

MAKING THE MOST OF HUMAN RESOURCES

EQUAL encourages sme employers to invest in human capital.

INVEST IN HUMAN CAPITAL NOW: GREATER EU COMPETITIVENESS LATER

In the EU, employers rarely invest in human capital, because there are few economic incentives, legal obligations, social partners agreements or public sector funding for them to do so. From a small business perspective, investment in training is often considered to be risky at best - a waste of money, at worst. This position is reinforced by the lack of tailor-made and relevant training available for SMEs and their staff. Unlike large companies, SMEs do not benefit from the economy of scale, when creating tailor-made training for personnel, and from more evolved Human Resource Management systems. They are also in a weaker position when it comes to maintaining production or services when staff are absent to attend training courses.

EQUAL is addressing all of these problems by promoting demand-led systems for investment in human capital and lifelong learning.

LIFELONG LEARNING PROMOTES SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT

The European Employment Strategy emphasises the benefits of employer investment in training adults, as it promotes productivity, competitiveness and an active older workforce. It also promotes sustainable employment. Furthermore, promoting lifelong learning is a way to tackle discrimination and reduce the risk of exclusion by increasing participation, and working towards giving all individuals real prospects of getting and keeping a job.

Employers need to be encouraged to invest in human capital so that the target set by the Lisbon European Council of 12.5% of the adult population participating in education and training by 2010 can be reached. At this stage, and despite the fact that some Member States have outlined comprehensive lifelong learning strategies, there is little information available on how to implement coherent lifelong learning systems, or how to increase the level of investment in education and training on the part of working adults and their employers.

It is argued that greater levels of consultation with and involvement of employers in developing solutions and systems that are demand-led, will help to anticipate future skills needs within companies and within sectors. This, in turn, will help to create a win-win situation that avoids mismatches between services delivered and the actual skills needs within the economy (Employment Taskforce Report^[1]).

Involving social partners, such as trade unions and employers' organisations, in increasing the motivation of employers and employees to invest in training is key^[2]. One of the priorities of the social partners is to build bridges between formal and non-formal learning. The European Association of Craft Small and Medium-sized Enterprises also argues for the recognition of continuous informal training in SMEs^[3].

EQUAL: ENGAGING THE EMPLOYER IN CONTINUOUS LEARNING SCHEMES

Engaging the employer is central to EQUAL innovation in attempting to develop a **culture of continuous learning** in companies. EQUAL has pursued and tested four main steps to encourage investment in human capital by employers, particularly SMEs:

1. Making the business case for investment in human capital;
2. Developing tools for assessment of competences and analysing training needs;
3. Tailoring training to specific needs and taking a 'blended learning' approach; and
4. Networking and collaboration through various means including training networks.

EQUAL has proven that networking and collaboration provide a necessary underpinning to points 1 to 3 above. It has also demonstrated that the timing of the intervention is crucial. For example,

the development of lifelong learning systems may become a more attractive proposition when new markets are being sought or new designs are being tested. EQUAL has provided resources for testing new approaches over an extended period of time. This has added value by allowing employers to invest in improving and developing tools and approaches to enhance human capital, and in setting up and developing collaborative networks with key stakeholders.

Some of the approaches described below, such as job rotation, are not in themselves new. However, the processes through which they have been developed and delivered within EQUAL has enhanced their efficacy and efficiency. The added value of EQUAL over previous approaches is in creating more **comprehensive interventions** than existed before. By combining and building on many established concepts, employers on EQUAL schemes have created integrated, **demand-driven and relevant solutions** that are dependent on the integration of steps 1 to 4 above.

Making the business case for investment in human capital

In order to ensure lifelong learning benefits for both employees (professional and vocational growth) and employers (increased competitiveness and productivity), training should be both relevant and cost-effective. In order to make the business case for investment in human capital, EQUAL has responded to the need to analyse and identify skills that have to be obtained or updated. Eventually, EQUAL can provide evidence for enhanced competitiveness for example, on a sectoral basis in the building industry^[4] and in the commercial, shipping/nautical and ship building sector^[5], as a result of such analyses and the subsequent adaptation of training provision.

Furthermore, EQUAL has developed methods with a regional dimension^[6] in several countries, focusing on anticipating regional economic and labour market needs. In these cases, EQUAL has provided employers with a background analysis against which they have developed a business strategy specifically linked to the regional characteristics, including migration trends and existing skills availability.

