



Orientation and counselling handbook for migrants and refugees' self-evaluation of competences

Guidelines and Tools



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Introduction

This Handbook has been developed in the framework of the European Project “MigrEmpower: Itineraries and resources for migrants and refugees’ empowerment and integration” (Nº 2017-1-ES01-KA204-038091), financed by the Erasmus + Programme, KA2 – Strategic Partnerships for Adult Education.

The MigrEmpower project attempts to promote equal opportunities and social inclusion by providing intervention tools for orientation, assessment of competences, self-evaluation and empowerment aimed at promoting migrants and/or refugees’ integration, making them immediately usable by professionals and social workers.

This Handbook presents the description of methodology, instructions and tools to be used during an orientation and counselling intervention. It originates from the guidelines developed by the MigrEmpower project partners: after having carried out pilots in each project country to test the preliminary version of this handbook, improvements and adaptations to the tools have been incorporated in order to deliver the final version presented in this document. The “Orientation and Counselling Handbook” constitutes the first stage of the MigrEmpower itinerary and it focuses on participants’ first needs analysis, self-evaluation and balance of competences and qualifications.

Following the Orientation and Counselling phase, the MigrEmpower itinerary foresees a Training path (Intellectual Output 3), where 5 modules in relation to subjects of Computer Literacy, Linguistic Literacy, Citizenship and Social Skills, Communication and Personal Brand, Self-Employment and Active job search support are provided.

The last step of the process concerns the provision of Employment Support (Intellectual Output 4) and more specifically, the organization of meetings with local employers, networking sessions and other activities addressed to improve participants’ employability, while support will be offered to those participants who wish to become entrepreneurs. In the course of the project, the partners created specific guidelines both for the Training Path (Intellectual Output 3) and for the Employment Support (Intellectual Output 4).

Therefore, this Handbook (Intellectual Output 2), addressed to counsellors working in the field of migration and refugees, can either be used by counsellors to carry out only the Orientation and Counselling interventions or – if combined with the Training Path and Employment Support - to carry out the entire itinerary.

The Orientation and Counselling itinerary: Methodology

As mentioned above, the Orientation and Counselling itinerary should be considered as closely linked to the other implementation activities, being the first stage of the MigrEmpower itinerary. It is therefore important that the person who agrees to be included in the itinerary is aware that they can take advantage of various parts in this programme.

All the activities encompassing the MigrEmpower Itinerary will be implemented through the counselling methodology based on empowerment and responses to needs, providing the person with the necessary support to design their own psychosocial profile and actively involve them. This method is meant to increase awareness of deep aspects of the person's experience, improve their realistic self-perception and integrate the emotional experiences that accompany them on their path. It facilitates the process of taking personal and direct responsibility for decisions, with the aim of enhancing the personal learning process.

A disadvantaged person can only take a decision and get a job if he/she has - or acquires - adequate levels of awareness of their motivations, resources and potential, as well as their personal and contextual barriers and opportunities. The decision-making process is strongly determined by the ability to analyse and read the reality inside and outside of the person.

Every person is characterized by a combination of desires, motivations, resources and potentials that must be explored, analysed and compared with a reference system in order to point out the constraints and possibilities for developing a personal action plan. Orientation counselling is the perfect answer to these needs.

Being one of the most important methodological tools, reference to the Balance of Competences¹ have been made, as it is the ideal tool to support the person in the

¹ **Balance of Competences (Skills Audit):** Analysis of knowledge, skills and competences of an individual, including their aptitudes and motivations to define a career project and/or plan professional reorientation or training project. The aim of a skills audit is to help individuals to:

- analyse their career background;
- self-assess their position in the labour environment;
- prepare themselves for validation of non-formal or informal learning outcomes;
- plan a career pathway. (CEDEFOP – Glossary, 2011).

In France the term is used to describe activities aimed to analyse and evaluate the competences; it can be used:

- To assess candidates during the selection of personnel,
- To evaluate the potential of employees,
- To recognize the credits,
- To facilitate the matching demand/supply of labour.

In Italy it is not a formal (legal) tool; there different models of Balance and it is usually used to support the participant in building a personal project during activities of orientation and to facilitate the matching demand/supply of labour.

reconstruction and analysis of personal, social and professional experiences in relation to all relevant contexts. The method is underpinned by the narrative approach, which - unlike the commonly used sequential approach - helps to emphasise the process character and circular nature of individual biographies. In this way, the person can identify significant aspects and elements that they had not considered as such until then. The result is the activation of a path of self-recognition and self-evaluation capable of producing evolution (in the person and in his or her competences). The term 'competence' refers to the abilities, skills, and knowledge that are needed by each person for successful social and labour integration. The term is broad as it encompasses all three elements. There are two main types, commonly referred to as: "soft" competences or "behavioural"; and "hard" competences or "professional/technical." Behavioural competencies include cognitive and personality characteristics while technical competencies include learned expertise.

The narrative approach is fundamental to the reconstruction of personal identity, in search of different images of oneself in the past and in different contexts, providing meaning to the present and to generate a self-formulated project. Personal experience is usually discontinuous: the narrative method allows us to understand the connections between different moments of life by trying to harmonise them and look for the meaning of personal experiences.

Through the narrative method it is possible to connect the inner state of mind with the outer reality, connecting the present with the past and at the same time to look ahead to the future.

Initially, some information may be left out - deliberately or not (especially during the description of one's personal history – see 1st Interview). It is not uncommon to forget relevant details as we are overwhelmed with issues competing for space in our minds, or to run out of time in a session to include all necessary information. On the other hand, information can also be left out intentionally. This usually concerns information that participants feel that they might be judged for or which they feel can create a false impression with the counsellor. Often the counsellor may suspect information to be missing or slanted, or even have a hunch about what this information is.

But this is in fact irrelevant: what really matters is to provide a tool for reflection that the participant will follow through during the 2nd and 3rd interviews. Narrative thinking represents a form of knowledge that is in line with the development of metacognitive abilities related to the perception of one's own feelings and those of others, one's motivations and intentions. It allows us to appreciate the actions of others and to understand their reasons.

Last but not least, the methodology of the MigrEmpower itinerary is characterized by being flexible and adaptable to the participants' needs and national contexts: therefore, for instance, the time duration of each suggested activity does not have to

be considered as a commitment but only a recommendation for achieving the goals of the Orientation and Counselling itinerary in an effective way.

Description of the Orientation and Counselling itinerary

The Orientation and Counselling itinerary will involve at least 20 migrants and/or refugees per each partner country (in total 120) and consists of 4 stages:

- 1st Stage: Welcome – Getting Acquainted, Enrolment, Detection and Analysis of personal characteristics and social factors. Individual Interview: one hour and a half to two hours of time duration.
- 2nd Stage: Reconstruction – Deepening of competences, resources, limits, aptitudes. Individual Interview: one hour and a half of time duration.
- 3rd Stage: Peer Comparing and Sharing. Group Session: two hours of time duration (4 groups with 5 participants each).
- 4th Stage: Synthesis – Personal Project. Individual Interview: one hour and half of time duration.

The amount of time for each of these steps may vary according to the participants' needs. The times indicated should therefore be considered as guidelines within the project's framework and not as absolutes, given that some individuals may need more time to carry out the narrative interviews. The overall time duration for the orientation phase is advised to last between one and three months, so the participants have enough time between the interviews to reflect on them and the activation process can unfold. In case it is necessary to reduce the time spent during individual sessions (due to the lack of time of participants or counsellors), there is the possibility to skip the second interview and let participants reflect on the questions as home assignments. Those assignments are marked with a ◻ symbol.

The grid on the following page summarises the resulting itinerary.

