

# PARTNERUP

## PARTNER UP Analysis Reports National level

Del. 2.2



Funded by  
the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them. [Project Number: 101087193]



## Project information

<b>Acronym</b>	PARTNER-UP
<b>Title</b>	Partnerships and stakeholder engagement for Upskilling Pathways
<b>Number</b>	101087193
<b>Sub programme or KA</b>	ERASMUS-EDU-2022-PI-FORWARD-LOT3
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://partnerup-project.eu/">https://partnerup-project.eu/</a>

## Executive Summary

The following national reports represent the outcome of the initial desk analysis carried out by the project partners in Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Romania with the aim to deepen the actual state of the art in the implementation of the Upskilling Pathways initiative (UP) in each project Country and at EU level.

The desk analysis allowed the partners to investigate and share knowledge about several aspects related to the UP initiative: legislative context and measures, key measures in place, wide target groups addressed, main challenges in reaching out the target groups, main challenges in skills assessment, provision of tailored learning and validation and recognition of skills acquired, actors delivering Upskilling Pathways, cooperation mechanisms in place.

It was based on stakeholders' contributions, on recent literature review, and on the consultation of National/EU documents on both Adult Learning and Education policies and Upskilling Pathways, published by European Commission or elaborated by European networks/associations.

The outcomes of the Analysis put the basis for the policy and practice work of the project.



#### **DEVELOPMENT TEAM**

Sylvia Liuti, Chiara Marchetta – FORMA.Azione srl

Mario Vučić, Sandra Petek, Mateja Mandić, Ana Tomljanović – Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education (AVETAЕ)

Antonela Marjanušić, Tajana Marušić – Adult Education Institution Dante

Xanthia Aristidou – CARDET

Mariana Matache, Maria Patrascu, Marin Matache - Euro Adult Education Association

Alexios Kokkos, Dimitrios Patronas - Hellenic Adult Education Association

**CONTRIBUTORS:** Asociatia Institutul Bucovina

*September, 2023*



*Table of Contents*

<b>1 Introduction .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2 Analysis reports .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Country Analysis - Romania .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>References .....</b>	<b>23</b>

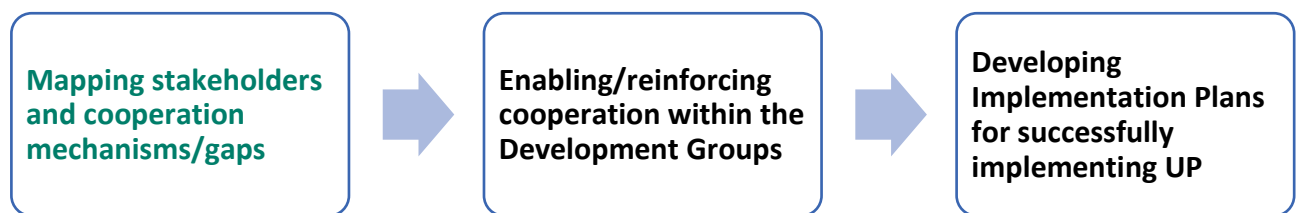
## 1 Introduction

The following national reports represent the outcome of the initial Analysis carried out by the project partners in Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Romania with the aim to deepen the actual state of art in the implementation of the Upskilling Pathways initiative (UP) in each project Country and at EU level.

Specifically, the Analysis was meant at collecting quantitative and qualitative data and information about:

- existing and missing stakeholders,
- existing cooperation mechanisms and structures,
- gaps in cooperation,
- good practices with reference to the Upskilling Pathways implementation in the Partner UP Countries and at EU level,

in order to **provide the basis for the policy and practice work of the project.**



The Analysis process allowed the partners to investigate and share knowledge about several aspects related to the UP initiative, by:

- analysing the main challenges in the UP implementation, in view of defining strengths and weaknesses in cooperation, identifying existing coordination structures, missing stakeholders and how this has impacted on a regular process of implementation;
- mapping and analysing a list of possible/useful stakeholders to engage, so as to make clear their added value and expected contribution;
- defining how they can further enable the implementation of UP.

In order to collect highly qualitative data, the Analysis is carried out according to two different methodologies, both aimed at defining gaps in cooperation and identifying opportunities for reinforcing positive/meaningful relationships already in place and involving and engaging missing and/or new stakeholders: **Desk Analysis** and **Stakeholder Mapping**.



The **Desk analysis** was mainly intended at deepening the actual state of art in the implementation of the UP initiative in each project Country and at EU level, by investigating:

- legislative context and measures;
- key measures in place;
- wide target groups addressed;
- main challenges in reaching out the target groups;
- main challenges in skills assessment, provision of tailored learning and validation and recognition of skills acquired;
- actors delivering Upskilling Pathways;
- cooperation mechanism in place.

