Development Groups

Country Reports

Project information

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Introduction

Development groups are planned as structured meetings of key stakeholders formed with the primary objective of facilitating discussion, cooperation, and partnership building in the context of improving the implementation of Upskilling Pathways. These groups are a critical component of initiatives aimed at enhancing adult learning opportunities and engaging stakeholders effectively.

These development groups serve as a platform for engaging in open and constructive discussions. They bring together a diverse set of partners and stakeholders from various sectors, including public authorities, education providers, adult learners, and other relevant parties. These discussions are centred around identifying challenges, sharing insights, and brainstorming solutions to improve the implementation of Upskilling Pathways.

Furthermore, development groups facilitate the organisation of meetings and interactions among key actors and cooperation partners. This includes representatives from public authorities responsible for policy and regulation, education providers delivering Upskilling Pathways, adult learners themselves, and stakeholders identified through comprehensive analysis. These meetings aim to create a collaborative environment where all relevant parties can come together, share their perspectives, and work towards common goals.

One of the primary tasks of development groups is to identify and design cooperation structures that can effectively support the goals of Upskilling Pathways. This involves determining how various stakeholders can work together, allocate responsibilities, and establish mechanisms for seamless cooperation. It may include the creation of frameworks, guidelines, and protocols that ensure coordinated efforts.

In addition, development groups focus on enhancing the flexibility and adaptability of learning pathways for adult learners. This involves discussing and proposing strategies to make learning opportunities more accessible, responsive to learners' needs, and adaptable to changing circumstances. The aim is to design learning pathways that empower individuals to acquire new skills and knowledge at their own pace and convenience.

Characterised by interdisciplinary collaboration, regular in situ or online meetings, data-driven decision-making, problem-solving orientation, and an action-oriented approach, development groups play a vital role in advancing the implementation of Upskilling Pathways and improving adult education. They foster collaboration, align strategies, and promote the creation of flexible and effective learning opportunities, ensuring that all relevant stakeholders work in synergy to achieve shared goals in adult education and lifelong learning.

Priorities and key areas

The following priorities have been identified based on the stakeholder analysis:

- Strengthening collaboration mechanisms between the stakeholders - setting frameworks, structures and responsibilities for allowing and facilitating effective cooperation
- Development of policies which are less fragmented and more coherent with EU strategies
- Increasing participation - working on outreach strategies and practices - promotion of good practices, information exchange, communication and publicity for greater involvement of adults with no or low qualifications.
- Improving the effectiveness of training needs analysis
- Validation of informal and non-formal competences and prior learning
- Financial support mechanisms for adult learners
- Enhancing the role of ALE practitioners
- Relevance of non-formal educational practices for ALE
- Digitisation strategy for the development of ALE
- Support for local adult engagement initiatives, involvement of regional/local level in promoting ALE development
- How to exploit European experiences linked to UP

Based on analysis findings, the development groups focus on several key discussion areas:

- **Opportunities**
  - What collaborations or initiatives related to UP exist within the country/at the EU level, and how can they be leveraged? Are there untapped resources, organisations, or stakeholders that could be brought into the collaborative effort to enhance UP? What best practices from other regions or countries can be adapted to improve collaboration in upskilling efforts?

- **Challenges**
  - What are the major barriers and challenges stakeholders identified which are hindering effective collaboration? What funding and resource allocation, policy, and/or accessibility and inclusion obstacles have been identified? What other challenges were reported?

- **Possible solutions**
  - What solutions have been proposed for the identified challenges and barriers? What models or strategies can be explored to overcome financial challenges in upskilling initiatives? How can policy changes to address legal and regulatory barriers to collaboration be supported? What strategies can be employed to promote partnerships in UP? Are there specific incentives that can be introduced to encourage participation and engagement from stakeholders?

- Implementation plans
  - What are the short-term and long-term goals for upskilling initiatives, and how can they be aligned with the objectives of the stakeholders? What is the timeline for implementation, and what are the key milestones that need to be achieved? How will responsibilities be distributed among the various stakeholders, and what governance structures will be put in place? What strategies will be in place to adapt and evolve the implementation plan as circumstances change or new challenges arise? What contingency plans can be developed to mitigate unforeseen challenges or disruptions in UP?

