the first seminar in Trento

- The first draft document proposed during the meeting of Oslo
- The second draft document proposed during the meeting of Birmingham

In order to elaborate this final version, also the individual contributes given have been

In developing this latest version, also individual contributions supplied by some partners through working papers (that have not necessarily been presented during the meetings) were taken into consideration.

Moreover, the Autonomous Province of Trento has proposed that the outcome of the project would be further elaborated and integrated (with other case-studies, besides those submitted by the project partners, and with further studies and reflection), and published in a special volume .

In October 2010 the volume will be presented in the contest of a public Seminar, and in that contest the reflection realized during the project will be systemized and summarized: therefore, this document represents a first synthesis, that has to be discussed and verified with the partners.

The further steps in order to create a shared document will be:

- The analysis of the present document
- Considering the evaluations that will emerge in final Seminar, the document will eventually be modified and/or integrated

1. Training is only one of the resources that can be used in a prevention and contrasting strategy against social exclusion

The different reflections proposed by the partners and the researches and 'best practices' discussed during the meetings permitted to acquire a shared consciousness referring to the etiology of the situation of exclusion (or the situation of 'defeat', as some researchers say), in which a person could be involved in some of the different phases of her/his existence and occupational/professional path.

In particular, the partnership agrees on the following characteristics:

- 'Multi-causality' of the situation of risk of exclusion (the situation could be influenced by contest, economic, social, cultural factors, and by factor connected with the level of instruction, age, gender, ethnical characteristics, but also factors related to the technical-professional competences, the transversal competences, the personal resources)
- Consequently, the multiplicity of the dimensions and variables on which is possible, appropriate, and necessary affect in order to prevent and counter the exclusion: these prevention and contrasting results couldn't be simply learning outcomes (training outcomes); they will have to be also results in terms of re-inclusion in a perspective of 'advanced welfare' (in terms of education and training, social services, employment services, reconciliation services, housing policies, etc.)
- Consequently, multiplicity of subjects e structures/systems from which is appropriate and necessary promote and integrated approach, in which the policies, the services, the interventions are integrated (i.e. with integrated paths of guidance, training, reconciliation between lifetimes and working time, income support, support for job placement and replacement, welfare, etc)

The partnership defined as 'plural' the type of intervention that constitute the focus of the project: this means that in order to pursue the expected outcomes, it is fundamental to coordinate and integrate (in a sort of network) public institutions and related services, unions, education and training provider, companies.

In this regard, a reflection would be interesting and useful, about what conditions make it possible for that forms of integration and networking to arise and develop, and about what could be the infrastructures and systems (at an institutional, administrative, organizational, socio-cultural level) in order to promote this manner of functioning. This perspective and suggestion for the analysis could be useful for a further reflection.

Starting from these premises, therefore, (that notably extend the background on which lies the object of interest of the 'Flexible approaches' project), and with a stronger consciousness of the limits, but also of the potentialities, the partnership has confirmed that the project is focused on one specific dimension among the ones that influence the situation of risk-exclusion-vulnerability-defeat (and therefore one specific area of intervention): the area of training.

In this regard, the partnership assumed that the training could play a fundamental role in the strategies aimed at contrast the social exclusion, specifically when the phase of design and the one of realization are managed with a 'flexible approach'.

Consequently, the partnership has confirmed that the specific content and objective of the Leonardo project is not the analysis of the multiple reasons (factors and variables) of the risk of social exclusion, but rather the analysis of the ways in which the different forms of 'flexible training' can contribute in supporting the social inclusion or re-inclusion.

Under this important premise (that constitutes a necessary contextualization both of the work done and of the argument examined), the reflection of the partners focused on the key-matter of the project: to which extent, and under which pre-requisites and facilitating conditions it would be possible to realize experiences that could be defined as 'flexible training'.

2. Training, for learning

A premise appears opportune: what is important (for people, for companies, for education and work systems) is not that people receive training but rather that they learn.

