



Project: System approach to close the employment gap and create a more inclusive labour market for vulnerable groups
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Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Explanation
ANQEP	National agency for qualification and professional teaching
BGN	Bulgarian lev
BTV	The first private nationwide television channel in Bulgaria
CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
CEEP	European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public Service
CGTP	General Confederation of Portuguese workers
CMO	Context, mechanisms, outcomes
CRAS	The Civil Registration and Administrative Services General Directorate
CSRD	Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive
ESG	Environment, Sustainability, Governance
EU	European Union
DGEEC	General Directorate of Education and Science Statistics
GDP	Gross domestic product
HR	Human resources
IAPMEI	Agency for Competitive and Innovative (Portugal)
ICT	Information and communications technology
IEFP	Institute of Employment and Professional Training
IM	Intervention mapping
INE	National Institute of Statistics (Portugal)
IPS	Individual placement and support
JOBS	Job search intervention
KELA	Social Insurance Institution (Finland)
KPEDU	The Federation of Education in Central Ostrobothnia (Finland)
LL	Living lab
MLSP	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
NEA	National Employment Agency (Bulgaria)
NEET	Not in education, employment or training
NSI	National Statistical Institute
OD	Odds ratio
PACT	Alentejo Park of Science and Technology
PES	Public Employment Services
POISE	Social Inclusion and Employment Operational Program
RCT	Randomized controlled trial
SEC	Sustainable employment commitment
SECLE	Service Centre for Continuous Learning and Employment (Finland)
SME	Small and medium enterprises
SOITE	Wellbeing services county of Central Ostrobothnia (Finland)
SYNCLUSIVE	System approach to close the employment gap and create a more inclusive labour market for vulnerable groups
TG	Target group
VMBO	Voortgezet Middelbaar Onderwijs (lower level, applied or practical education)
UWV	Netherlands Employee Insurance Agency

Abstract

The Synclusive project aims to enhance labour market inclusion for vulnerable groups in four European countries (Bulgaria, Finland, the Netherlands, Portugal). The project employs an "ENGINE approach" which aims to stimulate labour market mobility for vulnerable, low educated employees within organisations, thus providing space for labour market inflow of vulnerable job seekers.

This Action Plan report describes the design of the ENGINE per Living Lab, including a description of stakeholders and their collaboration, target groups, drivers, barriers, and solutions. In addition, it shows which interventions, how, and in collaboration with whom are supposed to work together as driving wheels of the ENGINES in each Living Lab. The report utilizes the information gathered from regional stakeholders through individual and focus group interviews, feedback sessions and meetings, and the findings of the project's previous State-of-the-art report. In addition, the interventions for unemployed job seekers and employees seeking mobility were mapped in each country.

Each Living Lab has identified its specific target groups: unemployed women 55+ (Bulgaria), long-term unemployed (Finland), vulnerable job seekers and employees in the childcare sector (the Netherlands), and young unemployed between 15 and 29 years of age (Portugal). The findings revealed many similar drivers, barriers, and solutions across Living Labs. The drivers, for example, are often related to the labour force shortage; motivation of unemployed people to gain employment; and skills, motivation, and cooperation of employment service professionals. The barriers, in turn, are associated with job seekers' limited work experience and skills; employers' insufficient knowledge and prejudices about the target groups and limited resources for guidance; and in some Living Labs limited job and career opportunities in the region. In each Living Lab, some solutions have been identified to promote the inflow and in some also mobility and talent development of employees. The solutions are often related to training and job coaching of individuals; pay subsidies and incentives; and policy-level actions. Only few interventions were targeted to enhance collaboration between regional stakeholders.

All Living Labs have taken their initial steps to identify the ENGINE and its possible gearing wheels in their region. In Bulgaria, the ENGINE will start with a collaborative re-entry training program combined with psychological support for unemployed women 55+. Thereafter, actions with employers to improve and apply inclusive employment practices and a public campaign against ageism and gender stereotypes will be launched. In Finland, the ENGINE will first focus on the municipality of Kokkola as an employer. The actions aim to help employees working in pay subsidized jobs to find a more sustainable employment in their current or other workplace and to increase employment of long-term unemployed by implementing both a peer group- and an individual-based coaching trajectories. In the Netherlands, the ENGINE will be implemented in the childcare sector. It starts with mapping possible career trajectories within childcare and improving the professional development of employees. In the next phase, the goal is to enhance the sense of team unity, integration of new employees and on-the-job-learning at workplaces. The final task focuses on matching job seekers with suitable positions. In Portugal, four different Living Labs will be implemented. The actions will start with creating and offering courses and training programmes for young people that prepare them for the labour market, offer some qualifications, and help to find new job opportunities. Next, the aim is to bridge the young unemployed persons with the Living Lab partner associations to provide them work experience.

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1 Introduction

The Synclusive project aims to develop and evaluate a comprehensive approach to support vulnerable groups in the labour market across four European Living Labs (henceforth LL) in Bulgaria, Finland, the Netherlands, and Portugal. The project employs a system-oriented "ENGINE approach" which aims to stimulate labour market mobility for low educated/skilled employees within organisations and thus providing space for labour market inclusion of unemployed job seekers. To make the ENGINE work, interventions for both vulnerable groups are needed. Accordingly, the LLs involve two main target groups: vulnerable unemployed job seekers and low educated/skilled employees seeking mobility. In addition, regional stakeholders (e.g., employers, municipalities, companies, educational institutes, communities) and their collaboration are needed to support the ENGINE and to facilitate the inflow and mobility of the two main target groups. The interventions that will be implemented must be tailored to the target groups and attuned to each other. In practice, this might mean that interventions will be co-created using initiatives and infrastructure which are already there to work from. Besides these more practice-based interventions, interventions having a more solid theoretical base, supported by earlier research evidence, and applying peer learning are preferred.

The main objective of this Action Plan report is to present the drivers, barriers, and solutions as well as the design of an action plan for each LL, and to discuss the extent to which the interventions are supposed to work together as driving wheels of the ENGINES in each LL. The report includes a description of the stakeholders and their collaboration, the target groups, the current barriers, drivers, and potential solutions for inflow and mobility in each LL (Chapters 4–7). In addition, the report introduces the interventions that can be considered and integrated in the intervention package of each LL (Chapter 3). Moreover, research- and practice-based interventions that have been applied thus far for job seekers and employees seeking mobility by considering different stakeholder levels are summarized.

The development of this Action Plan report is based on the findings of the project's previous State-of-the-art report, individual and focus group interviews conducted among regional stakeholders, feedback sessions and meetings with stakeholders and the results of intervention mapping. The report is a living document, which, for example, means that some target groups and stakeholders might change, and new interventions may be tailored in next two and half years. In this report we will first present the Methodology section, followed by a general chapter on interventions which may play a role in the LLs. Finally, the action plans for the LLs in the four countries will be described.

2 Methodology

2.1 Research questions

The research group formulated the main research questions that are listed below:

1. Barriers:

- What are the main challenges and barriers for the target groups of each LL a) to find a job and b) to establish upward or sideward mobility?
 - How do the views on barriers differ between stakeholders (e.g., employers, employment services, training institutions, job seekers etc.) of each LL?
 - Which of these barriers could be addressed by the means and in the time frame of the project?
- What are the main factors affecting the barriers?

2. Drivers:

- What are the main drivers for the target groups of each LL a) to find a job and b) to establish upward or sideward mobility?
 - How do the views on drivers differ between stakeholders (e.g., employers, employment services, training institutions, job seekers etc.) of each LL?
 - Which of these drivers might be enhanced by the means and in the time frame of the project?
- What are the main factors affecting the drivers?

3. Solutions:

- What kind of solutions have been applied so far to influence the barriers?
 - What solutions have been and have not been successful and why?
 - Which solutions could be implemented in this project?
- What kind of actions / interventions will be needed to solve the problems and to promote the employment and upward or sideward mobility?
 - How and by whom the challenges could be tackled?
 - How and by whom the drivers could be promoted?
 - How do the views on solutions differ between stakeholders (e.g., employers, employment services, educational institutions, job seekers etc.) of each LL?

4. Collaboration:

- What kind of relations and/or dependencies exist in collaboration between different stakeholders in each LL?
 - How should the relations/dependencies between the stakeholders be considered while planning the interventions?
- What kind of dependencies exist in barriers, drivers, and solutions in each LL?
 - How do the dependencies either hinder or promote the employment and upward or sideward mobility in labour market?

5. Reactions on the LL:

- How do the different stakeholders perceive the idea of LL?
- What kind of role they see they might have in it?
- What kind of boundary conditions and resources the stakeholders have regarding the participation?

2.2 Interviews of regional stakeholders

The research data gathered from the regional stakeholders via individual and focus group interviews were used in planning the ENGINE per LL and promoting cooperation between regional stakeholders. In each LL, the goal was to interview 10 to 25 regional key stakeholders who play an important and active role in the regional employment ecosystem. These stakeholders included job seekers, employees seeking mobility, employers, companies, employment services, training organisations, and civil society organisations. The contact details of potential informants were found from organisations' web pages and research partners' previous contacts, and in some cases, they were recommended by other stakeholders and interviewees. While recruiting job seekers and employees, study leaflets were sometimes used and delivered, for example, through civil society organisations and employment agencies to find persons who would be interested to sign up for the interview. The individual interviews were conducted in autumn 2023 and winter 2024 in-person, face-to-face, online or by phone, depending on the respondents' availability and preference. One interview took about 60 minutes. In Bulgaria, 27 informants participated in this individual interview; in Finland 11; in the Netherlands 18; and in Portugal 11, respectively. Interviewees' interest to participate in the focus group discussions were asked in the end of the individual interview.

The focus group interviews were conducted after the individual interviews in 2023. In each LL, the goal was to conduct two focus group interviews. The participants were recruited from those who participated in the individual interview and from regional stakeholders. Altogether, 15 stakeholders participated in the focus group interviews in Bulgaria, 9 in Finland, 10 in the Netherlands, and 10 in Portugal, respectively. In the beginning of the interview, the researchers presented a summary of main results of the individual interviews, that is the regional drivers, barriers, and solutions for increasing inflow and mobility. The researchers also presented some ideas of the ENGINE in the LL based on the results of the individual interviews. Thus, the preliminary results acted as a starting point for discussions. Depending on the results of each LL, the discussions included topics such as similarities and differences in perceived drivers and barriers, suggested solutions, cooperation between stakeholders etc. The role of researchers was to moderate the group discussions. The focus group discussions took about 75 minutes each. They were conducted online or face-to-face in the premises of LL partners (i.e., in the city of Amersfoort/Kokkola/Lisbon/ Sofia).

The questions for individual interviews were tailored to participant groups (i.e., job seekers, employees, employers, and other relevant stakeholders) in line with the main research questions. Some relevant questions were listed for each of these groups. However, it was not possible to establish an interview protocol for all possible participant groups for each LL. Thus, the research groups were allowed to modify, add, or delete questions based on their LL context and participants. The list of stakeholders was not either exhaustive: there might be other potential stakeholders that were interviewed.

All interviews were audio recorded. The transcription of interviews was recommended for further analysis. Each informant received a written invitation including a research brief and consent to participate, either in the individual and/or focus group interviews. The participation was voluntary, and the participants had a right to decline or withdraw from participating.

2.3 Intervention mapping

A wide range of interventions can make the ENGINE work, that is to stimulate labour market mobility of vulnerable, low-educated employees and to increase inflow of unemployed job seekers. In the Synclusive project, the Intervention Mapping framework (Bartholomew et al., 2016) have been utilized while considering the suitable interventions. The Intervention Mapping (henceforth IM) is a well-established protocol for planning, implementation, and evaluation of behaviour change interventions (e.g., Fernandez et al., 2019). It emphasizes the consideration of all relevant stakeholders at different levels (i.e., individual, interpersonal, organizational, community, societal) to ensure that the intervention addresses their needs and matches to their resources and contexts.

In line with IM framework, we first created a comprehensive understanding of the target groups in each LLs and the factors (e.g., barriers and drivers) influencing the behaviours of target groups at different levels. In this project, the interventions can, for instance, be targeted at unemployed job seekers, employees seeking upward or sideward mobility, employers and/or local stakeholders. Thereafter, we defined what kind of changes are aimed for and which determinants of behaviour should be targeted in the interventions. The determinants of behaviour are, for example, capabilities, attitudes, values, beliefs, self-efficacy, and expectations, as well as social support, and resources. Thus, the interventions may, for instance, focus on improving job seekers' self-efficacies and skills via training, and offering support for employers to develop the skills of their employees. Third we mapped suitable interventions that have been studied/applied thus far to promote inflow and mobility (i.e., solve the problems in concern) (see tables 3.1–3.2 in chapter 3). We considered both theory- and program-based interventions and listed specific information from each intervention (i.e., name of the intervention; the challenge the intervention aims to solve; the target group of the intervention; what changes are strived for (e.g., changes in competencies, capabilities, attitudes, motivation, values, beliefs, services, support, resources, cooperation...); theoretical background of the intervention; individual or group-based implementation;

using of peer-learning; stakeholders and resources needed for implementation; transferability to different contexts; and research evidence (e.g., study design and verified outcomes). The goal was to get a clearer picture of the solutions which have been effective thus far, with whom, why and how.

3 Interventions promoting inclusion in the labour market

3.1 Intervention concepts for enhancing inflow and mobility

A wide range of interventions and intervening concepts can make the ENGINE work i.e., to stimulate mobility of employees and inflow of unemployed job seekers to the labour market. The interventions can, for instance, aim to eliminate prejudices and discrimination at workplaces and in the labour markets; increase skills, knowledge, and expertise via training and individual coaching; enhance self-efficacies and motivation to employment; improve matching of job seekers and jobs as well as employees and opportunities for occupational development; and promote collaboration of regional coalitions.

Making the ENGINE work also calls for interventions to be implemented at several levels (e.g., individual, workplace, coalition) in an integrated way. This could, for example, mean simultaneous development of skills of employees, employers, and job seekers (and even employment service professionals) by using the interventions linked to each other in the regional context. Thus, the existing individual or separate interventions do not necessarily alone solve the problems or suit the complex context. Consequently, tailoring and integration (including attunement) of interventions need to take place in order to develop an integrated intervention package suitable for the specific challenges, target groups and regional key stakeholders. The Realist Evaluation approach (Pawson & Tilley, 1997; Pawson et al., 2005) applied in this project, will help to tailor the interventions while describing more precisely what interventions work for specific individuals, organisations, and coalitions, in what conditions, and why.

Training and coaching of employees, job seekers, managers or employers will be executed in each LL most likely. Previous studies have shown that peer learning is an effective method for learning especially for lower educated workers and job seekers as they often have a low self-confidence and self-efficacy due to negative experiences in a traditional school-based learning (e.g., Brenninkmeijer & Blonk, 2011; Vuori et al., 2002). Peer learning is a teaching strategy in which non-professional practitioners with different ages and same learning levels learn from each other. It aims to increase the learning confidence in a supportive learning environment and to assist the peers to develop collaborative learning partnerships. Accordingly, peer learning methodology could be adopted or used as a guideline while tailoring the interventions in this project.

3.2 Examples of research- and practice-based interventions promoting inflow and mobility

The Synclusive project aims to apply as far as possible theory- and evidence-based interventions that have been studied and/or applied to promote the inflow and mobility of vulnerable groups into the labour market. Therefore, previous research- and practice-based interventions have been mapped by applying an intervention mapping (IM) framework (Bartholomew et al., 2016). The goal IM frameworks is to produce a clearer understanding of the solutions which have been effective thus far, with whom and how.

As seen from table 3.1, most interventions applied to enhance the inflow of job seekers are individual based, rely on monetary incentives and are carried out as specific nation-wide programs. Although the programs have increased employment and activity among participants, their efficacy has not been verified by using an experimental control design. For coaching methods, individual placement and support (IPS) model and peer group-based coaching methods that aim to increase participants' self-efficacy in re-employment and job searching skills have been proved to increase employment in randomized controlled

study (RCT) designs. Table 3.2, in turn, indicates that less interventions have been targeted at vulnerable employees' mobility than at job seeker inflow. The interventions aiming to enhance mobility have focused on development of specific (e.g., digital) skills or career management skills of employees. Both individual- and peer group-based approaches have been utilized via workplace-level actions or nation-wide programs. The efficacy of the career management intervention in the early-, mid- and late-career phases have been verified in RCT studies.

The abovementioned results of IM are in line with the findings of the State-of-the-art reported submitted earlier in this project. The report showed that a vast majority of research on labour market interventions enhancing inclusion have focused on individual level interventions. Far less have been studied (and implemented) interventions at the employer, service, or coalition level. The studies which have compared the impact of different types of interventions (i.e., employment programs, training programs, job search activities, incentives, and sanctions), have indicated that the interventions aiming to promote unemployed persons' fast re-employment (e.g., job search interventions, IPS models) have been the most effective in terms of employment. The training interventions, in turn, have usually had positive long-term impact, whereas the employment subsidies alone have showed only minor impact or even negative impact (see Card et al., 2010, 2015; Kluve, 2010, Malmberg-Heimonen et al., 2019).

Altogether, some of these mapped interventions have potential to be implemented as such for some specific target groups (e.g., job search interventions improving self-efficacies, IPS-models for vulnerable employees and their employers), some interventions might need tailoring and adjustments (e.g., skill training interventions), and some interventions might offer inspiration for development of new interventions (e.g., interventions changing attitudes and prejudices).

Table 3.1 Interventions aiming to promote inflow of job seekers.

Name of the intervention	Challenge the intervention aims to solve	Target group	Changes that are strived for	Theoretical background	individual or group-based	Applying peer learning	Stakeholders and resources needed for implementation	Transferability to other contexts	Research evidence
Taite-coaching (previously JOBS [®])	Prolonged unemployment causes stress and decreases mental well-being. Unemployed people easily lost their self-efficacies regarding re-employment.	Job seekers who are motivated but being unemployed and unsuccessful in job seeking over 12 months	Increase in job search self-efficacy, self-confidence, job search skills, and ability to face and resolve setbacks. Decrease in passivity related to unemployment.	Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior; Meichenbaum's Cognitive Stress Inoculation Training; Bandura's Social Learning Theory	Group-based	Yes	Taite instructors from workplaces, e.g., HR / work ability coordinators who received Taite-coaching training	JOBS have been implemented in Finland, USA, the Netherlands, Ireland, China, South Korea. The manuals are in English but should be modernized.	JOBS produced positive long-term effects on employment (RCTs). The program was especially beneficial for those at risk of depression (Brenninkmeijer & Blonk, 2011; Malmberg-Heimonen et al. 2019; Vinokur et al., 1995, 2000; Vuori et al., 2002).
Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model (Bond et al., 2023; Drake & Bond, 2023)	People with mental health illness have difficulties to gain job and employment possibilities. Many of them	Unemployed persons with mental health illnesses (in high-income countries)	Support for job seekers before and after the employment. IPS coaches build relationships with employers.	Eight core principles to be followed: goal is competitive employment; every client who wants to	Individual	No	Job coaches, employers, mental health services. The time needed is in average 4–5 months for IPS clients who	Implemented over 20 high-income countries in Europe, North America, Asia and	9 meta-analyses including max 48 RCTs. Competitive employment was significantly

Name of the intervention	Challenge the intervention aims to solve	Target group	Changes that are strived for	Theoretical background	individual or group-based	Applying peer learning	Stakeholders and resources needed for implementation	Transferability to other contexts	Research evidence
	want to work, but less than 20 % are employed and many are unemployed for most of their lives (Drake & Bond, 2023).			work is eligible; services align with clients' preferences; rapid job search; targeted job development; integration of employment services with mental health treatment; personalized benefits counselling; individualized long-term support			successfully find a job and start employment.	Oceania. Could be tested among other target groups.	higher for IPS than controls (OR= 1.92), with a significant advantage in time to first job (OR = 1.90); IPS participants averaged 1.90 more hours and 1.66 more weeks worked than controls (Drake & Bond, 2023).
IPS job coaching (in Finland)	To increase employment among people with one or more challenges or disabilities	Unemployed persons who are clients of social services and need special and individual support before and after the employment	Support for both job seekers before and after the employment. IPS-coach builds relationships with employers	Practiced-based model applying the core criteria of IPS model (above). Only the target group is different.	Individual	No	Job coaches, employers, social services. Max 20 clients per job coach.	Was tested in 19 Work ability project pilots in Finland in 2019-2023.	46% of participants (260/568) found a job during the Work ability project pilots (Normia-Ahlsten & Riisalo-Mäntynen, 2023).