Process Overview

Stages	Aims	Areas	Steps	Tools	Time/Hours
1. Welcome - 1st Interview	Getting to know the participant	First Biography	Getting acquainted	Guidelines. Project Flyer. Registration Form. Informed Consent Form. Outline for the 1 st interview. EU Skills Profile tool	1,5/2
	Aims of project, Reasons and motivation of the participant/ Immigration history	Project; Orientation path and expectations	Aims and expectations		
	Mapping qualifications and work experiences	Education, schooling, vocational trainings, work experiences, CV	Qualifications and job experience		
	First needs analysis	Problem areas, positive and negative attitudes, Hopes, future plans and wishes. Resources	Needs analysis		
	First evaluation of counsellor	Results of first interview	Evaluation		
2. Reconstruction – 2nd Interview	Deepening acquaintance	Personal characteristics	Locus of control	Guidelines. Outline for the 2 nd interview	1,5
	Mapping network and resources	Social and professional environment	Personal and social network		
	Discovering interests and future wishes, motivating	Schooling, education, training, hobbies and interests, household. Job wishes.	Competence and interest fields		
	Self-Evaluation	Activities, competences, skills	Self-Evaluation with help of counsellor		
	2 nd evaluation of counsellor	Results of second interview	Evaluation		
3. Group session	Share experiences, provide support, reconstruction of the narrative	Personal history, social support, work related issues, motivation, needs	Interest fields and expectations, Challenges, Personal networks Work, Feedback	Guidelines for the group session	2
4. Synthesis – 3rd Interview	Apply gathered information to create CV and action plan	Professional biography, skills competences, work experience, education and training	CV and Action Plan	Guidelines for the 3 rd interview Europass online CV tool/ Language Pass	1,5

1. Outline for the first interview – Welcome Stage

Introduction

In this first interview, the focus is on getting to know the participant and using the narrative method to discover the themes that are foremost on the participant's mind. An Orientation and Counselling path invites the person to retrace their fundamental life phases and their important experiences. Usually, a person who embarks on such an itinerary will reconstruct/re-enact their identity (psychological, social, cultural, professional, etc.); this is essential for a real social and labour integration.

From this view it is important to consider the migration itinerary and the reasons for leaving one's home country. This can provide us with important information about the person's background and expectations, both personally and professionally. There are many different reasons to leave and there may be many different reasons as to why someone ends up in a particular country. These are life-changing events and as such their potential impact on personal development cannot be ignored. Secondly, the motivation for seeking help as well as the participant's expectations need to be explored and checked against the aims of the counselling process. Naturally the counsellor needs to be sensitive to the signals the participant sends out during this phase. Participants should not be pushed or feel forced to speak about emotions or experiences they do not wish to disclose. They are simply invited to talk about their background as far as they wish to take it at the time. When you feel a participant needs more time, you can propose to pick up the subject at a later point during the process.

Lastly, a preliminary needs analysis is made on the basis of the information that is gathered during this step and arrangements are made for the further interviews. The total duration for this interview is estimated to 1.5 hours, but more time can be allowed according to the needs of the participant and the detected areas of interest. Because of the high amount of information to be covered during this first meeting, we suggest steps 2e and 2f are to be given as home assignments to serve as preparation for the second interview.

All tools should be printed by partners on project letterhead before the interviews and group sessions.

1st step – Welcome – Getting acquainted and enrolment

Advice for the counsellor: Please consider that the first interview can be very delicate: the participant needs to be welcomed and put at ease. Start with explaining the project, its objectives and the different steps it involves and note the participant's reaction. It is important that the person understands that this is about a comprehensive process which includes orientation, training and support to reach employability.

Therefore, the counsellor welcomes the participant and explains the MIGREMPower project (presenting the flyer) and the aims of the itinerary. If the participant agrees to be enrolled in the project, the counsellor asks the participant to sign the Informed Consent form (briefly explain what this is first and why it is necessary).

The participant's name and personal data are kept on the registration form, where they are given a unique code that is to be used to anonymise all further documents. The registration form should then be kept separately.

Tool 1 - Registration Form²

Organisation / service _____

Counsellor/facilitator/trainer's name _____

Participant's code _____

First Name			
Surname			
Gender	Male	Female	
Date of Birth			
Place of Birth			
Nationality			
Highest qualification			
Address			
Phone Number			
Legal status (legal residence permit)	YES	NO	In process

² This registration form can be used by counsellors to carry out only the Orientation and Counselling path or – if combined with the Training Path and Employment Support - to carry out the entire itinerary.

By which channel did you get the information and knowledge of the programme?						
EXPECTATIONS						
JOB SOUGHT						
TYPE OF CONTRACT: (Fixed-term, permanent, full-time, part-time ...)						
SOCIAL INFORMATION						
Participant's status						
Family situation						
Public allowance						
Disabled worker						
Other difficulties						
PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION						
Most recent job date						
Digital competences						
Language (<i>Example: English</i>)	(A1)	(A2)	(B1)	(B2)	(C1)	(C2)
Language 1						
Language 2						
...						
Driver's license						
Own means of transport	Yes / / No / /					

Signature: _____

Date ____/____/____

Tool 2 - Informed Consent Form

Participant's code: _____

Has the purpose of the Project Itinerary been explained to you?
/ No

Yes

Have you been given the project flyer? **Yes**
/ No

Have you been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project? **Yes**
/ No

Project professionals may take some photographs during the activities, to document them. The photographs will be of the classroom as a whole but you may appear in them. Do you agree to appear in these photographs?

Yes / No

You will be asked to fill out feedback and evaluation tools, aimed at getting to know your experiences with the project and its effectiveness. The information you provide may be used in presentations or related documentation, **but you will not be identified by name at any time**. Do you understand and agree to this?

Yes / No

I agree to take part in this project and confirm that my participation is voluntary:

Participant signature _____

Date ____/____/____

Name and signature of the counsellor obtaining informed consent:

Name _____

Signature _____

Date ____/____/____

2nd Step – Orientation and Counselling: first interview

Tool 3 – Outline for the 1st Interview

Advice for the counsellor: After the enrolment and the signed informed consent form, you can continue with the interview.

In view of future employment it is important to understand the person's legal situation and to know which kinds of documents they have available that are required to get employment in your particular country (e.g. identity document/passport, permit of stay, fiscal code, health insurance card etc.). When there is no legal status, provide the participant with the necessary information to obtain legal status and which services to contact. As the focus for this project lies on labour integration, it may not be useful to continue the process if there is no realistic prospect of legal residence.

You can already ask what the participant expects of the process and what they would like to achieve, although this topic is also brought up later.

The order of the items can be changed according to the needs of the participants and the practical organisation. The idea is to detect the areas of interest but you may use the tools in a flexible way according to the level of trust and confidence with the participant. In case it is difficult to cover certain personal topics during this first interview (for example: the individual story, family issues), these can be raised again during one of the later interviews. Highlight this towards your participants and make clear that there is the possibility to postpone questions and that you respect their privacy. As such, they are not forced to answer your questions if it makes them feel uncomfortable.

Date of the interview ____/____/____

Organisation / service _____

Counsellor's name _____

Participant's code _____

1a Personal Situation

Date of entry into the host country ____/____/____

Comments _____

Please, ask for a short description of the housing situation (central/peripheral, rural/urban house/flat/room or bed only)

Advice for the counsellor: This question is important in order to understand possible difficulties with the integration process of the person, especially if there are children involved, and consequently in order to find the correct solutions. Please explain the reason for asking this.

1b Family Composition

Marital status _____

Cohabitant children (number _____)

born on	in	male/female	Nationality
In the welcoming country <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> not since	School employed <input type="checkbox"/> unemployed <input type="checkbox"/>		
born on	in	male/female	Nationality
In the welcoming country <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> not since	School employed <input type="checkbox"/> unemployed <input type="checkbox"/>		
born on	in	male/female	Nationality
In the welcoming country <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> not since	School employed <input type="checkbox"/> unemployed <input type="checkbox"/>		








In addition, ask the participant whether they are dependent on someone or if anybody (relative or otherwise) is dependent on them. Do they need to take care of someone or is someone taking care of them?

Notes

Additional method: Genogram

Advice for the counsellor: A genogram or family tree is a useful tool to gather information about a person's family. This visual representation of a family can help you to identify patterns or themes within families that may be influencing or driving the person's current behaviour. Most people really enjoy this opportunity to talk about their family history, and it can work as a good tool to build trust and rapport in a working relationship. However be aware that some people may find seeing a visual picture of the state of their relationships confronting, particularly if the majority of relationships in their life at present are conflictual or distant. Use this tool sensitively and in cases where you think it will be useful to help promote healthy change and the development of more positive relationships in the person's life. The symbols below are helpful in drawing a well-structured genogram. In order to keep the depiction simple, you can also reduce the number of symbols to ones you consider most important.

Symbols for drawing the genogram or family tree

	Female symbol - name, age
	Male symbol - name, age
	Unknown gender
	Married - add the year or ages
	De facto relationship - commencement date or ages
	Separation - date or ages
	Divorce - date or ages

1c How did the participant learn about the project (word of mouth, internet, leaflet, etc.)?