It was based on recent literature review and on the consultation of National/EU documents on both Adult Learning and Education policies and Upskilling Pathways, published by European Commission or elaborated by European networks/associations.

The mapping of Stakeholders was developed at country level through different activities:

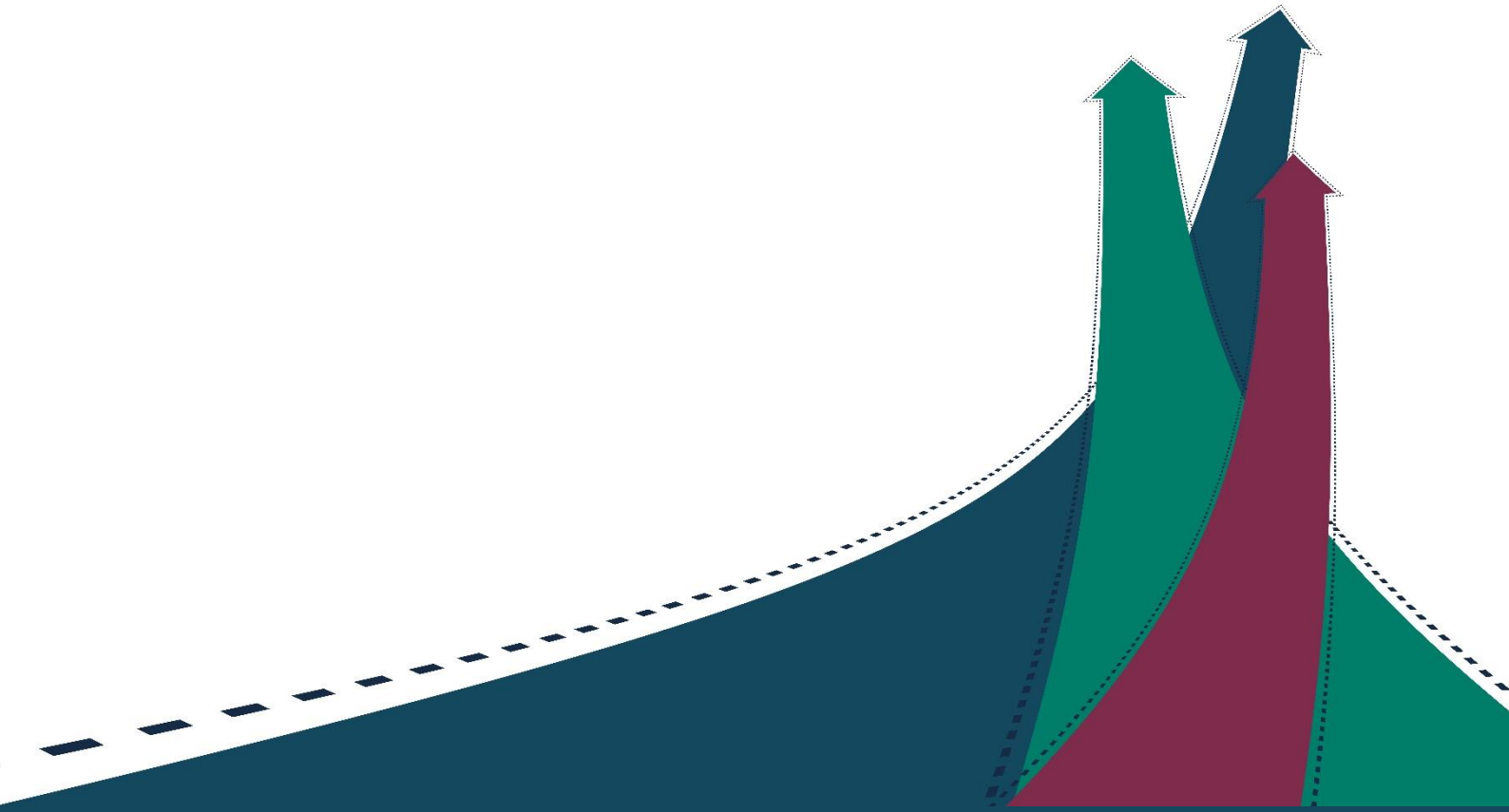
- **internal reflection** in partner organisation and/or in national project team, developed by collectively brainstorming about specific key questions, so as to share a common view of the main needs and objectives for the development of cooperation with/among stakeholders;
- **focus groups / interviews** with national stakeholders according common Guidelines, with the main aim to guide them in self-assessing their role in Upskilling Pathways, their relevance and their main contribution.

As results of the methodologies applied, the partners/national team produced an **Analysis Country Report** and a **Stakeholder Mapping Table**, as follows.