Name of the intervention	Challenge the intervention aims to solve	Target group	Changes that are strived for	Theoretical background	individual or group-based	Applying peer learning	Stakeholders and resources needed for implementation	Transferability to other contexts	Research evidence
School-to-Work (Koivisto et al., 2007)	The career transitions from school to work life (i.e. a process of finding employment and socialisation into a new organisation) is challenging for some young people which may also hamper the mental well-being.	For 17–25-year-old young people facing the transition from vocational college to work.	Increase in job search self-efficacy among young people and develop their capacity to deal with obstacles and barriers encountered in the labour market.	Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior; Meichenbaum's Cognitive Stress Inoculation Training; Bandura's Social Learning Theory	Group-based	Yes	20 hours training, jointly implemented by vocational schoolteachers and public employment services.	The programme was delivered extensively across Finland until the mid-2010s when it became subsumed within wider educational and career guidance models. The manuals are in Finnish.	A RCT study among young Finnish (n=334) showed that the training increased probabilities of employment, finding a job that corresponds to education and personal career plans, and setting of meaningful goals. Participation lowered psychological distress and depressive symptoms.
Parents in Employment – Bulgaria (MLSP, 2023d)	Ensuring better reconciliation of work and private life for parents with children aged	All unemployed including persons over 50 years	To help parents of children 0-5 return to the workforce; to provide job opportunities for people	Program-based. The employees work with families with small children and take care	Individual	No	Employment office; job seekers. Resources by the European Social Fund+	The programme is implemented throughout the country.	Performance indicator: Since the beginning of the program unemployed and inactive

Name of the intervention	Challenge the intervention aims to solve	Target group	Changes that are strived for	Theoretical background	individual or group-based	Applying peer learning	Stakeholders and resources needed for implementation	Transferability to other contexts	Research evidence
	0 to 12 and providing employment for unemployed people by providing childcare opportunities.		searching for work	of the children while the parents are at work.			and the government		persons 8 615, and. number of supported parents with children: 7 667. Output indicator: Unemployed and inactive participants who have a job when they leave the programme: 7 667 (NEA, 2023).
Measure - employment of unemployed persons over 55 years of age - Bulgaria (Art. 55a of the NEA) (MLSP, 2023b)	Providing employment to unemployed persons over 55 years of age for a period of 12 months	Unemployed persons over 55 years of age; employers	Helping people 55+ find employment	Program-based	Individual	Yes	Employers need to apply for funds and to work with the public employment services when searching for employees	The programme is offered across the country.	In 2022, provided employment to 357 persons, of whom 278 were newly enrolled. In 2022, the measure provided employment to 357 persons, of

Name of the intervention	Challenge the intervention aims to solve	Target group	Changes that are strived for	Theoretical background	individual or group-based	Applying peer learning	Stakeholders and resources needed for implementation	Transferability to other contexts	Research evidence
									whom 278 were newly enrolled. The amount spent on this project is BGN 1 118 717 (NEA, 2023).
National Retirement Assistance Programme (MLSP, 2023c)	To reduce social tensions and provide employment for a disadvantaged group of unemployed on the labour market	Unemployed people over 60 who are actively looking for work and registered with PES	Supporting the transition from unemployment to work and retirement of the target group	Program-based	Individual	Yes	Job seekers, employers, PES	It is implemented throughout the country.	In the first half of 2022, the programme provided employment to 1,623 persons, of whom 681 were newly enrolled.
Sustainable Employment Commitment (in Portugal, IEFP, 2023)	Companies not hiring with permanent contracts	Unemployed people regardless of age	Designed to encourage the permanent hiring of unemployed individuals	Europe 2030 / European programmes	Individual	No	Job seekers, enterprises looking for workers and stakeholders	This was/is implemented throughout Portugal, nationwide, it is likely transferable to other contexts.	Thanks to this programme, over 30.000 new permanent contracts have been created in the participant enterprises.

Name of the intervention	Challenge the intervention aims to solve	Target group	Changes that are strived for	Theoretical background	individual or group-based	Applying peer learning	Stakeholders and resources needed for implementation	Transferability to other contexts	Research evidence
Reduction of Social Security Contributions (in Portugal, Segurança Social, 2017)	Companies not hiring new employees due to the high tax demands	Unemployed young people	Provides incentives for hiring young people seeking their first job. Employers receive a temporary 50% reduction in social security contribution for a period of five years.	Law decret by the Portuguese government	Individual	No	Job seekers, stakeholders, enterprises and government ministries	This was/is implemented throughout Portugal, nationwide, it is likely transferable to other contexts.	Between 2017 and 2023, youth unemployment went down about 4%.
ATIVAR.PT Internships (in Portugal, IEFP, 2023b)	Young people not being able to get work experience	Unemployed young people between 18-30 years old	These internships aim to facilitate the entry of young people into the labour market.	Europe 2030 / European programmes	Individual	No	Job seekers, stakeholders, enterprises	This was/is implemented throughout Portugal, nationwide. It is likely transferable to other contexts.	The participation rate of these internships is between 65% and 80%. Since the programme has been launched in 2020, 98.741 internships have been approved and 70.888 of the participants have been hired by enterprises.

Name of the intervention	Challenge the intervention aims to solve	Target group	Changes that are strived for	Theoretical background	individual or group-based	Applying peer learning	Stakeholders and resources needed for implementation	Transferability to other contexts	Research evidence
Active Youth Employment (in Portugal, IEFP, 2023)	Young people facing disadvantages in terms of qualification and social integration	Unemployed young people	The goal is to enhance disadvantaged young people's (18-29) social-professional integration.	Europe 2030 / European programmes	Group-based	Yes	Job seekers, stakeholders	This was/is implemented throughout Portugal, nationwide, it is likely transferable to other contexts.	4 months after finishing the programme, 7 in 10 people stop being NEET (young people not in employment, education or training), 6 months after the programme, 8 in 10 people stop being NEET, and two years after finishing the programme 9 in 10 people are employed.
Wage XXI (in Portugal, IEFP, 2023)	Young people not being able to enter the labour market or invest in their own businesses	Unemployed young people seeking their first job	Supports the creation and development of new business projects	Europe 2030 / European programmes	Both individual and group-based	Yes	Job seekers, stakeholders	This was/is implemented throughout Portugal, nationwide, it is likely transferable to other contexts.	In 2023, 1.965 applications were submitted and 1.406 were approved.

Name of the intervention	Challenge the intervention aims to solve	Target group	Changes that are strived for	Theoretical background	individual or group-based	Applying peer learning	Stakeholders and resources needed for implementation	Transferability to other contexts	Research evidence
Mental retirement (Huijs, 2019)	Mentally retired employees who lost the connection with their organization and their future work perspectives. Lacking skills for goal re-engagement.	It is developed for job retention in people who dropped out of work. It is mainly aimed at people who were on long term sick leave.	Enhancing self-efficacy, regaining perspective to work	Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior; Meichenbaum's Cognitive Stress Inoculation Training; Bandura's Social Learning Theory	Group-based	Yes	Employees, employer(s), (trained) trainers	Pilot version tested on feasibility in a small group of sick listed police officers/ employees. Could be made also be made to fit job seekers.	Qualitative data, (Huijs 2019). In a group of 6, one-year sick listed employees, four returned to and remained at work after the intervention.
Weighed Customi- zation (Boermans et al., 2020)	Knowledge development and sharing (learning attitude) among job coaches of unemployed is too low, causing lowered effectiveness	Job coaches, reintegration consultants	Aim to increase methodical way of working among job coaches	Integrative model of behavioral prediction (Fishbein & Ajzen) Mental Model Theory/ guiding principles (to be developed)	Can be in a group	Yes	Trainers (target group), commitment of management	Currently a Community of Practice has started with the aim to further examine this intervention. Several other organization adopted this intervention.	Increased methodical ways of guiding unemployed (Boermans et al., 2020) in a quasi-controlled design.
Inclusive Turnover Growth Intervention (Geuskens et al., 2020)	Inclusive employer behavior is crucial for the long-term unemployed job seekers.	Employers	Aim to increase awareness and actual hired unemployed people	Peer learning principles could be applied	Group-based	Yes	Employer(s), trainer(s)	Possibly	Qualitative study with several employers anticipating near future growth of

Name of the intervention	Challenge the intervention aims to solve	Target group	Changes that are strived for	Theoretical background	individual or group-based	Applying peer learning	Stakeholders and resources needed for implementation	Transferability to other contexts	Research evidence
	Few interventions aim to enhance inclusive employer behavior								turnover and increasing need for personnel (Goudswaard, et al., 2021)

Table 3.2 Interventions aiming to promote upward or sideward mobility of employees.

Name of the intervention	Challenge the intervention aims to solve	Target group	Changes that are strived for	Theoretical background	individual or group-based	Applying peer learning	Stakeholder and resources needed for implementation	Transferability to other contexts	Research evidence
Towards a successful career training for young employees (Nykänen et al., 2023)	The early career stage is critical for young employees' future employment. Unsuccessful career start may discourage, diminish well-being and affect negatively to self-confidence and future career.	Young employees in the beginning of their career	Increase in employees' self-efficacies to identify personal strengths at work, set work-related goals, and seek work-related information and support; to improve coping skills to maintain wellbeing in difficult, stressful situations at work	Job Demands - Resources model (JD-R) (e.g., Bakker & Demerouti, 2007)	Group-based	Yes	Trainers from work organizations e.g., HR professionals, occupational health representatives; working hours of the trainers and participants	Trainer's and participant's manuals for employee-level intervention are available in Finnish	RCT study for participants in 21 Finnish work organizations (n=250). In the short-term the intervention increased preparedness for career management in the beginning of career.
Towards a successful career training for supervisors employing young workers	Supervisors have an important role in supporting successful career start and wellbeing of young employees.	Supervisors who lead young workers	Improving supervisors' skills to frame meaningful work-related goals to young workers, to provide feedback, to	Job Demands - Resources model (JD-R) (e.g., Bakker & Demerouti, 2007)	Group-based	Yes	Trainers from work organizations e.g., HR professionals, occupational health representatives; working hours	Trainer's and participant's manual are available in Finnish	Follow-up study for supervisor in 21 Finnish work organizations (n=125). The training intervention increased supervisors' skills

Name of the intervention	Challenge the intervention aims to solve	Target group	Changes that are strived for	Theoretical background	individual or group-based	Applying peer learning	Stakeholder and resources needed for implementation	Transferability to other contexts	Research evidence
(Nykänen et al., 2023)	Supervisors' need more knowledge and skills to manage these tasks successfully.		support overcome work-related problems, and to guide to set work-related personal goals				of the trainers and supervisors		to lead young employees.
Skilled and renewable career (Pankkonen & Vuori, submitted)	Employees in their mid-career start to be at risk of occupational skill obsolescence which may lead to fewer chances in progressing in the career and even losing one's job. The intervention pursues to support career renewal and increase resources to develop one's occupational competences.	Employees in their mid-career	Enhancing employees' preparedness for career renewal and utilization of skill development activities and improving occupational health and well-being	Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior; Meichenbaum's Cognitive Stress Inoculation Training; Bandura's Social Learning Theory	Group-based	Yes	Trainers from work organizations e.g., HR professionals, occupational health representatives; Working hours of the trainers and the participants	Manuals for trainers and participants are available in Finnish.	RCT study for participants in 15 Finnish work organizations (n=367). In the short-term the intervention increased preparedness for career renewal. In the long-term the intervention increased occupational health and well-being.

Name of the intervention	Challenge the intervention aims to solve	Target group	Changes that are strived for	Theoretical background	individual or group-based	Applying peer learning	Stakeholder and resources needed for implementation	Transferability to other contexts	Research evidence
Work engagement for senior employees (Vuori et al., 2019)	55+ workers perceive age discrimination at work and in the labour market which threaten the sustainability of their working careers and motivation to work. Intervention aims to increase employees' resourcefulness to manage this situation.	Employees 55+	Improving late-career management skills of employees: self-efficacies regarding work ability, seniority skills and employability, and increasing preparedness for setbacks (e.g., age discrimination)	Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior; Meichenbaum's Cognitive Stress Inoculation Training; Bandura's Social Learning Theory	Group-based	Yes	Trainers from organizations (e.g., HR coordinators). Working hours: training lasts 16 hours.	Manuals for trainers and participants are in English.	RCT in 17 Finnish work organizations (n=699). In a 6-month follow-up: participants reported higher work engagement and future time perspective, lower perceived age discrimination.
Seniority Skills in Use (Ruokolainen et al., 2023)	Supervisors are expected to support ageing employees' work ability and working career, but they do not have enough competences	Supervisors, line managers	To increase supervisors' preparedness in age management and positive age attitudes	Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior; Meichenbaum's Cognitive Stress Inoculation Training; Bandura's Social	Group-based	Yes	Trainers from organizations (e.g., HR coordinators). Working hours: training lasts 9 hours.	Manuals for trainers and participants in Finnish.	RCT in 10 Finnish work organizations among 216 supervisors. The training enhanced preparedness for age management and improved age attitudes towards ageing workers

Name of the intervention	Challenge the intervention aims to solve	Target group	Changes that are strived for	Theoretical background	individual or group-based	Applying peer learning	Stakeholder and resources needed for implementation	Transferability to other contexts	Research evidence
	to do it. Supervisors have stereotypical, negative age attitudes towards older workers			Learning Theory					
Qualifica Indústria Programme (in Portugal, IEPF, 2023)	Lack of training, qualification, and certified training moments for employees	Employees in small and medium-sized enterprises	Promote the internalization and training of employees	Europe 2030 / European programmes	Individual and group-based	Yes	Employees and employers	This was/is implemented throughout Portugal, nationwide, it is likely transferable to other contexts.	As of 2023, the programme had reached about 1.500 employees from textile, clothing, and shoe-making enterprises, in a total investment of 1.500.000,00€
Employment + Digital Training (in Portugal, IEPF, 2024)	Lack of digital skills of employees	Employees from enterprises and social economy entities	Training and requalification of employees of digital competences and individual qualifications	Europe 2030 / European programmes	Individual and group-based	Yes	Employees, employers and stakeholders (public entities)	This was/is implemented throughout Portugal, nationwide, it is likely transferable to other contexts.	Participants receive a maximum of 750€ for the training. In 2023, 2.000 applications were approved, and 25.000 are expected to be approved until 2025.

Name of the intervention	Challenge the intervention aims to solve	Target group	Changes that are strived for	Theoretical background	individual or group-based	Applying peer learning	Stakeholder and resources needed for implementation	Transferability to other contexts	Research evidence
Training-Check (in Portugal, IEFP, 2024)	Lack of training offer from enterprises	Employees from enterprises	Contribute to improving the competitiveness from enterprises through the professional qualification of their employees	Europe 2030 / European programmes	Individual and group-based	Yes	Employees and employers	This was/is implemented throughout Portugal, nationwide, it is likely transferable to other contexts.	Maximum duration of 50 hours of training per 2 years, being paid an hourly value of 4€ (up to a maximum of 175€).
Vital Craftman- ship (Huijs, 2019; Koopmans & Huijs, 2022)	Addressing the issue of sustainable employability, stay on tune with your ambitions and current work	Employees managers	To increase awareness of future employability, to prevent the trap of mental retirement. Creating and maintaining future work perspective and the skills to do so	HRM literature	Bottom-up development of tailored interventions	Yes	HRM and business consultants	Manuals in Dutch	Participatory action research provided medium support for its effectiveness (Huijs, 2019; Koopmans & Huijs (2022)).
Project „eDigiStars” (NEA, 2023)	To address the lack of employees over 50 with digital skills by introducing an innovative	Employees 50+	To motivate people 50+ and institutions to change their minds about acquiring digital skills	INTERREG Danube Transnational Programme. NEA is one of the Bulgarian partners. 19	Group-based	Yes	Vocational training and adult training organisations, labour offices, NGOs, local governments, chambers of	The tools could be used both for upward mobility and for training unemployed persons.	The 2-year project finished in Dec. 2022. Results are still pending. So far over 300 employees have been trained.

Name of the intervention	Challenge the intervention aims to solve	Target group	Changes that are strived for	Theoretical background	individual or group-based	Applying peer learning	Stakeholder and resources needed for implementation	Transferability to other contexts	Research evidence
	training system			countries participate			commerce, industry and economic development organisations etc.		

4 Living Lab Bulgaria

4.1 Labour market in the city of Sofia

Sofia is Bulgaria's capital and its largest and highest populated city. According to CRAS (2023), the registered population in Sofia is 1 538 078; for comparison, the population in Bulgaria is 6 447 710 (NSI, 2022). The people between the ages of 15 and 64 account for 72.1% of the total population of Sofia (the national average is 68.1%) (Sofia Municipality, 2017). The area around the capital is one of the key attraction locations for migration, with an average annual growth of population 6.1% by 2022 (Institute for Market Economics, 2023a).

Sofia Municipality is the best-developed municipality in the country and the main driver of the country's economic growth, accounting for nearly 50% of total GDP and having the highest GDP per capita (Sofia Municipality, 2016). Sofia has the highest average salary in the country and receives most the country's total foreign direct investment (District Sofia City, 2023). This has a determining importance for the Sofia economy as it leads to a large increase in employment mainly in information and communication technologies, as well as 'Professional activities and scientific research' and 'administrative and support activities'. The latter two activities are part of the business process outsourcing, the sector that has created most of the new jobs over the last decade (Institute for Market Economics, 2019). The leading sector is trade with a share of 25%, and the second is the rapidly growing ICT sector (24%) (Institute for Market Economics, 2023a).

Sofia is also the country's main administrative, industrial, transportation, cultural, and educational centre, accounting for one-sixth of total industrial output. Sofia is currently Bulgaria's major industrial city, with a focus on heavy industrial development. Sofia's region is home to roughly 800 large companies in metallurgy, printing, electrical and electronic sectors, and the fur and shoe industries. Chemicals, textiles, and food products are also produced (District Sofia City, 2023).