In perspective, the real competitive difference is learning, not training (training can happen without learning; on the contrary, 'traditional' training is just one of the ways (in perspective, not necessarily the more important) through which people can be placed in the condition to learn.

Despite commission's suggestions and EU program documents have been referring to 'lifelong learning' for a while, as for interventions the emphasis is on 'training': as much that, in order to support lifelong learning perspective, it seems that there are no other possibilities than to increase quantity and quality of training.

Surely, there are many other 'innovative' ways to encourage people's learning: e-learning; one-to-one training one (coaching, mentoring, tutoring); project-work; action learning; stage and internships; workplace learning; outdoor; etc.

What we want to point out here is that doing training more flexibly (flexible training is the object of interest of Leonardo project) constitutes a training device especially finalized to innovate the training process toward a more efficient development of learning.

In other words, the hypothesis is that 'flexible training' means 'more and better learning' because a flexible structure of training allows to:

- facilitate the access to training also for target populations known as critical/frail, usually underrepresented (*more people involved*)
- facilitate the tailoring (personalization, individualization) of training in accordance with people's requests and/or needs (*more & better learning*)
- facilitate the motivation for the participation and learning, and the actual participation to training and the effective fruition from identified target (*more people*)
- achieve better learning results (*more & better learning*), because of the intervention
- capitalize the training outcome, also in case of partial outcomes of training modules

3. Learning: some 'basic assumptions' relating to adult workers at risk of exclusion

If we look at the emerging scenario of the crisis, we can see that adult and low qualified workers are no more the only group 'at risk of exclusion': women, immigrants even if formally qualified, young people even if formally qualified, technicians, and managers themselves (i.e. in those small and medium enterprises which loose their competitiveness in a globalized market) all seems (and really are) 'at risk of exclusion'.

Obviously, these different categories face the risk of exclusion counting on a strongly diversified equipment of resources (cultural, socio-relational, educational, professional, financial, etc.). Consistently, in order to define strategies for preventing and contrasting exclusion for so differentiated people, it became necessary 'to make distinctions', and take into account the specificity of each of them, both for what concerns the obstacles and for what concerns the resources.

However, in the analysis held during the project, special attention was devoted to the group composed of adult workers with low qualifications (in relation to which the partners have completed numerous and qualified experiences), and were shared some 'basic assumptions' on the learning process of this type of population, who helped the next sharing of the implications that such 'assumptions' have in designing and delivering training interventions aimed at developing such learning.

As you can imagine these 'assumptions' are particularly relevant both for both the choices that affect the design and delivery of training (objectives, methods, forms and places, method of operation, etc.), and for the construction of architecture and/or engineering of the programming system for training (needs analysis, paths catalogue, system of recognition and certification, etc.).

In this respect, the reflection and also the documentation produced by the partners was particularly rich and interesting, but the nature of this document forces to take over in a very synthetic (and thus inevitably schematic) way these 'Basic assumptions,' referring to the original materials for deepening.

- 'Holistic' Concept of learning: interaction between cognitive dimension (individual), social dimension (group/community), affective dimension (motivation and direction) that happens in a 'synchronous' way and not 'diachronically' (as usually happens in the different experiences of apprenticeship)
- Crucial role of life-cycle: the path of construction, development and maintenance of 'lifelong' skills assumes differently meanings depending on the phases of the life cycle of individuals, in which learning takes a different 'sense' in relation to the person's existence and projects
- Learning as a 'situated' process, both in relation to a specific context / task reference and in relation to a referral group / community, and therefore crucial role of this context and group / community as *environment* and as a *resource* for learning
- 'Virtuous circle' and relationship between *experiential learning* (work-based, work-place), *reflection* about experience, and *recognition* (social, organizational, economic, etc.). of the competences acquired (finalization)
- Interplay of formal, non formal and informal learning, and crucially important dimension of informal

