European Network on Career & AGE
(Age, Generations, Experience)

**Good practices to facilitate the sustainability of individuals'
careers**

White paper for the third learning seminar,
Trento, 4 & 5 November 2014

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European Network on Career & AGE: Learning Seminar 3

I. Introduction

0. Document structure

This paper serves as a manual for the third learning seminar in the context of the European Social Fund learning network on 'Career & AGE (Age, Generations, Experience)'. In the first chapter we describe the process followed during the third learning seminar. The methodology, the rationale, the approach and finally the program details are discussed.

The second chapter of this paper describes the examples of good practice at the individual level submitted by the partnering countries and by the content expert, and the ones that were retained by the experts after the validation process.

In the third chapter we present the overall framework for sustainable career management, explained in terms of the individual level. The concepts used in the framework are explained, as well as the six dimensions of sustainable career management. These dimensions will be concretised by examples of good practice.

In the final chapter the conclusions are presented. We discuss the patterns emerging from the validated examples of good practice. Observed trends will be presented including the topics that seem to be missing from the collected sample of submitted practices.

1. Individual level

Practices that stimulate sustainable careers at the **individual level** are defined as ***measures, programs, projects, tools and processes created or facilitated by companies and by governmental bodies, which support individuals to sit in the driver seat of their career***. In doing so the government and the organisation create a context or framework in which the individual can (pro)actively manage his or her career in an effective way and with a high level of self-confidence and self-awareness.

2. Good practice

Prior to the seminar a **preparatory phase** took place during which the members of the steering group delivered suggestions of good practice. The expert and the team delivered additional suggestions. These examples of good practice are presented and analysed in this paper.

G**ood practice** refers to career practices, policies, programs, measures and tools that foster sustainable careers. More specifically we focus on examples of good practice that facilitate and support individuals from all generations, ages, educational level and background in developing career competencies and becoming more self-aware and self-directed in their career management. The examples of good practice can stimulate individuals' employability,

workability and self-awareness, can increase their career length and reach further than e.g. accommodative practices for specific target groups. The range of these examples is very broad, including e.g., flexible working methods, measures to facilitate work-life balance, career guidance tools, validation of prior competencies and autonomous teams as a way to increase responsibility, autonomy and employee participation.

These practices can be installed for the whole workforce or for specific target groups (e.g. focus on less educated white collar workers). Bottom line however is that incentives from the government or the organisation are set up to stimulate individuals in taking charge of their professional life.

A good practice also shows potential for transfer to other countries. **Transferability** of a good practice is defined as the degree to which the good practice can easily be transferred and used in other contexts (organisations, firms and companies in EU-Member States and EU regions, in different sectors and diversified markets) by other individuals.

3. Validation by experts

The proposed examples of good practice have been validated by a team of academic experts appointed by the steering committee using the criteria 'contribution of the practice to sustainable careers on the individual level' and 'potential for transfer in other contexts'. This validation process took place in Brussels on 16 October 2014.

As a result of this validation process 13 cases of good practice were retained by the team of experts. Three of these validated practices were invited to attend the second learning seminar and accepted the invitation. We thereby aimed to select for heterogeneity – i.e. three different cases in terms of types of practices installed, case and country characteristics. Also the practical criterion of availability and willingness of the 'owners' of these validated cases of good practice needed to be taken into account.

In the second chapter of this white paper we will detail which of the examples of good practice have been validated and which were not retained by the team of validation experts.

4. Learning seminar

4.1 Methodology

The overall objective of the learning seminars is to facilitate participants in **generating concrete and useful ideas and insights** for initiatives with regard to "Career & AGE" in their home country, based upon the presentation and the active discussion of validated cases of good practice in countries and/or regions in Europe, as well as outside Europe. Participants are not merely inspired by listening to and talking about these practices, but return with concrete insights about what is transferrable given the specific context of their own country and/or region, and how a transfer can and should be realized.

The methodology followed during the third learning seminar hence aimed at **maximizing the impact and learning effect**. To serve this purpose we followed an approach that guarantees continuity and in which insights can be anchored in the structured framework of sustainable career management. This framework, which will be discussed in the third chapter of the paper, serves as a guiding principle through the three seminars and the final event.

The final output after the three learning seminars and the closure event will consist of a career toolbox lifecourse approach. This will be presented during the final event on 10 February 2015 in Brussels and will consist of an e-tool representing an easy-to-use grid of examples of good practice.

4.2 Rationale

In what follows we describe the **general rationale** of the methodology used during the third learning seminar.

For participants who attend the seminar it is important to be aware of the specific career characterizing their home country: e.g. what are particular socio-economic challenges in this context, what are important characteristics of industries, organisations, regions, the workforce and broader population, the labour market, what are relevant system level policies… that need to be considered when evaluating the transferability of a practice to organisations and the individual employees in their own country? What conditions need to be fulfilled in order to realize transfer?

Especially given the goal to "stretch" participants' learning experiences by listening to practices from countries over the world that might be substantially different from their own context, it is important that participants are facilitated in recognizing their own framework and to look at commonalities in cases that might be – at first sight – totally different from their own context. Only in this way we can tap into the collective intelligence and knowledge of all participants leading to deep level learning and true co-creation.

This process implies diversity of viewpoints leading to diversified insights followed by integration and consolidation of these insights by applying them to a real business case. This **principle of Diversity and Integration** is known as the "D-I principle" (Agazarian, 2004).

4.3 Approach

The seminar used a **blended approach** and consisted of a combination of 1) key note presentations, including time for Q&A, 2) case presentations, 3) workshops in small homogenous groups to discuss these validated cases of good practice and their transferability to participants' home country and 4) a panel discussion in a heterogeneous group setting with representatives of the different stakeholders on the labour market.

4.3.1 Key note presentations

Both on day 1 and day 2 there was a keynote presentation by an expert in the field of sustainable careers. On the first day we had Prof. Michele Colasanto, President of the Employment Agency of the Autonomous Province of Trento and professor on labour market policies. The topic of his presentation was "fostering working careers by improving

opportunities: the experience of the Autonomous Province of Trento". On the second day a keynote presentation was delivered by Monique Valcour, Prof. of Management at EDHEC business school France. She addressed "how individuals and organisations can develop sustainable, high-performance careers".

4.3.2 Case presentations

The 3 validated cases that served as case presentations are the 'Profiler' (by Wannes Wilms, City of Lommel, Belgium), 'Cité des Métiers' (by Bernadette Thomas, France) and finally 'Stevig in de steigers' (by Maarten Vandenbemden, Wonen & Werk, Belgium).

4.3.3 Workshops

By means of an interactive workshop, according to the principles of the peer reflection methodology, the 3 validated cases were discussed on day 1.

Peer reflection is an interactive format in which participants interact and reflect about the selected cases in small subgroups. The peer reflection process followed the presentation of the three selected cases by the 'case owner' as described above. We have chosen to form homogeneous groups of participants who engaged in a discussion with the different 'case owners' to enable in-depth elaboration of the case.

During this peer reflection process an analysis of and reflection on one of the discussed practices took place in these homogeneous groups, using trigger questions that were tailored to the specific background of the subgroup (business profiles, ESF representatives, academics and governmental representatives).

The trigger questions were addressed in subgroups and a compromise on a subgroup level had to be achieved. The output of this subgroup interaction was posted on the wall and finally a plenary presentation of this output was performed. The output was also used as feed-in during the business case on the second day.

A difference compared to the flow of the peer reflection process in Belfast during the second learning seminar, where we addressed the organisational level, is that in this case we opted for moderators in the different subgroups to steer and coordinate the interaction process. These moderators received instructions face-to-face just before the peer reflection process to ensure that the right mindset was triggered on the right moment.

Interactive business case. On day 2 the interactive part consisted of an action learning approach during which we explicitly linked the acquired insights to the application of these insights: by applying the insights and output generated on day 1 and on day 2 (from the peer reflection and the keynote presentations) on a *real-life business case*, participants attain a deeper level of learning, as compared to a mere knowledge transfer. Moreover the probability that the participants will use these insights in their own context will increase. The interactive business case challenged the participants to solve an actual career management problem in a different context than their own context.

The flow of the interactive business case (cf. Fig. 1) started with a presentation of the career management challenge the company is facing by means of a presentation of the business case owner. After an explanation of the context and the challenges there was a possibility to exchange with the business case owner, which made it possible to deepen the conversation in order to get a good grasp of the real challenge. In the next phase the same homogenous subgroups as used on day 1 worked on the business case by answering the following questions and assignments:

- What are 3 priorities you would tackle?
- Work out a concrete action plan
- Stakeholders: who and how to involve them?
- What are possible problems you anticipate that you might be confronted with?
- What could ESF do to facilitate you in this process?

The answers on these questions served as input to create a subgroup presentation. During this process moderators once again facilitated the subgroup conversations to steer and coordinate the interaction process.

Afterwards there was an exchange of the proposed solutions via the presentations of the approach of each subgroup, followed by feedback from the business case owner. Finally a plenary wrap-up by the whole group of participants has led to a synthesis of the insights developed during this business case exercise.