## **2 Analysis reports**

*Report of the analyses that have taken place at the respective national level*



# Country Analysis

## ROMANIA



## Country Analysis - Romania

Country	ROMANIA
Responsible organisation/s	ASOCIATIA EURO ADULT EDUCATION

### Upskilling Pathways in each country: state of art in the implementation, main target groups, challenges

#### Legislative context

Concerning the legislative framework, there is a special part within the Law of Education 1/2011<sup>1</sup>, dedicated to 'permanent education'.

Lifelong learning is seen to represent all educational activities realised by each person within formal, non-formal and informal backgrounds for training purposes and for developing competencies including personal, civic, social, or labour competencies.

Lifelong learning therefore includes early education and compulsory education, superior education (high school), university, and continuing adult vocational training. The Romanian state ensures and sustains (including financially) access to education and continuing professional training for:

- Young people and adults who have not completed compulsory education;
- Young people who left the educational system before obtaining a professional qualification;
- People with special educational needs;
- Young people and adults who return to the country after a period of working abroad;
- Young people and adults who are residents in economically and socially disadvantaged communities;
- Employed people over 40 years old with a low educational background with low qualification levels;
- Students with a high risk of school failure;
- Any citizen who wants to benefit from permanent education.

Lifelong learning education is financed from public and private funds through public or private partnerships, with financing and co-financing from employers, non-governmental organisations, etc.

According to law, lifelong learning focuses on the organisation of these permanent education programmes through educational institutions, particularly stating that they must ensure:

- compensatory education (a "*second chance*" route into education for adults who did not obtain the basic level of school qualifications);
- continuing vocational training;

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/legea-educatiei\\_actualizata%20august%202018.pdf](https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/legea-educatiei_actualizata%20august%202018.pdf)

- civic education and - personal education designed to enable people to play an active role in society;

These laws aim to create training opportunities for newly disadvantaged groups, and stimulate employment. Many groups can be classed as '*disadvantaged*', and therefore qualify for this public support, including the long term unemployed, women, the disabled, those returning to work after maternal or paternal leave, or after military service, single parents, and those in rural areas with a low income.

### Key measures in place

1. A project was started by the Ministry of Education with '**Center Education 2000+**'<sup>2</sup> which offered a second chance for young adults between 14-25 years who did not complete compulsory education, where they were offered a '*basic education recovery*' programme in parallel with an apprenticeship type of training. These apprenticeships deliberately combined traditional Roma professions with other, more "*modern*" professions to motivate student participation.
2. Another national program, **The Second Chance program** according to the Ministry of Education,<sup>3</sup> is addressed to teenagers, young people, and adults, coming from diverse social backgrounds and of varying ages, who have not attended or completed primary and secondary education.

The program offers these categories of people the possibility of continuing and completing their compulsory education without having to interrupt their possible professional or family activities in which they are involved.

The program is structured on two levels:

- a. Second chance - primary education and
- b. Second chance - lower secondary education (the latter also having a professional training component)

For the program **A second chance - primary education:**

- they did not participate in formal school education at all;
- were enrolled, but dropped out of primary education - regardless of the time and reasons for dropping out;
- they did not graduate from primary education until the age of 14.

For the **Second Chance program - lower secondary education:**

- they graduated from compulsory primary education (including in the Second Chance system) but did not continue their education further, or
- they graduated part of the classes corresponding to secondary school education (V, VI or VII), but dropped out of school during this education cycle - regardless of the time and reasons for dropping out.

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.devex.com/organizations/center-education-2000-22809>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.edu.ro/etichete/doua-%C8%99ans%C4%83#>

The Second Chance Program is a flexible program, so as to motivate students and help them complete it, to offer more autonomy to schools in terms of its implementation. Through the program, innovative elements were introduced into the educational process, such as: the modular curriculum and the credit system for basic education, the evaluation, certification and recognition of previously acquired skills by students, and the provision of an individualised training program.

The courses can be held according to several timetables (during the week in the afternoon or evening, on Saturdays or during school holidays, etc.) depending on the possibilities of the students and the teaching staff. The program also has a flexible duration. Graduates have the right to continue their studies, according to the provisions of the law.