- Crucial role of perception of finalization of learning (effects for the task / job, effects for individual) in order to consider the learning significant
- Recognition of the presence (and coexistence) of different *models of learning*: some have proposed to distinguish the following types: *cumulative* (to manage sequentially the acquisition of new knowledge); *assimilative* (to manage the acquisitions of new concepts / skills on a solid basis); or *accommodative or adaptive* (to deconstruct routines and change the courses of action); *transformative* (to build or rebuild 'radically' skills and / or professional identity)
- Fit/coherence between learning models and knowledge & competence needs 'demanded' by the competitive scenario

4. Flexible training: what is it?

We have to ask ourselves what do we mean when we talk about ‘flexible training’.

First basic assumption

Training has a crucial role, in the framework of the emerging crisis scenario, as a tool to growth and development, but also as a tool (together with other different tools) to prevent and counteract effectively the risk of exclusion (professional, occupational, socio-economical) of people (worker within the Leonardo project) and at the same time to make enterprises cope with the emerging challenges

Second basic assumption

Training is an effective tool to prevent and counteract exclusion especially when and where it is ‘flexible’: so it is necessary to define what do we mean with ‘flexible training’ and which is the difference between flexible and ‘not flexible’ training

In the definition process, some references that have been considered are the following:

- technical literature
- EU programs’ reports
- The accomplished experiences and the ‘good practices’ that the writers of this document knew directly
- The six experiences (‘good practices’) that Leonardo project partners analyzed up to now

Third basic assumption

Training can be ‘flexible’ relating to different criteria and dimensions, which are underlined below:

- can be programmed and executed when it is useful (just in time), without having to necessarily respect long and fixed deadlines (**just in time**)
- once programmed, it can be modified (in the content, in the objectives, in the articulation, etc.) in case of factors that make the change appropriate/necessary (**adaptability**)
- it is accessible to a diversified target of users, based upon their needs and/or their projects (‘demand-side’) on one hand, and on the other on the programming priorities (**personalization/individualization**)
- in can be adapted to the specific needs of the people, and where appropriate and/or necessary it can be ‘composed of’ different units (**personalization/individualization**)
- facilitates the participation to training from beneficiaries, particularly those that are traditionally ‘under-represented’ (‘training poors’, at risk populations, dropouts, new poors, etc.), intervening on subjective and objective limiting obstacles (**accessibility**)

- facilitates the participation of beneficiaries, eliminating ‘barriers’ with particular attention to those who for socio-economic and professional conditions have more difficulties to participate to the training (women with children, caregivers, employed) (**accessibility**)
- is usable by a diversified range of users/target (individual and/or enterprises) depending on their needs and/or their projects (‘demand side’) if possible fitting them to the priorities of public funding (**wide range of target-needs**)
- as a consequence, it may concern a wide and heterogeneous range of competences (basic, technical, professional, transversal, etc.) (**wide range of competences**)
- takes into account target’s needs but also entry resources, valuing their previous experiences and recognizing corresponding credits (**wide range of resources**)
- it may use an articulated repository of resources (teachers/experts; methodologies and instruments; technologies and equipment; sites; didactic materials) in function of the objectives (**wide range of didactic means/tools**)
- allows the capitalization of previous acquisitions, in reference to professional standards that are locally, nationally, contractually acknowledged (**cumulability**)
- it benefits of simple and user friendly administrative procedures (request forms; funding; reporting) (**administrative simplicity and friendliness = more accessibility**)
- it allows to distribute differently (based on targets and programming choices) the sources of financing (public agencies; employment services; companies; individuals; other parties...) (**cost sharing**)

5. Warnings

The risks of flexible training

Relating to some kind of target , partners have underlined some relevant warnings, which have to be considered by to programming and funding Bodies and by the technical and training Bodies.

Generally, as you can see below, the warnings are aimed at remind the main counterintuitive effects which can be paradoxically produced in application of principles and conditions which could be seen as ‘all positive’.

