


# Development Groups Summary

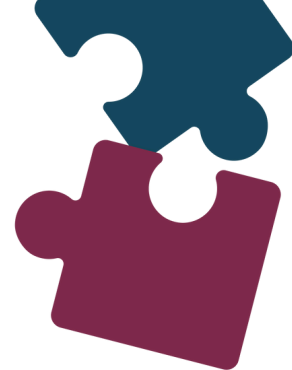
Country: Romania



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## Stakeholders involved

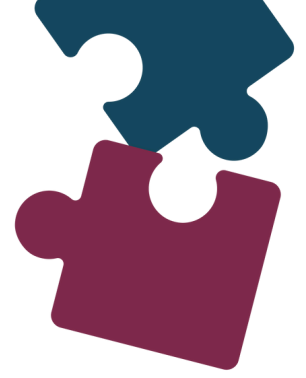
The 5 Development Groups (3 in persons and 2 online) organized in Romania encompass key stakeholders at regional levels, including public authorities, educational institutions, reference networks, organizations, and experts, which play a crucial role in promoting the Upskilling Pathways initiative in Romania. On 24 August and 28 November 2023, there were organized two face-to-face development groups in the northeast region of Romania, in Suceava, and the next on 30 November 2023 in Botosani. The other 2 events were organized online on 29.04 and 10.05.2024. Overall, 96 representatives of various institutions and organizations participated in these events.

Key stakeholders included:

- **Government authorities:** County Employment Agencies, County Councils, Municipalities, County Prefect's Institutions, County Culture Directorate, County School Inspectorates, County Agricultural Direction, General Directorates of Social Assistance and Child Protection, County Agency for Social Protection and Intervention, County Directorate of Statistic
- **Educational institutions:** Secondary Schools, Colleges, libraries
- **Business organizations:** Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Companies, Start Ups
- **Training providers (VET and Adult Learning)**
- **NGOs and Community Association**
- **Learners and adult educators**

Their roles included designing and implementing upskilling programs, promoting lifelong learning policies, coordinating efforts among stakeholders, and advocating for policy changes to support inclusion and employability. They played a key role in aligning the initiative's objectives with labour market and community needs.





### **Activities and methods for stakeholder engagement**

During the Development Group meetings, a variety of methods and activities were employed to actively engage participants, generate actionable insights and foster collaboration.

**Workshops:** Highly engaging and participatory, workshops brought stakeholders together to brainstorm, identify barriers, and co-develop strategies for effective collaboration. These sessions were instrumental in creating actionable plans and fostering partnerships.

**Working groups:** Particularly effective during face-to-face meetings, these sessions created a collaborative environment where participants could freely share their opinions, explore diverse perspectives, and work together to identify common ground for future collaboration.

**Roundtable discussions:** Enabled participants to share experiences, discuss diverse perspectives, and build a shared understanding of key concepts related to Upskilling Pathways.

Overall, a combination of interactive sessions (with a focus on the working groups), expert and moderator contributions, and round table discussions proved to be effective in engaging participants, generating specific suggestions, and fostering collaboration among stakeholders.

### **Opportunities**

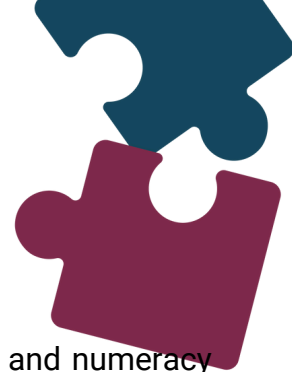
In Romania, collaborations and initiatives related to Upskilling Pathways (UP) include local, regional, and national partnerships among various stakeholders as; educational and training institutions, public authorities, companies, key actors in the employment and labour market, and networks and social partners. There are various successful cooperation mechanisms initiated, which we can mention:

#### **Second Chance Program:**

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, counselors, mass media, employers, training providers.





**Literacy and numeracy programs:** Employment Agencies organize literacy and numeracy programs for adults who have not completed primary education. Many county agencies organize 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.

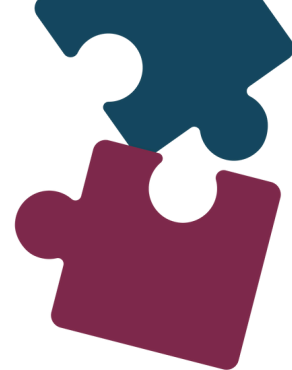
**EU-funded projects:** Various institutions and organizations use the opportunities to access ESF and Erasmus+ funding to support the implementation of the UP for low-skilled adults, included people from rural areas, Roma, people with disabilities and special needs.

## Challenges

The major barriers and challenges hindering effective collaboration in upskilling initiatives, as identified by stakeholders, following the brainstorming and working groups from our development groups meetings include:

- A common understanding of the concepts of Upskilling Pathways for low-skilled adults, and the steps of the Upskilling Pathways according to the Recommendation of Upskilling Pathways.
- Lack of information and awareness on different levels about the Upskilling Pathways.
- Flexibility in organizing training on the job or apprenticeship model, the most interesting for vulnerable low-skilled groups.
- Lack of responsibilities distributed among the state offices with gap in communication and cooperation.
- The legal frame and the national policies do not encourage the training and qualification of low-skilled people.
- Dependency on ESF funding without sustainable alternatives.
- Specific problems in collaboration, depending on the availability of local authorities, often based on personal relationships, the disinterest of local authorities.
- Discrepancy between the needs of the labor market and the educational and training offer inconsistent or fragmented policy frameworks across different sectors and levels of governance.
- Low motivation of the target group to participate in Upskilling Pathways initiatives mostly because of low levels of self-esteem and bad experiences from their participation in formal education.





## Solutions

Proposed solutions and strategies to address challenges include:

- Information and awareness campaigns among low-skilled people, in different forms, and at various levels, considering the complexity of the target group.
- Organizing a national event to highlight the issue of upskilling pathways and promote opportunities and positive examples, with the involvement of various stakeholders, including media.
- Promoting policy adjustments to encourage training and qualifications for low-skilled groups.
- Support for disadvantaged families, providing mediators, and advisors.
- Contact persons in each public institution for the guidance of families from the Diaspora, and contact persons for vulnerable groups.
- Enhancing local databases to track training needs and outcomes.
- Leveraging existing EU funding mechanisms and exploring new financial models to ensure sustainability.
- Offering incentives for stakeholder participation, such as recognition programs and grants.

These initiatives aim to strengthen collaboration, align efforts with labor market needs, and build an inclusive framework for lifelong learning.