Sofia differs from the rest of the country in the dynamics of employed people by gender. In Sofia, the employment in the age group over 15 was 58% among men and 47% among women in 2018. Thus, men have a much greater employment rate than women, but the presence of a tiny imbalance in the population distribution (52% women vs. 48% men) results in a clearly visible equitable distribution of the employed by gender (Institute for Market Economics, 2019). Employment has increased in all educational levels, including the least educated. The 30-39 and 40-49 age groups are accounting for more than half of all employment. There is nearly equal employment in the 50-59 and 15-29 age groups, while the number of people close to and in retirement age is lower in Sofia (Institute for Market Economics, 2019).

In 2021, women's unemployment was 9,3%, compared to 10.5% for men', however, women's incomes remained much lower than men's; they were frequently engaged in lower-paying industries, were less likely to hold managerial positions, and worked fewer hours. Currently, things are gradually changing. While women's wage was approximately 25% lower than men's in 2000, it is currently less than 18% in 2021 (Institute for Market Economics, 2023b; Mancheva, 2020).

Sofia's labour market is characterised by very low unemployment (1.5%), strong employment, and a declining number of people using the services of the Labour Offices (Institute for Market Economics 2023a; Sofia Municipality, 2017). The NEA's annual assessment indicates that there were 10257 unemployed persons in Sofia in 2022, which is 3088 less than in 2021; 3053 (29.8%) of them were over 55 years old. (MLSP, 2023a). According to the report, 5660 (55.2%) of the unemployed were women, while 4597 (44.8%) were men (MLSP, 2023a).

The National Employment Agency (NEA) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP) are the primary institutions responsible for the administration of the Bulgarian labour market and the development of labour market policy in Bulgaria. The NEA is in charge of registering unemployed people and distributing unemployment benefits. Only those who register with the NEA after losing their jobs are eligible for unemployment payments if they have worked for at least 12 of the previous 18 months. According to the Health Insurance Act, recipients of unemployment and social assistance are entitled to free health insurance in addition to their benefits (Ministry of Health, 2022). To qualify and continue receiving benefits for a maximum of 12 months, recipients must meet specific conditions, such as being available for acceptable work possibilities, providing evidence of job search, and so on. However, job seekers have the option to decline work offers that are too far away from their home, do not match their degree, or pose a hazard to their health (MLSP, 2020). The unemployed must register with their local Labour Office, which then provides direct assistance by informing and advising them about various programmes and/or work opportunities, as well as their requirements. Their services include vocational guidance, information and employment mediation, training courses, psychological support and counselling, motivation for active labour market behaviour and inclusion in employment programmes. The Labour Offices disburse funding for transportation, housing, allowances, and other expenses. Depending on the demands of the programmes, they arrange and monitor the relationships between employers and those without employment (MLSP, 2022b). When employers register with the NEA and the Labour offices, they gain access to information about available jobseekers, programmes and measures to maintain and promote employment, employment mediation, inclusion in employment and training programmes and measures; various benefits for maintaining and/or increasing employment, for apprenticeships and/or traineeships, and promoting employee territorial mobility.

Various stakeholders, including private companies, counselling services, and public employment services, are promoting labour market participation for senior workers on a national level through programmes and projects. Some of the programmes are: Encouraging employers to hire unemployed people over 55 years of age, Parents in Employment etc.

4.2 Target groups

The target group of Sofia LL is women 55+. Women 55+ are vulnerable in the labour market. They are most likely to be released in case of lay-offs, proven during COVID-19 pandemics – in 2021 the number of registered unemployed women was 102,000, considerably higher than the number of unemployed men – 79,000 (Institute for Market Economics, 2023b). One in 4 unemployed (27%) are over 55 (Own research BTV, 2021) The Synclusive project interviews with stakeholders reveal that women 55+ generally constitute a major part of this group (SYNCLUSIVE, 2023). This conclusion is also confirmed by several recruitment experts (Nikolov, 2023).

Older workers who lose their jobs tend to be unemployed for longer. Recent research (WorkTalent.com, January 2024) of WorkTalent.com shows the reasons for that: 60% think it is due to the employer preferences for younger employees, 13% add the very high expectations of employers, 12% believe people 55+ are overqualified. Women 55+ may end up taking lower skilled, lower paid jobs as a result. Even the subsidized employment opportunities for this group supported by the state offer women 55+ similar options based on traditional family roles, such as the new provision in the Labour Code since 2020 that maternity leave can be transferred from the mother to a grandparent, or programmes for unemployed women to take care of children 0–5 years old (in some cases 0–12), not included in the day-care system, so their parents can go back to work (MLSP, 2022c; MLSP, 2023d). They are also more likely to end up in less secure roles, such as contract or entrepreneurial work. EUROSTAT data shows that in 2022 the share of self-employed women aged

25–49 is 9.2% and rises to 11.3% among women aged 50-64 (Eurostat/24chasa, 2023). The difficulty to get re-hired and the gloom prospects demoralize women 55+ job seekers.

Dropping out of employment late in life can pose a great financial crisis, since women don't have enough opportunity to contribute to pensions or save money for the future. Bearing the brunt of unpaid care for children and later for parents compromises women's financial independence and contributes to poverty in old age. Although the gender pay gap has been slightly decreasing from 25% in 2000 to 18% in 2021 (Institute for Market Economics, 2023b), it remains considerably higher than the EU average of 12.7% in 2021. This gender pay gap is increased after retirement: the average pension of women is 25% lower than the average pension of men (Institute for social integration, 2022).

Employers tend to exercise age discrimination and prefer younger employees (Sabotnova, 2020). This is due to not only age, but three accompanying prejudices related to adaptivity, ambition and ability to acquire new skills and knowledge (Sabotnova, 2020). The age discrimination has psychological consequences, with increasing cases of depression (SYNCLUSIVE, 2023).

Women 55+ who are oftentimes primary care provider for their elderly parents or family members. Not only is this unpaid work with significant physical, economic, and emotional burden but it also depreciates their value as workers. Female caregivers were much more likely to exit the workforce to execute these duties. In 2020, 39.9% of women outside of the labour market do not work due to the need to be care providers of elderly relatives or children with disabilities – by 1/3 higher share than the EU average (Institute for social integration, 2022). Due to the lack of working hours flexibility options and care options for the elderly and the disabled, women who cared for parents, grandchildren, or more than one relative were significantly less likely to be employed than their peers, but when men took on caregiving roles, their employment status was unaffected (Institute for Market Economics, 2023b) The care economy is generally neglected in Bulgarian legislation and practices.

However, women 55+ are not considered a well-defined group, because it is heterogeneous in terms of education and skills, social capital, career path, etc. The higher the education level, the less differences there are among men and women in terms of unemployment: the share of unemployed with tertiary education is the same for men and women, while among those with primary education the share of unemployed women is 8% higher (Institute for Market Economics, 2023b). In 2022, slightly over 70% of the unemployed women 55+ were with secondary education, 12.8% with tertiary and 11.7% with primary education (National social security institute, 2023).

Synclusive research showed that the low-skilled women 55+ are less likely than the highly skilled women 55+ to suffer the loss of a job or fear they will not be able to find new employment, due to the structure of the labour market and the demand for lower skilled work. However, women with tertiary education, who used to be in senior management, have significant difficulties to find appropriate employment at a similar level, and are likely to take a step down the career ladder (SYNCLUSIVE, 2023).

The national policies and strategic documents have started to include people 55+ as a specific focus recently. Amendments to the Employment Promotion Act of May 2023 have been adopted to increase the effectiveness of the state employment and training policy. There is a new measure to promote the employment of disadvantaged people. Employers will have the opportunity to request training for the individuals they will hire, as well as to provide a mentor who will assist them in acquiring or restoring work habits and adapting to the working environment. Job seekers can use information services, employment, referral to training programs and measures and validation of

professional skills, knowledge, and competences. These are opportunities provided by the state budget through the Employment Agency and the regional public employment offices. The national Employment Strategy 2021–2030 also sets a target to increase the occupancy rate of people 55–64 from 64.2 in 2020 to 70.0 in 2030. In addition, the Strategy includes another target that corresponds with Sofia LL plan to increase the relative share of persons who have participated in trainings in the last 12 months to 35.4% (no baseline recorded) (MLPS, 2022b).

4.3 Barriers, drivers and solutions

Several key barriers were identified which prevent women 55+ to find employment and/or upward/sideward mobility (see table 4.1). At the individual level, the prevailing obstacles are lack of motivation in job seekers, which may be triggered by internalized self-perceptions of women as lacking skills or competences. These self-perceptions are often compounded by prejudices expressed by employers regarding the performance level of older women. Structural (system) barriers, on the other hand, deal with explicit (or implicit) discriminatory hiring practices (e.g., employers' preferences for hiring young professionals versus women 55 and above). Findings from the interviews indicate that employers tend to prefer investing in a cohort of young professionals expecting, justifiably or not, a higher return on investment (i.e., presuming the younger employees will work longer for the company). There seems to be broad consensus among employers that young professionals are essential in organizations as they bring knowledge, new ideas and have a diversity of perspective. The language of job vacancies reflects such age-based biases; the "juvenile" recruitment practice is evident in the job announcements in the recent years, which are designed to address a certain profile of a job seeker (Generation Z), interested in wellness, flexibility, entrepreneurship, purpose and impact, fun. Women from the target group are also generally perceived to generate higher costs for the employers (due to the Bulgarian salary structure); they are also believed to need – more often than their younger colleagues – sick leaves or personal days off, resulting in employers willing to employ less expensive workforce.

A further structural-level barrier deals with the lack of sufficient and adequately designed psychological support services for job seekers. This is a clear challenge, as it prevents job seekers from finding job coaching or the needed professional upskilling/reskilling services that will increase their employability. In addition, in-house trainings, team-building and social interactions in the companies tend to be designed with a younger audience in mind, which keeps apart women 55+. Table 4.1 highlights the most common barriers that women aged 55 and above experience when trying to find employment and/or upward/sideward mobility.

Drivers

A set of drivers was identified during the research phase, which could lead job seekers in the target group to successful upward or sideward mobility. At an individual level, older workers, particularly those who have fulfilled the retirement requirements, tend to seek meaningful and fulfilling work with impact. It also appears that some job seekers aged 55 and above may opt for self-employed careers.

Among the drivers at structural level are, for example, the labour force shortage due to population decrease and outmigration. Certain business sectors may benefit from older workers and their professional skills; for example, recent regulations derived from the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) (Directive (EU) 2022/2464 of 14 December 2022 adopted in January 2023, on enterprise sustainability reporting), could stimulate companies to revise their HR strategies, placing more emphasis on inclusiveness and human capital development. Table 4.1 describes the primary drivers that exist in helping women 55+ to find a job and achieve upward/sideward mobility.

Table 4.1 Barriers to Bulgarian LL target group employment and labour mobility.

	Main barriers that prevent the target group to gain employment and/or upward/sideward mobility	Could be addressed by the project
1	Work ability and professional experiences of older employees not considered as a company asset	yes
2	Job profiles and recruitment practices valorise younger workforce, pushing back women 55+	yes
3	Lack of access to adequate training, psychological and professional support services for job seekers 55+	yes
4	Multiple negative and inaccurate prejudices and age stereotypes facing women 55+	yes
5	Lack of (self)motivation and personal resources for seeking employment	yes
6	Staying out of the labour market for a year or longer demotivates women 55+ job seekers	yes
7	Ineffective job search support from government employment offices compared with private recruitment agencies	yes

Table 4.2 Drivers helping Bulgarian LL target group find a job or achieve mobility.

	Drivers that exist in helping job seekers to find a job and employees to reach upward/sideward mobility	Could be enhanced by the project
1	Labour force shortage due to population decrease and ageing.	yes
2	Structural changes in the economy and creation of new jobs, most of which require tertiary education.	yes
3	The Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) could trigger companies to pursue HR strategies for inclusiveness and human capital development.	yes
4	Older workers, particularly those who have fulfilled the retirement requirements, tend to seek meaningful and fulfilling work with impact.	no
5	Many unemployed educated and experienced women 55+ are willing to make a career change as freelancers, self-employed or set up a small business.	no
6	National policies and strategic documents include a focus on people 55+.	yes
7	European and national policies and initiatives supporting access to the labour market for the vulnerable groups – the European Year of Skills, the Pact of Skills, the National Plan for Skills Development, to name a few.	yes

Solutions

Throughout the interviews for the Action plan, several potential solutions were brought up. Some were directed at society, while others were more specific to vulnerable populations. It is critical to implement a zero-tolerance policy against ageism and discrimination in the workplace and society. The state and private labour offices should provide individualised services to all job seekers. Expanding the range of services, forming powerful partnerships, and enhancing multi-level coordination between employment offices, employers, and other labour market intermediaries were some potential solutions brought up during the interviews. State and private labour offices should provide individualised assistance to all job seekers. A psychologist's presence and involvement within the Labour offices would be beneficial to representatives of the target group of women 55+, as it would help them navigate this period of uncertainty, emotions of failure, and sadness.

Employers should look within the organisation before establishing a new post, as well as give possibilities for upskilling and professional growth. Investing in upskilling and training efforts can achieve the goals of developing new competencies to fill specific skill gaps inside the organisation while also increasing an organization's attractiveness to job seekers by providing opportunities to learn and grow. These new employment-related services could be provided in collaboration with state territorial labour offices and private businesses. Dividing employment into independent competency-based roles may provide older people with the freedom they require to continue working while also allowing organisations to take advantage of their experience and knowledge.

The MLSP and NEA are working together to provide new opportunities and launch various programmes to assist underserved groups. Some of the implemented solutions are presented in the current document's Chapter 3 Interventions to promote labour market inclusion, such as: employing unemployed persons over the age of 55, the National Retirement Assistance Programme, etc. Other programmes offered by NEA that mention unemployed persons over 50 years old among other vulnerable groups are Opportunity for Development (Providing opportunities for lifelong learning and improving the level and quality of knowledge and skills of the unemployed to increase their chances of employment); Ensuring Quality Labour (Implementation of various activities to promote the economic activity of the working age population); Parents in employment (provides subsidised daycare workers for working parents) etc. According to NEA statistics, the programmes are successful, and more individuals use them each year (NEA, 2023). However, according to the interviews, these procedures are not well understood by unemployed persons, particularly those who are not registered with their local labour office.

4.4 Engine and mechanisms

The LL's day-to-day operations will follow the ENGINE approach. The LL's target group is women aged 55+. The first step is identifying the relevant stakeholders to work with during the implementation of the project. The Bulgarian team is currently recruiting participant from the chosen target group. A community coalition will also be established (Zadocs & Edwards, 2006). As part of the coalition, diverse stakeholders willing to collaborate with the target group will be identified, including trainers, psychologists, and employers motivated to offer employment opportunities for the group. The second step is to identify barriers, drivers, and possible solutions, as described in Chapter 4.3 of the current document. Participants will receive collaborative re-entry training sessions, as well as psychological support, to help them improve their skills, motivation, beliefs, and attitudes towards starting a new profession or moving upward/sideward. Aside from learning new skills and expanding on existing knowledge, psychological support is essential. Several women mentioned during the interviews that their fear of losing their financial independence, as well as their incapacity to attain retirement age and benefits, will likely lead them to endure toxic working situations and/or not strive for advancement. On the other hand, older persons who lose their employment reported to be more likely to remain unemployed for longer periods and are prone to take up less secure positions, such as contract-based or entrepreneurial labour.

According to the interviewees, corporations, training institutes, and job services need to make a variety of modifications. When it comes to offering/looking for job, public employment agencies are considered less productive than private offices. Training/qualification institutes typically offer specified training programmes, which are supported by EU-funded measures (by Structural funds) but may not necessarily match the needs of job seekers, who must look for ways to increase their qualifications on an individual basis. Many unemployed educated and experienced women aged 55+ are interested in shifting careers, as well as workers who have reached the retirement requirements have expressed a desire for meaningful and impactful work after retirement. It is necessary to increase awareness among potential employers to broaden their pool of candidates for hire and

benefit from mature workers' availability, skills, and experience. Public campaigns against ageism and gender stereotypes, as well as an age-inclusive workforce, consultations with employers to improve and implement inclusive employment practices, early intervention, and addressing skills gaps for women at risk of losing their jobs, are among the activities planned by the LL in Sofia to address all the barriers raised during the interviews.

Several available interventions are identified and listed in Chapter 3 of the current publication, such as 'Encouraging employers to hire unemployed people over 55 years of age', 'National Retirement Assistance Programme', etc. The list will be expanded as additional interventions are identified. Currently, an intervention package is being under development. The intervention package is intended to meet the demands of the Sofia region, as well as the project's key stakeholders.

The Living Lab's major goal is to attract job seekers from the target group of women aged 55+. This will be accomplished by offering a joint re-training programme together with psychological support to job seekers. The training is intended to increase their drive and self-efficacy, while also providing them with the opportunity to learn new skills. Employers will be offered consultations to help them develop and implement inclusive employment practices. These consultations will assist businesses in understanding the needs of the target group, allowing them to adapt to their needs and provide more inclusive workplace settings. A public campaign against ageism and stereotypes will be planned so that other stakeholders change their perceptions of women 55+ and see them as valuable members of society not only at home but also in the workplace, as they have a lot of knowledge and expertise that could be extremely useful to prospective employers.

The Living Lab's second goal is to encourage upward and/or sideward mobility of employees. Employers will be given tools for performing a skills audit, assessing job satisfaction among present employees, and forecasting needs and identifying persons at risk. An early intervention package addressing skill gaps for women at risk of losing their jobs will additionally be developed to help keep them in the workforce. It will also assist them in further developing their talents to advance to a higher level within the same organisation. Finally, a public campaign to promote an age-inclusive workforce will be organised to combat discrimination and stereotyping of women 55+ and to urge all stakeholders to look inside their structures before hiring new staff.

Sofia Living Lab will work simultaneously to meet the two goals outlined by implementing the ENGINE approach and its gearing wheels (see Figure 4.1 and Appendix). The first geared wheel will be used to identify participants (women over 55 in need of re/training and stakeholders willing to collaborate with them). The next one is to provide appropriate re/training and psychological support, and the third wheel is about matching job seekers/employees with relevant opportunities. The fourth wheel aims to raise awareness and promote an age-inclusive workforce.



Figure 4.1 Description of the gearing wheels in the Living Lab Sofia.

At this conceptual stage of the project, all ideas for the Living Lab are based on the interviews completed in task 1.3, as well as desk research, and they might change later, and new ideas might be added as well. It is difficult to predict how the ENGINE will work and evolve in practice because the actual work with the target group and stakeholders has not yet begun. A more complete description of the implementation plan will be provided in the next working package WP2.

5 Living lab Finland

5.1 Labour market in the city of Kokkola

The middle-sized and bilingual Finnish city of Kokkola is located on the west coast of Finland. Kokkola has ~48.200 inhabitants of which 84% speak Finnish and 12% Swedish as their mother tongue. The population of this city is predicted to decrease by 1.7% and the number of working age population by 3.1% by 2040. This is mainly due to ageing i.e., increase in people over the age of 65. In 2022, 18% of inhabitants were under 15 years old, 59% were aged 15–64 and 23% were over 64 years old. The educational level of inhabitants is polarized: 21% of them has a higher education, whereas secondary education is lacking from 25% of inhabitants (Kokkola municipal information card).