1d Reasons for Orientation and Counselling

Advice for the counsellor: Ask the participant for their reasons and interest in taking counselling. This question is typically asked at the beginning of the interview, when the person is welcomed and can be very simple, like: *"why did you look for advice – why do you need this programme?"* - *"what do you expect from this interview?"* - etc.). At this stage it is time to deepen that information.

In this part of the interview, try to find out what the participant's perception of their situation is, their awareness level and the reasons to return for a second and third interview. Please bear in mind that the attitude and mood of the person may change during the interview: The answers can be short at first, while later, when there is more trust, participants may speak more openly.

While the participant is talking about reasons, motivation and interest in the programme, please **categorise** these into "positive" and "negative" attitudes and identify the related needs. This will allow you to get a first impression about the person and adjust the rest of the counselling process to their needs and personal views from the very start. Please consult the examples in the table below to help clarify the exercise. You can also make notes and do the categorising afterwards if this is easier for you.

Please note down the answers of the person and categorise them in the following way:

Reasons	Goals – hopes – wishes	Resources that participant has available to reach their goals	Evaluation		
			Positive attitude	Negative attitude	Needs
<i>e.g.: Unemployment, difficulties in the children social integration</i>	<i>e.g.: job, house, family</i>	<i>e.g.: - Networks of support Specific competences aptitudes</i>	<i>e.g. interested in some further education</i>	<i>e.g. the person has no plans for the future</i>	<i>e.g. needs a guidance in the social services</i>

1e Qualifications and job experience

Advice for the counsellor: The table below can be used to gather information about formal education. Tell the participant to start from basic school education to the highest level attained.

You can also ask to add non-formal qualifications if the has a clear understanding of what this means. If not, this information needs to be added later. Do not focus too much on details like dates at this stage but ask your participant to complete the table at home and pick up the information again during the next interview.

Information about education/ qualifications:

Name of the school/ university/ institute	Result: degree / qualification (formal) attendance certificate (non-formal)	Subject/Field	Start and end of the education (month/year)

1f Work experience

Advice for the counsellor: Ask the participant to also prepare this at home and go over the information during the next interview. This will help to save time when composing a CV later in the process and helps to activate the participant to reflect on his jobrelated experiences and expectations. Please emphasise that all work experiences can be relevant.

Please fill out the following worksheet

Name of the company	Activity field of company	Performed role/task	Type of contract (indefinite/ temporary)	from (month/year) until

--	--	--	--	--

1g Tell me about yourself

Advice for the counsellor: Invite the participant to say something about themselves and their family. Avoid asking any specific questions but allow the person to talk freely. To enhance talking, you can paraphrase or nod and use small encouragements that show you are actively listening and are closely following the story. **Free storytelling** is meant to find out which issues bother the person especially or which areas of life are considered taboo. If the participant does not talk at all, you can guide them through the topics described in the table below.

Write down keywords and take into account different gender roles

Categorise your notes/keywords in the following table:

Issues related to qualification	Issues related to job/needs	Issues related to work
<i>e.g.: "I have started to study, but I gave up studying" or "I'm interested in a vocational course to improve my competences"</i>	<i>e.g.: "I am unemployed, but I'm looking for a job"</i>	<i>e.g.: "I cannot find a job in my profession". "I am interested in becoming a nurse".</i>
Issues related to one's own personality	Issues related to family/friends/ children	Issues related to living conditions
<i>e.g.: "I am not motivated" or "I feel I'm full of energy"</i>	<i>e.g.: "My friends are far away, I am lonely" or "my children are having trouble at school"</i>	<i>e.g.: "Our apartment is too small" "I don't like our neighbourhood"</i>

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1h Immigration history

Advice for the counsellor: According to the methodological premise, it is essential to know the migratory path of the participant and their family, their choices made, their hopes, dreams and expectations, their disappointments, their experiences. All these elements contribute to the identity of the person.

Use the template below to guide the **storytelling** using mostly open questions (why, how, where, what, which ...). Remain aware that in many cultures, people are not used to talking openly about themselves, so some questions might appear unusual. Do not push for answers and let the participant be in charge of the things they wish to include in the interview.

Template for Immigration History

Tell me about your journey!

What were the reasons for your emigration? What was the journey like?	
Did you come by yourself or with friends or family? What are your family and friends doing?	
Why did you choose to come to this particular country?	
Expectations about: - social and cultural integration - work life - housing - family life	Results on: - social and cultural integration - work life - housing - family life

Notes

1i Initial assessment of the correspondence between expectations and objectives.

Advice for the counsellor: Review the expectations from the previous exercise together with the participant and compare these to the aims of the project.

Personal expectation on orientation and counselling	Accordance level with the aims of the orientation and counselling itinerary

3rd step: First Needs Analysis

1j Categorising the outcomes – overview of the personal situation

Advice for the counsellor: Ask the person to write some key words to describe their situation on a flipchart or on a sheet of paper. These keywords are compared with the notes you made in the previous exercises (1g-1i). Afterwards ask the participant to mark positive and negative attitudes with green and red colours. This should help to get a better overview about the personal situation. Examples of positive attitudes can be: 'I want to become an engineer' and 'I know what I should do to reach this goal'. Negative attitudes could be: 'I don't know where to start', or 'I think racism and prejudice are a big problem for me'.

This is not an easy exercise, since it requires self-reflection, critical thinking and the readiness to do this in an unfamiliar context. Explain the goals of the exercise to reassure the participant. For instance, one goal could be to look at things with more distance and to identify which issues are the most important. The exercise helps to discover one's own attitude towards these issues and might give some indication on how to overcome difficulties.

Positive attitude	negative attitude

1k Continuity vs. discontinuity

Advice for the counsellor: Discuss the attitudes classified as negative with the participant and classify them in changeable and (according to the participant) non-changeable attitudes. In case something is changeable, ask why it hasn't been changed so far and write this down. In case the participant says something cannot be changed, ask why this is so. Maybe the participant is able to reconsider some items?

Possible to change it	Not possible to change it
<i>Why didn't she/he change it yet?</i>	<i>Why?</i>

1l Start Developing future plans

Advice for the counsellor: Please focus on the key words which were listed by 1l under "Possible to change". According to this expectation the counsellor asks the person for ideas on how to bring about this change and to define further concrete steps to reach it. Categorise in short/long-term steps to reach the goal.

Possible to change it → he/she will change it			
Goals	Concrete steps		Strategies
	<i>Short term</i>	<i>Long term</i>	<i>How? Which resources? Is help needed? From whom?</i>

If there is any time left, briefly discuss the non-changeable issues and see whether there is a willingness to reconsider them if possible.

Advice for the counsellor: when there are any doubts about the participant's motivation, talk about the next interview and indicate the following steps. Explain why it is a good idea to continue (e.g. at the end of the process, there will be a concrete plan and a CV which will be useful for the participant in the future).

Results of the first interview

Advice for the counsellor: By the end of this first interview, you have collected valuable information which allows you to make an initial assessment on the life situation, the motivation and the needs of your participant. Also, you can begin with identifying the necessary steps towards reaching the participant's personal goals. This information will later be used to create an action plan. In the table below, write down the risk factors - they can be external (insufficient social support, language barrier, poverty) or internal (lack of motivation, anxiety...) – and protective factors (clear goals, realistic views, optimism, energy). Important is also to gauge and note down whether the participant is sufficiently aware of his/her situation and has realistic perspectives / expectations about his/her future in the host country.

Risk factors	Protective factors
<i>e.g.: sufficient/insufficient social resources (social and/or family networks), nuclear/extended family, absence / lack of emotional references and support for themselves and in the care of children, sufficient/insufficient income ...</i>	
Level of awareness of problems good /_/ sufficient /_/ poor /_/	
Notes: 	

Commitment to the second interview: yes/_/ no /_/ date:
 ____/____/____

Goals for the second interview _____

Advice for the counsellor: When you and the participant reach the conclusion that a different form of help or advice would be better suited, write down where you refer the participant to and briefly state the reasons for this.