The output was captured by the content expert and the results were distributed after the learning seminar.
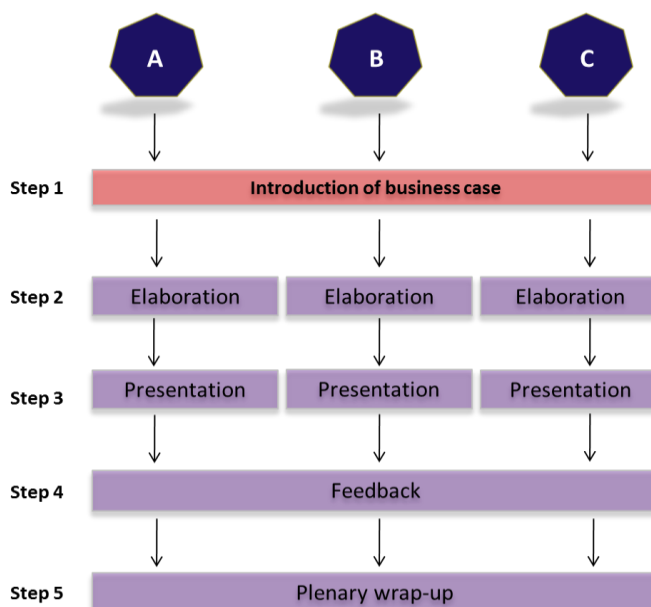
Fig.1. Flow of the interactive business case

This approach maximizes learning by connecting head (understanding, knowing what), heart (emotion & motivation, knowing why) and hands (behaviour, knowing how to). Learning by doing has proven to be an effective methodology in learning and changing behaviour. Through exchange with others on a real-life business case we empower and engage all the stakeholders and we create ambassadors for sustainable career management.

4.3.4 Panel discussion

The **panel discussion** took place at the end of the second day. The designed process used a heterogeneous group setting assuring that the different relevant perspectives were represented in the group setting. The panel consisted of representatives from the different stakeholders on the labour market as well as actors from organisations. The panel members were Veronika Schlasze, Willie Mcallister, Monique Valvour and Geneviève Marchal.

Discussion was triggered by *statements* which the participants of the panel discussion received in advance. To assure there was a clear link with the content of the program, input regarding the statements was provided not only by the content expert but also by the keynote presenters and the case owners.

The panel discussion allowed for reflection on the topics related to sustainable careers for individuals. In this way we looked back on the learning seminar and we were able to wrap-up the insights and get to straightforward conclusions.

4.4 Program overview

Below a general overview of the building blocks used during the third learning seminar is displayed, which took place in November 2014 in Trento. Next the program details are also displayed.

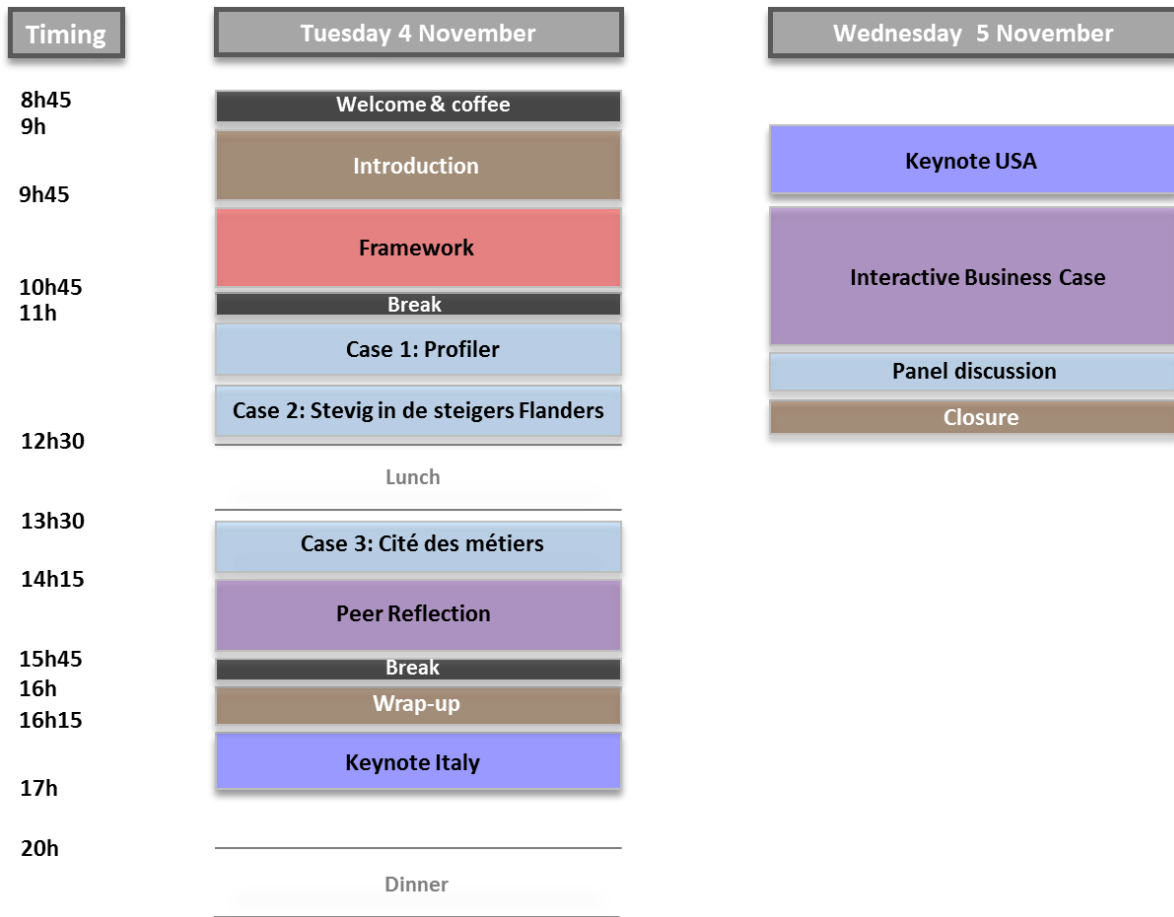| Timing	Tuesday 4 November	Wednesday 5 November
8h45 9h	Welcome & coffee	
	Introduction	Keynote USA
9h45		
	Framework	Interactive Business Case
10h45 11h	Break	
	Case 1: Profiler	
	Case 2: Stevig in de steigers Flanders	Panel discussion
12h30		Closure
	Lunch	
13h30	Case 3: Cité des métiers	
14h15	Peer Reflection	
15h45 16h	Break	
16h15	Wrap-up	
	Keynote Italy	
17h		
20h	Dinner	

Fig.2. Program overview of the third learning seminar.

4.5 Program details day 1(morning)

Timing	Building block	Description	Purpose / Output
8.45h 9h	Welcome & coffee		Setting the scene
	Welcome & Intro	Welcome by Province of Trento (HR director PAT) Opening of the seminar by ESF Flanders	
9h45	Framework	Presentation by Prof. Dr. Ans De Vos ▪ Framework and research overview ▪ Importance of career meta-competencies in individual careers ▪ Introduction of the business case and fit in the current learning seminar	▪ Framing of the learning seminar. ▪ Align knowledge level of model and trends aimed at shared understanding
10h45 11h	Coffee Break		
11h45	Profiler	Presentation of *"how individuals are supported by* **organsiations** *in developing career competencies to become more self-aware on these competencies and more self-directed in personal career management?"* 30' presentation, 15' Q&A	
	Stevig in de steigers	Presentation of case for less educated profiles: *"how individuals are facilitated and supported by* **organisations** *in developing career competencies and becoming more self-directed in their career management?".* 30' presentation, 15' Q&A	
12h30	Lunch		

Fig.3. Program details day 1 (morning).

4.6 Program details day 1 (afternoon)

Timing	Building block	Description	Purpose / Output
13h30	Cité des métiers France	Presentation of **career support** and **educational** case: *"how individuals are facilitated and supported by the concept of 'cité des métiers' in developing career competencies and becoming more self-directed in their career management?"* 30' presentation, 15' Q&A.	Insight in how can this tool based approach can be implemented in companies
14h15	Peer Reflection	Interactive session: ▪ Interaction in homogeneous groups between participants and case presenters. Case presenters switch groups after 15'. Analysis and reflection of cases in homogeneous groups, moderated by ESF representative	▪ Create in-depth insights
15h45	Coffee Break		
16h	Wrap-up	Conclusions of peer reflection: ▪ Lessons learned by case owners ▪ Transferability conditions ▪ Domains where case owners need help	▪ Create in-depth insights ▪ Give feedback to case owner ▪ Clarify transfer conditions ▪ Give input to ESF on how they can help overcome barriers
16h15	Italian keynote	Speech by Prof. Michele Colsanto, President of the Employment Agency of the Autonomous Province of Trento. "Fostering working careers by improving opportunities"	
17h	End of Day 1		
20h	Dinner		

Fig.4. Program details day 1 (afternoon).

4.7 Program details day 2

Timing	Building block	Description	Purpose / Output
8h30	**Keynote USA**	Presentation by Monique Valcour. "How can individuals and organizations develop sustainable, high-performance careers?" including Q&A.	• Create new insights and ideas stemming from a fresh international (U.S.) perspective • Sustainable careers in practice: how to manage an individual career?
9h30			
11h30	**Interactive Business Case**	Learning in action: application of insights generated on day 1 and lessons learned in real-life business case , including presentation of results, feedback on proposed approaches and a plenary wrap-up. Homogeneous group setting	• Maximize learning • Learning by doing through exchange with others on a real-life business case • Empower and engage stakeholders • Create ambassadors for sustainable career management
12h	**Panel discussion**	Reflection about seminar 3 in heterogeneous stakeholder group presenting the general conclusions	Get insight in what enables people to take charge of their career
12h30	**Closure**	Closure by Prof. Dr. Ans De Vos	

Fig.5. Program details day 2.

4.8 Key of the program outline

Introduction / Closure

General framework

Keynote speech

Company case studies

Interactive session

Break and meals

Fig.6. Key of the program outline.

II. Presentation of submitted practices

In this chapter we present the examples of good practice submitted by the stakeholders and the content expert. First we describe the three cases that will be presented during the learning seminar in Trento. These are 'Stevig in de steigers', 'Profiler' and 'Cité des Métiers'. Afterwards the other validated practices will be described. In the final part we describe the submitted practices that not have been validated. In the appendix (cf. chapter 6) an overview of all the submitted practices is provided.

Input regarding good practice examples came from the partnering countries as well as from the external expert. In total, 17 examples of good practice have been submitted. Of these, 15 have been retained for the validation by the experts. This pre-selection was made according to two criteria: 1) level of the practice (system, organisational or individual) and 2) sufficiency of information available to enable validation.