According to the municipality of Kokkola's information website, Kokkola has the largest concentration of inorganic chemistry in the Nordic countries and plenty of companies producing metal, food and wood products, boats, as well as industrial services. In November 2023, 3127 companies had their operations in Kokkola. The largest sector was retail. Most of the companies (83%) were micro-organizations having less than six employees. The biggest employers in the region are the municipality of Kokkola (~2.300 employees) and Wellbeing services county of Central Ostrobothnia (SOITE) (~4.000 employees). In November 2023, there were 383 vacancies open in Kokkola. The number of vacant jobs had declined by 8% in one year. The vacancies were most often open in health and social care sector, food industry, catering business, and inorganic chemistry. Regarding inorganic chemistry, there is a new large-scale e-fuel factory planned to be established for the Port of Kokkola in 2027–28. This investment will potentially bring 3.000 new jobs.

Based on the employment statistics of Kokkola from November 2023, the labour force of Kokkola was 21.832 persons, in total. The unemployment rate was 8.4% which is 1.6% less than in Finland in general. The unemployment rate however rose 8% (n=139 persons) within the last year. The total amount of unemployed was 1.825. Most of them were men (61%) and over the age of 50 (33%). Youth unemployment is also relatively common in Kokkola: 19% unemployed were under 25 years old. This is 8.7% higher than in Finland in general. 22% of unemployed had only primary school education. Almost every tenth of unemployed were laid off temporarily (8.2%). The long-term unemployment rate, i.e., the rate of those being unemployed at least 12 months was 35.6% (n=649 persons) of which 41% (n=267 persons) were unemployed due to disabilities or long-term illnesses. 2.1% of the population in Kokkola were receiving basic social assistance i.e., last-resort financial assistance or help with daily expenses.

Like all regions in Finland, the state organises TE-services in the region of Kokkola. These services aim to ensure the availability of skilled labour force and to improve the employment opportunities and employability of job seekers. The TE-services also help new entrepreneurs and facilitate the success of companies. The TE-services are mainly responsible for job seekers who receive earnings-related unemployment allowance from an unemployment fund. The duration of this allowance depends on the person's employment history. Municipalities, in turn, produce employment services in their region for job seekers who meet at least one of the following criteria: a) receive basic (i.e., not earnings-related) unemployment allowance or labour market subsidy from the Social Insurance Institution (KELA), b) are under the age of 30, c) are unemployed immigrant, and d) are foreign-language speaker. This allocation of duties between the state and municipalities has been in executed in a local government pilot on employment, and Kokkola has been one of the 118 Finnish municipalities participating in it. After January 1st, 2025, the employment services of all job seekers **will be transferred to the municipalities**. This national reform, as well as the ongoing pilot phase, aim to create a service structure that is expected to contribute to rapid employment of job seekers and increase the availability, effectiveness and diversity of employment and business services. The

goal is to transfer the employment services closer to clients and increase the customer-orientation of services by integrating employment, education, business, and social and health services more closely together. Moreover, instead of a strict service model, the municipalities are allowed to develop the services based on the needs of job seekers and employers in their region.

The municipal employment services closely collaborate with other regional stakeholders such as companies, employers, training institutions, rehabilitation services, social and health care services, third sectors organisations and pension and insurance institutions (see Figure 5.1). For instance, if unemployed persons need to update their skills, this is done in a close regional cooperation with employment services, training institutions, third sector organisations and employers depending on the individual needs. Accordingly, there is already a coalition in the Kokkola region that aims to support inflow and mobility of vulnerable people in the labour market. However, the collaboration of it could be more fluent, as it is described later in this chapter.

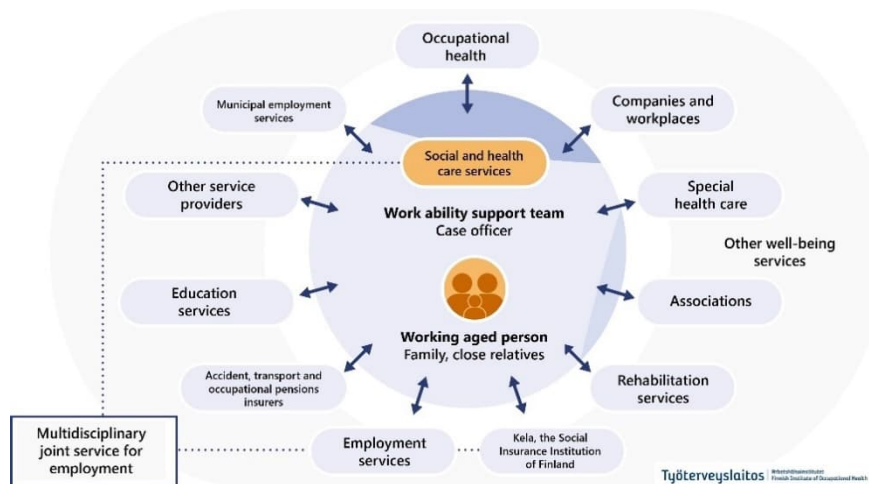


Figure 5.1 Work ability support in Finland for unemployed persons (Work ability support training, Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, 2022).

5.2 Target groups

Job seekers

The first target group (TG1) of the Finnish LL is the long-term unemployed job seekers. Based on the employment statistics of Kokkola, there were 649 long-term unemployed in Kokkola in November 2023. This group is very heterogenous and includes several sub-groups. First, it includes job seekers (n=69) close to labour market threshold who do not have major health problems, have been unemployed for 300–400 days and receive 50% labour market subsidy. They have dropped out of financially higher-level subsidies such as daily allowance earnings or unemployment allowance. The second subgroup is individuals who are employed but currently on long-term sick leave. The third group consists of unemployed who are studying independently and voluntarily (n=199). The fourth group are unemployed who are participating in workforce training (n=216) organised by the TE-services. The smallest group includes individuals who are working as substitutes for those on job alteration leave (n=37). All these groups consist of job seekers who can be seen to have great potential and motivation to gain employment. In addition, TG1 includes individuals who are persistently unemployed due to disabilities or long-term illnesses (n=283). This is a more vulnerable group which usually has individually tailored long-term treatment relationships and plans with healthcare, rehabilitation services and/or social care. According to the estimations given by the

employment services of municipal Kokkola, about 6% (n= 17) of these long-term unemployed could potentially gain employment with the help of various support measures.

Employees seeking mobility

The second target group (TG2) of the Finnish LL is the employees working in subsidized jobs via municipal employment services (~30–40 persons per year) or be employed by other municipal services (~5–15 persons per year). These people work mainly in technical, property maintenance, cleaning, and catering sectors. During the employment, a job coach of municipal employment services meets them 1–2 times at workplaces. About 40–50% of employees find a more sustainable employment during or after the subsidized period of employment. The rest 50% would need more support (e.g., support for training, support at workplaces by job coaches and supervisors) so that there could be mobility to better and more sustainable employment.

The third target group (TG3) could be young employees (under 29 years old) who have received their first employment after education, but whose labour market position is still vulnerable. They are newcomers in work life and do not necessarily have a clear view of how they could progress occupationally. Based on the previous research findings, they usually have fixed-term employment contracts, atypical working hours, lack of experience to tackle the possible challenges and setbacks in work life, and perhaps unrealistic expectations for work and work life which may cause disappointments (e.g., Grant et al., 2021; Hanvold et al., 2016; Zhou & Zheng, 2022). According to the municipal employment services of Kokkola, these young employees are in higher risk to quit the job while facing the first difficulties at work. In addition, it was emphasized that employers might have less time, resources, and knowledge regarding familiarization of work for young, less experienced employees. Based on the examination carried out by the municipal employment services of Kokkola, these young employees work more often in transport, construction, and restaurant industries. The main reasons for quitting the job were physical and mental health challenges, employees' unmet expectations, poor work climate and long journeys to work.

The fourth potential target group (TG4) could be the on-the-job learners i.e., those, often low educated employees who work without pay subsidies and want to progress occupationally. They may be employed either in public or private organizations which do not offer them possibilities to develop their skills or the employees themselves do not recognize their possibilities to develop. The characteristics of these employees particularly in Kokkola region is lacking as there is no statistics regarding these target group and they were difficult to reach for interviews. In addition, it has been difficult to find employers who would be motivated to develop their employees as a part of this research project. That is mainly because most of the employers in the region are small, and the bigger employers already have their own practices. The search of potential employers (or sectors) how could participate in the project by developing their current workers and employing job seekers will continue in WP2.

5.3 Barriers, drivers and solutions

Barriers

In the stakeholder interviews various barriers preventing long-term unemployed persons to find employment in the Kokkola region were identified (see Table 5.1). At the individual level, the most important obstacles are related to prolonged unemployment, low professional skills, and impaired health. Young people and immigrants were especially mentioned to have difficulties in getting their first job. The informants mentioned that the persons whose unemployment have prolonged are not necessarily any more aware of the demands of labour market and many of them have lost their self-efficacy and motivation to gain employment.

The interviewed employers felt that they were left without sufficient information and support when considering employment of long-term unemployed persons. As there are a lot small and medium-sized enterprises in the region, the employers saw that the employment subsidies and services should be better allocated to them. The bigger companies have already well-established practices regarding employment as well as skill and competence development of their workers. It was emphasized that there are probably a lot of (hidden) jobs in small companies, but the unemployed persons and jobs do not necessarily meet. In addition, it was mentioned that there are not enough jobs for those whose skills are outdated. The paradox is that there is a labour shortage in some sectors, but it cannot be met because there is not enough skilled labour. On the other hand, some sectors have a significant labour shortage, but not possibilities for salary payments. In addition, some employers were suspicious what comes to the employment on long-term unemployed or older workers. The employers were afraid of costs of sickness absences. In addition, they emphasized that they do not have enough resources (mainly time) to introduce the employee to the work and/or to support the skills of those who have been unemployed a long time. Instead, they expected the employees to be productive rather soon after the recruitment. Some interviewees however mentioned that the subsidized employment “verifies” that the employees are ready for working life and this message should be brought to workplaces more actively.

At the employment service level, one challenge is the passivity which increases if the services must be waited too long. That is, for example, if job seekers need services from several sectors (e.g., healthcare, social care, employment services), some services can be “on hold” while waiting for the other services. It was seen that career planning should be part of the services also for those long-term unemployed who have challenges with skills and/or health. Accordingly, it was not seen effective to forget the employment while solving the other problems. A clear challenge was also related to the subsidized work model which leads too often back to unemployment than re-employment. In Kokkola, a clear service gap was recognized in the employment services in the third sector (e.g., associations and non-profit organizations producing purchased services (e.g., income assisted jobs, apprenticeships, and rehabilitative work) for unemployed. That is because a major service provider, the ‘Kokkotyö’ foundation was disbanded a few years ago. The foundation offered work activities and services for 600 long-term unemployed persons yearly. The informants felt that it would be good to revive activities and collaboration as the foundation did provide.

The employment services should be smoothly implemented and coordinated. According to the interviewees, there is sometimes friction in services and cooperation between professionals and the regional coalition. For example, service providers (e.g., healthcare) may not know what services are provided by other service providers (e.g., TE-service) and where clients could be guided. The employment services also use outsourced services, such as job coaching and rehabilitation, which are not always linked to other services. It might also happen that cooperation between multidisciplinary networks of professionals may become even more difficult and create obstacles in the coming years due to the reform of the employment services, in which all employment services will be transferred from the state to the municipalities (see chapter 5.1). At the employment service system level, effective support for employees was also perceived as problematic. Several reasons for this were emphasized: too many clients per professional; too many bureaucratic obligations which diminish the time available for client interaction; unemployed persons’ need for rehabilitation and healthcare services are not recognized good enough; the national reform of TE-services has taken too much time which is taken away from services for clients.

Altogether, the barriers emphasized in Kokkola by the interviewed stakeholders corresponded to those recognized at the national level in Finland (see table 5.1. and State-of-the-art report, submitted).

Table 5.1 The main barriers for long-term unemployed to get employment in the Kokkola region.

	The main barriers for long-term unemployed to get employment	Could be addressed by the project
1	Impaired health and work ability	No
2	Lack of education and/or low professional skills	Yes
3	Lack of work experience and/or fragmented work history	Yes
4	Lack of Finnish language skill	No
5	Lack of motivation and self-efficacy to gain employment	Yes
6	Lack of awareness of the requirements of working life	Yes
7	Limited availability of jobs in the region, in lower-productivity jobs, in jobs without requirements of professional skills and fluent Finnish language skill	No
8	Unemployed persons and jobs do not match	Yes
9	Insufficient information, knowledge and/or prejudices about the long-term unemployed by employers	Yes
10	Insufficient support for employers when employing long-term unemployed	Yes
11	Limited time and resources of employers for guidance and introduction of work	Yes
12	Job coaching support do not extend to workplaces	Yes
13	Career planning services are not always combined with the services offered for long-term unemployed who have challenges with health and/or skills	Yes
14	There is friction in the services, cooperation between employment service providers and regional coalition	Yes
15	The local coalition has suffered from the disbandment of "Kokkotyö" foundation	Yes

The challenges regarding employees' upward or sideward mobility were discussed in regional interviews less (see Table 5.2). First, it was highlighted that perhaps the smaller the employers would like to have more information of possibilities and support about this topic. On the other hand, the workplaces felt that the employees have the skills for the job they were hired for, and the bigger workplaces have their own practices for possible advancement and thus less motivated to participate in this project. Some respondents however thought that employers should be more prepared to develop the skills and competencies of their current workers instead of searching for new employees outside the organization as a desire to find "ready packages" who do not need to be educated further. In addition, employees' low motivation to develop their skills, previous bad experiences in basic education and learning difficulties were mentioned as barriers. Moreover, employers' fear, that employees whose skills are improved may leave the job, was recognized. A survey by the Finnish Service Centre for Continuous Learning and Employment's (SECLE) examined further education among Finnish workers in 2022. The representative sample showed that 11% of employees felt that their employers have not enabled their participation in training despite employees' willingness to participate. However, almost half of the employees (47%) were satisfied with their possibilities to learn at their current work and their supervisors' support for learning. The employees with lower education were the least satisfied with their possibilities to learn and the support from their supervisors.

Table 5.2 The main barriers for employees' sideward or upward mobility in the Kokkola region.

	The main barriers for employees' mobility	Could be addressed by the project
1	Employees' low motivation to skill development	Yes
2	Employees with previous bad experiences in basic education and learning difficulties are not motivated to develop their skills	Yes
3	Employers' low motivation to skill development of their employees	Yes
4	Small and medium-sized employers do not have enough knowledge, resources, and practices for competence development of their employees	Yes
5	Small and medium-sized workplaces have limited opportunities for career development	No
6	Employers have limited resources to let employees undertake education and training during worktime	No
7	Employers have limited opportunities to organize training during working hours because the tasks must be occupied and there is too little staff	No
8	Employees often do not want to undertake education and training in their own time	No
9	Fear among employers that employees will leave for another organisation if their skills are improved	No

Drivers and implemented solutions

There are plenty of drivers in the Kokkola region (see table 5.3), which, by making them more effective, could lead to higher and more sustainable employment.

Employment service professionals, for example, have good education, experience in multidisciplinary cooperation, and motivation to help unemployed persons to gain employment. In addition, regional training institutions have cooperated for a long time with local companies and employers. The vocational schools have, for example, a special working life unit that regularly assesses the labour needs of companies and works together with the companies. The existing apprenticeship practices were also seen as well-functioning in this respect.

Some of the existing solutions were seen beneficial for employment and/or for the general life situation of the long-term unemployed persons. One is the personal job coaching services for job seekers organised by the municipal employment services. The job coaches coordinate the services and help the job seekers to find employment. This model has been developed in the Kokkola region further. Accordingly, unemployed persons, who are working with pay subsidies, receive help in planning a sustainable working career while working so that the employment does not end when the subsidized period ends. This activity is carried out together with the TE-service, municipality of Kokkola and the vocational school offering guidance assistance ('Ohjuri' -model). In the interviews, the model was found as well-functioning, and according to an impact report (Normia-Ahlsten & Riisalo-Mäntynen, 2023), those who participated in the process were placed more often in vocational studies than those who were not involved in the model.

In the regional social and health care services, "work ability support team" has also been implemented. It is a multi-professional team that seeks solutions for job seekers in difficult life situations or with health challenges. Currently, a nationwide Individual Placement and Support (IPS) job training project for mental health rehabilitators is under way in the Kokkola region. It is conducted by social and employment sectors, and it is based on the quality criteria of the IPS (see Bond et al., 2023; Drake & Bond, 2023), but has an expanded target group (i.e., the long-term unemployed, partially able to work, disabled). The results of this IPS model were brought up in the interviews and in the evaluation of the Work Ability Program (Saikku et al., 2022). The IPS model is quite widely accepted in Finland and found to be effective (Normia-Ahlsten & Riisalo-Mäntynen,

2023). In addition, the linear model of rehabilitative work activities has also been tried in the region. It combines work and rehabilitative work activity. The goal is that the employees move from the rehabilitative work activities to subsidized jobs in small steps.

What comes to skill development, it emerged that the vocational educational institution offers professional skills mapping service, which helps to recognize the skills and tailor the training for the students and job seekers. It was highlighted that vulnerable groups may need only one good educational or training experience which helps them to realize that they can be successful as a learner and can become excited and motivated about studying.

Table 5.3 Drivers helping to find employment and enhance mobility in the Kokkola region.

	The main drivers helping employment of job seekers	Could be addressed by the project
1	Labour shortage in some industries	Perhaps
2	Expertise of employment service professionals	Yes
3	Personal job coaching services for job seekers	Yes
4	Long-term unemployed persons receive help in planning a sustainable working career (i.e., OHJURI model)	Yes
5	The multi-professional “work ability support team” supports job seekers in difficult life situations or with health challenges	Yes
6	The individual Placement and Support (IPS) model is familiar	Yes
7	The vocational educational institution offers professional skills mapping for students and job seekers	yes
8	The Vocational educational institution has a working life unit that cooperates with companies	Yes
9	Apprenticeship practices are well-functioning	Yes

5.4 Engine and mechanisms

In the initial phase of the Kokkola LL, an emphasis is placed on the Kokkola municipal as an employer. That is because municipal is the second biggest employer in the region with ~2.300 employees, which makes it possible to pilot the ENGINE in a small scale in the beginning of WP2. The fact that most companies (83%) in the region are micro-organizations having less than six employees complicates the implementation of ENGINE i.e., the promotion of inflow and mobility in the same companies or employers. As the biggest employer in the region, SOITE, is going through a large-scale organizational reform of Finnish healthcare system (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2024), the organization did not have resources to participate in this project in its early phase. Nevertheless, the example of municipality of Kokkola hopefully encourages and motivates the other employers to participate. Accordingly, as the project goes further, more employers will be tried to recruit to participate.

What comes to the regional coalition, various regional stakeholders (see Figure 5.1) will participate in the implementation of ENGINE and tackling the barriers of employment also when the municipality of Kokkola is the employer. The content of coalition and relevant stakeholders however depend on the target group and the intervention that will be applied. For example, if the goal is to increase the mobility of employees working in subsidized jobs, collaboration between job coaches of municipal employment services, training institutions (e.g., KPEDU, The Federation of Education in Central Ostrobothnia), employers, supervisors, and third sector organisations are needed.