/_/ the person is advised to apply to other service: _____

Notes

2. Outline for the second interview – Reconstruction Phase

Date of the interview ____/____/____

Organisation / service _____

Counsellor's name _____

Participant's code _____

Introduction

The focus of this second interview is mostly on work life and job-related subjects. The participant reaches a better orientation on the job market, discover more about their own interests and capabilities and will be helped to structure factual information about education, qualifications and work experience. The participant is invited to think about his/her skills, competences, resources and interests. As a counsellor, you will gain a better understanding of the participant's character and sense of responsibility as well as their expectations towards the working life. Another important step in this phase is the exploration of the social network. This involves friends, family as well as organisations the participant is involved in and gives an indication of the amount of support the participant is able to gain from it.

Often a participant is not aware that the skills and the competences acquired through informal experiences can be important in professional life as well. The participant is invited to assess these with the help of the counsellor, and to consider to what extent these may be of help when thinking about which job, they would like to have.

Pick up the thread of the first interview

Advice for the counsellor: If your participant has decided to take part in this second interview, start with a personal question to get your participant talking about him/herself. If your participant is a little bit hesitant, free storytelling may warm them up. Try to avoid closed questions ("yes" or "no"), but let the participant talk freely. Possible questions: *Have you thought about the outcomes of the first interview and the possible benefit for you? What did you think about in particular? Are there any topics that you would like talk about more? Did you discuss the interview with your family or friends? What did they say about it?*

Notes

Detecting competences, resources, limits and aptitudes

2a Locus of Control

Advice for the counsellor: The Locus of Control stands for the extent to which a person believes he has control over their situation, as opposed to external factors beyond their control. This tool, generally used in the Balance of Competences, is important both because it provides to the counsellor with information about the views of the person in relation to their context and because it stimulates the participant to reflect on their opinions and attitudes.

Ask the person to fill out the following worksheet, letting them choose those statements that correspond with their beliefs.

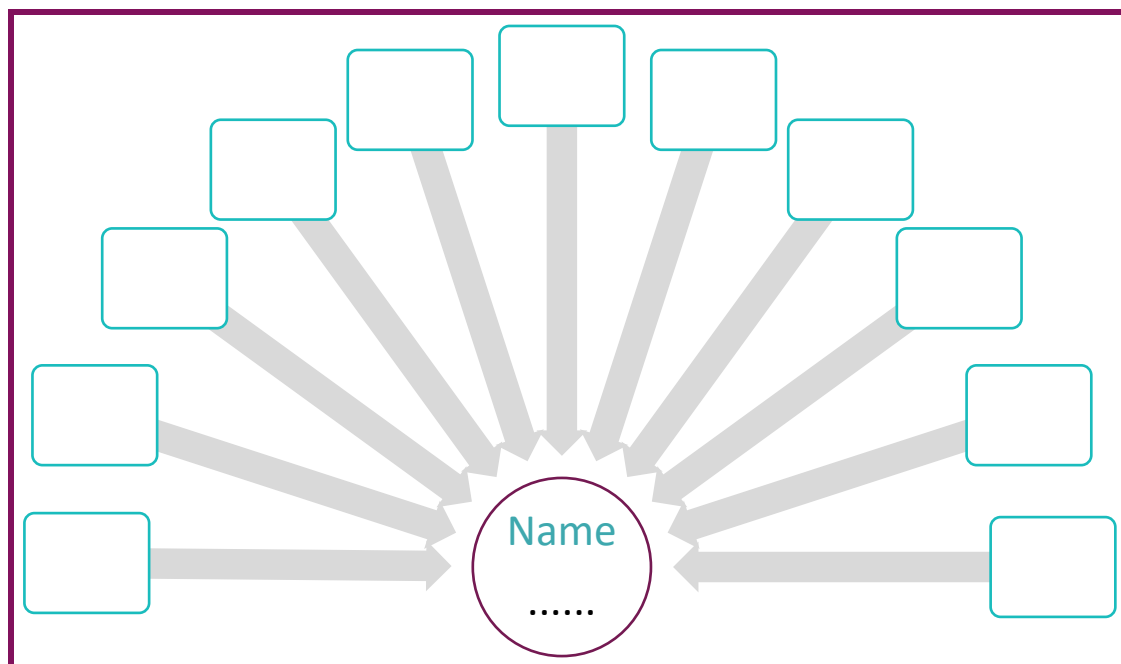
	TRUE	NEITHER TRUE NOR FALSE	FALSE
My plans will come true:			
By my determination to make them happen			
By luck			
Through my commitment			
Through the help that I could get			
By my ability to enhance my skills and my experience			
By money that I could have			
By the effort that I could put in overcoming difficulties			
By chance			
By my ability to be flexible and adapt to the situations			
By my determination to build a personal project and pursue it			
If others will not be guided by prejudice			

Advice for the counsellor: Please ask the **participant** – and note – for the reason of the choices. Help them to reflect on the given answers with reference to their experience, the choices made and their personal context (compared with the information provided in the previous interview and with the migratory path).

Advice for the counsellor: if the lack of time is a fundamental constraint in working with your participant, you can also give the subsequent tasks 2b-2g as home assignments (highlighted by ☐) and extrapolate the consequences in the Synthesis. Thus, the overall number of interviews can be reduced to two instead of three. The task could be: “Regarding 2b-2g, take one day for each task and reflect for a few minutes on situations where you did something very well. What was it? How did you do it? How would you assess your competences?”

2b ☐ Personal and social network

Please ask the participant to fill out the following template with the most important figures in their social or personal network. These can be friends and family, but also people that may be important contacts to support their social and professional life or support organisations that play an important role in their social life. Please also refer to the information gathered in the first interview (family composition).



Advice for the counsellor: Once the participant has composed the network, help them to reflect on it, analysing roles and functions of the different actors and discuss the quality of the network: is this a poor or a rich network? Is the network capable of providing support in difficulties? How can the network be helpful? Which are the difficulties in building a solid network of reference? What would change about this network? What kind of support do you receive from the different network actors? Such reflections are very important: often, people with more difficulties have very poor networks, mostly composed by public or social services and a few relatives.

2c Competences and interest fields

Advice for the counsellor: In this section, the competences and interests of the participant are examined in five areas: a) school education, vocational education and training (formal and non-formal); b) work experience; c) hobbies and personal interests; d) household and family; e) social commitment. This information is especially useful if the participant does not have a clear idea yet of which occupational direction to take and can help with a general job orientation.

First, review sheets 1e and 1f together with the participant. After that, for each of the abovementioned areas, write down the reasons for their interests and activities using the supplied worksheet.

School, vocational education and training

Please ask to fill out the following working paper

Template for discovering competences in the field

“School, Vocational education and training”

Please list activities and fields of knowledge you are/were interested in during your school time, your vocational education and training.

<i>School subjects, educational activities and fields of knowledge</i>	<i>Reasons for your interest</i>

During your vocational education and training, did you visit one or more additional courses regarding your activities and interests?

<i>Title</i>	<i>Contents - useful for further personal and professional development</i>

Work experience

Advice for the counsellor: Every work experience – even brief – may be a source for learning and for acquiring competences useful for professional development. It is important to explain this to the participant and to analyse the form 1f to check if they omitted any experience because it was considered irrelevant.

Please ask to fill out the following Working paper

Template for discovering competences in the field

“Work experience”

Please list activities and fields you are/were interested in during your work experience.

<i>Activities and fields</i>	<i>Reasons for your interest</i>

Please list the main competences you used/achieved during your work experience

2d Hobbies and interests

Advice for the counsellor: Interests and hobbies aren’t always considered important or relevant. However, these may reveal skills and aptitudes which the person is not aware of or underestimates and they may prove to be very useful for one’s professional development, especially when there is a lack of work experience or education. It is important to explain this to your participant and to consider every

experience, whether it took place in the household or in free time as potentially valuable. This part can take longer or shorter depending on the need to include the information (e.g. there will be less need when the participant already has a lot of formal qualifications or professional experience). + add something about social involvement (organised events)? Of course, if your participant is a trained surgeon, you obviously wouldn't want to dwell on these for too long, so remain sensitive to your participant's needs at all time! On the other hand, they might still be relevant in terms of developing a social network.

Please ask to fill the following Working paper

Template for discovering competences in the field "Hobbies and Interests"

State your Hobbies and Interests!

<i>Hobbies and Interests</i>	<i>Special activities, social or sports events, awards (e.g. art exhibitions, participation in a competition, etc.)</i>

Please tell me ...