1. Good practice: toolkit for the individual

As mentioned earlier, good practices that stimulate sustainable careers at the individual level are defined as ***measures, programs, projects, tools and processes created or facilitated by companies and by governmental bodies, which support individuals to sit in the driver seat of their career***. In doing so the government and the organisation create a context or framework in which the individual can (pro)actively manage his or her career in an effective way and with a high level of self-confidence and self-awareness.

An individual has several tools in his or her backpack to manage the career. This toolkit for the individual includes competence appraisals or balances, a competence portfolio, skills, knowledge, attitudes, networks, a professional project and sometimes a plan B. ***Examples of good practice at the individual level activate these tools***. But why would an individual bother to actively manage his or her career when there are plenty of organisations offering career support? When discussing the toolkit for the individual to get in the driver seat of the career, it is important to note that also motivation and an individual's broader life should be taken into account.

From an organisational and individual viewpoint there are three strategies to activate the individual toolkit, which all bring the individual worker into the driver seat of his or her career: 1) stimulating a 'new career attitude', 2) fostering the development of career competencies and finally 3) coaching of proactive career behaviours.

1) The 'new career attitude' refers to the protean attitude and the boundaryless career mindset. A protean career is 'driven by the person, not the organization, and is reinvented by the person from time to time, as the person and the environment change' (D.T.Hall, 1996). Identity and adaptability are crucial to realise this attitude. A boundaryless attitude refers to a career unfolding as 'sequences of job opportunities that go beyond the boundaries of single employment settings' (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994). We will address

these concepts in more detail in chapter 3. This new career attitude can be stimulated through external career counselling or via organisational career support.

2) Career competencies consist of knowing why (what someone wants or aims for), knowing how (the abilities) and knowing who (one's own personality). Knowing why refers to the insight into what is important in one's current and future career, and the 'why' as a basis for understanding the options you see, broadening your perspective on possible options, and navigate your career. Knowing how refers to the insight into one's strengths, what makes you good in the current job and what makes you good at the things done outside the job. It also refers to insight in your development needs as a basis for choosing a job that builds on the strengths or that allows for growth, and for presenting yourself to the job market. Finally knowing who (temperament and personality) includes the insight into your personality and drive as a basis for choosing a job and work context that fits with who you are as a person. Important here is to mention that a career unfolds in a certain career context. This career context has two aspects, i.e. the 'what' of the context and the 'who'. The 'what' refers to keeping track of evolutions in one's organization, sector, occupation and the broader labour market. The 'who' means understanding the importance of your social capital and the career stakeholders. This latter aspect of the career context prevents people to become too selfish as a result of the new career attitude. Understanding this career context determines, together with the career competencies explained above, the career potential, that is, the basis for employability. These career competencies can be fostered by stimulating individuals to actively reflect upon their strengths and career interests or by supporting them in developing insight in themselves and their career.

3) Proactive career behaviours are 'the anticipatory actions that employees take to sculpt their careers' (Crant, 2000). These anticipatory actions can, for example, consist of job crafting, I-deals, job change negotiation or seeking feedback. By coaching these behaviours the new career attitude can be promoted and vice versa the new career attitude influences these proactive career behaviours.

In what follows we will present the examples of good practice which activate the toolkit of the individual and which put the strategies discussed above into practice.

2. Case presentations learning seminar 3

2.1 Stevig in the steigers (Flanders, Belgium)

'Stevig in de steigers' is an educational coaching game for lower educated employees and their coaches (the employee's team leader, supervisor, HR, or any other internal coach). Stevig in de steigers, which literally means 'solid in the scaffolding', is designed by Vlerick Business School, managed by 'Wonen & Werken', a Belgian non-profit organisation, and is developed with the support of the European Social Fund Flanders.

The instrument facilitates an open and constructive conversation between the employee and his or her internal coach. It provides internal coaches a concrete structure for engaging in a coaching relationship with their employees in a playful way.

Stevig in de steigers responds to the growing need for lower-educated employees to strengthen and widen their set of competencies. Indeed research shows that:

- Lower educated employees more often end up in organisations/industries where employment is less stable.
- Changing labour market conditions have caused several competencies to become redundant. Therefore, firms are less inclined to hire lower-educated employees and tend to focus more and more on higher-educated employees.
- Increasing automation has caused a shift from routine tasks to more complex tasks. Therefore, competencies such as learning ability, problem solving, or creativity are becoming more important than ever.
- New forms of work organisation (e.g. job rotation) necessitate a wider variety of skills for every employee.

Despite these challenges, studies show that lower-educated employees tend to be less motivated to develop themselves, have less self-efficacy beliefs, are less inclined to believe that 'learning' is useful, and are less inclined to reflect on themselves and question their own competencies. The result is that they tend to exhibit a rather limited degree of self-management in learning and career processes.

Research indicates that coaching is an excellent way to respond to these challenges. Coaching differs from traditional learning and development methods (e.g. classroom trainings, on-the-job trainings, mentorships) as it strongly focusses on self-management in personal growth. In fact, a core characteristic of coaching is that the ultimate responsibility for a coaching process always lies with the coachee.

However, organisations usually only use coaching for so-called 'high potentials', executives, or other higher-educated employees. Moreover, supervisors often do not have the necessary skills, methods or instruments to coach their lower-educated employees. In fact, more often than not, these supervisors do not know what 'coaching' exactly entails, or how this differs from their day-day job in which they have to actively manage and direct their employees.

'Stevig in de steigers' enables organisations to drastically lower the threshold for their internal coaches (supervisors) to coach lower-educated employees. The instrument offers a clear structure that enables employees to (1) improve their competencies, (2) increase their degree of self-reflection, (3) exhibit more self-management, and (4) be more satisfied with the support they receive from their supervisor/internal coach. The result is that these employees will be more motivated and more employable. Additional advantages include the fact that issues at the work floor can be more easily discussed, supervisors develop their coaching skills, and they will be more satisfied with the support they receive from their HR department

'Stevig in de steigers' is available in a physical version as well as in a digital version that can be used on a laptop or PC. This way, the tool can be used in every possible work setting. Stevig in de Steigers' consists of 3 phases. Each phase can be completed at a different time, and the duration of each phase is adjustable – so, it can be easily integrated into the work

schedule. Every phase takes approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. An entire process (all 3 phases) takes about 3 to 8 weeks.

Phase 1: Who am I, and what are my abilities?

Because trust between coach and coachee is a basic requirement for a successful coaching relationship, the first objective of this phase is to build this trust. In a playful and 'safe' way, the employee is encouraged to share a few personal things about him or herself. Coach and coachee have a short conversation about the employee's personality, motives and ambitions. In addition, they talk about how (s)he feels in the organisation and in his or her team. The second objective is to stimulate self-reflection. This is achieved by mapping the employee's abilities.

Phase 2: Entering a challenge!

In the second phase, the well-known and widely-used G.R.O.W. method (Goal, Reality, Obstacle and Way forward) is applied. The power of the G.R.O.W. technique is that it provides a very clear and well-structured problem-solving process, through which you can achieve goals that you determine yourself.

In the first step of the G.R.O.W. process, the employee chooses a skill (s)he would like to work on. This can be a skill that the coachee is struggling with, or it can also be a skill that the coachee already masters quite well and wants to improve even further. By means of a set of 'question cards' and a board that are included in the instrument, coach and coachee are supported to successively:

- Determine (as specifically as possible) the Goal that the employee wants to achieve
- Explore the employee's current situation (Reality)
- Clarify the employee's Obstacles
- Determine concrete actions (Way forward)

Phase 3: Follow-up.

The third and last phase consists of a follow-up conversation that takes place a few weeks after phase 2. During this conversation, the employee and his or her coach reflect on the actions that (s)he may, or may not, have executed in the meantime. By using of a set of question cards, coach and employee think about how (s)he felt during these actions, what went well, what could have gone better, etc. If no actions were implemented, coach and coachee consider what went wrong, what alternative actions might be and how to move forward.

In addition to the instrument itself, 'Stevig in de steigers' also contains a manual for the coach to clarify what coaching is as well as a step-by-step user guide. Secondly support for implementation is also included by means of a guide for HR which contains practical advice on the way in which the instrument can be introduced and implemented in the organisation and a trainer set that contains a set of exercises that organisations can use to independently organise a short 'coach the coach' session for their internal coaches.

Results indicate that employees who were being coached rated the coaching skills of their supervisors higher if these supervisors learned how to use the tool. There was a slight drop in supervisor's self-rating of these coaching skills which can be interpreted as an improvement in awareness of these skills.

With regard to the effects on the employee, the learning orientation (the degree to which they find 'learning' valuable) slightly improved. There was a remarkable growth in their need for self-reflection. A serious boost in the satisfaction of the employee with the support they receive from their supervisor/coach was observed. Supervisors were also more satisfied with the support they receive from their HR department.

In December 2013 167 copies of the tool have been distributed to 154 different organisations in Flanders. How many organisations make use of the tool in their day-to-day business practices is not known though, but a structural follow-up is currently planned.

2.2 Profiler (Flanders, Belgium)

Large organisations have a typical problem embedded within their own structure. They often consist of hierarchy and a top-down management approach, based upon functions and need-to-have diplomas all positioned in a strict organisation chart. People can seldom use their real talents and 'inner-drive' on the job.

That is exactly why the Profiler is created. The Profiler is a trending software package developed by Wannes Wilms, an expert in education in Flanders, with a specific innovative management approach for (large) organisations. The objectives are:

- To give all personnel in large organisations a realistic chance to perform better on the job, taking more advantage of skills and talents that do not necessarily have to be part of their diploma or their job in the organisation. The basic question with Profiler is: "What is something you would love to do and you're (told by others that you're) good at?
- To 'liquefy' jobs and work volumes in an organisation where the work load for a specific group of people tends to be periodically different. The moment people get some spare time, they slide into comfort zones. For those moments when there is a huge stress load on jobs, work volume never seems to be enough. Profiler has a main goal to free people from their confined workspaces and job descriptions, so they can work during 20% of their 'spare' time for the benefit of the organisation when there is a smaller workload. Profiler does not change the hard working conditions such as contracts and pay checks, but commits workforce based on the talent and inner drive of the employees.