The municipal of Kokkola employs 35–50 long-term unemployed people with pay subsidies early. These people work mainly in technical, property maintenance, cleaning, and catering sectors. The **first** gearing wheel of the ENGINE in the Kokkola LL (see Figure 5.2) relates to the mobility of the employees working in pay subsidized jobs. The amount of pay subsidies as well as workplaces providing pay subsidized jobs are limited. In addition, about half of the pay subsidized employment leads back to unemployment than re-employment. Thus, it is necessary that these employees, who usually have challenges with employment but who have enhanced their employability in the subsidized jobs, will be helped to find a more sustainable employment. If these employees manage to take the next steps in their working careers, the resources will be freed up for those unemployed people who are waiting for the possibility to take the first step. Moreover, the pay subsidies help to develop the employees to the specific jobs and sectors suffering a labour shortage. The intervention that will be needed offers job coaching support to employees at workplaces as well as their supervisors and work communities. The coalition will be needed to include the training possibilities in this model and to find the new job opportunities at the current or other employers.

The **second potential gearing wheel** consists of actions for young newly hired employees and their employers. Young employees who have just been hired have been recognized to be at a higher risk of quitting their jobs while facing the first difficulties and setbacks at work. Furthermore, it was also emphasized that the support for employers is needed, for example, for familiarization of work for young employees. If the start of the working career of young people can be supported successfully, it is possible to prevent unemployment and the risks associated with it. Furthermore, there is also a **potential chance** to encourage and empower the employees and employers to skill development. However, the concrete plans regarding this gearing wheel and interventions associated with it have not yet been confirmed. Same goes also for the other potential groups of employees seeking mobility and their employers.

The main reason for being unsuccessful in recruiting the employers who will be motivated to promoting skills and mobility of their current workers, is the lack of big employers in the region. As big companies already have well-functioning practices and HR professionals for skill development, they do not have a high motivation or need to participate in this project. The small companies, in turn, do not have a great need to develop their workers as their possibilities and resources to promote mobility after skill development are scarce. In future, the possibility to implement the ENGINE (i.e., inflow and mobility) in a collective of small companies (e.g., small companies in catering business or mechanical engineering) should be considered. Accordingly, the idea could be to support skill development of employees collectively and find better mobility across organisations. This possibility can be studied next. For skill development and mobility, there already exist some potential evidence-based interventions, e.g., for strengthening sustainable employment and career progress of young employees (see Towards Successful Career intervention, in table 3.2) and for developing the occupational skills and mobility of employees in the mid-career phase (see Skilled and Renewable Career intervention, in table 3.2).

The third and fourth gearing wheels focus on inflow of job seekers, i.e., long-term unemployed who could find employment either in open labour market or in subsidized jobs in the Kokkola municipal. These gearing wheels do not necessarily connect to the gearing wheels of mobility of employees in the same workplaces. However, they will help the employers to find employees and support the job seekers to gain employment – the mechanism which is not self-evident. Furthermore, these gearing wheels will be connected to each other as seen later in this chapter.

The **target group** description showed that there is a group of long-term unemployed who do not have severe obstacles in their way of employment, but for some reason(s) they have not managed to find job. One of the main reasons for this is that during their prolonged unemployment they have

experienced many disappointments, and therefore many of them have lost their self-efficacy and motivation to gain employment. In addition, employers consider the risks associated with hiring long-term unemployed to be high and call for support to introduce the employee to the work. For many long-term unemployed the threshold for working life has, in fact, become higher than it should be. This group would probably benefit from a training which would improve their self-efficacy beliefs regarding gaining employment and update their job searching skills. Therefore, Taite-coaching could be offered for them (previous JOBS; Brenninkmeijer & Blonk, 2011; Malmberg-Heimonen et al. 2019; Vinokur et al. 1995, 2000; Vuori et al. 2002).

Taite-coaching is the latest Finnish adaptation of the JOBS[®] peer group method that effectively strengthens the job seeking skills and mental well-being of the unemployed persons (see Appendix). The aim of Taite-coaching is to strengthen employment in the open labour market and to reduce the harmful effects of unemployment on self-confidence and self-efficacy. Each Taite-coaching group will consist of 6-15 participants, who meet for five consecutive days, thus simulating a working week. The peer group learning process will be facilitated by Taite-instructors who represent different stakeholders in the coalition and will be trained by Finnish Institute of Occupational Health.

For those long-term unemployed who have more severe challenges with re-employment due to health problems, outdated education, and lack of sufficient skills, for example, the goal could be to enhance their capabilities and give stronger personal support for employment by using the IPS coaching (Normia-Ahlsten & Riisalo-Mäntynen, 2023). The IPS coaching (see Appendix) provides support for both job seekers and employers. It has been implemented earlier in Finland and in Kokkola successfully among those who are partially able to work or are disabled. In this project, the target group could be widened to those long-term unemployed who have health problems or lack of sufficient skills, but who could return to work after receiving some support from the job coach at work. That could, for example, be support for job modifications and skill development while working. The employers highlighted in the interviews that they should receive more information and support from employment services so that the threshold for hiring unemployed persons would be lower.

The Taite- and IPS-coaching will also support each other. Accordingly, most of the long-term unemployed persons can first participate in Taite-coaching. If they do not find job after this training, they can continue to the IPS-coaching, which offers more individual support for finding the job. In both trainings, job seekers' strengths, goals and interests are in focus, thus the work which has been done in Taite-training can be utilized in IPS and the movement towards work can thus be quicker. In addition, both Taite- and IPS-coaching will increase skills and competences of job coaches via trainers' training, which, in turn, support implementation processes of the trainings.

The **fifth gearing wheel** of the ENGINE in the Kokkola LL relates to the employment services and the stakeholders' coalition. At the employment service level, the need for better cooperation between employment services, employers, work communities, training institutions and multidisciplinary work has been recognized. The Synclusive project can help by providing a common platform for actors in the region to clarify cooperation and joint processes which was previously done by the disbanded "Kokkotyö" foundation. In addition, the interventions that will be implemented build and enhance the cooperation between different stakeholders. With the help of better regional cooperation formed during the project, it is possible to increase the ecosystem's resilience to confront the upcoming major changes in the service system (i.e., the transfer of TE-services from state to municipalities, see chapter 5.1).



Figure 5.2 Description of the gearing wheels in the Living Lab Kokkola.

6 Living lab the Netherlands

6.1 Labour market in the Amersfoort region

Amersfoort is a mid-sized city and municipality in the heart of the Netherlands. Amersfoort plays a pivotal role in the regional landscape, hosting a rapidly expanding business community. In the Netherlands, there are 35 labour market regions, of which the Amersfoort region is one. Amersfoort is the biggest city in the region, but some other towns also belong to this region. Apart from Amersfoort itself, this labour market region consists of the cities of Baarn, Bunschoten, Leusden, Nijkerk, Soest and Woudenberg. In 2023, there were 181,300 jobs (either part-time or full-time) in the Amersfoort region, which has been steadily increasing from 155,000 in 2015 but is expected to stabilise in 2024 (Regio in Focus 2023, UWV). There are about 6,000 registered job seekers in the Amersfoort region. The unemployment rate was 3.3% in 2023. It's higher for women (3.8%) than for men (2.8%), and highest for youth aged between 15-24 years (7.8%) and those with a low level of education (8.4%) (Statistics Netherlands, 2023). Compared to the national average in the Netherlands, the unemployment rate in the Amersfoort region is slightly lower, the disparity in unemployment between men and women is somewhat more pronounced, and the unemployment rate among those with lower levels of education is higher.

In the Amersfoort region, the healthcare and retail sectors provide the largest employment, followed by employment agencies, labour mediation, and industry (Statistics Netherlands, 2023). This indicates that the Amersfoort region is marked by an overrepresentation of sectors such as ICT, construction, and service industries, while sectors like transportation, storage, and public services are less prominent (Regio in Focus, 2023; see also table 6.1).

In 2023, there were almost 10,000 job vacancies in Amersfoort region. Most vacancies were in Business Economics and Administrative professions (2150), Technical professions (1850), Commercial professions (1150), and Healthcare and Welfare professions (1050) (Statistics Netherlands, 2023). In regard to the sectors of focus in the action plan of Amersfoort, there were 150 vacancies for Childcare workers (Statistics Netherlands, 2023).

In the labour market, especially within public services such as healthcare, childcare, and education, there is a growing tightness characterised by a shortage of personnel with the necessary skills. Concurrently, there exists a disparity in employment outcomes, with relatively high unemployment rates among individuals who have completed lower-level vocational education (VMBO), women and youth (15-24 years) (see table 6.1).

Amersfoort is designated as one of the 35 key 'labour market regions,' wherein the municipal authorities collaborate with the Employee Insurance Agency (UWV) and offer comprehensive services tailored to both the unemployed and employers. This joint effort towards employers is channelled through the Employer Service Center, a vital resource facilitating job placement and support.

Table 6.1 characteristics of the Amersfoort labour market region in 2023.

	Region Amersfoort	Netherlands (total)
Number of jobs	181,300	9.032,000
Number of vacancies	9,750	416,850
Unemployment rate	3.3%	3,5%
Men	2.8%	3.3%
Women	3.8%	3.8%
Youth (15-24 years)	7.8%	7.6%
Low educated	8.4%	5.7%
Number of jobs per sector		
Health care	30,300	1,492,100
Retail	21,300	940,200
Employment agencies & labour mediation	14,300	776,400
Industry	14,900	852,400
Specialised business services	15,200	654,900
Wholesale	11,600	529,300
Education	11,100	597,400
Information & communication	10,300	327,700
Construction	8,200	352,700
Public administration	8,100	570,800
Other services	8,300	339,400
Hospitality industry	8,800	465,800
Other business services	7,200	381,900
Financial services	5,300	222,100
Transportation and storage	5,400	408,200
Agriculture and fisheries	900	120,600

Stakeholders promoting labour market participation

In the Netherlands, the legal framework governing reintegration, the interaction between employers and job seeker services, and training is established by the Participation Act and the SUWI Act (Work and Income Implementation Organization Structure Act; Rijksoverheid, 2020). These two laws stipulate that municipalities and UWV (the Social Security Administration, acting both at the national and the regional level) jointly carry out tasks for employers and job seekers within the labour market regions. Thus, both the municipalities and UWV together are responsible for both employer services and job seeker services. The municipalities and UWV most often have access to the same support tools and subsidies for employers. However, they still differ to some extent in the way they deploy it and the criteria they use. With the increasing collaboration, these differences are expected to further diminish.

The job seeker service has the task of supporting job seekers in removing obstacles and to support them in finding work. For example, job seekers dealing with personal issues like addiction or problematic debts, which render them 'unfit for work', receive support in addressing these specific non-work-related problems. To this end, the job seeker service works with mental health care and debt counselling services. Job seekers who lack relevant experience or education that hinders their

participation in the labour market are supported with training, courses, education and/or work experience placements. This requires close cooperation with regional training institutions. The employer services support employers in filling vacancies by supplying suitable job seekers for those vacancies in collaboration with the job seeker services. If a vacancy is not automatically ideal for a job seeker, the employer services support employers in filling the position. If necessary, tools and facilities as described above are used for the labour integration of job seekers. Within the municipality, the Learning Work Desk serves as the intermediary between education, job seekers, and employers. It offers advice to these stakeholders to improve the alignment of education with the labour market.

6.2 Target groups

General target groups

The main vulnerable groups in the labour market in the Netherlands in general and in Amersfoort in particular are people with a non-western ethnic background, young people (25 years), older people (>55 years), those with a low educational level and those with a disability (Dutch Social Planning Agency, 2018). They more often work in flexible contracts, more often lose their jobs, and have more difficulty finding a job. The people with a minority background were, according to stakeholders' interviewees, the most vulnerable when they were migrant with a non-western background and/or refugee. Regarding those with a low educational level, those without a basic qualification or recent work experience (often young people and mothers) are also particularly vulnerable. The interviewees from the employer and the job seeker services also mentioned that people with multiple problems or multiple characteristics of vulnerability are the most vulnerable and experience the most difficulties in finding sustainable work. They often have a combination of psychological and physical complaints and issues with, for example, housing, debts, and addiction.

We may focus on all these vulnerable groups during the project in the Amersfoort LL. However, we will start with a focus on the employers who agree to participate in the Amersfoort LL. By beginning with the employers, we gain an understanding of the specific types of jobs involved. This allows us to facilitate their employees' talent and skills development, thereby supporting both upward and sideward mobility within these organisations. Simultaneously, we can assist vulnerable job seekers in finding employment in these organisations. This approach enables us to examine the hypothesised link between current employees' sideward and upward mobility and the integration of vulnerable unemployed individuals and follows the basic assumptions of the ENGINE.

Specific target groups in childcare

This report distinguishes between the general target group and more specific target groups. Our specific target groups are vulnerable job seekers and employees in the childcare sector. However, throughout the project, our aim is to include employers from other relevant stakeholders in our regional Amersfoort LL. Currently we are contacting employers from the education, construction, and retail sectors.

Thus far, a large childcare organisation (450 employees, 52 locations) has indicated willingness to participate in the coalition of the Amersfoort LL. This means that the first target group of vulnerable job seekers in our LL will be trained for positions in childcare. Organisations in these sectors experience large labour shortages and see opportunities to include vulnerable job seekers. As indicated, the second target group of employees who will be facilitated for upward/sideward mobility will also come from these organisations.

In childcare, female migrants from non-western backgrounds and young unemployed people are encouraged to seek employment because they possess an affinity for the work but lack the

opportunity to pursue the necessary training. At the same time, childcare workers with low or intermediate education (i.e., Secondary Vocational Education) are motivated to engage in professional development and may explore new job opportunities.

6.3 Barriers, drivers and solutions

Barriers

The main barriers for vulnerable job seekers to get employment and employees to progress upward or sideward are mentioned in Tables 6.2 and 6.3, respectively. They were derived from interviews with regional stakeholders and employers. These barriers and drivers are specific for the childcare sector, but many of them also apply to other sectors.

Table 6.2 The main barriers for vulnerable job seekers to get employment.

	The main barriers for vulnerable job seekers to get employment	Could be addressed by the project
1	Laws do not always offer (equal) scope for customisation when tackling the problems. In particular, barriers for job seekers with multiple problems	No
2	Legal requirements for specific education and registrations	Maybe
3	Capacities of job seekers related to health, education, and work experience	Yes
4	Multiple problems of job seekers outside work, including financial problems	Maybe
5	Difficulty with the Dutch language of job seekers	Yes
6	Limited time and resources of employer for guidance	Yes
7	Bureaucracy associated with the arrangements that make the inflow of job seekers financially feasible	Yes
8	Insufficient knowledge or prejudices about the target group by employers	Yes
9	Limited facilities for childcare (particularly important for female job seekers)	No
10	Graduates/qualified individuals are not always suitable for the position if they cannot fully 'get along' with the organisational culture of independence, autonomy and creativity	Yes
11	The unsuitability of qualified individuals is partly due to the lack of focus on soft skills in education. This is a problem if the vulnerable are not willing to develop themselves in soft skills.	No
12	The legal rule requiring consistent personnel presence in the group makes it hard or impossible to have small part-time contracts (i.e. contracts with few hours), which is sometimes necessary for vulnerable job seekers.	Yes
13	Employers can provide childcare workers with structure (fixed days and times) but limited flexibility, as they need to be replaced on a one-to-one basis	No
14	Employees are tired of training and mentoring new employees, viewing these as additional tasks rather than new employees offering extra help.	Yes
15	Team spirit differs across teams, especially with new colleagues from diverse backgrounds, and tends to diminish as colleagues depart from the organisation	Yes
16	Limited facilities and budget for childcare	Yes

Table 6.3 the main barriers for upward or sideward mobility.

	The main barriers for upward or sideward mobility	Could be addressed by the project
1	Capacities of job seekers related to health, education, and work experience	Yes
2	Limited time and resources of the employer	Yes
3	Employees often do not want to undertake education and training in their own time	Yes
4	Employers have limited options to let employees undertake education and training during worktime due to a lack of staff	Yes
5	Managers are often not aware of the willingness of employees to undertake education	Yes
6	Managers pay little attention to career opportunities	Yes
7	Career opportunities are very limited for childcare employees.	Yes
8	Fear among employers that employees will leave for another organisation or sector, such as primary education. The reasons for this include a tight labour market, a collective labour agreement rule that you move up a step in your income when changing employers, and more financial resources in primary education.	Yes
9	Employees make limited use of internal training opportunities, likely partly because this must be done in addition to regular duties.	Yes
10	Employers in childcare have limited opportunities to organise team activities or training during working hours, as the childcare groups must always be staffed, and there is a shortage of personnel.	No
11	Employers struggle to find the right funding for solutions to obstacles that are costly	Yes
12	Employees often leave if other colleagues also leave because of diminishing team cohesion and a poor sense of belonging	Yes

Drivers

The main driver for vulnerable job seekers to get employment is the labour force shortage, making employers eager to find new employees. At the same time, this is also a driver for employers to invest in the personal development of their employees to prevent them from moving to another employer. At the employment service level, the driver is that these professionals have knowledge, experience in multidisciplinary cooperation, and motivation to help unemployed people to gain employment. They also have the right means to support employees (e.g. help with applying for jobs, offering training) and employers (e.g. with subsidies or services like job coaching). At the individual level, a driver is that many job seekers, particularly those in childcare, are intrinsically motivated to find a job.

What kind of changes are needed?

Inflow of job seekers

Changes are needed at different levels to stimulate the inflow of vulnerable workers. At the level of services, more sustainable support for job seekers is often needed using, for example job coaching at the workplace. More sustainable support from the Employer Service Center is also desired for employers. Greater clarity regarding financial assistance for hiring vulnerable individuals and covering a portion of the training costs, along with reduced bureaucracy, are also beneficial changes. At the educational system's level, education needs to be adapted and tailored towards step-by-step modular programs that better fit the abilities of vulnerable job seekers and the limited time available of employees who want to obtain additional qualifications, new responsibilities, or challenges. At the employer level, they must allocate more capacity to support vulnerable new employees and tailor the job to suit their abilities and preferences. It will be beneficial to recruit job seekers in new

and more personalized manners, including engaging with them in their own environments and organizing shadowing days. Offering job guarantees can also lead to more successful placements. At the individual level, job seekers need training in skills, new diplomas/certificates, and improved self-efficacy to handle the new job.

Upward / sideward mobility of employees

Changes are also needed at different levels to stimulate employees' upward or sideward mobility. At the services level, advice and subsidies are needed to stimulate learning and skill development by employees who already have a job but are still very vulnerable, for example, because they are poorly educated.

At the educational level, we need similar adaptation of education and training to become more tailor-made and converted to step-by-step modular programs.

At the employer level, more attention and action are needed to stimulate learning and skills development, to keep their work interesting and challenging and to progress the career of their employees when they want to. At the individual level, employees must be made more aware of possibilities, be motivated and learn new skills.