Findings at the national level

Cyprus

Cyprus

Partner organisation(s): CARDET

Participating stakeholders

1st Development Group - online

The first development group took place online on May 15th 2024, with 9 participants representing various organisations. Specifically, the following stakeholders participated:

1. An Assistant Professor from the University of Limassol
2. A research associate from the Cyprus University of Technology
3. Trainers from the Human Resource Development Authority
4. Representatives from CARDET
5. Representatives of the University of Nicosia
6. Representatives of Innovade.

2nd Development Group - online

The second development group was held online on May 20th, 2024, with 13 participants from diverse organisations, including:

1. Representatives of KES College
2. The Director of the Faculty Training and Development Unit and e-Learning Pedagogical Support Unit of the University of Nicosia.
3. Adult educators/trainers of CARDET
4. Adult learners.
5. Representative of the Adult Education Centres, Ministry of Education, Sports, Youth.

3rd Development Group – face to face

The third development group was held face-to-face on May 30th 2024, with 11 participants representing various organisations. The stakeholders included:

The Director of the Human Resources Department of the Cyprus Employers and Industrialists Federation.

Senior officers of the Human Resource Development Authority.
Adult educators/trainers of CARDET.
An HR manager/trainer of CARDET.
Academic coordinators of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education
Representatives of KES College.
An officer of the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

4th Development Group - face to face

The fourth development group was held face-to-face on June 11 2024, with 13 participants.

During this meeting, participated representatives from the following organisations:

1. Educational researchers/trainers of CARDET.
2. A lecturer from the University of Nicosia.
3. An adult trainer from the University of Cyprus.
4. A trainer of the Cyprus Red Cross – Youth section.
5. Educational trainers of Innovate.
6. Researchers/trainers of the Institute of Development.

Role and Contributions of Stakeholders in Implementing Upskilling Pathways (UP

- **Educational Institutions (Universities and Colleges):** Educational institutions provide academic expertise, curriculum development, and training programme delivery. They also serve as adult education centres, offering training in various fields. They can contribute to implementing the UP by modifying their learning opportunities and adjusting the content to correspond to the needs of adults with low qualifications.
- **Research Organisations (CARDET, Institute of Development, Innovade):** Research organisations have extensive expertise in adult learning, developing innovative training methods that target adults with low qualifications. They can contribute to the implementation of UP by sharing the knowledge and expertise developed through EU-funded programmes.
- **Ministries and governmental authorities (Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, Human Resource Development Authority):** The government and ministries are responsible for developing policies, providing funding, and ensuring regulatory compliance to support upskilling initiatives. Their role is essential for implementing UP, as they design and implement policies and procedures, enhance coordination between different sectors and provide funding for upskilling programmes.
- **Employers and Industry Associations (Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Cyprus Employers and Industrialists Federation):** Employers and industry association's role is to identify industry-specific skills needs, offer on-the-job training opportunities, and contribute to curriculum development. They can contribute to the better implementation of UP by increasing investment in employee upskilling, enhancing partnerships with educational institutions, and providing more on-the-job training opportunities.
- **Trainers and Educators:** Trainers and educators deliver training programmes, mentor learners, and adapt educational content to meet emerging needs. They can contribute to the better implementation of UP by providing feedback on the needs of adult learners, adopting new pedagogical methods, integrating technology, and providing personalised learning experiences.
- **Adult Learners:** Adult learners participate in training programmes and provide feedback to improve the effectiveness of upskilling initiatives. They can act as ambassadors to encourage wider participation in upskilling programmes and provide insights into learner needs and preferences.

- **Non-Profit Organisations (Cyprus Red Cross – Youth Section):** Non-profit organisations engage in outreach and support services to facilitate access to training for underserved populations. They can expand outreach to more communities, offering additional wrap-around services and collaborating with other stakeholders to enhance the implementation of UP.

Activities and methods used

During the development groups, there were used the following activities:

1. **Presentation of the project and meeting aims:**
   Each session began with a detailed presentation outlining the objectives of the project and the specific aims of the meeting, therefore providing participants with a clear understanding of the project scope and the goals of the meeting.

2. **Focus group discussions:**
   Participants engaged in structured focus group discussions following the initial presentation during the online sessions. During in-person sessions, participants also had the opportunity to participate in focus group discussions, enabling them to share their insights, discuss challenges and propose solutions collaboratively.

3. **Workshops:**
   Workshops were conducted during the in-person meetings, providing a hands-on environment for participants to work together on specific tasks. Workshops focused on developing concrete action plans, road maps, and mechanisms for improving the implementation of UP.