The following warnings have been suggested particularly referring to the basic assumption about learning of adult workers, especially the low qualified and at risk of exclusion ones.

- Warning one: Individualization/personalization could create problems to the individuals both from the motivational point of view and from the effectiveness perspective (lack of social support peer to peer; lack of relational dimension and work community of practice). It seems better to provide a mix of learning environments integrating individual experiential learning, formative evaluation supported by experts and ‘supportive’ assessors and formal group encounters among the others, re-creating the fundamental dimension of a community of practice
- Warning 2 the more training is flexible, the more target users are critical (low qualified, at risk of exclusion), and the more meaningful relationships are needed with competent people, perceived as ‘close-friendly’ by workers: guidance counsellors, trainers, Trade Unions facilitators
- Warning 3: adopting a demand side approach about training offer could not fulfil the needs of medium - long term; at the same time, training offer could paradoxically not to be ‘demanded’ by the very people target by the educational policy
- Warning 4: modularization of the training paths has anyway t be explicitly related to a ‘whole’ formal qualification, which have to be thought as possible for the individuals (‘proximal development zone’): this kind of people (adult low qualified etc) are not normally rather motivated by the issue of employability
- Warning 5: validation and recognition of competences development in nojn formal and informal contests is not necessarily and ‘immediately’ perceived as an added value and doesn’t give a strong motivation: motivation and value have to be ‘gained and built in progress’ upon a growing confidence and mutual trust, and starting by the empowerment of self esteem and self efficacy, which can be generated by the recognition of competences developed in formal contests

6. Flexible training: to do what? (Even effective and useful training, if possible...)

As we can see, the criteria and the dimensions above refers to elements which are related to training 'process', more than to the training outcomes.

This means that the elements which define 'flexibility' of a training intervention not necessarily define at the same time the effectiveness and the utility (to the individual, to the enterprise). Paradoxically, it is possible indeed that training intervention is flexible but at the same time also not 'effective' relating to the pursues of the aims and of the expected results of learning, competences, social and organizational inclusion.

About flexibility it happens the same customer satisfaction at the end of the training course: paradoxically, we could have an experience with positive results relating to participants' satisfaction and at the same time negative results relating to learning and competences.

This is the reason for deepening the discussion among the partners about requisites and critical factors of flexible training, having in mind that we are talking about an un-effective and un-useful training (for the individual and enterprise).

Effectiveness and utility of a training course are measured relating to different elements:

- Compliance to the 'demand': that is to what individual and/or enterprises are asking for relating to their desires, interests, aims, plans, programs, projects, strategies, visions, values and so on
- Compliance to the 'need': that is to what effectively can improve social inclusion, occupability and occupation of individuals and survival, competitiveness and/or development of enterprises and/or sector in which it is operating. If you want to avoid the risk to make 'flexible but un-useful' training, it is necessary to take care of:
 - *(better if early) analyze and diagnose promptly the occupational, professional, social scenario and analyze the demand of enterprises and individual to this respects*
 - *at the meantime correlate the definition of these needs to sector, territory, company, personal development perspectives (also supporting public institutions and companies on this matter)*
 - *at the same time, relate this demand to the meaning which the training experience can assume as perceived by potential users, integrating in their professional and life span (personal, familiar, social)*
 - *taking into account when designing the training experience that the meaning for individuals is different in different phases in their life circle, and related to particular 'critical events' which occur in different phases*
 - *support and attend people in analyzing their needs and in projecting training, both before and throughout*
 - *design training in relation to educational and/or professional standards, institutionally and/or contractually acknowledged*
 - *relate the training paths to training and/or professional standards recognizable institutionally and contractually and/or in the contest of the companies*

- *relate to those training and/or professional standards*
- *analyze, appreciate and validate the competences developed independently by the contest, and recognize the related credits making the training paths shorter and tailor made*
- *certify its results, in relation to institutionally and/or contractually defined standards*

7. Flexible (and effective/useful) training: how to make it happen?

Now it is necessary to think about ‘how to make it happen’: that means which are the conditions (requisites, factors) for delivering ‘flexible training’.