We need many changes to stimulate the inflow of vulnerable job seekers and the upward or sideward mobility of employees. Although many actions, instruments and interventions take place in the region, they are not addressed collectively nor offered in an integrated way. In practice, the connection between inflow and upward or sideward mobility is not made at all. Although regional stakeholders embrace this idea, it is questionable whether this link between inward and upward/sideward mobility will 'work' in the current labour market. The Dutch labour market is incredibly tight, with historically low unemployment rates and many vacancies. Consequently, ample job openings are available for vulnerable job seekers. However, the focus on actively promoting upward mobility is not merely to create room for vulnerable job seekers but also to explore how it is beneficial for the organisation by aligning it with the organisation's human capital strategy. In childcare organisations there are not many opportunities for career progression and employers are afraid to lose their personnel. Here, the focus shifts towards retention, which can be partially addressed investing differently in human capital. To optimally utilise current opportunities and integrate interventions to tackle barriers for retention and upward/sideward mobility and make connections between current initiatives, better regional collaboration amongst employers of the same sector as well as other sectors is needed. For example, 'combination jobs' is considered to be an interesting solution for addressing some of the barriers by the present partners in the regional coalition.

Solutions that have been applied

At the municipality and employer service centre, many solutions are being applied to stimulate the inflow of vulnerable groups and, to a smaller extent, the career development of employees. These solutions are mainly directed at the job seekers. Examples are job coaching (Guidance in the workplace to retain employment), Job Application Support, Work Fitness Training (Labor Activation, Orientation, and Capacity Building), Support from a job buddy during job application activities, training programs including cleaning and Forklift-reach truck, activation tools including empowerment and developing general employee skills and Language classes. The municipality and the employer service centre also match the job seeker (the potential employee) and the employer. Finally, employers are mainly being assisted by subsidies and can get support in applying for these subsidies.

The Learning Work Desk within the municipality is a collaboration between UWV, the municipality and education. They give individual educational advice to job seekers and employees and help in all

kinds of trajectories related to learning together with individuals, employers, and education. They also discuss the training needs with employers and help in the search for the right funding and subsidies.

Specific solutions that have been applied in childcare

The childcare sector initiated a pilot program to facilitate employee entry. This resulted in a focus on migrant women. This group appeared to be highly and intrinsically motivated to go to work in this sector. This pilot involved providing these individuals with a customised and expedited training regimen specifically designed for a career in childcare. After an intake and a language course, the participants learned on the job during a series of structured internships. The initial phase of this initiative has recently concluded for 15 of the 17 migrant women selected after the intake process, all of whom succeeded in the language training. Soon, a modular version of the training will be developed and integrated into the Amersfoort LL. Furthermore, new classes may commence within the LL, potentially encompassing other vulnerable groups as well.

Opportunities for development, retention and career progression are now organised by offering the opportunity to switch locations, switch between groups of children in different age categories, and perform ancillary tasks, such as vitality/first aid. Employers also offer opportunities for training, for example, in internal academies. There are a lot of opportunities, but employees make limited use of it, possibly because this takes place in addition to work activities.

6.4 Engine and mechanisms

The changes that are aimed for in the Living Lab

In this initial phase of the Amersfoort LL, we focus on the childcare sector. However, we aim to also include organisations from other sectors. For now, we describe the ENGINE approach only for the childcare sector. Our multifaceted objectives include expanding avenues for upward and sideward career mobility as well as retention of employees and the inflow of vulnerable job seekers. Below, we describe the gearing wheels for the childcare sector in specific. The gearing wheels may be comparable for other employers or sectors, but that will be further explored in the coming year. In addition, the strategy described below consists of preliminary plans from the regional coalition, including the employer. However, this plan is an initial draft that is likely to evolve. Further exploration is needed to refine and finalise the plan.

The **first** aspect of our strategy involves providing enhanced support and attention from management for career development. These efforts aim to facilitate open discussions with employees regarding their personal development aspirations and to create new tasks, roles, and responsibilities where feasible. Additionally, if employees desire alternative opportunities, we will explore the potential for combination jobs encompassing both childcare and primary education or childcare and health care. At the same time, an intervention (to be decided) will be implemented to increase team spirit. These initiatives are aimed to enhance employees' self-efficacy, motivation, and retention.

The second aim is to increase the inflow of job seekers into the childcare organisation. Special attention is being given to two distinct groups: migrant women and young job seekers in childcare. We use an integrated approach to facilitate more effective matches between vulnerable job seekers and suitable employment opportunities. This will be achieved through a comprehensive strategy that encompasses the recruitment of motivated job seekers, enhancement of skills and self-efficacy among job seekers, potential modification of functions or tasks when required, including a newly developed learning path where job seekers can progressively work towards higher levels of assistance and reconciliation within the group until they reach the level of a pedagogical worker, and

the restructuring of educational frameworks to favour more modular and personalised on-the-job learning.

This strategy targets the immediate enhancement of workforce capabilities and seeks to foster a more inclusive and adaptable employment landscape. By addressing the needs of both the current workforce and those entering the sector, we aim to cultivate a more dynamic, skilled, and motivated workforce. Hereby, we aim to contribute to the overall improvement of the childcare sector.

Description of the gearing wheels

Figure 6.1 illustrates the initial draft of the ENGINE gearing wheels for the Amersfoort LL (see also Appendix for a description of the hypothesised context-mechanism-outcomes). As mentioned earlier, the specifics of the gearing wheels may evolve over time, and the gearing wheels themselves may change—some may disappear, or others may need to be added. It starts with the first gearing wheel at the left, which focuses on mapping possible career trajectories within childcare. Possibilities for new careers are limited, but there is potential for expansion, particularly by creating combination jobs with other employers in the same or in related sectors.

The second gearing wheel addresses the often-overlooked aspect of career advancement and **continuous learning for employees with a low or medium educational level**. Targeted interventions are implemented aimed at managerial strategies to improve professional development. While the personal bond between employers is often strong, team spirit may be modest, particularly among new colleagues from diverse backgrounds, and tends to diminish as colleagues depart from the organisation. In response, the third gearing wheel is strategic interventions tailored to cultivate a more robust sense of team unity, thereby enhancing both the integration of new job seekers and the retention of existing personnel. This dual focus is pivotal in establishing a sustainable workforce.

The fourth gearing wheel emphasises the necessity of **educational reforms** to accommodate the evolving needs of job seekers. This entails a shift towards more modular, customised learning programs or courses and an increased emphasis on on-the-job learning. The fifth gearing wheel focuses on matching job seekers with suitable positions. This involves an extensive selection process where job seekers are actively sought within their communities. It encompasses a shadowing day, presentation, and intake process with a strong emphasis on understanding the needs of the job seekers as well as the organisation. This also includes a comprehensive assessment of each job seeker's skills and job requirements, alongside opportunities for potential upskilling and reskilling. Additionally, potential modification of functions or tasks when required, including a newly developed learning path where job seekers can progressively work towards higher levels of assistance and reconciliation within the group until they reach the level of a pedagogical worker.

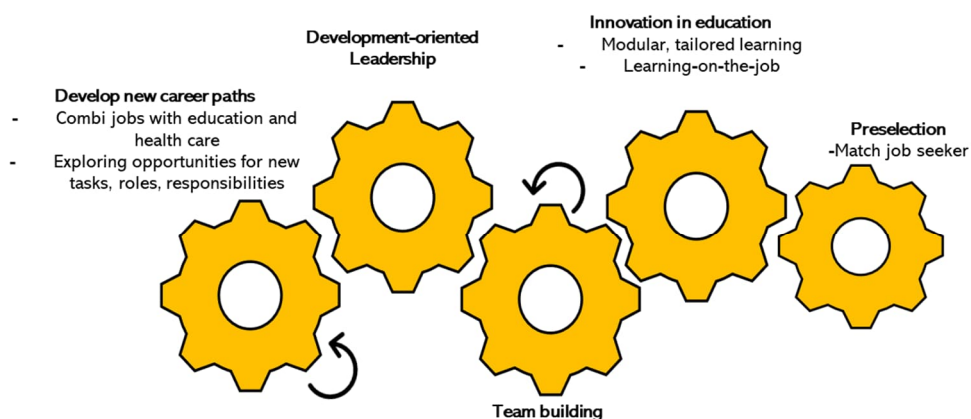


Figure 6.1 Description of the gearing wheels in the Living Lab Amersfoort for the childcare sector.

7 Living lab Portugal

7.1 Labour market in the city of Lisbon, Évora and Lagoa

The Portuguese economy has seen significant changes since the 1974 democratic revolution and joining the EU in 1986. Agriculture's contribution to wealth has dropped to under 4%, though it still employs around 10% of the workforce (Reis, 2013). The country has shifted to a service-based economy, with manufacturing contributing to 18% of production and 19% of employment (Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 2017). Unemployment rates have decreased, reaching 6% (since 2022) but the current state is influenced by the aftermath of COVID-19, the Ukrainian war, and inflation (PO ISE, 2023). The government has implemented active labour market policies, adapting them over time to reintegrate different groups (young people, women, people with disabilities, refugees, immigrants...) into the workforce. Unemployed individuals can access various subsidies through the Portuguese Social Security system, but eligibility and duration depend on specific criteria and previous employment history (IEFP, 2023e).

Unemployed people in Portugal can access a variety of services, such as unemployment subsidy, for people who have had a job contract and contributed to the social security; Employment-Insertion, for unemployed people, registered at the employment centres, where people can do socially necessary jobs for a complementary monthly income; Internships and training by IEFP (National Institute for Employment and Training), which are determined by the level of qualifications of the unemployed person; support for self-employment, to create enterprises, through microcredit or start-up support; and incentives to job searching, if an unemployed person registered in the IEFP accepts a job offer presented to them, and it is lower than the unemployment subsidy, extra financial support is offered (IEFP, 2023e).

In Portugal, four LLs will be implemented. One in the capital of the country, Lisbon, which is a metropolitan city, one in the city of Évora, which is in Alentejo, an area with great agricultural productivity, and the city of Lagoa, located in Algarve, a region mostly focused on tourism. The fourth LL will be implemented digitally, to reach as many people as possible, and not be limited by a specific region or place. These regions present different realities and challenges and have different needs when it comes to the labour market. For instance, metropolitan areas (such as Lisbon) offer better educational opportunities and more job opportunities compared to rural regions (more prevalent in Alentejo and Algarve) which have higher poverty rates and lower education levels (DGEEC, 2023). The tourism sector in Algarve poses specific challenges related to low salaries and very demanding work hours. Migrant workers, for instance, often find jobs in the restaurant industry but face issues like long hours and underpayment due to informal contracts. When it comes to the organisation of employment services, these work nationally in all Portuguese territory, independent of location.

Various stakeholders were identified in the State-of-the-art report submitted earlier in this research project: IEFP (Institute of Employment and Professional Training), IAPMEI (Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation), ANQEP (National Agency for Qualification and Professional Training), government ministries, business networks like Rede do Empresário and startup hubs like PACT, which are both Synclusive project partners. These entities play key roles in employment and enterprise development in Portugal. Government ministries like labour, solidarity, and social security, along with IEFP, ANQEP, and startup incubators, are seen as crucial institutions in addressing unemployment by various government officials. The ministry of economy emphasizes the necessity of creating more enterprises and requalifying employees, supported by organizations like IAPMEI. Collaboration among IEFP, ANQEP, and IAPMEI is noted as vital for integrating vulnerable groups into the labour market (Cedefop, 2021; Portuguese Republic, 2022). Other stakeholders, like CGTP

(General Confederation of Portuguese Workers) and educational institutions such as regional universities, contribute to employment opportunities and worker support. Government-related institutions have significant influence but are limited by state budgets and government-approved policies, while private organizations have more flexibility within legal boundaries to implement measures, they deem suitable for their trainees or employees.



Figure 7.1 Locations of the three physical Living Labs (in blue) in Continental Portugal.

7.2 Target groups

The European Commission defines “young people” as those between 15 and 29 years of age, this is the target group of Portugal’s LLs (Eurostat, 2023). The social inclusion and employment program of 2020 in Portugal recognizes nine primary vulnerable groups: individuals with disabilities, migrants, refugees, youth (children and young adults up to 29 years old), women, older individuals, long-term unemployed individuals, homeless individuals, and former inmates (Observatório Nacional, 2022).

IEFP representatives, that were interviewed in the previous stages of the project, and who are overseeing nationwide operations, considered the youth (aged 16-24) as the most at-risk demographic in Portugal. Portugal’s youth unemployment rate is higher than the EU average, although the country’s current unemployment rate, in general is slightly lower (at 6%) than the EU average (at 6.5%) (EURES, 2023). Statistics from the National Institute of Statistics (INE) in 2022 revealed a youth unemployment rate of 19.9%, totalling 72,000 individuals. By comparison, in 2012,

the count of unemployed young people reached its peak at 172,000. By the second quarter of 2023, this rate had declined to 17.2% (Banco de Portugal, 2023). As of 2021, 19.4% of young people who had recently graduated from university are unemployed, and 15% of them are working in jobs which require less qualifications than those they have (Fundação José Neves, 2021). As of 2023, 33,9% of young people (until 25 years old) in Portugal receives a minimum wage, and 25,8% if they're between 25-29 years old. For comparison, of the employed people over 30 years old, 23,7% receive minimum wage. Regarding contracts, 58,2% of young people between 15 and 24 years old have temporary jobs, while people between 25 and 29 years old, 40,3% of workers are in temporary jobs. The EU average is 24,3% (Fundação José Neves, 2023).

In specific the case of Alentejo and Algarve, rural areas face higher poverty rates and lower education levels, posing challenges in motivating youth to complete their studies. Around 33% of students did not finish high school within the expected three-year period between 2018-2020, as reported by the General Directorate of Education and Science. In 2022, 6% of students didn't finish high school, which is a total of over 50.000 young people. School abandonment, particularly serious in Algarve, correlates with the region's poverty. Stakeholders attribute this vulnerability to youth's lack of experience and, at times, inadequate qualifications. In terms of the distribution of the number of unemployed people, considering the last month of 2023, December, 100 338 people were registered in the area of Lisbon, 16 944 in the region of Alentejo and 23 551 in the region of Algarve, of a total number of 317 659 unemployed registered people nationwide. Of these, the higher number of unemployed people are non-qualified workers (84 928), followed by personal services, protection, security, and salespeople (61 979), administrative staff (35 141), qualified workers in industry and construction (30 591), and specialists of intellectual and scientific activities (30 185). Regionally, except for Açores and Madeira, unemployment has risen, with the highest variation being in the region of Alentejo (+9,6%), while in the previous month (November, 2023), the highest variation was in the region of Algarve (+18,4%) (IEFP, 2024). In table XX are presented the number of unemployed people per LL region.

Table 7.1 Unemployment in Portugal in December 2023, nationwide and per region of the Portuguese LLs (IEFP, 2024).

	Country Total (unemployed)	Lisbon	Alentejo	Algarve
Age Groups				
Under 25	34 911	10 372	2 101	2 688
25-34	65 412	22 321	4 287	6 474
35-54	129 088	43 014	7 077	9 917
Over 55	88 248	24 631	3 479	4 472
Gender				
Male	142 090	45 421	8 857	11 247
Female	175 569	54 917	8 087	12 304
Education Level				
No instruction	28 932	11 044	4 926	2 295
Basic – 1 st Cycle	39 135	8 453	1 793	2 109
Basic – 2 nd Cycle	42 177	11 049	2 128	2 585
Basic – 3 rd Cycle	58 939	18 256	2 859	4 917
Highschool	110 178	38 274	4 004	10 219
University	38 298	13 262	1 234	1 426

7.3 Barriers, drivers and solutions

The challenges facing the Portuguese labour market, especially concerning youth employment, are multifaceted (EURES, 2023). Key issues include a lack of work **experience and low qualifications** among young people, hindering their integration into the workforce. Educational attainment remains a concern, with a significant portion of the population not having completed high school (47.8%), although most young adults have completed, at least, high school (75.2%) (Fundação José Neves, 2023). As such, there exists a **generation gap** in Portugal, which is the biggest one amongst all EU member states (Fundação José Neves, 2021). In many rural areas of Portugal, older adults do not motivate their children to study, as they weren't able to do it themselves, as explained by the interviewees in the previous stages of the SYNCLUSIVE project. There's also a mismatch between skills and labour market demands, while some youths are **overqualified** for available positions, but have no job experience. Conversely, in certain sectors like agriculture, construction, plumbing, and others, there is a noticeable absence of young people actively working or undergoing training for specific jobs. Economic factors such as high taxes on companies contribute to lower wages and very limited hiring capacity (Banco de Portugal, 2022). The stakeholders which were previously interviewed, indicated that due to the tax policies in place in Portugal, hiring is rare and highly competitive, with many applicants and few opportunities. As explained by the stakeholders that were interviewed, enterprises are obligated to pay almost the same value they pay their workers, in tax, to the state, which strangulates the growing of companies. The emigration rates have risen, especially among highly educated youth in search of better opportunities abroad. Exploitation of migrant workers in sectors like agriculture and tourism has also been noted (Oliveira, 2022). Furthermore, the disjointed efforts among public institutions in supporting the unemployed—especially the youth—highlight the need for **better collaboration and coordination among government bodies, employers, educational institutions, and community organizations** to address these complex challenges. Next table (7.1) represents the main barriers for unemployed young people to get employment).

Table 7.2 The main barriers for unemployed young people to get employment in Portugal.

	The main barriers for vulnerable young people to get employment	Could be addressed by the project
1	Lack of education and/or low professional skills	Yes
2	Lack of work experience	Yes
3	Lack of motivation and self-efficacy to gain employment	Yes
4	Lack of awareness of the requirements of working life	Yes
5	Discrimination towards ethnicity	No
6	Limited availability of jobs in the specific region	No
7	Insufficient information about job opportunities for youth	Yes
8	Insufficient information about the young people by employers	Yes
9	Insufficient support for employers when employing unemployed young people	No

Possible upward or sideward mobility in the companies, where youths are already working, is usually hindered by various factors. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, although efforts had been made regarding precarious work, 56% of workers below 25 years old had **fixed-term contracts**, against 18% of the general population (Fundação José Neves, 2023). Companies tend to hire young people the maximum time they legally can as limited-time workers, to then replace them with new ones, as to not offer them a permanent contract. As there are **few opportunities for new employees**, there are also very few opportunities for employees to move upward or sideward (although easier) in their jobs, as that usually only happens when an employee leaves or retires (retiring age in Portugal is 66 years old), and no new vacancies are created. As it was possible to conclude from previous research, companies don't usually invest in their employees training, to offer them a chance at upward and/or sideward mobility. As stated by IEFP representatives, culturally there isn't that mindset of "continuous learning". In the public sector, upwards mobility is only allowed through public tenders, which is a lengthy process, and again very competitive. Sideward mobility, on the other hand, seems easier to achieve, both in the public and private sectors.

In sum, the challenges regarding employees upward or sideward mobility regarding Portuguese young people are very complex, as they face serious problems to enter the labour market, and the mobility is even more difficult in Portuguese organisations. The market is composed of 99% of SME (Small and Medium Enterprises) with a very flat structure and very few horizontal positions. Next table (7.2) presents a some of the main obstacles:

Table 7.3 The main barriers for employees' mobility in Portugal.