In other cases, EQUAL tested positively the value added of providing specific advice on markets, skills planning and business development opportunities^[7]. Some member states investigated the benefits of adopting a holistic approach to human resources and business management based on a performance management system. These approaches have addressed the problem of the lack of human resource management in SMEs and successfully created an *Integrated tool of Innovation*^[8] to both improve the workplace and the chances of survival of the business at the same time.

The Job Rotation^[9] model has also been adapted by some member states as an effective tool for reintegrating disadvantaged people and simultaneously providing employers with the opportunity to release existing staff for training while maintaining production and/or service levels. EQUAL in Ireland used job rotation^[10] as a means to integrate and secure employment for marginalised individuals (including ex-offenders, people with disabilities and refugees) who had previously experienced discrimination in their efforts to secure employment. The scheme simultaneously facilitated the training needs of employers. EQUAL could demonstrate that 40% of the employers involved in a job rotation scheme opened up their business into new fields by making use of the skills and initiatives of migrants and others who took part in the scheme. Furthermore, there is evidence^[11] that a number of companies have also expanded by taking on new staff that resulted in job offers for 83% of the job-seekers.

Developing tools for assessment of competences and training needs analysis

EQUAL has developed and successfully tested several tools for assessment, including Information and Communication Technology (ICT)^[12], Web-based tools^[13] and job rotation systems^[14]. These tools are used to assess employees' skills and, combined with analyses of what skills gaps exist, allow to identify specific employers' needs and the needs of the sector^[15]. For example, in the port sector^[16], new pathways for training were developed by adapting the training in accordance with the findings of needs analyses and validation/certification, which all relevant stakeholders developed together.

Tailoring training to needs and taking a 'blended learning' approach

Once the training needs have been analysed, it is time to find or create the right type or mix of training. SMEs prefer shorter courses, preferably on site, and targeted at real work needs. The availability of time is often a crucial obstacle for participation in lifelong learning interventions.

Therefore EQUAL in Italy created a method of constructive dialogue with the employer to solve the problem of timing of training^[17]. This approach led to a successful combination of the needs of the employees and the vessel-owners in question.

- Blending different types of learning, such as e-learning, virtual coaching, mentoring, and action learning has provided a useful package of support for both managers and workers. EQUAL examples from several member states provide evidence for the benefits of a "blended learning" approach:
- In this context, EQUAL in Spain focused on the printing and publishing sector, and proved successful ways^[18] to support employers and employees in adapting to new technologies, by making highly innovative use of multi-media materials and the latest e-learning platforms to train 200 employees.
- In the UK, EQUAL has taken what is known as "the family learning model" and applied it to the workplace context in order to demonstrate that this model^[19] can also be used to change the way in which employers perceive and engage with training/learning. Using job rotation as a training device was another innovation explored in the context of this approach.

Networking and cooperation between employers and other actors has been very important in EQUAL. EQUAL's success largely resulted from the support and collaboration of all stakeholders and the ensuing win-win ethos generated through joint-ownership of the process. Training networks proved to provide an innovative means through which this can be tested and realised. Through involving employers, employers' organisations and trade unions it has been possible to validate and sustain good practices and outcomes. Cooperation with social partners has proved particularly useful in changing work cultures, perceptions of work and groups of workers. This cooperation has helped SMEs^[20] to engage in training, and to repeat successful practices and exchange know-how.

In some of the new approaches explored, the social partners have been key drivers. In Italy, for example, social partners used EQUAL to address highly significant issues related to the reform of welfare systems^[21]. They successfully managed to achieve this objective by empowering workers through transferring, to all workers, trade unions' skills and abilities that are needed for the prevention of workplace disadvantages.

The advantages of cooperation with work-related authorities have also been highlighted by EQUAL experiences in several member states^[22]. Involving the national employment services in the development, testing and validation of new models encouraged them to disseminate the results and use the methods developed at a local employment services' level. International networking also made the stakeholders and decision-makers learn about other education systems and ways of operating, and realise what factors were important in making certain types of training etc work.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The creation of a culture of lifelong learning requires a collaborative approach between employers, employer representatives, trade unions and employees. Employers need to be convinced of the business case for investment in lifelong learning and the win-win benefits associated with nurturing the diversity of their workforces. Employers who begin to engage in these issues following changes in their attitudes and perceptions will subsequently generate demand for services that will, in turn, create a market for lifelong learning. EQUAL has demonstrated that an efficient way to convince the employer is to approach all relevant stakeholders at the same time. This enables a multi-faceted approach that allows for integration and concentration of resources towards the delivery of relevant and timely solutions that benefit all.