The different conditions are related to different dimensions:

- political and institutional
- industrial relations
- administrative and regulatory
- economical and financial
- managerial and organizational
- social-relational
- methodological (psycho-pedagogical and didactical)
- communication

Some conditions are transversal to different domains: i.e. an adequate and effective involvement of the stakeholders both in the governance of the programme or of the project (even through agreements, board, etc.) and in the cost sharing. So, the conditions to make flexible and effective/useful training’ will be described relating to two macro-domains:

- on one side, the domain of the structural conditions
- on the other side, the technical methodological conditions

A) Structural conditions

- *integrate training with work policies, involving employment and guidance services and their operators*
- *involve different stakeholders, in terms of both ‘governance’ and ‘cost-sharing’*
- *make their participation formal through procedures, learning agreements, etc.*
- *Distinguish management, governance and technical structure in the management of the interventions, identifying clearly the responsibilities of ‘project management’*
- *have an adequate budget in a ‘institutional programming’ action (going from projects to programs)*

- *assure 'equal opportunities' of funding to the different types of potential beneficiaries/targets, independently from their present capability of prompt activation*
- *build (where not yet present) 'system infrastructures' for effectively finalize training:*
 - a system of professional standards structured in competence units
 - a system for validating and certificating competences acquired in formal, not formal, and informal contexts
 - a system for recognizing credits
 - a system for accrediting providers and/or educational offer
 - a system for qualifying and permanently updating consultants who support individual sessions, also through reconstructing, validating and certifying their non formal and informal competences, and through professional supervision
- *define an 'accredited' catalog of the educational offer, differentiated for kind of competence and sectors, articulated in units and referred to professional standards which are institutionally acknowledged and certifiable for competence units*
- *provide for differentiated and friendly funding, to be able to deal with direct and indirect costs of training (ILA, voucher, grants, aids, fiscal deductions, etc., also for work-life balance)*
- *activate a function of analysis of the needs for training in companies, to accompany them in evaluating those needs in relation to their business strategies and human resources development*
- *maintain always active an information function about training opportunities available locally and/or based on area of interest*
- *activate a function of analysis of individual demands (also in relation to companies, sectors, territory) for guidance and empowerment, conducted by qualified professionals, capable of accompanying the person (in a logic of case management) in the realistic analysis of opportunities and resources and in managing one's program; also, in case, the program should be modified it or re-projected in a perspective of re-motivation and re-guidance*
- *before those entry analyses, share and formalize a 'service pact' binding and implying responsibility*
- *where not in contrast with their socio-economic situation, provide for having beneficiaries participate in the training's financing*
- *on the contrary, for beneficiaries in critical situation, provide for integrations of their incomes, at the condition that they attend courses and obtain leaning results (competences)*
- *define not only the requisites for being eligible to access funds, but also the requirements for being callable (minimum attendance, etc...)*

- assure ‘development times’ of interventions to grant consistent financing (and to avoid the deadweight effect)
- assure an adequate timeframe among professional competences, basic and transversal competences, tutoring and individual counseling
- assure that the interventions will be monitored and evaluated, in respect of accountability, policy & program design, management control, and learning & improvement

! As you can see, some conditions are above seems critical relating to the warnings mentioned before in the document