	The main barriers for employees' mobility	Could be addressed by the project
1	Inadequate employee motivation for skill development is observed.	Yes
2	Employers lack enthusiasm for enhancing the skills of their workforce.	Yes
3	Small and medium-sized employers face challenges in acquiring the necessary knowledge, resources, and practices for fostering employee competence.	Yes
4	Limited avenues for career development are available in small and medium-sized workplaces.	No
5	Employers possess constrained resources, hindering employees from engaging in education and training during work hours.	No
6	Organizing training during working hours is challenging for employers due to task constraints and insufficient staffing.	No
7	Employers harbor concerns that improving employees' skills may lead to them seeking opportunities with other organizations.	No

Various solutions have been created and experimented within Portugal's territory to address these barriers. For instance, Portugal responded to the issue of companies favouring temporary contracts over permanent ones with the introduction of the Sustainable Employment Commitment (SEC). This initiative, focused on benefiting the unemployed, has significantly contributed to creating over 30,000 new permanent contracts within participating enterprises (IEFPc, 2023). In addressing economic challenges related to high tax demands on employers, Portugal implemented a strategic initiative to reduce social security contributions. The government introduced a policy granting a temporary 50% reduction in social security contributions for those hiring unemployed young people, leading to a notable 4% decrease in youth unemployment between 2017 and 2023 (Segurança Social, 2017). To tackle the challenge of unemployed young people gaining work experience, Portugal launched the ATIVAR.PT internship program in 2020. Tailored for individuals aged 18 to 30, the program has become a beacon of hope, providing meaningful internships, and bridging the gap between education and professional life. With a participation rate ranging between 65% and 80%, the program boasts a 71% success rate, with 70,888 participants securing employment since its inception (IEFP, 2023b). Committed to addressing challenges faced by disadvantaged youth, Portugal introduced the Active Youth Employment Program. Tailored for unemployed youths facing obstacles in education and training, the initiative has successfully reintegrated participants into the workforce, with 9 in 10 securing employment two years after program completion (IEFP, 2023d). Recognizing the difficulties faced by young people entering the labour market or starting businesses, Portugal introduced the Wage XXI initiative. Specifically designed for unemployed youths seeking their first job or aspiring entrepreneurs, the program has proven effective, with 1,965 applications submitted in 2023 and 1,406 successfully approved, highlighting its role in fostering economic empowerment among the younger generation (IEFP, 2022). Next table (7.4) presents the main drivers and implemented solutions in Portugal.

Table 7.4 The main drivers for employment of job seekers in Portugal.

	The main drivers helping employment of job seekers	Could be addressed by the project
1	Employment services have knowledge about the labour market and are spread in several regions of the country	No
2	The employment services offer job seekers personalized training	Yes
3	The employment services offer job seekers personalized employment services	No
4	Apprenticeship trainings are well designed in collaboration with the activity sectors associations and training institutions	No

Portugal's LLs, through the Synclusive project, aims to address some of these barriers, specifically regarding the mismatch between skills and labour market demands, by identifying these market demands and creating and offering specific training to young unemployed people and young employees that wish to achieve upward or sideways mobility in their enterprises; bridging the young unemployed with the national project's partner associations in order to provide them with work experience, tackling another key issue; offering young unemployed people some sort of qualification, through courses and training programmes, to prepare them for the labour market; finding and ensuring job opportunities for the young job seekers, so that they have a chance to enter the labour market, thus ensuring the inflow of employees.

7.4 Engine and mechanisms

The multiregional Portuguese Living Lab

In Portugal, three LLs will be implemented in three different regions of the country, together with a fourth digital LL, which will further broaden the geographical reach of the project. The main focus will be on jobs which require technological skills and also entrepreneurship and tourism, as these are the main areas of the current labour market with more needs for skills development and also for job demands.

The Portuguese national consortium includes an employment governmental service (IEFP), a temporary contractor (TermCerto), a science and technological park (PACT), a network of enterprises (REDO) and a municipality (Lagoa City Council). All of them are focused in fulfilling the goals of the project in terms of integrating in the labour market the young job seekers. This will be ensured after the adequate interventions, to make the ENGINE work effectively to develop competencies and mentoring the young employees to find new and more responsible activities, tasks or jobs – in terms of upward and sideward career mobility.

To reach the project KPIs (key performance indicators), the regional coalitions will focus first on making the ENGINE work through collaborations with SMEs, mainly from technological and tourism sectors, and helping them to identify areas where new tasks, roles, or responsibilities can be created. This will provide career development or mobility opportunities within the enterprises, and encourage cross-functional collaboration, allowing employees to gain experience in various aspects of the businesses. As SMEs have a very small structure the goal is to work with the employers to help them to recognize the diverse skill sets of employees and explore opportunities for jobs that align with the company's needs.

Following this, the second stage will be to increase the job seekers entry or inflow into the labour market. Namely, in the sectors mentioned previously, and through the policy mechanisms regarding entrepreneurship. This will also open opportunities for mobility as people will be able to create their own jobs. In the beginning, the young entrepreneurs will only have the resources to ensure their own wages, but in the future, with the growth of the business, they will be dedicated to more responsible tasks and will hire other young people to perform the tasks that they require.

The development of young workforce capacities is the goal of our multiregional LLs strategy, which also aims to create a more flexible and inclusive labour market. This will lead to a more skilled, motivated, and dynamic workforce by responding to the requirements of both inflow of job seekers and mobility of employees.

Description of the Portuguese Living Labs Engine

The Portuguese Living Lab has developed a comprehensive strategy/engine to address the multifaceted challenges of the labour market. This strategic initiative commences with a meticulous analysis of the prevailing and anticipated needs within the job market through the collaborative efforts of regional coalitions. These coalitions serve as instrumental platforms for gathering invaluable insights, identifying emerging trends, and assessing the specific requirements of diverse industries and sectors.

Following this insightful groundwork, the LL proceeds to plan and implement targeted interventions geared towards fostering increased mobility for young individuals within enterprises. This phase is crucial for aligning the skill sets of the emerging workforce with the evolving demands of various industries. The upwards and sideways mobility of employees allows on young people to take on tasks with more responsibility, also opening the way for inflow of job seekers.

Recognizing the significance of skill enhancement, the LL places a strong emphasis on the development of job seekers and young employees. Innovative courses are designed and offered to both groups, covering a spectrum of vital skills such as digitalization, leadership, entrepreneurship, and others essential for success in the contemporary job market. This investment in education and skill development aims to empower job seekers and employees with the competencies necessary for a successful and impactful career, as well as helping with their mobility.

Once young job seekers have acquired these skills, the LL takes on the responsibility of facilitating their seamless integration into the workforce. The process involves a meticulous matching of individuals with suitable enterprises, a step that considers qualifications, skills, and the specific needs of the businesses involved.

To ensure a more nuanced fit, the LL goes beyond the initial matching and actively assigns specific responsibilities to the matched employees. This strategic step is intended to not only fulfil the needs of the enterprises but also to provide valuable and tailored professional development opportunities for the individuals involved. The final phase of the LL's approach involves facilitating the entry of these individuals into internships and professional experiences. This hands-on exposure allows young talents to apply their acquired skills in real-world scenarios, further enhancing their readiness for the challenges of the labour market.

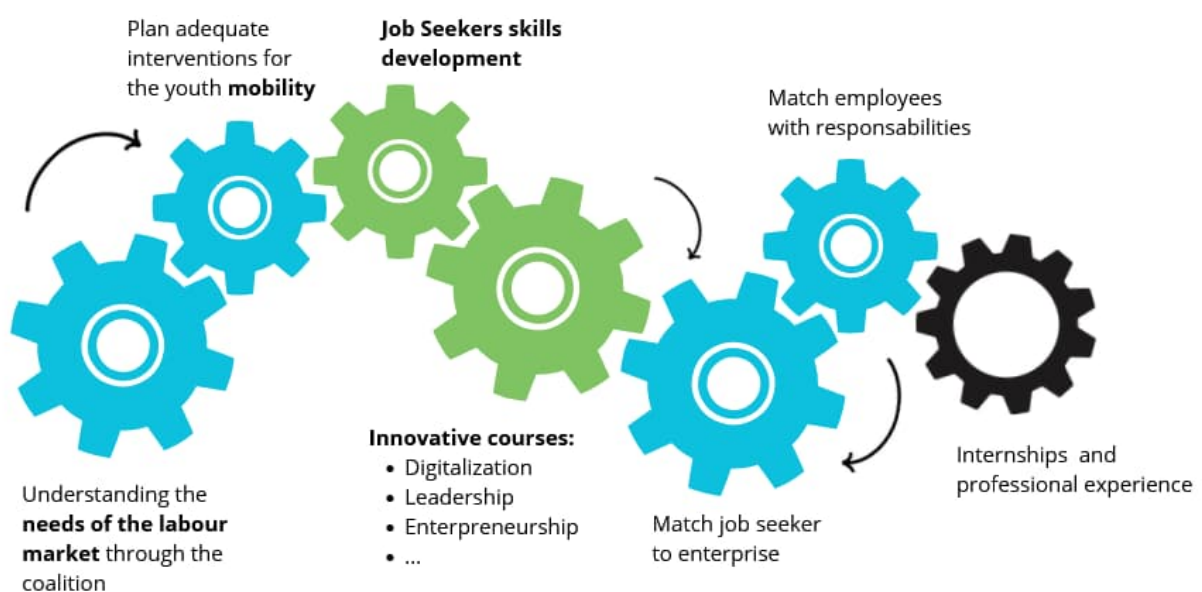


Figure 7.2 Gearing wheels in the Portuguese Living Lab.

In summary, the Portuguese LL's holistic approach aims to bridge the gap between education and the dynamic demands of the workforce (see also Appendix). Through collaboration with regional coalitions, innovative education initiatives, strategic matching, and hands-on professional experiences, it strives to create a comprehensive ecosystem that facilitates the upwards and sideways mobility of young employees and the seamless entry of young job seekers into the labour market. This will help tackle the issue of youth unemployment, ensuring a robust and skilled workforce for the future.

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Appendix: Overview of Context-Mechanisms-Outcomes (CMO's) for each Living Lab

CMOs for finding employment for women 55+ in the Sofia LL

Outcomes	Context	Program context/ intervention	Resource Mechanism	Reasoning Mechanism
Finding employment	<p>Target group: women 55+</p> <p>Due to ageism disappointments with job searching, women 55+ have lost their self-motivation to find employment</p> <p>Pre-selection of committed job seekers using recruitment agency services</p> <p>In-person training</p> <p>Trainers will be from selected organisations</p>	<p>Collaborative re-training programme for women 55+</p> <p>Learning through real-life examples</p> <p>Peer-learning</p> <p>Same content of intervention for all is preferred, but minor tailoring is allowed if necessary</p> <p>Additional support if needed</p>	<p>Adequately targeted recruitment</p> <p>Facilities for participation</p> <p>Possibility to participate without losing unemployment benefits</p> <p>Peer support</p> <p>Coordination with employment services</p> <p>The employer accommodates personal needs and removes barriers</p>	<p>Peer support fosters a sense of community, and increases the motivation</p> <p>Positive feedback contributes to successful learning</p> <p>Increased confidence in own abilities, skills, and opportunities for employment</p>

IF	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Women 55+ are motivated to find employment 2. Women 55+ are interested in the training programme and eager to learn 3. Trainers are skilled and motivated to create real-life learning environment 4. An employer guarantees a job after the programme
THEN	Women 55+ will have more opportunities of finding employment in their desired area
BECAUSE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Their job search related self-efficacy has increased 2. Their job search activity has increased as they know more about the area they are searching for employment 3. Their ability to gain employment is increased as they know more about the activities of the companies they are applying to

CMOs for Taite-coaching of job seekers in the Kokkola LL

Outcomes	Context	Program context/ intervention	Resource Mechanism	Reasoning Mechanism
<p>Ultimate outcome:</p> <p>Long-term unemployed have gained employment</p> <p>Intermediate outcomes:</p> <p>Job seekers' job searching skills and motivation have increased</p> <p>Professionals' skills to support employment of long-term unemployed have improved</p>	<p>There are long-term unemployed persons who have been unemployed 12 months but who are close to labour market threshold (e.g., no severe illnesses, disabilities, etc.)</p> <p>Due to the prolonged unemployment and disappointments with job search, the job seekers have lost their confidence to gain employment</p> <p>Employment services need new research-based measures to support their clients in getting employed</p> <p>Some industries in the region suffers from a labour shortage</p>	<p>Job seekers: Learning of job search skills</p> <p>Support of motivation to job search</p> <p>Setting goals for job search</p> <p>Learning to turn negatively perceived personal life or working history to positive</p> <p>Recognizing strengths, skills and abilities</p> <p>Learn from and with motivated peers</p> <p>Same intervention for all, with minor tailoring if necessary</p> <p>Professionals: Learning of implementing Taite-coaching</p> <p>Learn from and with motivated colleagues</p>	<p>Pre-selection of motivated and human-centered job coaches to Taite-instructor training</p> <p>Pre-selection of motivated job seekers by job coaches</p> <p>Locally executed coaching activity with facilities</p> <p>Possibility to participate without losing unemployment benefits</p> <p>Getting additional support from services if needed (e.g., health issues, learning difficulties)</p> <p>Peer support</p> <p>Getting support from job coaches afterwards if needed</p>	<p>Being approached in one's own environment creates trust</p> <p>Peer support fosters a sense of community, solidarity, social and functional support, and cohesion</p> <p>Positive feedback supports motivation, self-confidence and self-efficacy</p> <p>Feeling seriously considered and feeling capable ('I matter' and 'I can').</p>

IF	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Job seekers are at risk of depression due to the prolonged unemployment 2. Job seekers have insufficient job search skills 3. Job seekers are motivated to get employed 4. Job seekers have goals in terms of job search 5. Job seekers participate Taite-coaching voluntarily 6. The participation in Taite-coaching is financially compensated
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. The coaching environment is local and safe, and instructors aware of job seekers' situations 8. Peers and instructors give social support during training 9. Taite-instructors are skilled and motivated to follow the original Taite-coaching method
THEN	Job seekers will have a higher possibility to succeed in job search and getting employed
BECAUSE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Their job searching skills have improved 2. Their job searching motivation has increased 3. Their job searching self-efficacy and self-esteem have increased 4. Their job searching activity has increased 5. Their ability to handle and solve setbacks regarding job search has improved 6. Their ability to win jobs has increased 7. Their knowledge of getting support from local services has improved

CMOs for IPS coaching of job seekers in the Kokkola LL

Outcomes	Context	Program context/ intervention	Resource Mechanism	Reasoning Mechanism
<p>Ultimate outcomes:</p> <p>Long-term unemployed have gained employment</p> <p>Employers hire long-term unemployed persons</p> <p>Intermediate outcomes:</p> <p>Professional skills of job coaches have improved</p> <p>Employer-employee cooperation of job coaches have improved</p> <p>Job seekers' job searching motivation and self-confidence</p>	<p>There are long-term unemployed who need individual support before and after the employment (e.g., job seekers with health problems, outdated education, those in rehabilitative work activities)</p> <p>There are regional employers with a labour shortage</p> <p>Employers could recruit unemployed persons but need help to do it</p>	<p>The coaching: follows the IPS protocol with 25 quality criteria</p> <p>suits to anyone who wants to participate in working life</p> <p>is tailored to the target group and individual participants</p> <p>offers ongoing personalised support</p> <p>focuses on fast job search based on clients' interests</p> <p>establish close relationships with employers</p> <p>is integrated with other</p>	<p>Job coaches: come from employment services who cooperate with local coalition</p> <p>participate in IPS-training for job coaches before a client implementation</p> <p>follow the IPS quality criteria</p> <p>coordinate services and benefits</p> <p>provide support to both job seekers and workplaces before and after the employment (e.g., discussions, encouragement, financial information, utilization of local coalition)</p>	<p>Taking into account job seeker's own objectives and a feeling of being seriously considered create motivation and commitment to employment</p> <p>Less fear of losing incomes or other relevant services</p> <p>More confidence in one's own abilities and skills and possibilities to gain employment</p> <p>More self-efficacy in job performance</p>

Outcomes	Context	Program context/ intervention	Resource Mechanism	Reasoning Mechanism
<p>regarding skills, abilities and possibilities to find employment have improved</p> <p>Employers: Employment of job seekers has become easier and less risky</p>		<p>employment support activities</p> <p>includes benefits advice</p>	<p>For job seekers: personal support of job coach during the whole employment process</p> <p>possibility to participate without losing unemployment benefits</p>	<p>Employers are better informed and less afraid of hiring unemployed persons while they trust on the help of job coaches</p>

IF	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Job seekers who want to take part in IPS training can do so 2. Job coaches are skilled and motivated to follow the IPS-coaching criteria 3. Job coaches help jobs seekers find a job in a concrete way 4. Job coaches have regular face-to-face meetings with the client before and after the employment 5. Job coaches build relationships with employers and work community by meeting them regularly in person 6. Job coaches coordinate the services and benefits available for job seekers 7. The participation in IPS-coaching is financially compensated
THEN	Job seekers who have been unemployed longer than a year and who have challenges with re-employment are employed in jobs that match their interests and capabilities
BECAUSE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Job seekers are more confident regarding their skills, abilities and possibilities to gain employment 2. Job seekers self-efficacy regarding their job performance has increased 3. Job seekers are less afraid of losing income and other relevant services 4. Employment of job seekers is easier for employers 5. Employers are less afraid of employing job seekers 6. Professional skills of job coaches have improved 7. Employer-employee cooperation of job coaches have improved

Contextual factors for finding employment in childcare in the Amersfoort LL

Infrastructural (e.g., political support, policies, labour market)
There is a significant labour market shortage
The legal rule requiring consistent personnel presence in the group makes it hard or impossible to have small part-time contracts (i.e. contracts with few hours)
Employers and educational institutes arranged that job seekers start at preliminary function and can progressively work towards higher levels of assistance and reconciliation within the group until they reach the level of a pedagogical worker
Institutional (e.g., informal rules, organisational culture, leadership, regulations)
For job seekers, working in childcare is like their home situation: they often have children themselves and can therefore relate to the work
Family-oriented culture
Leadership is limited due to non-hierarchical organisation
Team spirit is sometimes modest as colleagues leave the organisation/high turnover
Fatigue and unwillingness of colleagues to train/coach new employees
Support from the city councillor and director of the organisation ensures commitment
Thorough pre-selection and requirements for participating in training (limited to motivated job seekers), encompassing trial afternoons for shadowing on-site with the employer.
Interpersonal (e.g., communication, collaboration and networks)
Supervisors/managers are aware of the employee's / job seekers' situation
Colleagues have mixed reactions to the ongoing influx of new job seekers: While some view it as beneficial, others find it burdensome due to the time investment required for training and supporting them
Profile of the intake coordinator: She has a strong capacity to engage with job seekers and clearly articulate the advantages of the training program
Individual (e.g., values, roles and knowledge, personal environment, physical issues, economic situation)
Job seekers want to be economically independent
Job seekers need flexibility (e.g., to care for their own children).
Barriers related to exceptions about diplomas are taken away
Relief for job seekers in terms of childcare for their children as the employer arranges this
Job seekers are already, to some extent, proficient in the Dutch language or get a pre-class to get skilled in the Dutch language
Job seekers are very motivated to work in childcare
Confidence of job seekers is increased through guaranteed employment when they pass the training/internship
Classes are free of charge
Job seekers are approached in their environment, e.g. community centres

CMOs for finding employment in childcare in the Amersfoort LL.