- 3. The Employment Agencies** organise literacy and numeracy programs for adults<sup>4</sup> who have not completed primary education. Many county agencies organise these courses for the beneficiaries of the minimum guaranteed income because most of them are people who unfortunately do not know how to write, read and calculate, therefore they are offered the chance to enter into the labour market by becoming literate. After learning to write, read and calculate, they will be able to take a qualification course. The courses are held in the halls of some educational institutions, with qualified staff from the Employment Agency.
- 4. Roma communities** - Within Romania there are areas with a high Roma population, and there has been a policy to encourage more Roma people to become teachers, in order to serve as positive role models<sup>5</sup>. In order to achieve this there are '*positive discrimination*' programmes to attract young Roma students into teacher training, including a distance learning programme through the University of Bucharest, and a system which allocated special places for Roma students within all universities. The "*Centre Education 2000+*", also supports Roma students with the condition that they work within their communities for some time after they graduate.
- 5.** Romania organised in 2017 one international **Mutual Learning Workshop** with the topic Implementing Upskilling Pathways. The workshops aimed to bring together seven countries to explore the policy actions and practical levers that can support the implementation of the EU Upskilling Pathways (UP) Recommendation. It comprises two sessions: The first session in November 2017 which focused on supporting countries to understand what UP is and develop a "*to-do list*" of actions as first steps for implementing UP in their country. The second workshop in April 2018 which was expected to review the early implementation of this list. This will examine what is working well and some of the challenges encountered by Member States and how they could be overcome, and will go further in implementation by focusing on UP steps, enablers and funding.

## **6. European programmes**

---

<sup>4</sup> [https://mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/MMPS/SNOFM\\_2021-2027.pdf](https://mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/MMPS/SNOFM_2021-2027.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.romaeducationfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/romania\\_report.pdf](https://www.romaeducationfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/romania_report.pdf)

Various institutions and organisations use the opportunities to access ESF and Erasmus+ funding to support the implementation of the UP for low-qualified adults.

Many programs and projects have been implemented, but the results are not exactly what was expected, sometimes the cooperation between employers, educational organisations, government, public and/or private providers, etc. faces a lack of tangible and immediate effects.

### **c. Wide target groups addressed in Romania**

Priority **target groups** of adults with low qualifications in Romania for UP implementation were identified, including:

- a. Active/employed people
- b. Unemployed people
- c. Inactive people that are usually invisible and harder to reach (not employed, not registered with PES)
- d. People who have not completed their studies
- e. Refugees and individuals from a migrant background
- f. People in rural areas, which have less access to education or training facilities
- g. Minorities such as Roma communities, particularly those where there have been multiple generations in unemployment
- h. Retired people

To engage these target groups requires targeted outreach; it is needed to have a partnership, including working with local authorities, learning/ training providers, social services, civil society networks, employment services, employers, social partners, chambers of commerce, libraries, cultural houses, church groups, schools. Sometimes financial incentives are a source of motivation to bring them to a training provider courses or back to school

### **d. Main challenges in reaching out to the target groups**

Romania, as well as all European countries recognised that UP could provide an opportunity to create a more coherent support system for low-qualified adults. This could be done through existing EU supporting mechanisms, such as the European Agenda on Adult Learning or funding programmes like ESF or Erasmus +.

### **e. Main challenges in skills assessment, provision of tailored learning and validation and recognition of skills acquired**

According to our analysis of the answers to the questionnaires and the discussion in the focus groups, the main challenges in training and upskilling low-qualified individuals in Romania may be seen from different perspectives, as follows:

- Maintaining stable political commitment for implementing UP and tackling fragmented governance
- Lack of existing data/evidence or research to identify key target groups and the information is not accessible to them.
- Education availability/access: Due to geographical or financial reasons, low-qualified individuals in Romania face challenges in accessing education and training opportunities.
- Lack of flexibility for the VET training programs in terms of accessibility, duration and practical learning.

- The biggest number of low-qualified people are in the rural areas and the training providers are in the big cities and the travel costs for the trainees are not covered in many cases.
- Unsatisfied labour market needs due to misalignment between companies' needs and low-qualified individuals' training and needs for training. Even if certain training has been available and implemented and certain low-qualified individuals have been involved in these programmes, the result has not fulfilled the labour market need, as the individuals did not valorize the training into real labour market employment for sound periods.
- Secure and sustainable funding to develop or refine existing provision to incorporate the three UP steps
- The employers do not have an obligation to support the training and up-skilling of their staff; especially in the HORECA sector and in the construction sector they do not give priority to the training and qualification.
- Motivation and stability: Low-qualified individuals encounter difficulties in investing through training and lack of skills for specific roles may be identified after the specific training program is effectively implemented.
- Stigma and discrimination: Even significant progress has been noticed, in certain situations low-qualified individuals may face discrimination in the workplace.
- Lack of digital skills: Many low-qualified individuals in Romania may not have access to or be comfortable with technology, which is becoming mandatory nowadays.
- Linguistic skills: More and more domains need more than native language proficiency, so low-qualified individuals appear at risk of position and exclusion due to linguistic skills, even for training opportunities.
- The legal frame and the national policies do not encourage the training and qualification of low-qualified people. Only the ESF program supporting currently the qualification within investing in people projects
- Fostering a *lifelong* learning culture and creating incentives for adults to learn

#### **f. Actors delivering Upskilling Pathways**

The factors involved in Upskilling pathways are mainly:

1. Government authorities - issue the necessary legal framework and facilitate the professional training process by providing public-private services and facilities as part of education and development programs, as well as by allocating funds for educational projects.
  - a. Ministries: Ministry of Labour and Social Justice, Ministry of Education, Ministry of European Investments and Projects, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Finance
  - b. National Authority Employment
  - c. County Employment Agencies
  - d. Municipalities
  - e. National Authority of Qualifications (ANC)
2. Educational Institutions
3. VET/Training Providers

4. Validation of Non-formal and Informal (VNFIL) Centres
5. NGOs and Adult Learning and education providers -non-formal education
6. Adult Learning and Education providers – formal education
7. Chambers of Commerce
8. Churches
9. Trade unions/ social partners
10. Employers
11. Library
12. Universities
13. Companies and employer associations

### **Stakeholder cooperation in UP: successful cooperation mechanisms, missing stakeholders and gaps in cooperation**

#### **a. Successful cooperation mechanisms**

There are various successful cooperation mechanisms initiated, which we can mention:

##### **National Level:**

- **Cooperation in the second chance program: in all Romania, this program is running as a Partnership for education - school and community**

The main stakeholders involved are: Schools, County School Inspectorates, local administration, NGOs, mediators, trainers, counsellors, mass media, employers, training providers.

School-community collaboration in promoting the "*Second Chance*" Program resulted in expanding the number of classes from primary education and secondary education in disadvantaged communities and communities geographically segregated. Campaigns were carried out promotion and information in different forms (arrangement of information spaces in schools and town halls, meetings, with young people and adults who have not completed their education mandatory, exchange of experience, presenting examples of good practice, TV shows, information in the press etc.) through the support provided by representatives of local authorities, non-governmental organisations, school and health mediators, counsellors etc. in the promoting and informing the benefits offered by the program.

Involvement of responsible factors from schools and communities in popularising, information on the benefits of the Program "*Second Chance*" led to the increase in the number of requests to view completion of compulsory education, increasing the availability of teaching staff in supporting the program and involvement in specific activities, at the manifestation of an increased interest from students.

##### **Regional Level:**

- **Cooperation in literacy and numeracy programs: County Employment Agencies, schools, municipalities, training providers, NGOs.**

The Employment Agencies organise literacy and numeracy programs for adults who have not completed primary education. Many county agencies organise these courses for the beneficiaries of the minimum guaranteed income because most of them are people who unfortunately do not know how to write, read and calculate, therefore they are offered the

chance to enter into the labour market by becoming literate. After learning to write, read and calculate, they will be able to take a qualification course. The courses are held in the halls of some educational institutions, with qualified staff from the Employment Agency.

As a result, vocational training courses represent an alternative through which the unemployed can have an extra chance to get employed.

The Employment Agency intends to qualify the labour force needed by the structures subordinated to the town halls, for example green space caretakers and asphalt pavers. In this sense, collaboration protocols were signed with the municipalities, so that practical training is done within these structures and theoretical training in classes provided by the town halls. Also, the persons registered with the employment agencies can benefit, free of charge, from assessment and certification services of the professional skills acquired through non formal and informal learning, the financing of which is ensured from the unemployment insurance budget.

#### **Local Level:**

- **Collaborations in various projects, with European funding, for various target groups:**

For example, the representatives of stakeholders involved in the Focus Group in Suceava highlighted some projects in the region where very good collaboration where established:

- People from rural areas: - close cooperation between NGOs with the labour office on profiling and registering all people with low qualifications that we identify in rural areas. We are organising job fairs together, meeting with employers and creating facilities for those difficult to employ.
- People with disabilities and special needs - close cooperation between NGOs with special schools from the region because they do not have many options to support the qualifications of youngsters with disabilities and special needs and we try to complete the offer with training opportunities offered by training providers and keep together the youngsters in the school.

- b. Missing stakeholders, gaps in cooperation and challenges**

There are some gaps which were identified in our focus groups, interviews, and analyses:

- Common understanding of the concept of Upskilling Pathways and the low-qualified adults
- The steps of the Upskilling Pathways according to the Recommendation of Upskilling Pathways adopted in December 2016 by the Council of European Union
- Challenges in implementing UP
- Strategy for action plan based on need analysis
- Equal policy and programs distributed between the regions
  
- Flexibility on organising training on the job or apprenticeship model, the most interested for vulnerable low-qualified groups because brings training, certification and income as well
- Lack of responsibilities distributed among the state offices with a big gap in communication and cooperation
- The legal frame and the national policies do not encourage the training and qualification of low-qualified people. Just the ESF program supporting currently the qualification within investing in people projects

- Specific problems in collaboration, depending on the availability of local authorities, often based on personal relationships, the disinterest of local authorities
- Mentality – the cooperation based on interest
- Ignorance of legal obligations