A very specific management style was developed using the most modern views on the difficulties experienced in these large organisations. The core principles of a top-down approach were changed and a way of structuring the organisation was developed based on 6 core principles:

- Autonomy: all people have a desire to operate and work self-directed.
- Mastery: people generally want to automatically get better at stuff they are good at.

- Purpose: every person wants to play a role of significance in an organisation.
- Creative: the human being is a fundamental creative organism. We need to stick close to that.
- Curious: all people are curious by nature, so why not take advantage of this knowledge?
- Unique: you are a unique person on this planet, just like everyone else is…

Afterwards a software package was created that uses these core principles to create the possibility to operate in the current organisation, under a person's current contract and with all the known current degrees, diplomas and skills. People were asked what they like to do and what they are good at. Then 20% of their (already) paid time was allocated to projects within the firm that they like to do, are good at and for which they possess the right skills.

The Profiler starts from the idea that employees use on average 70% of their working time efficiently. Instead of fighting the loss of 30% with all kinds of systems form the viewpoint of 'command & control', 30% of the working time is given back to the employee. This 30% can be filled up with projects for which the employee has the talents and inner drive. The employees remain responsible for their core tasks in the remaining 70% of the time. This led to a huge improvement in efficiency on the work floor – without stress or regulations.

Everyone can create new projects and can participate in existing ones if they feel like. There is no decision tree. There is no hierarchic model of deciding who is allowed to do stuff. It is an organic part of the organisation, with participants out of free will. They get a clear view on their competencies since the profiler stimulates them to reflect on it and to identify these competencies.

As a result people start to move within the organisation they have known for many years. There was a tendency to choose projects that focus on the personal talents and inner drive. People slowly but surely got involved in projects that cross the boundaries of their job description and diplomas, but within the reach of their self-assessed talents and passion. An additional and rather unexpected effect is to have people be a living testimony of working on a project that they wanted for themselves.

A more efficient organisation was achieved with a more positive attitude among all employees that wanted to be involved in the projects. Projects started flourishing and many where created. Some were successful, others were useful in learning from mistakes.

Much more work could be done with the same amount of employees, without any extra costs and as a consequence productivity is stimulated. Another beneficial effect of the Profiler is that talents and inner drive are made searchable in the organisation. People can give feedback about their learning needs in their own profile.

Many projects evolved from the start-up phase, mainly because of the positive feedback from participants all over the organisation. The feeling of being able to work without a direct boss and act self-directed could have been the trigger.

People that returned to their workspace, after running these projects with colleagues from other departments, spread a positive testimony about their project trial, thereby creating a large platform of employees within the firm willing to support the ideas of working on Profiler projects. It also resulted in a positive vibe and wellbeing for the participants and their normal work environments.

Management was confronted with an organic new way of running projects. They had to move from a 'command & control' approach to an 'empower & facilitate' mindset. Essentially management had to give up a part of control and give employees space to experiment.

Profiler has been implemented in 4 organisations so far, all with different outcomes. Profiler has also been copied in the Flemish government providing a talent database to government workers.

2.3 Cité des Métiers (France, international)

A Cité des Métiers is a place managed in partnership by different stakeholder organisations, open to anyone in search of information to build one's professional future, according to the principles of open access, free of charge and anonymous use. It works like a one-stop-shop for job seekers, people in search of career guidance and organisations looking for people and their talents.

The main advantage is that all partners can find each other on one venue, bringing the competencies of all those partners together. The idea was simple: to set up a single location where all types of users, whatever their age and status, could receive answers to their questions concerning their future career throughout their life.

Back in 1993 there was a clear need in France to lower the threshold for career guidance. Today, with the spread of access to digital information, the concept of the Cité des Métiers is still very relevant: the multiplicity of information sources have led to an increase in the need for guidance and for help to recognize opportunities more clearly.

The objectives of this concept is 1) to make a centre for information and advice including all the partners that help people to better frame the responses on questions related to their career choices, career transitions and career progress, 2) to offer concrete answers, tips, tricks and feedback to job seekers and employees in general and 3) to bring together all the tools, resources and stakeholders in the field of labour, career management and learning & development.

Since Cité des Métiers is jointly run by partners specialising in career advice, training, employment, appraisal and creation of activities, their resources can be pooled to provide the best career advice, integration and professional development for individuals. This experience resulted in the creation of a label, which allowed for a geographical expansion.

Today there are 18 Cités des Métiers in France. Currently, there are 30 similar places which have obtained the "Cité des Métiers" label in 10 countries: France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, Canada, Chile, Mauritius, Belgium and China. Documentary resources and

methods are pooled across the international network of the Cités des Métiers, to compare, evaluate, question the practices and foster the emergence of a shared culture.

The mission is to direct users to all the resources allowing them to formulate and achieve their career aims and to guide and support them in their choices by providing them in a single place with:

- Interviews with professionals belonging to institutions competent in the fields of counselling and professional life,
- Free access to documentation on employment, careers and vocational training,
- IT resources and multimedia areas, and
- One-day information sessions, symposia and meetings organised by all the partners or produced in cooperation with external partners

It is important to note that the concept of a Cité des Métiers must be adapted to the specific context of the territory where it is used. A Cité des Métiers results from the encounter of actors working in a same territory and sharing the same values, who, after a shared diagnosis, decide to engage in a common project for pooling their resources in order to provide the inhabitants of the territory with the will and the means to decide and build their professional life.

To meet the needs of the inhabitants in the best possible way, each Cité des Métiers can also, with the support of its partners, complement the services of the labelled platform with a territorial network of reception spaces bringing the same type of service directly in the locations of greatest need.

Thus, even if all the Cités des Métiers are designed according to a common pattern and abide by the same Charter, they possess distinctive features reflecting the characteristics of the territory where they are located.

In fact the choice of the supporting structure of a Cité des Métiers as well as its design depend on local partnerships, organised according to a specific context: the project leaders are generally public bodies such as the regional authority, but in some cases the project may be carried out by other structures, such as, in France, Chambers of Trade and Commerce or of Agriculture, a jobcentre or a vocational training organisation.

Finally the concept should be adapted to the rapidly changing context and to the changing needs of its users. The Cités des Métiers have been and are still demonstrating their relevance through their capacity to tailor their resources and advice to the new needs of their users, thereby adapting to new technologies.

Cité des Métiers uses a life cycle approach and empowers the individual: it puts the individual employee in the driver seat of his or her career. When deciding to integrate all the career services in a Cité, a huge change management process has to be designed and managed.

3. Other validated examples of good practice

3.1 Age Management (City of Helsinki, Finland)

The city of Helsinki as an employer has strived to become the most age-friendly workplace in Finland as average age of the workers is increasing and large numbers of workers are going to reach retirement age in the near future.

The main premise of the age management program is that one-size-fits-all management practice is not possible given the age diversity in the organisation.

The objective of this program is to manage people of different ages within the City of Helsinki in such a way that the requirements of people in different life situations and with different goals will be taken into account during the planning, organising and designing of work, as well as in other areas of management.

More specifically the aim of the program is to stimulate young workers to remain in the service for the city, to support continuity in the workplace for employees at different stages of life, to improve the well-being of older people at work and to extend their working lives and finally to create a more age-conscious culture in the city that takes better notice of workers in different life situations and with different needs.

The reconciliation of work and other aspects of life is a Helsinki city policy. The city makes it easier for staff to reconcile work with other aspects of life, for instance with flexible working hours, telecommuting, independent shift planning, family time and work rotation. The city makes special efforts to support the working ability of seniors. Older personnel are offered, for example, physical activity courses, flexi-time, redeployment, and retirement advice. Age is also taken into consideration in the bonus system. Other measures targeted at different age groups are induction, mentoring, and construction of career paths.

There are various projects under the umbrella of age management to help support the ability to work and to continue to work and to find effective management practices for people of different ages. Examples of projects are:
- ELSA, Retirement of people in specialist work (the Human Resources Division and City Planning Department);
- Work engagement (Koskela Hospital and Herttoniemi Dental Clinic);
- Management of different age groups in a diverse workplace, Kustaankartano Centre for the Elderly (Department of Social Services and Health Care);
- Healthy Working Hours benchmarking (Health Care) and
- The guys get in shape project (Sports Department).

At a strategic level the Helsinki City Board requested action plans for retirement and age management from each of the departments. These plans include age structure analysis and projection of upcoming retirement transitions and concrete plans of action adjusted for the particular challenges of each department. Also a network of internal facilitators was created with representation from administration, HR and each of the 35 departments. The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health was an external consultant in this process.

City of Helsinki achieved a comprehensive plan for becoming a model city of age management. This was achieved with a number of projects for supporting young employees, improving the wellbeing of older employees and creating an age-conscious operational culture. Occupational Physical Activities, the Occupational Health Centre and the Human Resources Division all participated in the project. Finally, an integrated perspective to an active ageing lifestyle was created within the project.

The project is still on-going but already the knowledge has increased on retirement scenarios in each department with new sense of urgency for actions. Also, age management action plans of various age groups for each department have been achieved. The City of Helsinki as a big employer with a very diverse workforce has been able to create a holistic approach to age management with the design and implementation of this project.

This project is unique in a sense that it integrates the three dimensions of our learning seminar: the system level (becoming a model city of age management), the organisational level (becoming the most age-friendly workplace in Finland) and the individual level (addressing different needs and different life situations of different age groups) are addressed at the same time. This 3-D practice involves a large representation of stakeholders and balances management needs with individual needs.

3.2 Elan+ program (Dynamo, Flanders, Belgium)

Task analysis and Jobcrafting as a method of career guidance in the banking sector.