B) Technical-methodological conditions

- a) leave people free to self direct and self manage their own training pathway (self-direction), that should be considered a right for everyone to access and exercise concretely.
- b) Such *self-direction* can count on a system of a “demand driven” training offer: for instance through vouchers, ILA and other ways to support individual access to training.
- c) Assure the ‘credibility’ of the training offer (and of its source) in the eyes of the people it is addressed to and therefore the importance of *mutual trust* : between people and trainers; between people and training bodies; between these and enterprises etc), both to favour access to training and for an actual participation in training, to favour a positive attitude towards the evaluation and certification and to achieve positive results.
- d) Assign a crucial role to trade union operators is central in the training of employed workers, as long as they are competent:
 - on one hand (as trainers who are “close to workers”) as *animators of the training demand*, able to solicit the expression of needs due to their “closeness” and due to the “mutual trust” we mentioned before;
 - on the other hand (as trade union representatives) *able to negotiate* the quantity and quality of training that is needed, with companies, institutions and with education and training institutions and contrast the risk of exclusion to support inclusion or social re-inclusion.
 - Support an adequate appreciation of training by participants, also for ‘instrumental’ reasons: it could be due to economic reward, to contractual recognition or anyway to some kind of recognition within the labour market, which are all relevant conditions and can enhance motivation, access, persistence, etc.
 - *Personalize* the learning pathways, in respect of individual needs and in respect of the problems that the most “vulnerable” can have with the training offer;
 - Facilitate the development of a “*new identity of learners*” on behalf of the people involved (often starting from negative stories and experiences): this re-definition of one’s identity as a “learner” is a “matter of development” that involves everyone, in the view of *lifelong learning*.

- Finalize training to the learning of *transferable competences* also in other companies, sectors, professional positions and not train for duties or processes that are too “company-specific”, especially if the company is in a production crisis.
- Communicate an aptitude of ‘relational proximity’ by the trainer (teacher, facilitator, mediator, animator) to the participants, helping them to overcome possible obstacles to come back to formal training and enhancing motivation to learning
- Enhance accessibility to the training offer as much as possible (venues, proximity to work contest, time, if possible in working time and gaining the normal reward; costs: giving incentives, grants, services, etc)
- Make great use of (if necessary, mainly) an informal setting as a pedagogic resource for training (this activity must be correctly planned: it must not be mixed up with *informal learning* meant as learning that is carried out in contexts that are not intentionally planned: for instance the daily context one lives at work etc.
- Employ ‘*expert colleagues*’ as trainers too: because of their legitimating, and because of their proximity
- Facilitate ‘*mutual support*’ among participants as much as possible, also through “*peer-to-peer*”, training moments in which it is possible to make the experiences of each individual a resource for others, in the view of *mutual trust* and of abandonment of “defence barriers” that this type of collaboration can make possible.
- All this calls attention to *training settings* that from a psychological point of view can be seen as ‘welcoming’, able to hold anxiety, distrust of the people involved, fear, and activate ‘social empowerment’.
- This is possible, especially with ‘*vulnerable*’ individuals if the training offer is not connoted as an experience characterized by a fiscal profile (for instance because of the final evaluation, that could be associated to a fear of social stigmatisation and loss of reputation).
- The chance to foresee ‘*tactics to build the training pathway*’ that allow to hide the development of *key-core-transversal skills* in curricula that are dedicated to the development of other competences, the lack of which, is not a social stigma in the community (as could be with *key-core competences*);
- Training for small groups of adult workers, to favour more activation, interaction, trust etc.
- Favour a strongly participated approach of people in training, taking cognizance of the fact that they have an important role from the analysis of needs, to the sharing of the training programme, to didactics and evaluation;
- Pay special attention to avoid an exclusion dynamic during the access phase to training and during the courses; contrast different causes that may negatively influence access to participation (social-age, organizational, relational, cultural, educational, gender etc).

! As you can see, some conditions are above seems critical relating to the warnings mentioned before in the document

8. Methodologies and activities to support training¹

The last section of the document presents the synthesis proposed by one of the partners regarding the relationship among needs, training settings, learning processes, venues and roles involved.

Nella parte finale del documento, si ritiene utile proporre la sintesi che uno dei partner ha proposto in relazione al rapporto tra tipologia dei fabbisogni, setting formativi, tipologia di processi di apprendimento, sedi e figure coinvolte.