**c. Suggestions for improvement of the challenges and gaps**

- Information and awareness campaigns among low-qualified people, in different forms and at different levels, considering the complexity of the target group
- Awareness of the need and explanation of the advantages of having a competence, a qualification
- Resettlement of skills at the profile level
- Support for disadvantaged families
- Mediators and advisors for this target group
- Contact person in each public institution for the guidance of families from the Diaspora
- Updated databases with this target group and feedback from these people regarding the training/retraining, literacy programs

For further information, see **Stakeholder mapping table** [here](#)

**Other relevant experiences of stakeholders' activation/cooperation**

We would like to present one example of the Euro Adult Education Association's project financed by the European Social Fund, where cooperation between various partners functioned very well and we had implemented all 3 steps from Upskilling Pathways.

**"RURAL FORCE - TRAINING, Certification, more chances for employment!"** was a project co-financed by the ESF, Sectoral Operational Program Human Resources Development 2007 - 2013, Priority Axis 5 "*Promotion of active employment measures*", Major Area of intervention 5.2 "*Promotion long-term sustainability of rural areas in terms of the development of human resources and employment*" - POSDRU/135/5.2/S/128962.

The project lasted 18 months with the **general objective**: Ensuring increased opportunities for 940 job seekers through information activities and career counselling.

**Project partnership**: S.C.MPA S.R.L. - Sibiu – coordinator; ASOCIAȚIA EURO ADULT EDUCATION – București; Asociația Dezvoltarea Capitalului Uman - Alba Iulia; Asociația INCEPTUS ROMANIA - Cluj Napoca; BPI S.R.L. ITALIA - Milano, Italia.

**The target group** consisted of 940 **people from rural areas** (50% women): 370 people looking for a job, 370 inactive people and 200 people in subsistence agriculture.

**Specific objectives/Results**



Development of job search skills for 940 people through **information activities and professional advice**

- Providing information about the labour market at the local and national levels,
- Evaluation and self-assessment of personality in order to guide the career,
- Developing the skills and self-confidence of job seekers,
- Training in job search methods and techniques,

Development of **professional skills** for 752 people:

- by organising professional training programs (FP) in the fields of: entrepreneurship, foreign languages, and IT – 352 people
- by **assessment and certification of skills acquired in non-formal and informal learning** – 400 people

Integration of 160 people into the labour market, of which:

- 140 beneficiaries of job placement services
- 20 beneficiaries of consulting activities and assistance for starting a business

Increasing the level of information of the target group through information campaigns on education and training opportunities, the labour market at regional, country and European Union level, occupational, sectoral and geographical mobility.

Organisation and implementation of internships in ITALY for 40 participants

### **Qualitative information about the analysis process**

The Upskilling pathways analysis process consisted of:

- Analysing existing documents in the field,
- Analysing the responses of stakeholders to the questionnaires developed in the project,
- Interviews with representatives of stakeholders,
- Organising of three focus groups,
- Participation in the Job Fair organised by the Employment Agency Ilfov where we had discussions with unemployed people with low-qualification and employers.

#### **Did the analysis process improve/change the stakeholders' commitment and contribution?**

The analysis process brought a clarification of the concept of Upskilling Pathways for low-qualified individuals because we found that some of the stakeholders did not have the same understanding of this concept, as well as of the term low-qualified adult. A clarifying discussion on these concepts and reaching a consensus was needed.

Various stakeholders were involved who have attributions in a certain field and with a specific target group (for example Employment Agency - unemployed) or other stakeholders who address several categories of persons with low qualifications (for example NGO through European projects).

We believe that an improvement in the commitment of the participants and their contribution will be achieved during the project, in the development group meetings, but the first step was made through the discussions and consensus regarding Upskilling Pathways for low-qualified adults.

**How do you evaluate their level of participation in the analysis process?**

We initially addressed several regions in Romania, some were very interested in participating in this project, others less. We chose to do an analysis at the level of three regions in Romania, namely North-East (Suceava), South-West Oltenia (Ramnicu Valcea) and Center Region (Brasov) and three focus groups were organised in Suceava, Ramnicu Valcea and Brasov.

Regarding the level of participation of stakeholders in the focus group in Suceava, it was special that representatives from more than 15 institutions involved in working with the target group participated and they want to be part further in the next phase of the project, namely development group.

The local television was interested and conducted an interview, and some participating institutions published information about the event on their social media pages.

In the other regions, the interest was lower, so the development group will be established in Suceava with the participation of stakeholders from the other 2 regions.

**How the analysis impacted your organisations and relationships with stakeholders?**

The three focus groups were organised in the 3 regions through the involvement of our partners, namely the Bucovina Institute Association in Suceava, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Brasov and the Dual Learning Association in Ramnicu Valcea.