How did you discover these interests/ hobbies?

Where did your passion for these hobbies/interests come from?

What do you find most interesting about it and why?

Now please explain ...

- Did you visit any courses related to your hobbies/interests?
- Which course(s) did you visit and what was your particular interest in it?

<i>Title</i>	<i>Contents - useful for a further personal and professional development</i>

2e Household and family

Advice for the counsellor: This following part can be important when there is a lack of work experience and life has exclusively revolved around the household.

Please ask to fill the following Working papers

Template for discovering competences in the field “Household and Family”

Please list all tasks and topics which are related to your personal interest and activities in the household and your family:

<i>Particular interesting tasks or topics</i>	
<i>Sewing, Cooking, Home economics, Repairs...</i>	

Please explain:

- Did you visit any courses regarding your activities and interests in household and family?
- Which course(s) did you visit and what was your particular interest in it?

2f Social Commitment

Advice for the counsellor: Social commitments can be very helpful for the social integration process and for acquiring further transversal competences (e.g. mediation, conflict resolution). Deriving the applied competences requires a level of abstract thinking where the participant might need some extra help and input.

Please ask to fill out the following Working paper

Template for discovering competences and interests in the field “Social Commitment”

Are you active in any association or communities? Yes /_/_ No /_/_

Please list activities and fields you are/were interested in this commitment.

<i>Activities and fields</i>	<i>Reasons for your interest</i>

Please list the main competences you used/achieved during your social commitment

(Please check the results of this working paper against point 1 (personal and social network)

2g Transversal competences

Advice for the counsellor: Please help the participant to list other competences useful for the employability, if not emerged so far, as language or computer skills, etc.

Self-evaluation with the support of the counsellor

Advice for the counsellor: Help the participant to develop a self-evaluation with reference to each relevant activity or field of knowledge listed in the first step of each area (2c to 2g).

Explanation of the levels:

Level A: I can do it under guidance of a person or with written constructions.

Level B: I can do it independently under similar conditions.

Level C1: I can do it independently and in different contexts.

Level C2: I can do it independently and in different contexts and I can teach other people to do it.

Description of activities	Abstraction of activities to abilities	4° Step: Self-evaluation of abilities				
2° Step: What did I do in detail? How did I proceed?	3° Step: What am I able to do? What did I learn?	Level				In which other context did I use these abilities?
		A	B	C1	C2	

Work expectations

Advice for the counsellor: Often, migrants who urgently need to find work will accept any kind of offer, even if it does not correspond with their competences and qualifications. While keeping the necessity of work in mind (in order to survive, to help the family, to stay in the host country), focus on the participant's aptitudes, interests and abilities. This will help them to get a better idea of what they look for in a job and raise their chances of finding more fulfilling work and develop professionally pursuing realistic and concrete goals. To accept any job is often a symptom a low level of self-esteem and a feeling of isolation.

2h "What am I looking for in a job?"

Please ask to fill the following Working paper

In the following table you will find different work-related aspects. Please indicate how important they are to you:

	Not	A little	Mostly	Very
Physical environment (No risk of harmful factors, etc.)				
Human environment (Positive relationships with colleagues, cooperation, etc.)				
Availability of free time/ time for family				
Flexibility of time				
Security (no risk of dismissal)				
Creativeness (Opportunity to invent, to design, to elaborate, etc.)				
Variation (no routine/ boredom)				
Independence				
Career chances / promotion/opportunity of leadership				
Level of professionalism (enhancement of knowledge and skills)				
Income level				
Social prestige				

2i “What kind of job am I looking for?”

Advice for the counsellor: Fill out the following work sheet together with the participant. Ask which jobs they are interested in and assess together to what extent the necessary knowledge, experience, skills and other characteristics are available. For many jobs, examples of these can be found online. Discuss them with the participant and talk about how suited they would be for this particular function. If your participant has no idea yet, you can build further on the previous question and suggest some examples of functions that correspond to their wishes. Then continue with discussing knowledge, experience, skills etc.

JOB/ FUNCTION: (e.g.: Family Assistant – Waiter - Gardener)				
Knowledge (e.g.: Gardener: life-cycle of plants, pruning periods; Waiter: calculation, food-wine combination)	self-evaluation			
	A	B	C1	C2
Skills (e.g. Waiter: basic math, communication skills, teamwork)				
	A	B	C1	C2
Characteristics and personal resources (e.g. physical strength, ...)				
	A	B	C1	C2
My strengths (e.g.: experience in the field)				
Skills and characteristics to improve and develop				

Preparing the CV and the personal action plan

To prepare for the third interview, which will be dedicated to completing a CV and composing an action plan, the participant should review the contents of forms 1e and 1f and add any other important factual information that is not yet included. Suggest doing this as homework. Mostly when a participant has never before written a CV, this kind of information is not readily available and needs to be researched. It will greatly shorten the time needed in the third interview if the participant has prepared this beforehand. As an alternative, there is an online Skills Profile Tool that may also be used for this purpose (<https://ec.europa.eu/migrantskills/#/>). This tool has been created by the European Commission to make mapping an individual's profile of skills, qualifications, and work experiences easier. It serves as the basis to issue personalised advice for further steps towards labour market integration (e.g. a referral to authorities dealing with the recognition of diplomas, validation of skills, language or other training, or employment support).

2j Starting the action plan

Advice for the counsellor: The counsellor and the participant highlight the participant's interests, comparing them to the future project, to the competences already existing and to those to be developed.

Interest	Future steps	Available competences	Competences to be further developed

Notes

Results of the second interview

Advice for the counsellor: Please make an evaluation on the basis of the 2 interviews' results.

<p>Awareness level of problems</p> <p>good /_/ sufficient /_/ poor /_/</p> <p>Notes:</p>
<p>Ability to protect against risk</p> <p>good /_/ sufficient /_/ poor /_/</p> <p>Notes</p>
<p>Ability to build and maintain a social network (integration / social isolation, family networks / friendship support</p> <p>good /_/ sufficient /_/ poor /_/</p> <p>Notes:</p>
<p>Ability to adapt to the environment and life experience</p> <p>good /_/ sufficient /_/ poor /_/</p>
<p>Ability to recognise and describe the main problems of their own history within family relationships</p> <p>good /_/ sufficient /_/ poor /_/</p> <p>Notes</p>
<p>ability to create realistic future plans</p> <p>good /_/ sufficient /_/ poor /_/</p> <p>Notes:</p>

Advice for the counsellor: Please, note possible changes in comparison to the outcomes of the first interview.

Notes

Positive attitudes	Negative attitudes
<i>e.g. interested in any further education – looking for job – awareness about the need of support to face up the parenting tasks</i>	<i>e.g. no plans for the future</i>
Projects and aspirations	
<i>e.g. work, house ...</i>	
Risk factors	Protective factors
<i>e.g.: sufficient/insufficient social resources (social and/or family networks), nuclear/extended family, Absence / lack of emotional references and support for themselves and in the care of children, sufficient/insufficient income ...</i>	

Ask the participant whether they would like to take part in the group session

/ / takes part in group meeting. Date: ____/____/____ time: _____

/ / takes part in third interview. Date: ____/____/____ time: _____

Note any important information on the itinerary (changes, focus)

/ / The participant is advised to apply to the following service:

Notes

3. Outline for group sessions

Outline for meetings with a small group

Advice for the counsellor: Working with a group of people with similar experiences (history of immigration) may facilitate the sharing of experiences and the reflection on related feelings. The group may also provide support and new inputs and views that the participant hasn't yet considered. In this respect, a group session can be a useful instrument to elaborate or adjust future plans.

It can be helpful to set up groups with participants that have similar aims or needs, e.g. groups of persons who, during the interviews, have highlighted difficulties in job orientation.

The group meeting can be organised after the first or second interview. This is up to you to decide. The advantage of doing it after the second interview is that participants will know you better and the level of trust will be higher. Also, you will know the participants better and have more background information.

Please pay attention, not only to group dynamics, but also to the level of participation and to the contribution of each participant. Keep your focus on the outline of the training. The material will be used for the individual paths.

You can freely choose any of the activities below that suit the particular group you are working with.