These types of activities were highly successful in engaging participants. Also, initiating the meetings with online discussions appeared to be particularly beneficial, followed by face-to-face meetings. The online discussions provided a fertile ground for introducing the project and its results to the stakeholders. Also, during the online meetings, stakeholders got a sense of the topics that the development groups aim to resolve, e.g. how they can address the challenges observed during the stakeholder analysis and start thinking about establishing mechanisms and paths for improving the implementation of UP.

During the face-to-face discussions, participants were again introduced to the project aims and results. They were able to provide feedback and share their thoughts in greater depth. Participants also had the opportunity to elaborate more concrete ideas on establishing road maps and mechanisms for improving the implementation of UP.

Overall, both formats appeared beneficial, enhancing the collaboration between the participating stakeholders.

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Opportunities

Participating stakeholders noted the several initiatives related to UP within Cyprus, focusing particularly on the role of three major public authorities responsible for adult education in Cyprus.

The Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth (MoESY)

The creation of the **European and International Affairs, Lifelong Learning and Adult Education Office**. The mission of this office is to contribute to the effective and successful participation of the Ministry in European and International Affairs while enhancing the collaboration between the different departments of the Ministry about adult learning. The office also developed **the Lifelong Learning Strategy (CyLLIS) for 2021 -2027**, which aims to enhance collaboration and create the necessary synergies amongst various stakeholders involved in adult learning to assist in implementing strategic objectives. The CyLLIS particularly targets adults with low qualifications, aiming to provide learning opportunities that reflect labour market needs for the digital and green transition.

The MoESY also supervises **EPALE Cyprus**, which is responsible for disseminating articles, news, reports, and surveys on adult learning in Cyprus, enabling the exchange of ideas, and creating networking opportunities between individuals and organisations.

The MoESY also offers **second-chance schools**, gymnasiums, and technical schools that provide alternative pathways for students who have not completed their education through traditional routes or need a different academic environment. These opportunities allow adults with low qualifications to upskill, enabling their employability.

The MoESY also runs programmes of non-typical education, like the **adult education programmes**, offering a variety of interdisciplinary courses while organising free-of-charge learning activities for various target groups, such as people with literacy difficulties, people with special needs, enclaved Cypriots, prisoners, mentally ill and elderly people. Furthermore, the MoESY runs the **state institutes of further education**, offering equal opportunities for learning and contributing to lifelong learning in Cyprus. Finally, the directorate of the Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and Training provides various VET programmes that educate and empower adults to acquire basic and professional knowledge and skills aligned with labour market needs.

Overall, the MoESY has a leading role in Cyprus in providing training programmes and opportunities to adults with low qualifications for upskilling and reskilling. It has established collaborations with adult education providers, rural and urban communities, municipalities, other ministries, and other stakeholders involved to support adult education and lifelong learning, emphasising the upskilling of adults with low qualifications.

Human Resource Development Authority

The Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA) is a semi-governmental organisation with a mission to establish the essential conditions for the structured and systematic training and development of Cyprus's human resources across all levels and sectors, to meet the economy's needs in alignment with the nation's overall socio-economic policies. The HRDA has established cooperations related to upskilling with local, regional, and national organisations and public and private authorities, offering programmes and funding schemes that provide adult training. For example, the HRDA:

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- Offers programmes for entering unemployed people into the labour market and lifelong learning.
- Provides subsidies for the training of new and existing employees.
- Implements projects under the Cyprus Recovery and Resilience Plan (2021 - 2026).
- Conducts large-scale advertising campaigns to promote the available training programmes, targeting specifically adults with low qualifications.
- Developed the Professional Qualifications System, aiming to upskill the human force by providing evaluation and accreditation of the training and targeting specifically employed, unemployed and economically inactive adults.
- Implements the Training Programmes included in the Action Plan for the European Year of Skills 2023 and the Cyprus Recovery and Resilience Plan.
- Offers funding schemes and programmes on Digital Skills, Technical Vocational Training, Safety and Health and Modern Vocational Development for the Green and Digital Transition.

The Cyprus Productivity Centre (CPC)

The CPC is a governmental authority monitored by the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance. The CPC aims to enhance the workforce's productivity and skills through training and development programmes. To achieve this, the CPC implements various programmes funded by the HRDA. The CPC is specialised in providing training for management and technical skills according to the needs of the labour market. The CPC also emphasises offering programmes on digital skills and e-government, which are targeted both at the general public and at specific groups of the population, such as persons aged 55 years and over and adults with low qualifications.