Outcome s	Context	Program context/ intervention	Resource Mechanism	Reasoning Mechanism
Getting employed (in >= 12-hour (temporary) contracts)	<p>The intervention is a collaboration of UWV, municipality/ employer, vocational education institute</p> <p>Extensive pre-selection of motivated job seekers</p> <p>Broad support: e.g. involvement of city council member</p> <p>Guaranteed employment after intervention</p>	<p>Step by step learning</p> <p>Tailored to specific needs and possibilities of job seekers</p> <p>Start as 'groepshulp' (versneld traject)</p> <p>Learning on the job aligned with individual learning styles</p> <p>Learn from and with peers</p> <p>Get additional support when needed (e.g. language course)</p>	<p>Being informally approached in one's environment</p> <p>Peer support</p> <p>The involvement of the city council member and employer</p> <p>Guaranteed income</p> <p>The learning method suits the job seekers' style</p> <p>The employer accommodates personal needs and removes barriers</p>	<p>Creates more trust</p> <p>Fosters a sense of community, solidarity, and cohesion</p> <p>Feeling seriously considered ('I matter')</p> <p>Less fear of losing income and more confidence</p> <p>More confidence in one's abilities</p> <p>Making them more involved and loyal</p>
Skills development (e.g., language, theory, application, hard skills, soft skills, general workplace skills)	<p>The organisation has exceptional attention to optimising organisational culture</p> <p>Barriers related to exceptions about diplomas are taken away</p>	<p>Guaranteed Income preservation (despite the stop of subsidies)</p>	<p>Aligns with needs and desires related to employment</p> <p>Peer support</p> <p>The learning method and knowledge level suit their style</p>	<p>Improves motivation</p> <p>Fosters a sense of community, solidarity, and cohesion</p> <p>Improves confidence in one's abilities</p>
Self-efficacy in job performance	<p>Family oriented culture</p> <p>Employer takes care of prerequisites</p>		<p>Being approached in one's environment</p> <p>Peer support</p> <p>Experiencing many small successes</p> <p>The learning method suits their style</p>	<p>Creates more trust</p> <p>Fosters a sense of community, solidarity, and cohesion</p> <p>Increases confidence</p> <p>Increases confidence in one's abilities</p>

Initial program theory for the outcome getting employed in the Amersfoort LL.

IF	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruited using a personal approach 2. Motivated job seekers receive a step-by-step tailored training program 3. With quick learning on the job by peers 4. With a large employer in childcare that guarantees a job after the program 5. In a safe learning culture where supervisors are aware of the employee's situation
THEN	they experience increased self-efficacy, motivation and improve relevant skills, leading to an increased chance of employment
BECAUSE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Being informally approached in one's environment and aligning with personal needs and desires creates more trust 2. Peer support fosters a sense of community, solidarity, and cohesion 3. More confidence in one's abilities because the learning method suits the job seekers' style

Initial program theory for the outcome skills development in the Amersfoort LL.

IF	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruited using a personal approach 2. Motivated job seekers receive a step-by-step tailored training program 3. with quick learning on the job by peers 4. with an employer in childcare that guarantees a job after the program 5. in a safe learning culture where supervisors are aware of the employee's situation
THEN	They improve relevant skills
BECAUSE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Aligns with the needs and wishes regarding (self-supporting through) employment 2. Peer support fosters a sense of community, solidarity, and cohesion 3. Confidence in one's abilities because the learning method and knowledge level suit one's style

Initial program theory for the outcome Self-efficacy in job performance in the Amersfoort LL.

IF	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruited using a personal approach 2. Motivated job seekers receive a step-by-step tailored training program 3. With quick learning on the job by peers 4. With an employer in childcare that guarantees a job after the program 5. In a safe learning culture where supervisors are aware of the employee's situation
THEN	they experience increased self-efficacy
BECAUSE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Being approached in one's environment creates more trust 2. Peer support fosters a sense of community, solidarity, social and functional support, and cohesion 3. Experiencing many small successes increases confidence 4. Confidence in one's abilities because the learning method suits one's style

Contextual factors for upward or sideward mobility of employees in childcare in the Amersfoort LL

Infrastructural (e.g., political support, policies, labour market)
There is a significant labour market shortage, giving employees numerous options to work elsewhere
Childcare is highly regulated, with numerous laws that must be adhered to
Parents are assertive, with high external demands/expectations from parents
Salaries are relatively low compared to similar essential sectors
Institutional (e.g., informal rules, organisational culture, leadership, regulations)
There are limited opportunities for advancement, leading to less focus on talent development
Employers fear that investing too much in staff will lead to them to leave the job
A high degree of autonomy, proactivity, and creativity is expected from employees
Family-oriented culture
Leadership is limited due to the non-hierarchical structure
Team spirit can be modest, especially with new colleagues from diverse backgrounds, and tends to diminish as colleagues leave the organisation
There is a high workload, partly due to staff shortages
There is little flexibility in work hours, and workdays are long
Learning is expected to occur mainly outside of work hours, as staffing groups is already a challenge due to workforce shortages
The roles carry a high level of responsibility and may include a high emotional burden
The employer provides a safety net by allowing you to partially take on other positions or tasks and, at the same time, holding your old position
Interpersonal (e.g., communication, collaboration and networks)
Supervisors/managers are aware of the employee's situation
Collaboration with colleagues is going well: the mutual bond is strong
Peer support
Individual (e.g., values, roles and knowledge, personal environment, physical issues, economic situation)
Employees are not actively pursuing the next steps in their careers
Relief for employees in terms of childcare for their own children as the employer arranges this
Employees particularly dislike learning theoretical aspects.
Employees are driven by the energy they receive from children, their contribution to the children's development, and the appreciation they receive for it

CMOs for upward or sideward mobility of employees in childcare in the Amersfoort LL

Outcomes	Context	Program context/ intervention	Resource Mechanism	Reasoning Mechanism
Career progression (other tasks, responsibilities, roles, or job combinations)	Labour market shortage Limited opportunities for job advancement Employers fear that investing too much in	The team coordinator undergoes training to foster development.	The team coordinator discusses what you want and what is concretely achievable.	Feel supported because you're doing it together. Less fear of expressing your

Outcomes	Context	Program context/ intervention	Resource Mechanism	Reasoning Mechanism
	<p>staff will lead to them leaving.</p> <p>Learning is expected to occur mainly outside of work hours</p> <p>High work pressure</p> <p>Collaboration with colleagues is going well: the mutual bond is strong</p>	<p>Job combination.</p> <p>Strengthening team spirit</p>	<p>Openness to development opportunities is created.</p> <p>Awareness of possibilities is raised</p> <p>The opportunity to safely take small steps is provided.</p>	<p>development wishes.</p> <p>The intention to explore job opportunities is strengthened.</p> <p>Provides a sense of certainty</p>
Retention (Do you plan to switch jobs in the next two years?)	<p>Employees are not actively pursuing the next steps in their careers</p> <p>Employees particularly dislike learning theoretical aspects</p> <p>The culture is informal and the organisational structure is flat</p> <p>The employer provides a safety net by allowing you to partially take on other positions or tasks while retaining your old position</p>		<p>The team coordinator discusses what you want and what is concretely achievable.</p> <p>Openness to development opportunities and the needs of teams is created.</p> <p>Peer support</p>	<p>Feeling supported because the organisation also considers the employee's interest, stepping beyond its own.</p> <p>Reduced fear of expressing wishes.</p> <p>Loyalty and commitment towards the organisation and colleagues.</p>
Personal development/growth (A clearer understanding of his/her development/career opportunities and what he/she values in his/her work)			<p>The team coordinator discusses what you want and what is concretely achievable.</p> <p>Openness to development opportunities is created.</p> <p>3. Awareness of possibilities is raised</p>	<p>Feeling supported because it is done together.</p> <p>Reduced fear of expressing your development desires.</p> <p>Strengthened intention to explore new opportunities</p>

Outcomes	Context	Program context/ intervention	Resource Mechanism	Reasoning Mechanism
Self-efficacy in job			<p>Improved insight into your talents and interests.</p> <p>Understanding of which new tasks, roles, and responsibilities you can undertake.</p> <p>Peer support</p>	<p>Strengthens engagement and support, and trust from the coordinator.</p> <p>Reduced fear of taking steps.</p> <p>Fosters a sense of community, solidarity, and cohesion.</p>

Initial program theory for the outcome career progression in the Amersfoort LL.

IF	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the team coordinators get trained to stimulate employees to think about personal development and learning 2. the employer actively explores new job opportunities for employees, including potential roles within other companies 3. team spirit is strengthened in a participatory way 4. in an informal, non-hierarchical culture in which the employer guarantees long-term employment
THEN	employees gain heightened awareness of personal growth and job prospects, including embracing new responsibilities, roles, and tasks within and beyond their organisation, thereby enhancing their career advancement opportunities
BECAUSE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. discussing what employees want and what is concretely achievable increases feelings of support and that you're in it together 2. openness to development opportunities creates less fear of expressing your own development wishes 3. increasing awareness of possibilities increases the intention to explore new job opportunities 4. the opportunity to take small steps provides a sense of certainty

Initial program theory for the outcome retention in the Amersfoort LL.

IF	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the team coordinators get trained to stimulate employees to think about personal development and learning 2. the employer actively explores new job opportunities for employees, including potential roles within other companies 3. team spirit is strengthened in a participatory way 4. in an informal, non-hierarchical culture in which the employer guarantees long-term employment
THEN	employees experience increased team spirit and job opportunities, increasing chance of retention
BECAUSE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. discussing what employees want and what is concretely achievable increases the feeling of being supported because the organisation also considers the employee's interest, stepping beyond its own

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. openness to development opportunities and needs of teams reduces fear of expressing wishes. 3. Peer support increases loyalty and commitment towards the organisation and colleagues
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Initial program theory for the outcome personal development in the Amersfoort LL.

IF	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the team coordinators get trained to stimulate employees to think about personal development and learning 2. the employer actively explores new job opportunities for employees, including potential roles within other companies 3. team spirit is strengthened in a participatory way 4. in an informal, non-hierarchical culture in which the employer guarantees long-term employment
THEN	Employees experience a heightened awareness of personal development and job opportunities, leading to enhanced personal growth
BECAUSE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. discussing what employees want and what is concretely achievable increases feelings of support and that you're in it together 2. openness to development opportunities creates less fear of expressing your own development wishes 3. increasing awareness of possibilities increases the intention to explore new job opportunities

Initial program theory for the outcome Self-efficacy in job

IF	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the team coordinators get trained to stimulate employees to think about personal development and learning 2. the employer actively explores new job opportunities for employees, including potential roles within other companies 3. team spirit is strengthened in a participatory way 4. in an informal, non-hierarchical culture in which the employer guarantees long-term employment
THEN	employees experience increased awareness of their own talents and job opportunities, increasing self-efficacy
BECAUSE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved insight into your talents and interests strengthens engagement and support, and trust from the coordinator 2. Understanding which new tasks, roles, and responsibilities you can undertake reduces fear of taking steps 3. Peer support fosters a sense of community, solidarity, and cohesion

CMOs for TechSavvy training for job seekers/employees for job mobility in the Portugal LL

Outcomes	Context	Program context/ intervention	Resource Mechanism	Reasoning Mechanism
	Target group: young people unemployed or young employees wanting to learn how to become Techsavvy specialists	Collaborative learning on TechSavvy among peers and trainers	Peer support/motivated peers Mixed groups can be motivated by being employed or by job seekers in techsavvy areas	Peer support fosters a sense of Techsavvy community, and increases motivation
	Pre-selection of motivated job seekers by employment agency services, and employees for mobility by employers, for TechSavvy skills development and future jobs	Tailored approach regarding specific needs of young people and companies.	Coordination with employment services and employers for Techsavvy trainings and job searching.	Possibility to participate without losing unemployment benefits /employment salaries increase trust in the employment services and in employers.
	Due to disappointments with job searching due to lack of skills in TechSavvy, the young job seekers have lost their self-efficacy to find employment.	Learning by doing, using real-life cases in TechSavvy to develop high demand skills from the labour market (i.e. TechSavvy skills)	Interesting and easier to learn using real organisational cases to develop TechSavvy skills.	Positive feedback supports successful learning and make it easy to understand what companies need and how to apply knowledge in TechSavvy
	Trainers will be from project partners from Portugal Real life context where training takes place, within startup place, working stations with computers, physically together.	Training will be face to face and in distance education format. Technical learning using project-based learning and problem learning, using a real-life approach and	Facilities for participation in the intervention, as computers and software.	More confidence in their own abilities and skills and possibility to gain employment in TechSaavvy areas.

Outcomes	Context	Program context/ intervention	Resource Mechanism	Reasoning Mechanism
		application to practice.		
<p>O1 Getting employed</p> <p>O2 upwards/sideward mobility</p>	<p>Companies want coding experts, programming using python language, more job opportunities, companies willing to have this knowledge.</p>	<p>Same content of intervention for all is preferred, but minor tailoring is allowed for developing of skills needed by companies / employers.</p>	<p>Young participants will get a better understanding of their future jobs using the TechSavvy skills acquired.</p> <p>Getting support from job coaches after intervention.</p>	<p>More self-efficacy in job search performance.</p> <p>Know what to expect, more confident, more knowledge about suitable TechSavvy jobs, and better prepared to assume more responsibilities when in professional mobility.</p>

IF	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Job seekers are motivated to get employed. 3. Job seekers participate in the training program voluntarily and willing to learn. 4. TechSavvy group is made up by motivated peers. 5. TechSavvy trainers are skilled and motivated to create real-life learning environment to respond to the needs and demands of the organisations in technological skills.
THEN	<p>Job seekers will have a higher possibility to get employed in all types of companies; and employees will be able to access upward and sideward job mobility</p>
BECAUSE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Their job searches related TechSavvy skills have improved. 2. Their job search related self-efficacy has increased as TechSavvy are skills needed and valued by the companies. 4. Their job search activity has increased as they know more about the TechSavvy needs of the companies. 5. Their ability to win jobs has increased as they know more about the TechSavvy needs of the companies. 6. Their knowledge of getting support from local services has improved because of the links with the trainers with the employment services

CMOs for entrepreneurship **interventions** for job seekers in the Portugal LL

Outcomes	Context	Program context/ intervention	Resource Mechanism	Reasoning Mechanism
Getting employed / creating their own job/business	Target group is composed by young people unemployed, planning to create their own job / business	Collaborative learning on Entrepreneurship among peers and trainers	Peer support/motivated peers in creating their own job / business.	Peer support fosters a sense of Entrepreneurs community and increases motivation.
	Pre-selection of motivated job seekers by employment agency services for Entrepreneurship skills development and to create their own job / business in the future.	Tailored approach regarding specific needs of young people for the creation of their own job / business.	Coordination with employment services for access to measures that supports the creation of young people own job, framed by entrepreneurship governmental policies.	Possibility to participate without losing unemployment benefits increases their trust.
	Due to disappointments with job searching due to lack of skills, the young job seekers have lost their self-efficacy to find employment and are willing to create their own job / business.	Learning by doing using real-life cases in Business creation and entrepreneurship to develop their skills (i.e. administrative management needed to create their own job or a company, innovation, market opportunities, financial management, digital marketing)	Getting support from the trainers and mentors during and after intervention. Getting support from the employment services with the training and the measures to support the creation of their own job / business.	Positive feedback supports successful learning and make easy to understand how to apply knowledge in creating their own job / business.

Outcomes	Context	Program context/ intervention	Resource Mechanism	Reasoning Mechanism
	Real life context: training takes place, within an incubator, helping to understand the startup daily life, problems, challenges, and success histories.	Training will be face to face and in distance education format. Technical learning using project-based learning and problem learning using a real-life approach and application to practice.	Facilities for participation in the intervention, as computers and software	More confidence in their own abilities and skills and possibilities to create their own job / business.
	Market opportunities, for new business creation and young people to create their own job.	Same content of intervention but tailoring to the specificities of the business that young people want to create. The trainers will be mentors during all the process of the intervention and after the intervention.	Young participants will get a better view of their future job / business with the examples and cases from real startups that are located at Audax_Iscte.	More self-efficacy in job search / creation performance. Know what to expect, more confident, more knowledge about how to create their own jobs, and better prepared to assume the responsibilities of creating a business.

IF	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Job seekers are motivated to use the measures that the Employment Services Agency have at their disposal (funding and technical advice) to help them to create their own job. 2. Job seekers participate in the training program willing to learn how to develop a business plan and how to create their own job. 3. Entrepreneurship group is made up by motivated peers helping each other's and creating opportunities with synergies and complementarities. 4. Entrepreneurship trainers are skilled and motivated to create real-life learning environment to respond to the needs and demands of the labour market.
THEN	Job seekers will have a higher possibility to create their own job.
BECAUSE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The job seekers skills have improved regarding how to design and implement a business plan, creating their own job. 2. Their knowledge of getting support to create their own job from governmental services has improved because of the links of the trainers with the employment services.

CMOs for mentoring job seekers and employed for job mobility in the Portugal LL.

Outcomes	Context	Program context/ intervention	Resource Mechanism	Reasoning Mechanism
Getting employed and upwards and sideways mobility	Target group is composed by young people unemployed and / or employees wanting job mobility. Pre-selection of motivated employees by companies and young unemployed by employment services	Tailored approach regarding specific needs	Appropriately targeted recruitment	The chance to get the Mentor support increases motivation.
	Due to difficulties in getting more responsible tasks and promotions, the young employees have lost their self-efficacy to find new opportunities.	Program package for the mentorship with personalized help, by a mentor.	Facilities for participation including a video studio and 3 workstations with computers.	Positive feedback supports successful change of professional goals.
	Mentoring will be face to face and in distance format.	Multimedia partnership, helping young job seekers to make videos for dynamic CV presentations	Startups from Audax_Iscte help/access to digital expertise/ learning how to present themselves using video communication.	More confidence in their own abilities and skills and possibilities to gain mobility and more responsible tasks.
	Mentors will be from Iscte, PACT, REDO, CMLagoa	Coordination with employment services and companies for mentorship support during	Mentorship to help young job seekers to know how to behave when entering an organisation, how to communicate	More self-efficacy in job seeking and job mobility processes. Employers gain trust on the mentorship

Outcomes	Context	Program context/ intervention	Resource Mechanism	Reasoning Mechanism
		and after the interventions	with their peers and supervisors.	process and on the effective motivation and skills of job seekers and employees.

IF	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vulnerable job seekers with difficulties to find a job and employees wanting to develop more responsible tasks want to take part in mentoring with the aim of employment or job mobility. 2. Job mentors participate in mentor program and are skilful and motivated to support job seekers and employees with the aim of employment or mobility. 3. Job seekers and employees receive individual mentorship about integrating an organisation, during and after the employment or mobility processes. 4. Job mentors cooperate with job seekers and employees and help them with employment or mobility. 5. Job mentors inform about the services and benefits available for job seekers or employees
THEN	Job seekers and employees achieved their goals (employment or job mobility matching their interests and capabilities or for a promotion or development of tasks with more responsibility) for a period longer than six months.
BECAUSE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Job seekers and employees are more confident regarding their skills, abilities and possibilities to gain employment or mobility for more responsible tasks. 2. Job seekers and employee's self-efficacy regarding their job performance has increased. 3. Job seekers and employees feel appreciated by potential employers. 5. Employers are less afraid of employing job seekers and to promote job mobility of employees, as they trust on the mentorship process and on the effective motivation and skills of job seekers and employees.