Time frame for each group session: 2 hours

Date of group meeting ____/____/____

Participants

No.	participant codes
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

The topics need be chosen according to the difficulties, the needs, and the aims of the participants. Here are some suggestions for topics to cover:

Topic:	Presentation of the action and objectives Welcome exercise/game and starting of the group session
Description:	<p>Explains the aims of the meeting and the modalities of the session, encouraging everyone to actively participate.</p> <p>Afterwards, ask participants to write the word "Welcome" on a blackboard in the languages they know: their mother tongue, the language of the host country, other possible languages (English, French, etc.).</p> <p>Each one will then practice pronouncing those words with the help of others.</p> <p>This exercise is intended to promote an intercultural atmosphere, facilitate comparison and create a reassuring environment.</p>

Topic:	Mutual Acquaintance
Tool/Method:	Ball of wool technique
Description:	<p>Each participant says:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name • Age • Family composition • Nationality, • How long have you been staying in this country? • Qualifications • Employed/unemployed • Competences • Hobbies • Preferences •

Topic:	Personal interests and expectations for the project
Tool/Method:	Pair work
Description:	<p>Exchange ideas about personal interests and expectation concerning the project. Create pairs.</p> <p>Each person should explain to his/her neighbour his/her personal interest and expectations or reasons to participate. The participants can write these down on a sheet of paper.</p> <p>After 10 minutes each participant explains the interests/expectations of their neighbour in group.</p>

Topic:	“Dreams and aspirations”
Tool/Method:	Open discussion / meta cards
Description:	<p>Discuss with the participants where they want to be in 2 / 5 years’ time: professionally, socially, family related, geographically. How realistic are those plans? Have they already undertaken concrete steps? Are the goals clear or unclear? What does everybody think?</p>

Topic:	“Talk about your challenges in everyday life”
Tool/Method:	Open discussion / Meta cards
Description:	<p>Sometimes bad things happen in every life and there are different ways to deal with them. Ask each participant to write on meta cards how they are dealing with sad or bad things in his/her life. Suggest to reflect on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) integration, social inclusion); b) family c) job search; d) education e) difficulties in dealing with government/ administration f) financial difficulties g) societal issues, discrimination racism

Topic:	“Tell us about your personal networks”
Tool/Method:	Group discussion
Description:	<p>If the social network exercise as suggested in the second interview has not (yet) been completed, participants can also do it during the group session. The counsellor asks participants to identify their contacts (personal networks, social networks, both formal and informal) by using the same template.</p> <p>Afterwards, ask the participants to share their social resources with the rest of the group. Encourage them to think positively and to reflect on good examples or to think of ways to strengthen or broaden the network. Be sensitive to the fact that some participants may not want to disclose this information.</p>

Topic:	“How to look for a job and how to face a job interview”
Tool/Method:	Brain Storming
Description:	<p>We can assume that all participants will be interested in this topic.</p> <p>Briefly summarising – and in a neutral way, without personal references – the issues and common difficulties that emerged in this area during the interviews, the counsellor invites the participants to talk about the topic in a free discussion, bringing forward their positive and negative experiences.</p> <p>It can also be helpful to do a role-playing game in which participants are invited to play an active role (job applicant/ personnel manager) whilst the others play the role of observer.</p> <p>Each participant will have the chance to express his/her opinion on the simulations, providing suggestions on attitudes and contents.</p>

Topic:	End of the meeting and feedback
Description:	The counsellor invites the participants to evaluate the activities and their level of participation.

4. Outline for the third interview – Synthesis

Date of the interview ____/____/____

Organisation / service _____

Counsellor's name _____

Participant's code _____

Introduction

During the third interview a synthesis is made of the results gathered throughout the previous stages. These results are to be analysed in the back office but are later discussed with the participant, who is actively involved in the process. This active participation will facilitate the construction of the personal action plan. After the counselling, the participant can look for an external evaluation of the outcomes, i.e. exchange with family and friends.

The findings from the previous interview are used to create a CV as well as a personal action plan together with the participant. Although in most cases the gathered information will be complete, it is important to reflect on the past interviews with the participant in order to make sure no important issues are left out. It is advisable to start with a short recap of the results of the second interview, followed by reviewing the home assignments and composing the CV and the action plan.

Pick up the thread of the previous interview: composing a CV

For creating a CV, using the online EUROPASS tool is highly recommended. You can find it on the following website:

<http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/documents/curriculum-vitae>

Using this tool offers many advantages, such as uniformity, a clear and well-structured layout and the possibility to save, change and add information later. It can be used on different platforms (like mobile devices). If the counselling with a participant would be continued beyond this project (with you or any other programme) the CV can be imported again and updated when needed. The CV does not need to be perfect at this stage, but a preliminary version would be enough, given that the participants will acquire the hard and soft skills to autonomously compose their CV during the Training Path. Therefore, it is advised that after the Training Path the participants revise the CV with the help of the counsellors.

Advice for the counsellor: Explain how the tool works and show the participant the different functions such as opening and filling out the forms and exporting the CV to various formats. After finishing the CV, offer to save the PDF onto a USB stick for the participant or send by email. Depending on how well prepared the participant is, creating a CV together may take more than an hour. Time is often spent looking for

the name of a certain employer or school, especially when the participant is from a culture using a different script. This should already be done at home as much as possible, otherwise there will not be much time left for the action plan.

Creating a Personal Action Plan

Advice for the counsellor: Start with a synthesis of the most important outcomes of the process. The items marked with * can be prepared by the counsellor beforehand to save time and discussed with the participant during the interview. Start with a summary of the needs and expectations of the participant and probe whether they have evolved during the process.

Synthesis of the needs and initial expectations*

Synthesis of the path developed during the consultancy*

Advice for the counsellor: the consultant summarises abilities and competences on a balance sheet together with the participant and orders them according to the competence field (e.g. ICT competences, social competences, parenting competences, organisational competences, language competences, etc.).

Please list all competences which you attributed with A, B, C1 and C2:

A	B	C1	C2

--	--	--	--

Synthesis of the goals for professional development

Synthesis of goals for social integration

Advice for the counsellor: Together with the participant, plan the next steps for the implementation of the action plan (e.g.: which training course should be attended; which specific job should be applied for). Only include realistic goals that can be well planned.

	GOAL	STEPS/ACTIONS	TIME FRAME
			<i>Next month</i>
<i>Work</i>			
<i>Education</i>			
<i>Social</i>			
<i>Family</i>			
<i>Other</i>			
			<i>Next two months</i>
<i>Work</i>			
<i>Education</i>			
<i>Social</i>			
<i>Family</i>			
<i>Other</i>			

NOTES

Follow up appointments or referrals

Although it is beyond the scope of this project, we recommend (if possible) carrying out follow-activities to assess whether the objectives of the action plan have been reached and whether the participant needs further help. Moreover, it can be helpful in determining whether the action plan needs to be adjusted and how useful this approach has been to the participant.

Commitment to follow-up interview: yes/_/_ no /_/_ date: ____/____/____

Goals for the follow-up interview _____

If follow-up meetings are not manageable and/or you think a referral to another service to ensure continuity would be advisable, you can make use of the following form.

/_/_ The person is referred to the following service: _____

Notes

5. Results of piloting in the partner countries

The MigrEmpower itinerary went through a pilot phase in six partner organisations of the project in six European cities: Barcelona (ACH), Nicosia (CARDET), Leipzig (Wisamar), Rome (SANSAT), Vienna (Südwind) and Strasbourg (AMSED). In the period between July 2018 and February 2019, the partner organisations all implemented the MigrEmpower itinerary, and more concretely the methodology and tools in order to assess its usefulness, find challenges and improve the handbook where necessary. Nevertheless, the methodology of this handbook is flexible and non-exhaustive. It is therefore allowing the implementing organizations to adapt it to local contexts and participants' needs.

In each partner organisation at least 20 people with a migratory history (including refugees, asylum seekers and people without a regular legal status) took part in the counselling sessions. Although the handbook expresses no preference for one gender, the balance was either equal (in Strasbourg and Leipzig) or there was stronger representation of women (up to three fourths in Vienna, Rome and Nicosia and only women in Barcelona). This can be considered an unintended positive result for empowering women, who are structurally disadvantaged in society in general and among migrants in particular. The duration of the itinerary was varying between three months and six months length. Given that many participants in the six cities were bound to jobs or language courses, the meetings were usually organised in the afternoons or evenings in order to not conflict with the schedules of the participants. The meetings were usually arranged with the participants in place or through phone calls and e-mails. To avoid overstraining, AMSED left it to the participants to schedule the appointments for their interviews on the days that worked best for them. Such a move can be encouraged as beyond the avoidance of overstraining and frustration, it promotes more equality between organisations and participants and thus gives the participants more agency and self-esteem. Nevertheless, for this the counselling staff will be required a certain degree of flexibility.