Key messages from EQUAL for **SMEs/business** are that they are invited to involve themselves through networking and cooperation to:

- Discover the win-win of investing in human capital, using the full potential of all employees, including disadvantaged group, and avoiding inequalities and discrimination;

- Develop tools for assessment of competences and analyses of training needs;
- Learn to be open about new solutions such as 'blended learning' approach (e-learning, coaching, action learning) and innovative in-company and lifelong learning solutions such as job rotation; and
- Use all know-how gained to forecast business development and develop their staff and their business - "win-win".

Key messages from EQUAL for **Social Partners** are that:

- They are invited to initiate and encourage networking development in all conceivable ways and raise awareness of the benefits of and ways to invest in human capital, and assist employers in all the steps necessary for win-win for all partners involved (for instance help with dialogue, information on existing training, development of new qualifications, invalidation and continuity).
- Networks can help to reduce the burden on SMEs in particular and can serve to accelerate learning and the development of a market for lifelong learning.
- Networks work most efficiently when there are close ties to local employment services, research and training institutions and agencies responsible for forecasting business development. Early intervention to anticipate and act on change helps businesses and workers, including disadvantaged people.
- The quality of a partnership (whether sectoral or regional) is dependent on how demand-driven and result-oriented it is. The stronger the bottom-up, demand-driven approach is, the better and more long-lasting results are achieved.
- They need to ensure the use the EQUAL experiences in connection with the annual reports on implementation of the framework of actions for the lifelong development of competences and qualifications adopted in February 2002 and evaluation of this framework planned for 2006.

ENDNOTES

[1] Jobs, jobs, jobs - creating more employment in Europe, report of the Employment Taskforce chaired by Wim Kok, November 2003

[2] Framework of Action adopted by the European social partners in March 2002 and the second follow-up report on the framework of action (2004)

[3] UEAPME Position on the Communication of the European Commission: 'Increasing the employment of older workers and delaying the exit from the labour market', Brussels, 15 April 2004

[4] **MASTER** DP (IT-G-TOS-017) Italy : is undertaking a serial of vocational training actions in order to create or recreate middle or high-level professional in the sector of the finishing off within rehabilitation of buildings: wall decoration, stone restoration and crafting. Partners, and in particular trade and sectoral unions participate in the organisation phases of the training, the training path as well as in the definition of the skills referential and the validation of competences and skills gained. the evidence of benefits of the investment in training both for human resources (in terms of professional growth) and for enterprises (in terms of the increase of the competitiveness). The DP has used, successfully, a broad range of methods to publicise the courses, including local television channels and radio stations.

[5] (See [17]) **SUPPORT** DP "Skills UPgrading in the PORTs" (IT-MDL-190), Italy: the main objective is to define a substantial skills certification system adopted by all the project's players, unions/trade associations and transnational partners in order to cater changes in the port and port infrastructure system in general due to technological and organizational innovation concerning flexibility and market integration. The set up and consolidation of a structured system create the right conditions for companies and workers to adapt to economical and structural changes.

[6] **EqualCAN**, (ES-ES276), Spain - designed a complete training programme for the road transport sector in Cantabria. It is aimed at adapting employers and their employees to new challenges in the marketplace, to new technologies, the environment and safety. This overall action is aimed at all levels of the sector, from drivers to managers. A preliminary study showed that this sector's main feature is the size of the company: most them have only 2 or 3 self-

employed drivers, a clerical worker and the manager. Only two of have more than 20 employees. These small firms are facing strong competition from large companies, so it is necessary to adapt them to new challenges or they will disappear. This overall action has been designed for this purpose, and aims to give Integral Training Plan to the sector. 32 training actions have been designed for the whole transport workforce and help these small firms to become small logistic centres. Through the training, they also learned how to operate at an international level, and take advantage of new market opportunities.

G-Local Immigrazione, Competenze, Sviluppo Nei Sistemi Territoriali (IT-G-VEN-008), Italy: The Partnership of Geographical Development was set up with the aim of investigating a few processes for the employment of migrant workforce in the SMEs, as well as strengthening their competence and integration processes in several industrial and suburban areas. G-Local is implementing permanent professional training actions and integration practices aimed at developing the professional skills of immigrant workers already employed in companies of the Veneto region. <http://www.equalglocal.com/>

[7] **K.E.R.N.nige Offensive**, (DE-EA-49478) Germany: the Development Partnership is setting up five regional centres of quality competency in favour of the educational disadvantaged and distanced persons in SMEs in order to create a customer oriented structure following the demand. The five regional centres offer counselling for:

- tailor made personnel and (internal organization) development
- job rotation
- customer orientation in the branch of tourism
- quality assurance in the services sector
- qualification and organization of enterprises in craft.

