

Challenges of Lifelong Learning in Workplaces

Project Rationale

Quality workplace development¹ calls for the better matching between employer needs and available development activities. Today, various actors provide workplace development services, yet most of the services suffer from the following shortcomings:

- Services are fragmented

Today's workplace development services are usually sporadic short-term interventions, such as a consultation or a training of particular skills. Identification, planning, implementation and evaluation of services do not constitute a continuous process of workplace development that would systematically enhance the skills and competences of a client organisation.

- Services are not designed proactively

Workplace development services are not able to respond sufficiently to the business needs of today and tomorrow. Even though future skills shortages are identified both at national and European levels, the gathered information remains dispersed and generic. Therefore, workplace development service providers are not able to use existing forecasts to plan future services.

- Impact of services are poorly assessed

Impact assessment of workplace development services is often neglected both by service providers and clients, because they lack appropriate tools and indicators to measure success. That is why the existing quality assurance systems of service providers measure only partially the performance of their workplace development activities, focusing often solely on service methods.

- Services are polarized in secondary and tertiary levels

European education institutions providing workplace development services are tightly divided in secondary and tertiary levels. However, skills and competences profiles required by employers follow rarely the same polar division. Flexible supply of workplace development services requires joint action between education institutions in different levels as well as mutual identification and recognition of informal and non-formal learning.

¹ Workplace development in the proposed project includes the following activities:

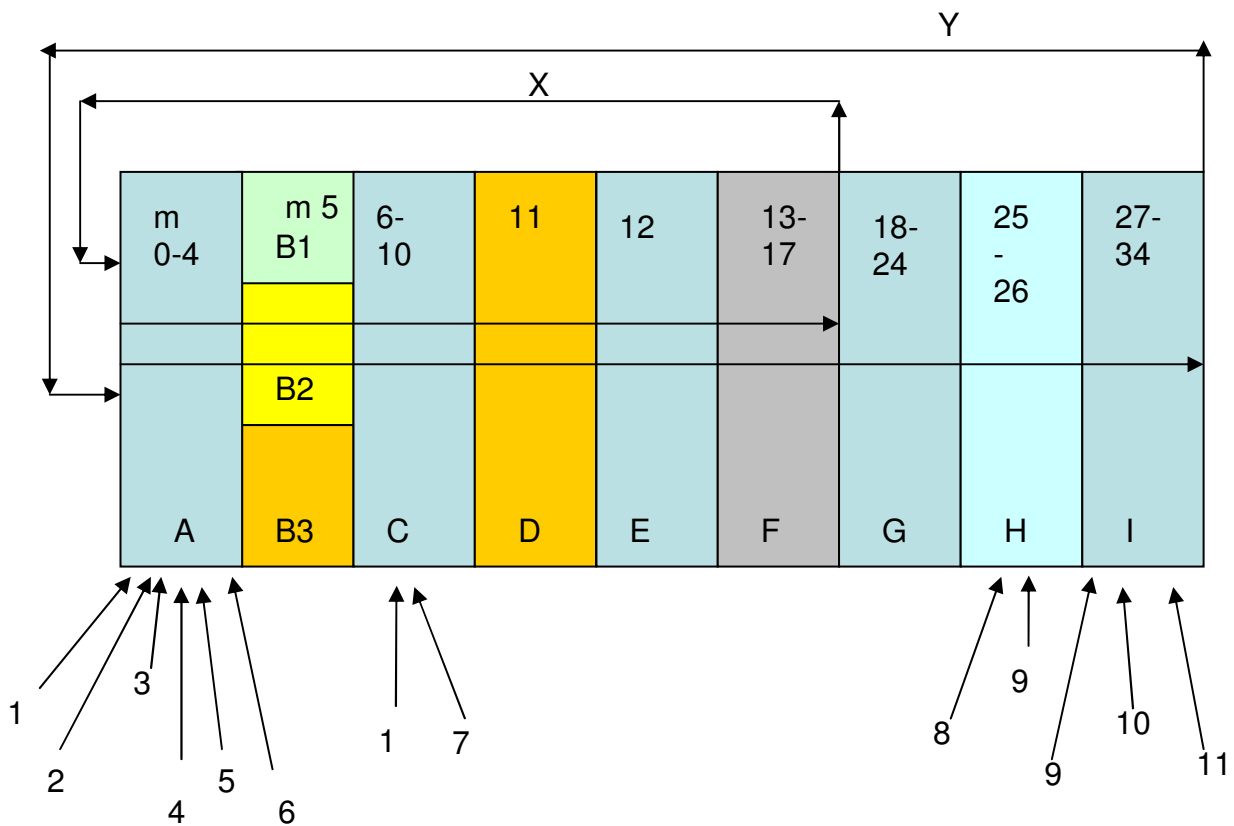
- degree education
- in-service training, adult education and updating training
- skills profile surveys and mapping of training needs
- research, process development and consulting

Project Objectives

In response to the identified shortcomings of the current workplace development services, the proposed project aims to foster lifelong learning in the European labour market. To this end, the project seeks to improve workplace development services focusing on:

- process-oriented approach of service provision
- proactive use of business needs forecast in service provision
- impact assessment and quality assurance of the service provision
- cooperation between secondary and tertiary levels of education

The chart below illustrates an initial scheme for workplace development intervention. A refined version of the scheme will be drafted in the project.



A	Anticipation of labour market needs	1	Enterprises
B1	Career plan update	2	Industry associations
B2	Mapping of existing and needed skills	3	Ministry of Education
B3	Impact assessment	4	Ministry of Employment
C	Planning of workplace development	5	Regional authorities
E	Time of delivery	6	Futurology researchers
F	Training/ consulting	7	Education institutions
G	Employment period	8	Client supervisor
H	Evaluation of the training quality	9	Client employee
I	Impact assessment	10	Client employer
		11	Employment authority
X	Skills adjustment period		
Y	Work place development adjustment period		

Project Partners

Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences (MUAS) is prepared to coordinate the project and it is looking for partners that are:

- higher education institutions
- secondary education institutions
- business community representatives (associations, companies)
- research organisations

MUAS is a Finnish institute of higher education, hosting 14 different degree programmes and offering in-service training tailored to client needs through a flexible study environment. The university is also active in developing its education services together with the regional business community.

Project Financing

The consortium will apply for funding from the EU Lifelong Learning Programme. The open call will close on February 26, 2010. The specific programme depends on the closer focus of the project, but the envisaged programmes include Leonardo, Erasmus and Grundvigt.

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