Apart from these organisations, other adult education providers, higher institutions, private authorities, and industrial federations have established cooperation mechanisms between organisations that, inter alia, support the upskilling of adults with low qualifications. These include:

The Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI):

The CCCI is a private corporate entity operating under special legislation, maintaining financial independence and remaining free from state influence. It is also a Supreme Advisory Board, offering a platform of communication between professional business associations and promoting the business community's interests within the framework of Cyprus's broader interests and the welfare of its people.

The Cyprus Employers and Industrialists Federation (OEB):

The OEB is the leading national employer organisation, politically independent, with a mission to promote and support the interests of Cypriot businesses in Cyprus, the European Union (EU), and internationally. The OEB supports the education and upskilling of employees by participating in various ad-hoc committees specialised in different fields.

It seems that in the Cypriot context, while there are a variety of authorities/organisations that support adult learning in Cyprus—directly and indirectly—there is a lack of networks across Cyprus that could further enhance adult education in Cyprus, specifically the implementation of UP. Establishing these networks, similar to the ones reported in the Italian Report of WP3,

could contribute to the exchange of information between stakeholders involved and to a better implementation of UP.

Challenges

The major barriers and challenges stakeholders identified which are hindering cooperation are:

Outreach activities

- Challenges in promoting training programmes for adults with low qualifications.
- Challenges in reaching this group of adults, as often they need to use internet-based tools to be informed.
- Challenges in maintaining motivation for participation: Many adults with low qualifications may need to see the value in participating in the available training programmes while facing various other obstacles, e.g., time constraints, financial barriers, and psychological barriers.
- There are challenges in the effectiveness of current programmes reaching adults with low qualifications. For example, participating stakeholders reported that the programs available through the Cyprus Recovery and Reconciliation Plan had a medium impact on these populations.
- Challenges in raising awareness about the importance of lifelong learning training and continued professional development.

Governance challenges

- The fragmentation of the adult education sector in Cyprus hinders the effective implementation of UP. Stakeholders noted that many public authorities are involved in adult learning and upskilling, though an overarching authority does not monitor these.
- Challenges in harmonising activities offered by different adult education providers in Cyprus.
- Lack of collaboration between state authorities and semi-governmental and private organisations in adult learning.
- Development of a plethora of bodies in governmental authorities that eventually do not offer concrete support nor have a particular impact.
- While the MoESY developed the CyLLIS strategy (2021 – 2027), its implementation is still in progress.

Challenges in validation and recognition

- While there are bodies responsible for validating and recognising training programmes, namely the National Qualifications Authority (NQA) and the Professional Qualifications System, more information is needed on how the NQA operates.

Funding challenges:

- A significant funding challenge hindering the effective collaboration between stakeholders towards the more effective implementation of UP is the dominant role of EU-funded projects in promoting collaboration instead of structural domestic funding, with the direct involvement of relevant public authorities. This causes challenges in both the outreach activities and the sustainability of results.

Awareness Challenges for UP:

- Many stakeholders need to be made aware of this council recommendation and, even more, of the three-step approach. During the development group discussion, participating stakeholders found integrating the three steps of the UP more challenging in a cohesive pathway, indicating a need for more strategic coordination. This hampers the potential for effective monitoring and evaluation and reduces the ability to derive insights from the gathered evidence.

Possible solutions

Stakeholders participating in the development groups proposed various **possible solutions** to address the identified challenges and barriers. These include:

1. **Improved strategic cooperation**

   Stakeholders suggested the creation of strengthening national bodies responsible for overseeing and coordinating upskilling across sections and regions. Also, the CyLLIS 2021-2027 could serve as a starting point for the better implementation of UP. The CyLLIS also developed an Action Plan for its implementation, providing concrete action steps for addressing its key priorities. With some adjustments, the CyLLIS may offer the overarching framework for the better implementation of UP since it is a strategy developed by the MoESY, in consultation with other key stakeholders and social partners, setting the timeline of activities that need to be conducted.

2. **Enhanced Monitoring and Evaluation**
   Participating stakeholders reported that standardised metrics and evaluation frameworks are essential to measuring the effectiveness of upskilling programmes. They also suggested developing mechanisms or platforms to collect and analyse upskilling outcomes from training programmes run by different organisations/authorities. The existing governmental portal Ariadni could be used to record this data.