K.E.R.N. is a maritime region neighbouring the Baltic Sea in Schleswig Holstein, including important cities (Kiel, Eckernfoerde, Rendsburg and Neumuenster), where it is common to find the country wide average of up to 25 % participation in SMEs' further education. Yet, uneducated and semi skilled employees most seldom participate in further education.

Please click [here](#) for further information on the regional centre or <http://www.kernige-offensive.de/>

[8] **Glass Challenge** DP, PT-2001-247, Portugal. The model is based on the continuous improvement principle, supported by the self-evaluation of the organisation, by the customers and collaborators, and by the evaluation of performance and competences. For further information on the model, please click [here](#).

[9] **Job Rotation** : The principle is that employees participate in further training and during this period are substituted by (un)employed persons trained to take over their duties. Job rotation is used in several European countries in companies and organizations both in public and private sector. The benefits of job rotation could reach the **employers** (better qualified workforce, solutions to fulfil the educational needs of the organization, solutions to recruitment problems when facing an aging workforce and shortage of skilled workers, broader and better recruitment base, releasing the potential of the senior workers by mentoring), the **unemployed** (keeping and updating professional skills by training and work experience, better employment opportunities and prevention of social exclusion, better job seeking skills and higher self-respect) as well as the **employed** (further education and updating professional skills, better career opportunities and prevention of burn-out and stress).

[10] **EQUAL-IRELAND** Lifelong Learning Job Rotation, (IE-12), Ireland: The main objectives of the project are to:

- Provide accredited lifelong learning-job rotation opportunities to disadvantaged people, both unemployed and employed
- Jointly identify, design and develop the job rotation system and the associated required training/education programmes
- Develop module and flexible training programmes through eLearning/Open Distance Learning using local enterprise and community training centres for participant support
- Create changes in workplace practice that will facilitate a life long learning-job rotation infrastructure and culture

- Refine and adapt the mechanism as appropriate for national application and mainstreaming

For further info, please visit the internet site www.dublinpact.ie

[11] JobRotation - New ways DP, (DE-EA-78004), Germany. One of the four DP's goals is to use JobRotation as integrated personnel and organisation development, an implementation concept reflecting the needs of the participants. JobRotation identifies training needs in SMEs and assists with the development of a training plan to develop company competitiveness. The DP also shows that unemployed people access not only to training but also to work experience and temporary employment and are able to update their skills and experience. A very high percentage of JobRotation trainees have/will secured permanent employment at the end of the projects: 40 % of the employers involved in a job rotation scheme in this project opened up their business into new fields by making use of the skills and initiatives of migrants and others who took part in the scheme.

[12] Competence Euro-vision DP (Benl-01/EQ/3.E/005) Belgium. DP Competence Euro-Vision in Flanders has successfully created a set of tools that enable a company to assess both what skills it needs and what skills the workers have. This has made it possible for the company to adapt both its work organisation and training to the current possibilities and needs and future developments. The main aim of the project is to introduce a strategic training policy and its application in a larger number of SMEs with the intention to preserve or to increase the position of the employers in the labour market using the potential surplus value of the newest ICT-applications and distance learning.

The project develops instruments for the SMEs to cover the whole process of the realisation of a strategic training policy:

- A benchmarking instrument that is also a detector of needs.
- A tool to help the SMEs to determine a training policy strategy. It's about value based management by which shareholders, stakeholders and employees are taken into account.
- A tool that gives the employees and the employers a clear view on the competences, skills and knowledge so that a funded training program can be drawn up. With the tool, the right solution/remedy for a determined problem/deficit of the employees can be proposed and a fair diffusion of the training opportunities for all employees can be stimulated, because they are all involved.
- An instrument that visualises and gives a semantic interpretation to abstracts concepts as 'attitude/skill/knowledge'. Both the employers and the employees should be able to use the instrument.
- To develop an instrument that realises the qualitative support and foundations of the training program. This will lead to the elimination of non-effective trainings with an increase of the quality of the training cycle as a consequence.
- An instrument (benchmarking) to measure the effectiveness of the trainings with a view to raise the proclivity towards the investment of a company and a raise of quality of the trainings.