Febelfin Academy, which is the training federation of the banking sector in Belgium, wanted to set up a project to increase employability in the sector. Social partners, employers and employees were involved:

- The social partners were looking for an instrument or method to offer the employees (especially employees aged 45+) a way of career guidance. The banking sector is in a constant evolution since the financial crisis. There is a high work pressure and there is a lot of fear about restructuring, reforming and streamlining the sector and thus loss of jobs.
- The employers looked with some scepticism to the career guidance question because they were afraid to lose good qualified personnel as a result or to create non-realistic expectations for the employees involved in the project.
- The employees are often insecure about all the changes in the banking sector. If they want to stay employable they need to know more who they are, what they are able to do, what they can signify for their employer, which changes they can make if necessary.

Febelfin Academy selected the project proposed by Dynamo New Generation Training as a 'career guidance track' based on task analysis, jobcrafting and attitude-based interviewing. Dynamo is a Belgian consultancy firm.

The objectives of the program are:

- to give employees a better idea of their possibilities in perspective of employability (strengths, needs, interests, fears, …) in order to make their work more attractive so they can stay longer in their present job
- to focus on analysing the present job and make improvements on what is going on now and what currently motivates the employee rather than thinking about something in the future (a new job) which is not really clear right now
- to train managers and HR-coaches who want to offer career guidance to their employees
- to teach them how you can craft your job and how they can encourage other people to start with jobcrafting
- to find a method which brings employers, employees and trade unions together in achieving more attractive work for everyone.

The core concept Dynamo developed for this project is a task analysis and jobcrafting technique combined with principles of attitude-based and solution-focused interviewing. The task analysis is a format people have to prepare before they come to training or before they can start with a career guidance track.

People are asked to describe their 10 most important tasks and to order them in 3 categories from small, medium-sized to larger tasks. Consequently they have to describe 9 wishes (strong points, interests, needs) and 9 risks (cognitive risk, emotional risk and physical risk) which are connected to their job. In the next stage they match the different wishes and risks with the 10 tasks. This process results in 4 different kinds of tasks: 1) beautiful tasks, 2) ugly tasks, 3) 2-faced-tasks and 4) unfulfilled wishes in their job. The definition of the different tasks is very important before you can start with implementing jobcrafting techniques. People can decide themselves which technique they want to implement: do they like to make more beautiful work or do they want to eliminate or reduce the ugly work.

The attitude-based interview is a good starting point to coach participants in discovering what motivates them. It results in an attitude and motivation profile which supports future career choices. It gives self-understanding of which things are supportive in developing a career.

To make people familiar with these techniques the following sessions were organised:
- A pilot session organized with the social partners (representatives of the trade union) and HR. HR-managers of the bank needed to be introduced with the technique of task analysis and jobcrafting. People of the trade unions had to do the same exercises as the people who would follow career guidance.
- Task analysis and jobcrafting sessions for individuals who prefer to work in a group setting
- Sessions for managers and HR consultants following the train-the-trainer approach
- Individual career guidance sessions for people who prefer to work individually which resulted in an individual employability plan

In reality the project turned out to be a win-win for trade unions, employers and employees.

Employees take more responsibility for their own job and are more motivated to do their work because they are in charge of making changes to their day-to-day tasks. Because of the method of task analysis and jobcrafting they can rethink their work with some slight changes which make it easier to be satisfied with what they are currently doing. The project shows that employees are not necessarily focusing on quitting their job when they ask for career guidance. A good job and task analysis helps them to know which tasks are really energy consuming and which tasks give them energy. By choosing their own strategy to deal with the 'ugly tasks' they can, to a certain extent, craft their job to the job they want, with respect for the company's goals and what their colleagues think.

Results so far indicate that a positive attitude towards career guidance was created. Due to the career guidance the participants felt more secure to talk about their career with their direct supervisor. They know more about what they can do to make a job more attractive. A lot of managers were stimulating people to go to the career guidance sessions. Finally the track gives a better view on the real training needs of the participants.

3.3 iGemba (Barco, Flanders, Belgium)
Operational excellence and self-steering teams.

The iGemba project addressed the lack of commitment of the employees at Barco, a global technology company based in Belgium. The project aims at improving communication and promotes operational excellence and a lean culture within the organisation. The project makes an explicit link with the corporate culture by connecting it to the 7 core values, being 'customer delight', 'openness', 'ethical behaviour', 'leading by innovation', 'caring about people', 'encourage team play' and 'mutual trust'.

The objectives are to:
- Develop a lean culture and to introduce continuous improvement. Employees are stimulated to make suggestions for improvement,
- Initiate the so-called 'Gemba walks' during which operational managers, as well as the C-suite profiles, come to the work floor, look at the process and talk with the people
- Set up Kaizen projects for improvement projects with multi-disciplinary teams.
- Install self-steering teams

The iGemba project is rolled out world-wide (Belgium, Beijing, Noida & Duluth). Other departments like Planning, Logistics, Buying, Engineering and Quality were closely involved in the process and this for the different organisational layers being operational management, line supervisors and operators.

Huge investments were made in visualization and ways to communicate. Due to the thorough approach every employee participates in the project and there is a strong feeling of involvement.

Thanks to iGemba the lean culture was installed and disseminated within Barco. Currently there is shorter throughput time and a better quality of the products. The demands of the

customers can be more accurately responded to. Every operator has gone through a considerable growth process due to iGemba and for some there were career opportunities and promotions. The employees are stimulated to collaborate and the feeling of autonomy is enhanced by installing self-steering teams.

3.4 InnoOmnia (Finland)

The InnoOmnia Lifelong Learning Entrepreneurship Hub

In Finland there was a clear need to find new flexible models for training and supporting entrepreneurship in the vocational field focusing on all age groups. InnoOmnia offers a new model for supporting entrepreneurship and employability in Vocational education and training bringing together students, staff and entrepreneurs.

Omnia, the Joint Authority of Education in the Espoo Region, designed this program to address several educational and social issues:
- unemployment: how to empower people to make a living through entrepreneurship
- image of Vocational Education Training (VET): can modern technology, real world learning, pedagogy and good chances of future employment make it an attractive choice for the youth
- training for teachers and school leaders about 21st century learning in VET
- offering on-the-job/work-based learning opportunities for students , often the first job for a 16/17 year-old
- making entrepreneurship sustainable and less of a lone journey by offering community support

InnoOmnia, a flagship for vocational learning, opened its doors in August 2011. Omnia received the Ministry of Education Quality Award in 2013 in addition to recognition for the most innovative learning environment. Omnia is a forerunner in national and international education development projects focusing on systemic, sustainable solutions. Omnia offers vocational training to young people and adults ranging from basic to specialist qualifications, apprenticeship training, youth workshops and professional development programs for teachers, trainers and school leaders in the vocational training sectors.

InnoOmnia is a lifelong learning hub offering a unique combination of services: 1) entrepreneurship support for resent/would-be entrepreneurs, mainly from arts and crafts or the service sector 2) work-based/on-the-job learning programs for vocational education upper secondary students 3) innovation and piloting new pedagogy for vocational teaching and learning e.g. gamification, mobile learning, entrepreneurial teaching methods 4) teacher and school leader professional development for vocational sectors.

InnoOmnia is a community where teachers, students and entrepreneurs share the same coffee pot. All spaces are learning spaces and everyone is both a learner and a teacher. InnoOmnia's development projects pilot different aspects of 21st century vocational learning e.g. teaching real world skills, using mobile technology and cloud-based learning to improve learning outcomes, learning through entrepreneurial projects, etc. Entrepreneurs apply to join the community and receive daily community and business support. Working with

students and actively contributing to the community is a requirement. InnoOmnia aims to empower teachers, students and entrepreneurs, to increase innovation on a grassroots level and to ensure high quality VET education.

There is a considerable regional impact: over 50 % of the 9th graders in the region apply to Omnia. Since the opening in September 2011, InnoOmnia has supported 110 new/would-be entrepreneurs in making their business sustainable. 600 students have benefited from on-the-job/work-based learning within the hub or its projects. 742 teachers and school leaders have been trained on entrepreneurial teaching methods and educational technology, thereby spreading new teaching and learning across VET in Finland. The InnoOmnia model has received both national and international recognition.

The hub connects and empowers students, teachers and entrepreneurs. InnoOmnia offers flexible solutions and support like a learning community: real-life-learning and authentic business environments for students, three levels of support (daily mentoring, community support and business support) for entrepreneurs, professional development opportunities and entrepreneurial immersion for teachers and new models for public-private partnerships for the organisations. Entrepreneurs act as role models for the youth and thanks to InnoOmnia more students view entrepreneurship as a viable path for employability. The physical spaces created support, openness and collaboration. Modern technology, new pedagogical solutions and professional development give VET a high profile. On-the-job/work-based learning supports informal learning of real world skills and individual learning paths.

3.5 Jobclub 45+ (Cevora, Wallonia, Belgium)
Cevora is a learning and development centre where employees can follow courses and training for free. The employers involved in this association pay a yearly contribution to Cevora to make this possible.

The Jobclub 45+ focuses on senior employees aged 45+ and enables the development of the skills that older jobseekers did not use for many years, but which are necessary for labour market participation. In this way Jobclub 45+ assists older employees in finding a job.

The process follows this sequence: there is a meeting with all the jobseekers older than 45 who are following a professional training with Cevora. Those sessions are subdivided into two blocks. First an expert gives a lecture on a specific topic concerning soft skills. In the next stage the participants are stimulated to share their experiences regarding difficulties to find a job. Cevora believes that jobseekers following professional trainings in different fields experience the same kind of difficulties to find a job. To address these difficulties they organise networking events to stimulate the exchange of experiences. Additionally some specific issues are discussed with an expert regarding 'knowing your assets' and 'increasing your self-confidence'.