The analysis carried out in the project contributed to the consolidation of the collaboration with our old partners but also to the development of new relationships with other stakeholders from the respective regions.

**How the analysis impacted the relationships among stakeholders?**

The participation of so many stakeholders in this event once again highlighted the current situation, but especially the challenges that each stakeholder faces and what ideas to find solutions to solve them.

We can say that some of the stakeholders have met before in other projects/meetings, but the current focus group brought together various types of stakeholders involved in UP for low-qualified adults.

**What went well:**

The focus group organised in Suceava (North East Region) was a great success. Representatives of the most important stakeholders in the region participated, who were represented by decision-makers, such as the vice mayor, deputy director of the Employment agency, school inspectors, etc. The participants were very active and committed and interested in improving the situation of adults with low qualification levels and collaborating for this. Most of them want to continue the collaboration in the project, even to be part of the development group.

### **What went wrong?**

Focus groups were also organised in other regions, but the participation was lower.

### **Lessons learnt (if any)**

It is important to bring together decision-makers for discussion and consultation because they can influence the process of change and improvement of upskilling pathways for low-qualified adults and can also continue involvement in our development group.

### **Good practices**

*N.B. 'Good practices' are defined, in this context, as strategies, approaches and/or activities that have been shown through research and/or evaluation to be effective, efficient, sustainable and/or transferable, and to reliably lead to a desired result in supporting identification, engagement, commitment of stakeholders as well as cooperation among them, with specific reference to the UP initiative. The Good practices can be local, regional, national or international ones.*

**Upskilling Adults 45+ with Migrant Background** it is an ERASMUS+ program and the implementing organisation in Romania is Romanian Institute for Adult Education.

The project is designed to train facilitators and provide services for educational providers that focus on upskilling middle-aged adult migrants of all genders so that they can thrive in the modern workforce. The project recognizes that migrant adults aged 45-plus constitute a vulnerable population. They face difficulties (re)integrating into the labour market due to (long-term) unemployment, de-skilling and a competency gap.

The project lists the following objectives:

- To design dedicated programmes to train staff working with adults 45+, tested as part of the project by 18 educators.
- To provide tailored, holistic services for adults aged 45+ from migrant backgrounds, so that they can access the labour market and actively participate in their community. This involves creating a combination of validation services and training offers (for upskilling), together with guidance on entrepreneurial initiatives and how to find a job.
- To develop a two-pronged learning strategy: digital skills and soft skills that can be adapted to different contexts and target groups.

More information on the website: <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/upskilling-adults-45-migrant-background-romania>

**WISE for Digital Upskilling** is an ERASMUS+ program and the implementing organisation in Romania is Workshops Without Borders.

The project has the following objectives:

- Developing, testing and implementation of innovative digital learning materials to be used for up-skilling of disadvantaged workers participating in work-based training in work integration social enterprises – literacy/numeracy and basic digital skills
- Developing, testing, implementation and dissemination of a set of tools and innovative digital learning materials to better prepare job coaches in work integration social enterprises as professionals equipped to promote and achieve equity, diversity and inclusion challenges in the work-based learning environment – tools for skills

assessment, designing integration pathways for disadvantaged workers and life and job coaching

- Strengthening the cooperation, networking and practice sharing between organisations engaged in work-based training for adults with low qualifications in participating countries. A common set of basic digital knowledge training materials for adults with low qualifications will be developed to also include new technologies that are emerging into the labour market.

Also as a result of the project, 70 work integration social enterprises, and other parties interested to support and develop work integration social enterprise such as labour agencies that will attend the multiplication event will receive project outputs on these topics. 20 trainers/ staff that perform job coaching activities will improve their knowledge and skills. In addition, 10 work integration social enterprise managers and future trainers will improve their knowledge and skills on designing and implementing effective work integration programmes for low skilled adults, identifying social indicators and social reporting in a work integration social enterprise following the short-term joint staff training events.

More information on the website: <https://riseromania.ro/en/wise-for-digital-upskilling>

### **SEPAL project**

Leader of the project was Bucovina Institute Association and worked closely with the Suceava Labor Office on supporting young NEETS to access the training and practical stages of learning within the SEPAL project.

The SEPAL Project is funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA and Norway grants found for youth employment. SEPAL is implemented in 5 European countries in partnership with: Bucovina Institute in Romania, Fundacio Privada Pere Closa in Spain, with ZISPB in Lithuania, with KoiSPE Diadromes in Greece and with KOMES in Poland.

SEPAL project aims to empower young individuals by offering support services for employment and practical apprenticeships stages for 600 NEETS, aged 18-29 years old and coming from vulnerable groups: youth with disabilities, Roma, migrants, low skilled and school drop-outs.