The DP also wants to offer to the companies a wide range of information on training so that the companies don't have to sort that out for themselves. The DP wants to develop the following databases:

- A database with functioning and competence profiles specifically meant for the SMEs of the targeted sectors: electro, garage, information-economy, services and tourism.
- A database of tools (training programmes, on-line courses, books, videos) in order to reach the necessary competences.

For further information on the Comet guide, please click [here](#)

[13] 4T Four Ways, FI-16, Finland. This DP developed a "Valuatlas" portal (www.valuatlas.net) for casting industry and also a tool called "Emma" for controlling SME's operations. This second product has been made together with the Finnish EQUAL project **Taitava tevanake** (FI-17).

Within the Transnational Cooperation Agreement **EURASME** (European Approach in favour of Small and Medium Enterprise, TCA 322), the 4T Four Ways developed a "webtool" for with the Spanish partner **CALYTECH**, (ES-ES58). The main aim is to identify training needs based on a skills analysis approach and analyse the changing job contents. This tool for SMEs allows a self-evaluation of the current and future situation, knowledge, technology and health. This web-based self-diagnosis tool (which could be transformed into a CD-Rom) aimed at companies in the following topics: Quality, Labour Risk Prevention and Working Environment, NIT and Environment according to Community law and trends. The "self-diagnosis tools" will offer specific contribution to operators, managers and workers engaged in their enterprises/vocational training centres/etc.

All partners within **EURASME** also develop a project web site with the following different areas:

1. Information: about the project; equal opportunities; business and human resources management; environmental management; vocational health.
2. Network forum / portal to promote inter-firm exchanges and e-business.
3. A catalogue of good practices as regards Human Resources Management Policies of a territory.
4. An electronic newsletter with the aim to disseminate information regarding the project: pieces of news from papers; EU business / employment policies; financial aids; legislation; equal opportunities; research works on different topics (impacts of EU enlargement, future trends of economy and markets ...).

One of the partners of this TCA, **K.E.R.Nige Offensive**, (DE-EA-49478) is also responsible for developing a methodology for self-organized e-learning teams: tailor-made e-learning access and training tools for educational disadvantaged employees in SMEs.

[14] See [12] JobRotation - New ways DP, DE-EA-78004, Germany

[15] **Phenix** DP, FR-NAT-2001-10540, France. The DP is developing an experimental approach of professional evaluation involving both employer and employee, in order to stimulate continuous training and skills validation as a main part of the management. The objective is to develop a kind of contractual relationship around "life long learning". The model could be the development of training centres offering training next to working places.

The background of this approach is a survey sent to 1.500 persons (50% employers, 50% employees) working in very small enterprises relating to the care sector. As a result, skills and human management are really to be improved, as 85% of employers never provide professional evaluation to their employees, since 60% of them would be interested in such a practice, especially with the help of an external coach. The main problems for using continuous training are time (how to replace employees during their training), money (paying salary during training) and mobility of employees. Anyway, more than 70% of employees would accept to train out of their working time. The age of employees impacts their availability and mobility: range 35-45 years old is awaiting home training (most of those employees are women, and their family concerns clearly modifies their mobility) and range over 55 doesn't want to move for training. On the contrary, range 45-55 is the most available and mobile for training. Their age also impacts their wish and ability to use NICT (new information and communication technologies): when they reach 45, employees don't dare to use NICT, and over 55, most of them don't get any Internet connection. Most of aged and experimented employees in this sector have got a low school level: this criteria doesn't allow them to learn easily new methods and those people are more afraid to get training or professional evaluation than others.

FARO, Flessibilità, Adattabilità, Riconversione degli Operatori della Pesca, (IT-S-MDL-182), Italy. The DP's aim is to set up a process in order to deliver new qualifications/skills and re-conversion to avoid workers in the fisheries sector to be excluded through the set up and experimentation of an integrated lifelong learning training model. Training is just a part of the project, which is based on a set of integrated actions, such as:

- Support for operators in Employment Centres in maritime districts to enable them to support enterprises in developing human resources;
- Actions to draw up and promote strategies for collaboration by enterprises, trade associations, local development actors and workers, in order to mobilise all actors and create a network;
- The experimentation of models to validate previous work experience.

[16] See (II - Sectorial Basis) - SUPPORT DP, IT-MDL-190, Italy

[17] **Gli immigrati a Mazara del Vallo: un valore umano da formare per non discriminare** (IT-G-SIC-051, Italy) focuses its action on migrant employees working in the fishing sector. The project seeks to demarcate migrants' specific skills in order to provide them with a real career opportunity on the basis of their competences. Migrant workers are qualified through individual interviews, orientation and vocational training programmes. It's the first time that this kind of action is orientated to the fishing sector and to the formation of migrant workers.