3. **Cohesive accreditation and recognition**
   Stakeholders proposed developing cohesive accreditation and recognition following a simple procedure. They also proposed creating a national body responsible for the recognition of prior learning (through informal and non-formal learning).

Regarding **policy changes** for addressing legal and regulatory barriers, stakeholders proposed the following:

1. **Legislative Reforms**

   o Stakeholders suggested reforming labour laws that allow more flexible working arrangements that facilitate participation in training programmes. They particularly suggested reforming current policies and funding schemes offered by governmental and semi-governmental authorities that allow the participation of self-employed citizens and public servants (note: most schemes provided by HRDA target employees in private organisations and the unemployed).

   o **Certification Recognition**: Stakeholders noted that the recognition of qualifications and certifications across regions and sectors should be standardised to ensure mobility and acceptance of skills. They also noted the recognition of micro-credentials that certify the learning outcomes of short-term experiences.

2. **Supportive Policies**
Stakeholders also noted the further promotion of lifelong Learning Policies that support lifelong learning and continuous professional development. They also suggested the development of inclusive education policies that place particular emphasis on adults with low qualifications.
Stakeholders also suggested supporting the implementation of UP while utilising the implementation of other related council recommendations, e.g., on individual learning accounts and micro-credentials.

Concerning the **strategies** to promote partnerships in UP, stakeholders suggested the below:

1. **Development of multistakeholder platforms**
Interactive online platform:
Participating stakeholders suggested the development of an interactive online platform in which stakeholders can upload/ describe the learning opportunities offered by their organisation. In this way, other organisations will be aware of the activities offered on a national level by all types of stakeholders (public and private, trade unions), therefore enabling a better alignment of stakeholders involved in adult learning. A similar process has been initiated by the Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy. Something that needs to be resolved is whether a specific body should be formulated to monitor this platform and whether non-governmental organisations can participate.
Regional Hubs: Stakeholders suggested the development of regional hubs to coordinate local upskilling efforts and share best practices. Key organisations that could be involved in this effort are the Union of Cyprus Municipalities, the Union of Cyprus Communities, and the newly established local governmental organisations. The local governmental organisations could be responsible for adult learning in Cyprus, enabling the decentralisation of related activities.

2. **Public Awareness Campaigns**
   a. Stakeholders suggested running public awareness campaigns that particularly target adults with low qualifications, using various means such as partnering with community organisations, offering flexible scheduling of the training programmes, providing personalised outreach, and using mentors or advisors who provide one-to-one support and encouragement.

Proposed **incentives** to encourage participation and engagement were:

1. **Financial Incentives**
   o Participating stakeholders noted the importance of offering stipends to individuals participating in upskilling programmes.
2. **Recognition and Certification**
   o Stakeholders noted that micro-credentials can be incentives for adults with low qualifications, which can accumulate towards larger qualifications.

3. **Support Services**
  - Stakeholders noted the offering of career counselling and guidance services to help individuals navigate their upskilling journey, which addresses the first and second steps of the three-step approach of UP.

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Implementation plans

During the development group discussions, stakeholders considered it challenging to respond to the questions about implementation plans, bringing to the fore the challenges noted in the related section. Based on their responses throughout the discussions, we propose potential short-term and long-term goals, timelines, key milestones, responsibilities, strategies and contingency plans.

Considering that in Cyprus, the LLIS 2021 – 2027 is already in place, it is suggested that its Action Plan be implemented to oversee all the activities related to the better implementation of UP. This includes the adoption of specific action steps and timelines for the following key priorities: Establish the governance, monitoring, and evaluation framework, decrease youth unemployment and upskill/reskill youth and the workforce, increase the participation of adults in lifelong learning, enhance the professional practice of adult educators and trainers.

Below are listed some potential short-term and long-term goals that may be particularly useful for UP:

Short-Term Goals

1. Awareness and engagement: Increase awareness about the importance and availability of upskilling programmes among target groups.
2. Assign the main responsible authority for the better implementation of UP: During the development group discussions, stakeholders seemed unsure which national authority should be responsible for implementing UP. The most prominent national authorities appeared to be the MoESY and HRDA. As they suggested, it is essential to utilise the current governmental structures and not seek to create another body solely responsible for UP.
3. Stakeholder collaboration: Establish partnerships and collaborative frameworks among key stakeholders.
4. Resource allocation: Secure initial funding and resources to support the rollout of upskilling initiatives.