Educational methodologies learning

The choice of educational methodologies and the design of activities to support learning have to be adapted to learning models and to training settings. Methods and educational tools cannot be defined in a prescriptive way, they rather have to be organized following the needs analyses and the challenges and types of learning they derive from it. A non-thorough list allows to identify various venues where it can be possible to implement learning:

- venues that traditionally are dedicated to training, formal or informal, as classrooms and, in companies, equipped spaces not dedicated to production;
- contexts of experience, linked to the real development of work activities, in the company or at the client or supplier;
- individual or private spaces, where one can develop a mentored project through face to face coaching or connecting to the network, in order to use self-learning materials, develop distance-interactions, make web researches.

At the same time, it is possible to identify educational methodologies that are linked to the presence of different mentoring and teaching functions and roles:

- methodologies based on the transmission of contents (knowledge, abilities), even integrated by active education, where prevail functions like face to face teacher/co-teacher, or mentoring;
- methodologies based on the acquirement of contents and on the on site training, where the function of the teacher and of the mentor is normally offered by the owner or by experts of the company, as by individuals of suppliers or clients, also integrated by the function of company trainers, coaches or mentors;
- experience - reflection methodologies, where the individual has to develop a structured revision of professional experiences, using tools like reflection diaries or project works, and usually counting on forms of educational mentoring (tutoring, mentoring, coaching...);
- methodologies that are based on the potentialities of present communication technologies, where the individual faces educational forms that require technical and organizational knowledge, ability to enhance distance education, may it be synchronous or asynchronous, with the other learners and with who is managing the e-learning process.

The following chart summarizes a possible scenario, that proposes the possible choices of the project in order to make needs, educational models, training settings and processes consistent. The choice of educational methodologies has to be made taking into account the learning challenges and, as a consequence, the link between needs and models, as defined in the chart.

¹ This section of the document is proposed by Furio Bednarz

<i>Type of need / educational model</i>	<i>Training settings (also complementary ones)</i>	<i>Learning process</i>	<i>Venues and people involved</i>
Activities centred on the recovery and the strengthening of basic skills	Outcomes and recognition of skills projects (<i>confidence building</i>)	Clarification and (aware) consolidation of hidden knowledge and experience micro-skills	Collective venues/ face to face meetings (also in the companies) – guidance experts and trainers with counselling and outcome skills
	Alternated mentoring and training projects	Reactivation of basic skills in a logic of proximity (applied to life and work)	Alternated rooms (on the job) – teachers and mentors
	Literacy and/or basic skills modules (in classroom – in groups)		Classroom, with active education – teachers and mentors / coaches
Activities centred on contents and professionalization, based on knowledge and appropriate mental schemes	Alternation between contents learning and active education	Sequence that leads to active work; development that goes from the dimension of protected work (classroom-laboratory), to the mentored transfer to acquire autonomy	External accredited or internal venue (flip chart, slide projector, electronic multimedia boards, access to web resources, etc.) – teachers (included owner and internal /specialized external resources)
	Individual access to catalogue training (voucher – individual projects)		Equipped external accredited venue – teachers / tutors
	<i>Blended learning e e-learning</i> , included on the job mentoring actions		Private venues, or equipped places to be used individually or collectively - coaches, e-learning assistants
Activities centred on creating complex skills	Active education	Activation or circular learning processes, based on experience – reflexion – modelling – planning and reactivation of experience	<i>In company training, outdoor training</i> , equipped venue (flip chart, slide projector, electronic multimedia boards, access to web resources, etc.) – teachers (included owner and internal /specialized external resources)
	<i>Experience/reflection Settings</i> , structured with methods and tools like <i>problem based learning, project work</i> , reflection diaries, etc.		Private venues, or equipped places to be used individually or collectively - coaches, e-learning assistants
	Cooperative learning and research-action in a virtual environment (<i>virtual communities of practice</i>)		Private venues, or equipped places to be used individually or collectively – e-learning assistants