The cooperation with Suceava Labor Office started in November 2018 when the Bucovina Institute through project SEPAL offered practical apprenticeship stages to the NEETs youngsters. We signed a cooperation agreement in order to support registration of young NEETs from rural areas, profiling them according with local legislation, offering counselling and orientation by Bucovina Institute WISE services (Work Integration Social Enterprise services that we are accredited) and the labour office support on organising the job fare mediation with employers and the companies willing to host a learning practical stage for youngsters.

We developed an LSC approach (Local Stakeholders Committee) with coordination of the Labour Office and it was based on constant meetings and actions in order to support the youth NEET employment in our region Suceava.

The project developed a platform for NEETS registration, diagnoses and communication peer to peer and the list of available jobs provided by LSC Suceava Labour Office was permanently updated.

The specialists from Suceava Labor Office (SLO) was involved on the development of support services for NEETs employment in close working with Bucovina WISE specialists, on the piloting stage of the SEPAL Innovation Book and Apprenticeship Book, we had delegates for the international exchanges stages and the SLO participated on the international training sessions.

The great results of this cooperation proved that, we need to cooperate and complete our support services on supporting youngsters for employment, if the NGO sector has more access to the funds for innovation the labour office has the role for validation of the new approach, the experience on being part of all stage of the project implementation bring a significant chance for training, specialisation and exchange with the best practices across Europe.

More details: [www.bucovinainstitute.org](http://www.bucovinainstitute.org) , [info@bucovinainstitute.org](mailto:info@bucovinainstitute.org);

### Priorities for Development Groups

**The Development Group** will be composed of representatives of various stakeholders from two regions in Romania (North-East and South-West Oltenia) and will meet regularly. The category of the stakeholders: Public authority, Adult Learning and Education providers – formal and non-formal, VET providers, NGOs, Employment Services, Employers, Trade Union, Social services, Universities, Secondary schools, Libraries and Adult Education centres.

The meetings of the development group will be organised as much as possible face-to-face so that the discussion will be more interactive and constructive.

**The priorities for the Development Group**, based on the focus groups meetings and on the desk research are the following:

- Clarification of the concept of Upskilling Pathways and Common understanding of the Recommendation of Upskilling Pathways adopted in December 2016 by the Council of European Union;
- Identification of the target group that the project refers to low-qualified persons;
- Dissemination of good practices that members of the development group have and lessons learned;
- The limits of competence of the stakeholders and the responsibilities between stakeholders;
- Improve the tracking mechanism of low-qualified persons and find solutions to be better guided on the labour market needs regarding their skills;
- Involvement of the companies in the learning and evaluation process for the low-qualified persons and motivation of the companies;
- Discussion on how to improve flexible learning pathways, but also outreach, and skills assessment for the target group
- Discussion and find solutions for improving cooperation structures between stakeholders;
- Continuous capacity building for trainers who are involved in the upskilling target group;
- Dissemination and exploitation of other European partner's experiences regarding Upskilling Pathways.

The Development group will have at least 4 meetings to analyse, discuss and have consultations about the following tasks:

**In the first meeting** of the development group we will focus on the following:

- The detailed presentation of the project and clarification of the concept of Upskilling Pathways;
- Common understanding of the Recommendation of Upskilling Pathways adopted in December 2016 by the Council of European Union;
- Identification of the target group that the project refers to low-qualified persons;
- Analysis of the target group's training needs and the possibility of being involved in community life;
- Dissemination of good practices that members of the development group have and lessons learned and set up an online group for discussion.

**The second meeting** will be brainstorming with all members of the development group on the following topics:

- The limits of competence of the stakeholders and target groups that they address;
- To set the responsibilities and improve the field's governance in terms of overlapping, responsibilities between stakeholders,
- Improve the tracking mechanism of low-qualified persons and find solutions to be better guided on the labour market needs regarding their skills.
- Discussions and consultation about the target group's attitude regarding the incentives.

**In the third meeting**, starting from the identification of the GT and the delimitation of the Limits of competence, we will establish the role, the attributions of each one and the future actions.

The next topics will be discussed:

- Actual situation and the gaps in UP;
- Collaboration mechanism between Stakeholders;
- How can we improve skills assessment and tailored learning offers for the target group;
- Validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning but also recognition of second-chance learning;
- Involvement of the companies in the learning and evaluation process for the low-qualified persons and motivation of the companies;
- Identification of possible cooperation structures.

**In the fourth meeting** we focus on the improvement of the actual situation:

- Discussion on how to improve flexible learning pathways, but also outreach and move from non-formal to formal
- Discussion and find solutions for improving cooperation structures between stakeholders;
- Continuous capacity building for trainers who are involved in the upskilling target group;
- Dissemination and exploitation of other European partner's experiences regarding Upskilling Pathways.



## References

Parlamentul României, *Legea educației naționale nr. 1/2011*, Bucurest