More specifically in 2013 three themes were addressed:
1) How to react against stereotypes. The aim is to reinforce self-confidence. The participants discuss on the stereotypes they could face when meeting an employer and the fear they

experience in such a situation. In order to actually see how they behave in interview situations, they are filmed while performing a role play and afterwards the videos are analysed.

2) Creativity to solve problems. The goal here is to teach participants tools to improve creativity. They are explained how the brain works, what the process of problem solution entails and what the tools are (brainstorming, analogy, mind-mapping...). They also exchange with other participants on their experience, and work on their "personal branding".

3) Dealing with change. The objective here is to provide participants with the adequate tools, so that they can cope with the changes they will have to face. They work on the perception of change and on the emotions linked to it. At the end, they set up an action plan that will help them to deal with changes they will face in their professional plan.

Results indicate that in the period 2012 - 2013 598 jobseekers have attended these sessions. All of them also follow a professional training in the same time, so it is impossible to know the precise impact of these sessions. However, it can be stated that in 2013, 68% of Cevora's participants have found a job within the 6 months of the training.

3.6 M-WiM (employers association of the metal craft in Lower Saxony, Germany)

Improvement of the framework for occupational and vocational training in enterprises and for workers in the metal trades in Lower Saxony.

The metal craft is characterized by many small and medium enterprises that offer little systematic occupational education and career planning. Only 25% of the employees participate in training measures. Many employees do not even know what possibilities exist for the qualification and professional career development in the industry.

The project 'Improvement of the framework for occupational and vocational training in enterprises and for workers in the metal trades in Lower Saxony' had the objective of strengthening the competitiveness of enterprises and reinforcing the employability of workers by further qualification, by creating a framework for skills development and by improving the possibilities for and motivation of employees to participate in such measures.

To this end, consulting, profiling and qualification programs have been developed. Companies are supported to better understand, plan and organize their training needs. Employees are supported in the identification and assessment of their skills and in developing an individual competence development plan.

The consultancy and training was based on the objectives defined in the collective agreement on qualification in the metal industry and on the regional need for skills in the metal industry. In this way, the training of employees was based on the concrete demand for certain skills by the companies. Two training concepts for multipliers within the companies were developed:

1) The enterprise training experts are HR specialist, training officers or instructors of vocational training institutions, whose task it is to improve qualification conditions within the company. A demand-driven consulting approach was developed.

2) The promoters of the training are employees who were trained in motivating their colleagues to take part in qualification programs and advise them on their possibilities. A regional network for training promoters was set up to enable them to broaden their view concerning the needs and potential of the metal trades in Lower Saxony and how to respond with offers for counselling and training.

In addition, an Internet platform for the entire metal craft in Lower Saxony has been developed where employees and companies can find information on opportunities for occupational development.

In total, within 30 companies more than 60 people were trained to enterprise training experts and up to 40 persons to training promoters, who are continuously giving career planning support to employees within their companies. The Internet platform was successfully established and designed for employees as well as for entrepreneurs. It gives a systematic overview of (almost) all training and education opportunities in the metal craft.

Several tools were developed for the internet platform: there is for instance an online competency check for employees and a training navigator that shows training and career opportunities. By entering the initial qualifications an overview of possible training and education measures appears including an orientation where they might lead to within the metal crafts. The site is jointly operated by the trade union and the employers' association.

The establishment of systematic vocational training possibilities within the corporate structures was a key objective of the project and could be achieved. The managers in the participating companies have recognized that training has to be regarded as an instrument of human resource development and entails more than merely the teaching of technical skills. Employees were enabled to successfully plan their career independently.

A key indicator for success is that the results of the project have been incorporated into the new demographic collective agreement of the metal industry, signed by the social partners in 2014, valid for over 2.000 enterprises for a period of six years.

3.7 Start it @KBC (KBC Group, Flanders, Belgium)

Whereas several initiatives exist to support 'established' start-up companies, no facilities existed for early stage start-ups between the development of an idea on one hand and the first prototype, a solid business plan and the first customer on the other.

That is why KBC Group, a Belgian bank, initiated this program to stimulate early entrepreneurship. Early stage start-ups in the concept phase are supported by this project before they have a business model or business plan.
Unlike other incubators the objective here is to support early entrepreneurship by offering start-up companies office space, advice, training, networking, events and coaching all for free.

Goal was to have 20 start-ups by the end of 2014, counter stands at 75 in October 2014. The main goal for KBC itself, besides fostering early entrepreneurship, is to lay the foundation for

a new relationship between bank and society, to position KBC in the market in a new way and finally for double loop learning (feedback about internal operations, new potential clients and innovative change inside KBC).

Together with Cronos, Mobile Vikings, Antwerp University, iMinds, Accenture and Flanders DC, KBC Group set up an incubator in the KBC Tower in Antwerp. A call for ideas was issued every quarter. Applicants are asked to submit a file answering a number of questions about their idea and are invited to pitch before a jury composed of representatives of the different partners. The selected companies get access to free office space and access to experts from the partner companies. In the service package there is also one-to-one coaching, a Start it Academy, Inspirational talks, food and drink events to build a community, as well as a concerted social media effort to build a virtual community.

Out of 600 inscriptions, over 150 ideas were pitched out of which 75 were selected to become part of Start it. 226 people are active in Start it out of which 23 mentors. Currently, 15 start-ups are ready to leave Start it and go to the market.

3.8 VAE Platform (Wallonia, Belgium)
Validation of acquired experience and prior learning.

For many people, employed or unemployed, the access to lifelong learning is difficult. The diplomas are usually an obstacle for those people who want to follow university curricula. Indeed, they may have the sufficient experience in a specific field that would allow us to follow and succeed in certain curricula, but they do not have the degree or certification that would allow them to enter the training. This is a big obstacle for the access to lifelong learning.

The Decree of November 7 of 2013 concerning the 'Valorisation of acquired experience' (VAE) allows adults who want to follow university courses to valorise the experience they gained along their professional life.

The VAE admission allows adults who do not have the required degrees to enter a Master or other lifelong learning curricula. To do so, they have to justify 5 years of professional and/or personal experience (this includes the validated years of superior education). The adults can be exempted from some of the classes of the curricula.

There were two issues with the former VAE procedure. On one hand, the VAE process was not very well known and not very readable nor understandable for the audience it targeted. On the other hand, there were only a few curricula using the VAE process. Thus there was a clear need to streamline this process.
The VAE is targeted to the active workforce, regardless of status (unemployed, employed or self-employed). The aim for them is to acquire new competences so that they can keep their job, develop their career or reorient it. In the end, the individual can increase its employability and mobility on the labour market.

To ensure a VAE process of high quality and equity, the project harmonizes the VAE process among all the universities in French speaking Belgium. The coordination is managed by the CIUF, the interuniversity council for French speaking Belgium. A common process was designed so that people can make use of VAE more easily. The VAE process was standardized and harmonized to simplify it for candidates, and thus, make it available for a bigger audience.

The VAE process consists of 5 steps:
1) Information: CUIF centralizes the information available for VAE candidates. Contact points provide information on curricula and universities; there are several brochures and a website that helps candidates during the procedure,
2) Orientation: helps the candidate to precise his or her project. The contact point can assist in this. The admissibility of the demand is analysed. In case of a negative answer, other options are being offered,
3) Commitment: if the first analysis proves to be conclusive, the demand is transmitted to the university. The university commits itself to analyse the demand in depth and to answer it. The candidate commits himself to invest in the process,
4) Evaluation: the jury evaluates the professional and personal experiences acquired by the candidate,
5) Communication of the result: the jury communicates its decision to the candidate, including recommendations regarding the training path.

Thanks to the VAE harmonization program there is an improvement of the VAE process and an increase in the number of universities engaged in VAE. Tools for career guidance were developed. Since 2008, there are about 700 VAE candidates yearly and about 500 of them are admitted into a university curriculum. Candidates now have easier access to the VAE process and their employability and mobility is enhanced due to VAE. Candidates are required to reflect on their own competencies

The process of validation of prior experiences and competencies is now present in several European countries like the Netherlands, France, U.K. and Scandinavian countries.

3.9 Work-life balance employee program (IDEA, Spain, Andalucía)
This Employee Assistance Program focuses on improving the work-life integration, the flexibility and the gender equality of the employees of IDEA, the agency of innovation in Andalusia.

The program originated from the observation that there was a stressful work environment and a negative impact on productivity, together with high absenteeism levels and a female representation gap in decision-making bodies.
The overall objective of this program is to develop a best practice approach concerning work-life balance in order to improve employees' job satisfaction and performance and to boost the recruitment and retention of staff.

More specifically the program tries to:
▪ Create a healthy family life and a fulfilling career

- Improve communication regarding existing practices
- Review and develop existing work-life balance policies
- Develop employees' engagement
- Eliminate discrimination and harassment
- Increase the female representation in decision-making bodies
- Promote equal opportunities for both men and women

To achieve these ambitious goals IDEA designed and implemented a work-life balance employee assistance program that included several actions to achieve the objectives mentioned before, such as:
- Flextime schemes: employees are obliged to attend work in a set of 'core hours' but during certain periods they can choose their arrival and departure time
- Annualised hours: working time is organized on the basis of the number of hours worked over a year
- Part-time working: employees are allowed to reduce their working hours to enable them to meet temporary or permanently increased responsibilities outside work
- Planned remote working: flexibility may be agreed for occasional working at alternative locations (either from home or elsewhere)
- Compressed hours: staff agree to work longer hours on some days in order to work shorter hours on another day

The results of this cultural change project include lower rates of absenteeism, more female managers, a better work environment and a raise in employees' engagement.

3.10 De Wroeter (Flanders, Belgium)

Labour centre 'de Wroeter', an organisation in the organic food and vegetable industry, is a social economy labour centre for people who encounter problems to enter the normal labour market.

The challenge de Wroeter is facing is that physical problems make the hard work (producing organic fruits and vegetables) too heavy for some of the employees aged 50+. The reason for this is a decreasing physical strength and personal physical impairments due to ageing.