Long-Term Goals

1. Sustainable skill development: Create a sustainable system for continuous skill development and lifelong learning.
2. Economic growth: Contribute to growth by aligning workforce skills with industry needs and technological advancements.
3. Adopt the three-step approach of UP: Create the necessary structures, procedures, and pathways for this approach.
4. Social inclusion: Reduce skill gaps and promote social inclusion by providing upskilling opportunities to disadvantaged groups.
5. Evaluation and improvement: Implement robust systems for ongoing upskilling programme monitoring, evaluation, and improvement.

Aligning goals with stakeholder objectives involves ensuring that upskilling programmes meet the needs and priorities of all involved parties. For employers, this means designing programmes that align with industry requirements to ensure employees acquire relevant skills that enhance productivity and innovation, as prioritised in the Lifelong Learning Strategy. The government focuses on supporting economic growth, reducing unemployment, and

promoting social inclusion through targeted upskilling initiatives consistent with national policy objectives. Educational institutions play a crucial role by enhancing their programme offerings and forging partnerships to meet the evolving demands of the labour market, reflecting the strategy's emphasis on educational adaptation. For individuals, the goal is to provide clear pathways for career advancement and personal development, thus promoting individual empowerment in line with the strategy's objectives.

Concerning **the timeline for implementing** the above goals, participating stakeholders noted again a significant challenge in providing suggestions. Nevertheless, they provided a rough estimation of a timeline. Specifically, they suggested that to start this process, it is essential to establish governance structures, initiate awareness campaigns, and begin stakeholder engagement and partnership development. This could last from 6 months to one year. Over the next 2-5 years, the focus should be on implementing comprehensive monitoring and evaluation systems, establishing a national framework for accreditation and recognition, and designing training programmes tailored to the needs of adults with low qualifications and in line with blended learning approaches.

Possible distribution **of responsibilities and governance structures** involves:

Governance Bodies:

- Assigning one or two national bodies responsible for the overall strategy and coordination.
- Development of regional implementation committees to manage regional and local programme delivery.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- Government: Policy development, funding, and regulatory support.
- Employers: Provide insights into skill needs, offer training placements, and contribute to funding.
- Educational institutions: Develop and deliver training programmes.
- Non-profit and community organisations: Outreach and support services.

Strategies to adapt and evolve the implementation plan include flexibility in policies and procedures, establishing channels for feedback from participants, employers, and other stakeholders, and regular reviews and updates to assess progress and identify areas for improvement.

Some contingency plans to mitigate unforeseen challenges may include a comprehensive risk assessment to identify potential challenges and disruptions and creating robust communication strategies to keep all stakeholders informed during disruptions.

Evaluation of the events

Overall Evaluation

Participants rated the event highly, expressing overall satisfaction with the organisation, content, and execution. The agenda was well-received, with many attendees appreciating the structured and comprehensive approach to the topics.

Discussions and Results

The discussions were perceived positively, with participants valuing the interactive and collaborative nature of the sessions. Many noted that the outcomes of the discussions were insightful and aligned with their expectations. The results were constructive, providing a solid foundation for future initiatives. Also, the participants considered that they gained from their participation, as they had the opportunity to meet people from other organisations and, therefore establish networks and channels of communication.

Most Valuable Sessions

Many participants identified the face-to-face sessions, in which they had the opportunity to participate in roundtable discussions and exchange ideas, as the most valuable. During these sessions, participants also had the opportunity to casually interact with others, bringing to the fore important insights that potentially could not have been discussed otherwise.

Engagement and Challenges

All participants were highly engaged throughout the development group sessions, contributing actively to discussions and brainstorming activities. However, they found providing concrete action plans for the implementation timeline particularly challenging. This difficulty was attributed to the complexity of aligning multiple stakeholder objectives and the need for more detailed guidance on translating strategic goals into actionable steps.

Suggestions for Improvement

Participants offered some suggestions for improvement. Some attendees requested more case studies and practical examples of successful upskilling initiatives to understand implementation strategies better. Also, given the challenge participants faced in developing concrete action plans, some suggested organising workshops where the major ministries (e.g. the MoESY) and other authorities have a leading role, giving insights into the legislative and structural processes in which UP may be implemented.

Overall, the events were successful in engaging participants and providing valuable insights. Future sessions could benefit from a greater focus on practical application and detailed planning support.

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