[18] **ADREN@E**, (ES-ES361) developed an e-learning platform that is mixed with a virtual coaching or mentoring platform works. It works within the book sector, which actually has to face the challenges of adapting its working methods, products, know-how, working force and culture to the new technologies. In this frame, the objectives of the project are firstly to analyse the impact of new methods of work organisation and new technologies in the sector. Secondly the objective is to support the book industry's businesses, which includes printing, publishing, distribution and booksellers. The DP's aim is to support the creation of new companies and new business models facilitating the access to the digital economy and offering new opportunities for entrepreneurs and risk capital companies. In this frame the projects seeks to develop innovative schemes of training and requalification, particularly designed for disadvantaged groups, by using the NICT.

For a project multimedia presentation please go to: www.enaee.org click on "Presentación multimedia" and then choose "English".

[19] **Family Learning Works**, (Ukgb-26). Guided by the leading principles of EQUAL and recognising the key role of basic skills and family learning as the effective foundation for lifelong learning, the objective of Family Learning Works is to identify best practice in the field by bringing together lead practitioners and policy makers from across the West Midlands Region. This Development Partnership aims to design, develop and implement a work-based basic skills programme underpinned by existing successful family literacy and numeracy models developed in other environments eg schools and community learning centres. These work-based gateways to learning will help overcome barriers of accessibility to basic skills provision, recognising common problems faced by men and women whose work patterns may preclude opportunities for learning and training and who often lack confidence in supporting their children. The Partnership aims to further promote the value and importance of family learning and to bring down barriers preventing access to family learning by developing the role of family learning mentors who will promote the workplace as an effective environment for learning and encourage the understanding of the importance of basic skills training for the workforce.

[20] **FARO**, (IT-S-MDL-182) see footnote [16]

5C+I-Cooperation Coaching&Consulting Center for Competitive Advantage&Innovation, (DE-EA-53478)

Training Resources to address Equality and Diversity, TRED, (IE-14) is setting out to use its capacity to research, design and deliver accredited training responses which will provide trainers / facilitators of learning with the competence and tools that will impact on the workplace and support behaviour change in the workplace. TRED Development Partnership has agreed to tackle discrimination through creating a national resource of expertise and tools to support the implementation of inclusive work practices and diversity management. TRED has successfully developed and delivered its equality/diversity foundation certificate to Human Resources managers and trainers and is tracking the effect of this through companies and other organisations.

PERSEO, (IT-IT-G-LAZ-009)

[21] **L'azienda come luogo dello sviluppo sociale: le competenze sociali delle RSU**, (IT-S-MDL-038), is a project, which aims to give back a social dimension to work by raising the perception of social issues. The partnership wishes to empower the workers within the trade unions, favouring the acquisition of competences and skills together with social programming. In that sense, and within a point of view of networking intervention, the project aims at rereading the social dimension in the working place in order to propose contracts, containing new guarantees, care and prevention instruments. The DP organises training programmes for trade union representatives to make them acquire new competence in order to help workers' social integration.

Trade union representatives are in fact considered as a privileged connection for the DP's intervention, since they are within the companies (they are workers, just like the others), they can therefore interface with their colleagues, find out about disadvantageous situations and contact social services.

[22] The "**European Work-Life Futures**" TCA is concerned with combating discrimination against disadvantaged groups in the labour market and with developing specific measures and innovative approaches to address competences and lifelong learning (LLL) needs of key target groups. This TCA consist of two DPs: Workforce Futures Partnership: (Ukgb-54), and People: (SE-1). The main objective is to undertake joint developments with regard to competence development to support actions for LLL and inclusive work-practices whilst at the same time focusing on the needs of the target groups and the business needs of the employers. More specific objectives are:

- Exchange of knowledge and experience to ensure transfer of best practices concerning effective approaches to changing the attitude of employers towards LLL and diversity management
- To compare effective support structures for LLL and e-learning
- Joint research and exchange of data on business and training needs among key target groups, consisting of employees and employers

The TCA works on the development of a jointly designed and produced tool for competence assessment and HRM planning. For further info on the TCA, please see the [attached document](#)

Perseo (IT-G-LAZ-009) build a network based on a relationship among different actors (Municipality of Cassino, University, Chamber of Commerce, Employers Association, training providers) to develop a training model strongly rooted in the territory is the core of the work of DP in Italy (Lazio Region).