The aim of the project is to provide an improved and sustainable working context for each employee with physical difficulties and this within the same division, within another division of the organisation or within another organisation.

First de Wroeter helped the employees to express themselves more clearly. The social background of these employees and a common lack of the ability to speak and understand the Dutch language can cause serious problems in achieving high quality communication. This is necessary though to obtain an improved working context. In a next phase they consulted the responsible colleagues in the respective divisions to see if there was a possibility to rotate within the original division or to mutate to another. If this was not possible, they helped looking for a better fitting job elsewhere.

This diversity project involves a language-coach to assess the documents on their simplicity and their ability to capture the information needed, so that these can be understood by non-native speaking employees. They also asked specific questions about gender (women are a minority) and culture (they have many nationalities together) because these specific points of view can have great impact on the sustainability of a proposed solution.

Several individual rotations were achieved (between greenhouse activities and outdoor activities), three employees were mutated to another division (where there is more walking involved to relieve chronic lower back problems) and last but not least a general rotation system was implemented for the most heavy working activities for the entire division. It turned out that younger employees also benefit from this and de Wroeter believes this also has a positive effect on sustainable employability of the entire workforce on the long term.

Besides clear individual benefits, like lower rates of illness, there is an increased level of trust between the employee and the employer which will encourage future communications on how to improve the working context for all.

This project is the only one we encountered which tries to enhance the language skills of non-native speakers. In this way it empowers the individual to take control over his or her (professional) life.

4. Other submitted examples of good practice

In this section we present the examples of good practice submitted by the partnering countries and the external partner that were not retained after the validation process and thus were not considered during the learning seminar. The major argumentation not do so was 1) relatively low plausibility of transferring these examples of good practice to other countries, 2) shortage of information available to be able to validate the practice and/or 3) lack of relevance for sustainable career management.[1]

4.1 Training advice 50+ (Cevora, Wallonia, Belgium)

The objective of this program is to assist older employees to develop their skills and to empower and to motivate them in managing their adaptation to change.

First there is a meeting is between a training consultant and the employee. At the end of this session the consultant lists trainings that will be helpful to the employee to develop his or her skills. The training consultant session is limited to one per year. The number of trainings per year is not limited, but is reasonable. The employee or his or her manager can both ask for this service.

Thanks to a financial intervention by Cevora the employee receives 40 euros after the training advice. To stimulate the company and the employee to participate in training, Cevora provides 40 euros to the company if the employee follows a recommended training (40 euros per day of training followed). Most of the trainings last 1 or 2 days.

It is difficult to link the trainings actually followed by the employees with the training consultant sessions followed. It is likely though that these sessions lead to the most popular trainings within Cevora. They can be subdivided into two categories: the technical and sectors specific trainings (e. g. AutoCAD, Java, Adobe,...) and the trainings in office automation (word, excel,...), foreign languages, personal development etc. Also, it is worth mentioning that 20% of the trainings are undertaken online.

In 2012 and 2013, 449 workers have met a training consultant. It is estimated that after these sessions until now 140 days of training have been followed by employees thanks to the program.

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[1] It should be noted that in general the information provided on the "fiches" varied substantially in terms of level of detail and amount of information. The idea behind these summarizing "fiches" was that interested countries might use this first description of the practice to further check out the initiative following the links or references provided in the document, or by contacting the contact person on the fiche. However, the concise summary of information on the fiche made if sometimes difficult to evaluate the practice. As a consequence we adapted the process for this learning seminar and we have chosen to present and to elaborate 3 promising cases based on a selection of the fiches that were put on a shortlist by the expert validation team.

4.2 Career Potential Methodology[2] (Prof. dr. Beatrice Van der Heijden, Netherlands)

Markets, firms and technologies change increasingly fast and internationalisation and individualisation lead to the situation that today knowledge and competencies, necessary to optimally perform in a job, age faster than ever. This is why employees must keep their competencies and employability up-to-date.

Employability is defined as 'the capacity to get a job, to keep a good labour market position and, if necessary, to perform another job' (2006, Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden). Employability is a critical requirement for enabling both sustained competitive advantage at the firm level and career success at the individual level. The increasing work pressure, as well as the increasingly busy private agenda, prevent workers to invest time into their own employability and, as a result, employability is at risk in the long run, which is problematic both for the individual and for the organisation.

Additionally work and private life are today so intertwined that employees experience a continuous pressure to perform also after their working hours, which means that employees are more responsible for anticipating on their own future development needs. Today it is not sufficient to have the knowledge and competencies to perform in the current job, employees should also have the capacity to acquire the necessary expertise for the future so that they can stay employable.

On the other side organisations also have more responsibility for the employability of their employees. Organisations should invest in the development of their employees and should pay attention to people management in order to stimulate sustainable employability. Research indicates that the idea that investing in people causes employee turnover has to be refuted. Rather the contrary applies: investing in people connects them to the organisation.

The objective of the Career Potential Methodology is to enhance the employability of employees at the individual as well as the organisational level.

The research of Prof. dr. Beatrice Van der Heijden led to a valid operationalization of the concept of employability. This operationalization is based on a five-dimensional conceptualization of employability, in which occupational expertise is complemented with 4 generic competences:

1. Domain specific expertise: refers to the skills relevant for a specific occupation. The presence of this dimension is a basic requirement for employability and it means that one should have sufficient skills and knowledge to perform in a functional domain. An exemplary item is: "how positive am I concerning my performance in my job during the last year?"
2. Anticipation and optimisation: refers to the capacity of reflecting on the trends, developments and discontinuities in an occupational field and understanding the

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[2] It should be noted that at the time of writing this white paper this example of good practice still had to be considered by the validation expert team and thus was pending on validation.

consequences of these developments in terms of your own development needs. A high level of employability requires creative potential, willingness to change and ambition to perform at your best. An exemplary item: "to what extent do I take responsibility for my own labour market value?"

3. Personal flexibility: the capacity to switch jobs and organisations easily and the agility to adapt to change in terms of jobs, roles, working schedules and locations, colleagues, etc. An exemplary item: "how easily do I adapt to changes in my work environment?"

4. Organisational identification: the competence to adapt to organisational cultures and implicit rules. Organisational identification leads to successful cooperation in different forms and shapes where sharing responsibilities, knowledge, experience, feelings, victories and failures is crucial. It is also related to setting the goals and defining the objectives together. An example here is: "how well am I involved in achieving the mission of our organisation?"

5. Balance: keep the balance between your own interests and those of the organisation and reconcile these two perspectives. Balance also refers to the focus on the current job versus attention for the career as a whole as well as to the problems related to life-work integration. An exemplary item here is: "how good are work, learning and life in harmony with each other?"

Each of these 5 dimensions should be present in a certain employee to guarantee a high level of employability. Together they determine which level of employability a person has.

The research of Prof. dr. Beatrice Van der Heijden also led to a practical approach of employability called the 'Career Potential Methodology'. This methodology contains the five dimensions of employability discussed above and additionally includes multiple individual, job-related and organisational factors which impact the development of employability. Moreover this methodology gives insight into opportunities for career success. In other words this methodology has predictive validity for current as well near future professional success.

The Career Potential Methodology consists of an international validated online survey developed by LPM consulting in collaboration with Prof. dr. Beatrice Van der Heijden. The feedback process is automated and the methodology also includes guidelines for certified coaches who are involved in the process.

The report provides insight into the (level of) employability of a certain employee, in other words his or her career potential. Strengths, weaknesses and areas of development which can stimulate employability are identified. The methodology can also be implemented organisation-wide. In that case the organisational employability is mapped and gives an idea of the general labour potential. Over- and underqualified employees are detected in a faster way. Same applies to shortcomings on the organisational level concerning how employability of groups of workers can be fostered, as well as shortcomings in terms of development efforts by individual employees.

The Career Potential Methodology measures the capacity needed now and in the future to successfully perform in the employment process. As such it offers scientifically validated tips and tricks for individual career planning, career coaching, organisational change, performance reviews and recruitment & selection.

An individual worker can influence his or her employability to a large extent by participating in social networks, by following training and development programs and by achieving a balanced life-work integration. Other person-related factors are involvement in the career, behavioural style and engagement. All these factors impact one's employability.

The organisation can also play a role. Organisational determining factors of employability are for example the attention supervisors draw upon growth of employees aimed at broadening expertise rather than exclusively focusing on one domain or expertise which narrows the employability. Another example of an organisational factor is a true learning climate which provides enough time and space to learn and which offers developments opportunities in every career stage. Also job-related factors can impact employability: the extent to which a job is challenging for example determines the potential to learn and to let the employee grow.

The Career Potential Methodology is commercialized by Knowvium, the applied science company, under the name 'Employability Potential Methodology' and typically consists of three steps:
1. The coachee fills in the scientifically validated questionnaire about employability
2. By means of an in-depth interview between consultant – coachee results emerging from the questionnaire are discussed and interpreted. The output of this step is a personal employability potential profile
3. The coachee acknowledges the personal development points and draws up an action plan

The questionnaire is a competence-based approach to employability. Two sources of raters (employees and their immediate supervisors) are involved in developing and testing the measure. This instrument facilitates further scientific Human Resources Management research and is of practical value in light of job and career assessments, recruitment, staffing, career mobility and development practices.

These are the key results and achievements of the Career Potential Methodology:
- Validated measure to determine individual workers' employability
- Multi-trait multi-method methodology (individual employee and direct supervisor)
- Thorough insight into individual, job-related, and organisational factors/antecedents of employability
- Thorough insight in both objective and subjective career success.

With this methodology it is possible to get a clear view on the individual capabilities and competencies. In a society where 'change is the only certainty' being and staying employable asks for a reliable and valid measure embedded in a structured process. This is exactly what this methodology provides.