In most of the cases the meetings took place in the rooms of the organisations. Yet, in the case of CARDET from Nicosia – due to bad and expensive public transportation and a lack of time of the participants – some interviews were organised in the homes of the participants. This move not only allowed the implementation of the interviews which otherwise would have been dropped, but also provided the participants to conduct the interviews in a familiar place. SANSAT from Rome had one participant in a distant town. In order to make participation possible, the staff conducted the interviews online via video chats and e-mails. Other partners provided drinks and snacks in their sessions in order to make them more comfortable.

The participants' profile

Between and within the organisations the participants had very heterogeneous backgrounds. Concerning their educational background, in Barcelona, the group was composed of two participants who were illiterate, seven had finished elementary school, four middle school and seven high school. In other cases, the participants had at least finished middle school and high school and a majority had university degrees. Additionally, some of the participants could offer practical experience in their field. However, even despite their formal and practical qualifications those people were often frustrated because they were overqualified for the jobs they were doing or the employments they were offered. Concerning their legal status, most of the participants had residence permits as third country nationals or asylum seekers and refugees. However, some participants had irregular legal status and could thus no access to social benefits or administrative advice. Those participants were especially affected by a lack of information of their rights and social resources.

Despite their heterogeneity, certain commonalities can be identified among the participants. Firstly, they were unemployed or employed in low paid, underqualified jobs and thus dissatisfied with their current situation. Secondly, they were often alienated from society, socially excluded and lacked a network of friends from the host country. Thirdly, they had limited language skills. And finally, they faced further structural constraints such as laws discriminating immigrants, racist employers and landlords, public transport difficulties and a lack of time to engage in finding alternatives to their current situation.

Reasons for participation

The reasons for participating were varying amongst the individual participants in the respective partner organisations, however a few major reasons can be identified. The main motivation in all six organisations was the search for a job or a better professional perspective. As the participants were dissatisfied with their current professional situation, MigrEmpower offered them an opportunity to find support and advice. Given that most participants were socially alienated, another important factor was social inclusion and participation. Thus, the orientation and counselling part of the itinerary provided an entry point into contact and exchange with other migrants, but also locals – the staff of the organisations. Aligned with this was the search for contacts and the expansion of local networks amongst people in comparable situations. Although it is an aim of the interviews to create an awareness amongst participants that the improvement of competences is an important factor in successfully finding a suitable job, for some participants improving social and personal competences was a reason for participating. In many cases, the quest for hard facts and knowledge also played a role and participants brought very concrete questions into the MigrEmpower itinerary, such as getting to know where and how to apply for technical trainings or learning about the places, sites and means to search for jobs. Other participants wanted to get to know the national/local application system and

its procedures better in order to refine their applications. Moreover, improving and understanding their personal situations played a role for other participants. In the case of Barcelona where some participants only had an irregular legal status and could thus not access public or state support such as language schools, practicing and improving the local language was a motive for participation.

Results achieved

The achievements of the piloting phase can be related to single stages and the overall itinerary. The goal of the first interview is getting to know the participant and his/her personal history. The organisations describe that having the chance to talk about their personality, their interests and their concerns had a positive and motivating effect on the participants. Many of them left the interview with new incentives to find jobs and to integrate into the host society. AMSED, the partner from Strasbourg, observed that the awareness of competences and skills was raised, and many migrants were surprised by the competences they possess. Furthermore, the participants were more realistic about their career developments and upward mobilities. Wisamar from Leipzig reported that the first interview started the reflection progress and activated the participants' self-awareness.

The second interview aims at self-evaluation and discovering interests and future wishes. The range of achievements was varying in this session. Many participants discovered their interests and identified their skills, so they became more aware of themselves and could express their greatest strengths and weaknesses. Talking about past experiences provided them with many possible professional perspectives. AMSED from Strasbourg reported that at this point the participants became aware of the importance of both learning a language and creating a network. In the case of Südwind, the partner from Vienna, there was a divide between persons with and without formal education. Whereas for the participants without formal education, the interview was rather short because their interests consisted in cooking and sewing, it was a nostalgic but frustrating moment for the ones with formal education because they could not apply their skills and competences as they used to do in the past. However, for both groups the fact that they could express their concerns brightened them up.

The group session attempted to provide an arena to exchange experiences and provide mutual support. The organisations usually conducted the group sessions in smaller groups. AMSED based in Strasbourg, for example, organised three focus groups according to the professional goals of the attendees. The aims of the sessions were largely witnessed: the participants shared the challenges they faced during the process, for example feeling like as outsiders because of being migrants. They exchanged experiences and asked questions about the job search. It was a beneficial experience to meet people in a similar situation and it provided them with new information and strategies. Thus, they created a network of knowledge and tool box of best practices and faux pas. However, in the Viennese case the group session ran

the risk of becoming a space of frustration and dissatisfaction. To not let the participants slide into depression, the professionals intervened by guiding the session into a language café where new words and expressions would be acquired and experience shared.

The climax of the orientation itinerary was the third individual session with the aim of summing up the achievements of the previous sessions and partly materialising them into a CV and an action plan. The achievements for this final stage were very similar for the participants of all organisations: they accomplished this material success and were equipped with a well-elaborated CV and an action plan. Having both their strengths and concise goals written down was a further motivation for the participants to improve their futures. The professionals observed that the participants could much better than in the beginning of the itinerary identify their competences and grade them. They were not only sure of what they wanted to achieve – an improved professional situation and social integration – but they also had strategies of how to achieve it. They could thus define the subsequent steps and identify the missing elements to reach their goals.

Regarding the overarching outcomes of the process there is a variety of achievements both related to their professional path and well beyond it.

- 1) In all organisations the majority of participants became aware of the importance of language. The acquisition and improvement of the respective language of the host society is one of the priorities, either through language classes, autodidactic learning or increased interaction with native speakers. Thus, the participants chose one way or another to improve their language skills in the near future.
- 2) In conjunction with that came up the desire to become part of the social life in some cities.
- 3) Most participants also became aware of the importance to engage in formal trainings and professional qualifications and specialisations. Many were going to engage in it as soon as they fulfil the necessary language requirements. With the immediate tailored support of the counsellors they could develop options for registration in concrete training programmes.
- 4) This desire to further qualify or formalise the existing qualifications is linked to the achievement that the participants learned to identify their skills and competences – both social and professional – and became aware of their strengths and weaknesses.
- 5) The attendees became clearer not only about their personal interests and skills, but also their needs.
- 6) In correlation with the latter, the itinerary also had an effect on the personal and emotional developments of many participants. It increased their overall self-esteem as well as their motivation. Thus, many participants reported that the mental barriers that kept them from applying for jobs decreased.
- 7) On a legal level the majority of participants had insights into their rights and legal possibilities. The case of some women in Barcelona was salient here, as they made large advancements regarding their rights. Hence, two women

started an asylum process. Exiting illegality and the insecurities and vulnerabilities it brings with it, those women were strengthened and endowed with new personal and professional perspectives. Other women of the same group came along family reunification laws, which permitted them to find declared work.

- 8) For many female attendees the orientation counselling also created a safe space to learn, share experience and express their opinions with people in similar situations. Other participants expressed that the informal environment contributed to better learning effects as compared to job support services provided by the state.
- 9) The itinerary had an impact on the interpersonal level. On the one hand, the participants became more aware of the importance of networking. On the other, MigrEmpower constituted an arena to find new informal teachers and friends and thus enlarge their network and strengthen each other.
- 10) Although most participants were clearer about their needs, goals and priorities, at the same time they widened the possibilities on educational courses and increased their horizons in that they started to think about things they had not thought before. Additionally, they also appeared to be able to better estimate how realistic their career aspirations were.

Despite the wide range of positive achievements and the empowering effects the itinerary had on the participants in the different partner organisations, certain structural constraints such as discriminating immigrant laws or racist and other biases in the host societies are out of reach for the itinerary. Thus, there were some cases where frustration and dissatisfaction remained.

Adaptations to the local contexts

As mentioned above, the implementing partners largely stuck to the original itinerary. Yet, there were minor deviations and additional material used in order to adapt the tools to target group and local circumstances. AMSED, the partner in Strasbourg employed one additional tool during the synthesis for the creation of the CV and the cover letter, the Pôle Emploi, in order to do justice to the specific French application procedures. Due to language difficulties, the SANSAT from Rome conducted some of the interviews in groups so others could help with translation. For a better understanding of the participants' family relations ACH from Barcelona added a genogram to itinerary. Their counsellors also reformulated some questions as they seemed intrusive. Südwind from Vienna deviated from the schedule of the first interview and oftentimes they engaged for three hours instead of one and half or two. This was due to the fact that the counsellors did not want to interrupt the narration flow of the participants. Such a move should be encouraged because longer interviews can be expected to yield more important information of the participants and makes them feel more satisfied.

Challenges

As one can imagine, an orientation process and the piloting of a newly developed handbook does not come along without any challenges. As mentioned above, the insight into the importance of language was an achievement reached during the itinerary. Yet, language was also a challenge all organisations experienced during the implementation, as it affected the deepness of the answers and prolonged the interview process. As with two participants of the itinerary this problem was severed as they were also illiterate. Additionally, poor language and illiteracy made the evaluation difficult. The organisations could solve linguistic difficulties partly because some counsellors spoke English and French with the participants, used dictionaries or involved third persons to translate. Another way to overcome the problem was employed by the counsellors of SANSAT from Rome who conducted some interviews in a group. However, the presence of third persons might affect the answers of the participants. Thus, foreign language skills of the counsellors are highly welcomed. Yet, this is also a common problem in the field of migration counselling and will partly remain in the future. A possible solution would be translating the tools in participants' languages in order to avoid translation problems.

Reaching participants was another challenge the organisations faced. On the one hand, the migrants who would most benefit from this itinerary often lack the networks and access to NGOs and other organisations and vice versa. This is especially the case for migrants without a regular legal status or employment. On the other hand, many migrants with jobs substantially lack time (and money for the transport to reach the venues of the counselling organisations) and the counselling process was considered lengthy. There were different approaches to this. ACH from Barcelona – instead of waiting for the future participants to pop up or being reached by dissemination via their webpage and Facebook – went directly to the irregular workplace of their target group to disseminate the project and have immediate contact with them. This enabled the counsellors to directly explain the project and answer open questions and concerns. The personal contact also strengthened the trust in the counsellors and the participants could also assess if they felt comfortable in the presence of the staff of the organisation. Other organisations approached this problem by inviting participants they already had in their pools from previous programmes such as empowering projects or language classes. In order to tackle the lack of time and money and make the project more attractive and as pleasant as possible for the participants, another organisation provided drinks and snacks during the meetings and tried to make the meetings as meaningful as possible. In cases where the difficult and costly transportation system would have prevented the participants to engage in the project, the organisation took over the costs for public transport or even visited the participants in their homes.

It was mentioned above that during the itinerary many participants had jobs, attended language schools or had other commitments. Therefore, scheduling posed a common problem. This was partly solved by letting the participants schedule the

meetings and partly by the staff adjusting their time according to the needs of the participants. However, broadly it is difficult to find a universal solution to it.

In the context of time, the counsellors made diverging observations. On the one hand, the lack of time of the participants resulted in the suggestion to reduce the number of interviews from three to two in order not to bore or overstrain the participants or make the process too bulky. On the other, in the case of Südwind the interviews took three hours. Furthermore, the counsellors from Rome and Leipzig experienced that there was not enough time for the participants in the second interview to identify their competences and skills. Therefore, the handbook could be changed in a way that counsellors are given the possibility to combine the three interviews into two, while keeping the three interviews as a standard. Concerning the lack of time for the assessment of skills and competences, the respective tasks could be set as a homework, so the participants have days or weeks to reflect on it.

Furthermore, it was considered unfavourable that the results of the second and first interview were expected directly at the end of each of the interviews. Given that self-assessment is a lengthy process, one would have to give it more time.

Generally, personal history is a very sensitive topic, especially when working with people who experienced traumatising events in their home countries, on the way to Europe or in the host countries. Thus, some questions appeared to be intrusive. Here the counsellors paid high attention to sensitivity and some reformulated the questions. A revised version of the handbook shall also do justice to this experience and reformulate some of the questions where necessary.

Another challenge that was experienced was the question of how to end the orientation process without letting the participants down. For that, as mentioned in the introduction and methodology, the activities suggested in this handbook should be considered as part of the whole MigrEmpower itinerary. The training path and employment support will prevent a premature separation of the counsellors and participants.

Lastly, the following table summarizes the solutions, project partners adopted in order to deal with the abovementioned challenges in the future:

Challenge	Solution
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foreign language capacities of the counsellors • Dictionaries • Translators • Translation into further languages (e.g. Arabic)
Reach participants Lack of time and money of participants Attractiveness of participating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissemination at the irregular workplace • Pay the costs for public transport • Make home visits

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide drinks and snacks during the sessions
Scheduling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduling the activities according participants' availability
Time: self-assessments needs a lot of time Especially: 2 nd interview: time for identification of skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibility to set some activities as homework
Some results were expected too early	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide results in a later timeframe (e.g. in the beginning of the subsequent interview) and clearly explain to participants that these activities are part of a whole itinerary
Personal history very sensitive, intrusive questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counsellors paid attention to sensitivity • Possibility to reformulated questions in order to make them more sensitive • Possibility to postpone questions
How to end the itinerary without letting the participants down	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly explain to participants that these activities are part of a whole itinerary

Additional modifications

During the piloting the organisations not only tested the handbook but tried out additional complementary approaches as mentioned before. One additional method already included in this handbook that has been applied by the ACH from Barcelona shall also enrich the handbook: the genogram. During the first interview, it provides a useful tool to discover the participants' family relations.

Another proposal is to defer the creation of the CV to the workshops organized within the training path. This, however, is ambivalent as there are advantages and disadvantages of postponing the CV. If one looks at the content of the training path it becomes clear that the necessary knowledge to create a CV is conveyed in the five modules: the participants increase their computer and office skills, they become aware of the importance of social skills, how to create their "personal brand" and about the importance of language and communication, all elements of a good CV. They could subsequently carry out the task more autonomously and it would serve them as an additional practice of the knowledge acquired in the workshops. However, a major disadvantage would be that the CV would no longer be an initial material success after the third interview. And still, more focus could be placed on the action

plan and instead of a CV a temporary skills profile as mentioned in “Preparing the CV and the personal action plan” before 2j. In a nutshell, the participants would take the action plan as a tangible success after the orientation phase, could start developing their CVs autonomously at home during the training path, would revise it at the end of the training path or the beginning of the employment support and would have another tangible success later one.

An issue that needs further discussion and might depend on the individual preference of each counsellor is the role of time. Among the implementing partners there were contradicting opinions if the three interviews should be given more time in and between the interviews or if it is useful to reduce the number of interviews from three to two and thus reduce the overall time spent on interviews. The first case would require more time from participants and counsellors, a detrimental factor that would keep the former from engaging in the itinerary or dropping out prematurely. Thus, this is an argument for a shortened version of the orientation itinerary. However, a shortened version is likely to lack deepness and not produce the desired results.

6. Conclusions

Regardless of their professional and educational backgrounds the orientation and counselling handbook is helpful for a variegated group of migrants unsatisfied with their current professional situations. The pilot phase has proved that among other things it enhances the chances of migrants on the labour market, brings to the fore the importance of language, the wish to engage in formal trainings, the identification of skills and competences, increase of self-esteem and motivation, widens professional horizons and also fosters social integration.

It is a useful tool for both experienced and unexperienced counsellors as it provides a framework for orientation and due to its openness and narrative approach also allows a high degree of flexibility and can thus be applied to all kinds of local and personal circumstances.

As mentioned above, it is not a strict framework, even though in itself it covers many aspects. Therefore, counsellors employing the handbook are encouraged to add auxiliary methods or skip task or questions when they feel they might damage instead of benefitting the participant in the orientation phase. The same holds true for the indicated schedule. This is only a recommendation and counsellors are invited to shorten or prolong the interview sessions if it helps in the orientation process.

Equipped with a better awareness of their skills and competences and with a clearer goal in mind the participants can then go over to the workshops of the training path and the employment support.