III. Overall framework: Sustainable career management

In this chapter we describe the overall framework of sustainable career management used in the context of the European Network 'Career & AGE (Age, Generations, Experience) and we explain in detail the six dimensions of this framework in terms of the individual level. For each dimension we will give relevant examples stemming from the validated examples of good practice discussed earlier.

1. Definitions and concepts

1.1 Careers

A **career** refers to the pattern of work-related experiences an individual encounters during his or her professional life (Greenhaus, Callanan & Godshalk, 2010; Hall, 2002). It is a complex mosaic of objective situations and events, and subjective experiences. One of the most important evolutions of the past decades is that this pattern of experiences is no longer, or should no longer, be restricted to the context of one single organisation (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009; Hall, 2002). Moreover, "career development" can mean much more than making logically – often vertically – structured steps or promotions accompanied with growth in status and power (Inkson, 2007). Over an individual's life course, many events can happen – both in individuals' personal lives and in the broader organisational and societal context – that affect the career choices individuals make, which make careers highly unpredictable.

This means that careers are highly subjective and complex, unique to each individual and dynamic over time. For organisations, this implies that it is difficult to get grip upon the individual career of every single employee. Moreover, as for more and more employees careers no longer take place within the context of one single organisation, this results in a different view on the "ownership" of a career. When an individual leaves his or her employer, the employment relationship with this specific employer ends but the career continues. Stated differently, a career is not the property of an organisation but is owned by the individual. It is the individual who is considered as being the 'owner' of his or her career. ***This is why we explicitly adopt the individual lens during the third learning seminar since it is indeed the individual who sits in the driver seat and is 'in charge' of his or her career.***

At the same time, careers and the management of careers is highly relevant for organisations as for their continuity they depend – to a greater or lesser extent - on their human capital. Therefore individuals should receive support from organisations in shaping and managing their careers. Career management policies undertaken by organisations can have substantial implications for individuals. Indeed, organisations have a strong influence on careers, through their career policies and practices. Differently stated, individuals' careers do not develop in a vacuum but are affected by the contexts in which they unfold; the organisational context as well as the broader labour market, but also the private context of individuals' personal lives. Careers can hence be conceived as 'eco-systems' (Baruch, 2014).

This also means that when an organisation ends the employment relationship with an employee, this does not mean the end of the career for those employees who are not yet facing retirement. Careers evolve within the context of a broader external labour market and are hence also affected by the broader socio-economic environment and the policy measures taken by governments and labour market intermediaries.

This brings us to the societal dimension of careers: the concern of policy makers for careers which ensure sustainable employment for each individual. Likewise individuals should get support from system level policies to make their careers more sustainable. Careers are broader than employment alone. Periods of unemployment, career breaks, part-time work are just a few examples of transitions that can be part of an individual's career. And these transitions do not occur fluently for every individual. Even though the time dimension is inherent to the notion of a career, "time" is not a synonym for "continuity". For example, it is not always easy for an individual to see the link between what he or she is doing in his daily job at this moment and the implications for their employability in the long run. The cumulating effect of experiences can have major implications for someone's long-term employability but is often not considered from that perspective. Incentives from the policy level as well as from organisations can, as we have seen in chapter II with the examples of good practice, stimulate individuals to get in the control room of the career and to become more aware of their current competencies as well as those needed in the future.

1.2 Career Management

Career management refers to "all the processes and practices that manage the development of individuals along a path of experiences and jobs" (Hall, 2002).

In the contemporary view on careers, careers are considered as "boundaryless" and individuals are expected to take charge of their own career development (e.g. by reflecting on their career values and competencies, and investing in career planning and self-development). The organisation – as well as governments – can provide tools, resources, processes and structures that allow employees to assess and develop themselves and to plan their career pathway based on the organisational reality (Baruch, 2004). This corresponds with what are addressing with the definition of the individual level as presented in this white paper (cf. chapter 1).

The expectation that individuals take charge of their own career leads us to the notion of 'protean careers' (Hall, 2002; Briscoe et al, 2006). The term 'protean' comes from Greek mythology and refers to a God called Proteus, who had the gift of being versatile and mutable, and who was capable of adopting many forms. Hence an individual with a 'protean' attitude manages his or her career according to the guiding principles of self-directedness and professional values and actively takes up the responsibility for his or her career (De Vos & Soens, 2008). Protean capabilities include adaptability and identity which implies continuous learning, developing and reflecting.

There are two main dimensions in a 'protean career', namely self-directedness and value-driven career decision-making. Individuals who take charge of their own career take initiative and keep their competencies up-to-date even if the employer fails to do so (self-directedness). Moreover, individuals with a protean career attitude are value-driven, which

means that personal values are the most important criteria when assessing and judging their career, as opposed to values of others (i.e. the company values or values of colleagues or friends).

For the **individual** this implies that much has become possible today for those individuals who wish to actively take charge of their career. However, this also poses a threat since in reality the group that actively guides and directs its career, and possesses the necessary career competencies to navigate their careers, is still relatively small (De Vos & Soens, 2008; Dewilde & De Vos, 2009). This entails risks for the employability of this group when jobs and organisations change so dramatically that they no longer fit in the new environment. It also risks to create a so-called "Matthew effect", in that those individuals who master the necessary career competencies can create a sustainable career for themselves whilst those who lack these competencies risk to end up in a "dead end street" when they do not receive active support or career guidance from their organisation or other institutions.

For **organisations** the opportunity of self-directedness is that one can invest much more in talents of employees and that they become more involved in their personal development. Moreover research and practice show that offering an attractive career perspective is an important factor in attracting and retaining of employees (De Vos & Meganck, 2009). Career management is, especially for the well-educated, a crucial element in the "employee value proposition" of an organisation.

1.3 Career stages

A **career stage** 'assigns a person's age in the context of his or her career or occupation. This measure of age calibrates the person's acquisition of knowledge, competencies, and experiences against a developmental yardstick. Although the progression of mastery varies from occupation to occupation, the concept of career age acknowledges that most of us progress in our work lives from basic to advanced skills' (Kooij, De Lange, Jansen, & Dikkers, 2008 in Pitt-Catsouphes & Matz-Costa, 2009; Super, 1990 in Pitt-Catsouphes & Matz-Costa, 2009).

But is it still relevant to distinguish career stages in this highly unpredictably world with an increasingly complex context? Can we reveal common patterns in individual career dynamics? In what follows we will address these questions.

1.3.1 Traditional career stages models

The traditional view on career stages considers three major stages across which an individual's career unfolds: (1) establishment, (2) advancement, and (3) maintenance. (Hall & Nougiam, 1968 in Hall, 2002). (cf. figure 7).

During the **establishment stage** the young individual starts to work and is looking for security, safety and recognition. At this point the internalisation process unfolds and there is exploration and trial in behaviour. The individual has to find a way to fit into the system, an experience that can be quite stressful. The result of this stage is the formation of a

professional identity, development of self-esteem and a clear definition of and a relationship with the environment.

The next stage is **advancement**. Growth, promotion and achievement are the main concerns in this stage. The individual tries to master his or her professional domain and wants to get up the hierarchical ladder. The result of this stage is mastery.

The third and last stage is **maintenance**. Performance is levelling off, the competitive attitude starts to crumble and there is an increasing need to help others develop. This is the start of a plateau during which sustaining a certain performance level and a degree of satisfaction are the key issues. At the end of this stage decline arises.
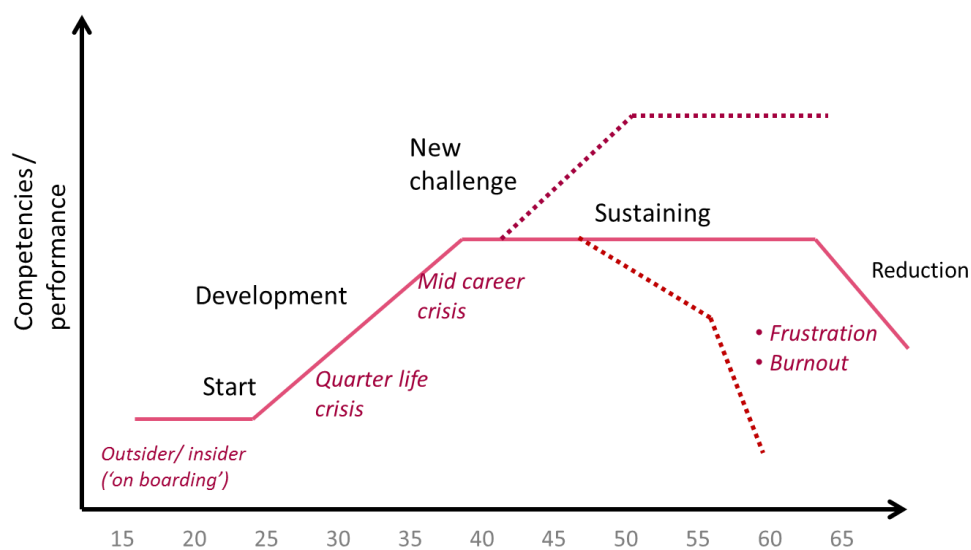

Fig.7. The traditional career stage model (based on Hall 2002, p.103).

The traditional model of career stages is useful in a stable and predictable context. In a complex and more dynamic environment though, with high levels of uncertainty, this model does not seem to fit with the career reality anymore. As mentioned before, nowadays careers are highly subjective and complex, unique to each individual and dynamic over time. Skills, needs, passion, motivation, purpose, concerns and values change more often and faster than ever over the span of a career (Hall, 2002). Moreover in addition to (financial) performance the major criterion other indicators of career success like personal growth or work-life balance have gained importance leading to what Mirvis & Hall (1994) call "psychological success" as the major indicator of career success.

1.3.2 Contemporary career stages model: learning cycles

These observations led to a new model of career stages, in which life-long learning is considered as a crucial condition for a sustainable career. This means that the individual should continue to learn, to develop his or her competencies and to challenge him or herself across all stages of their career.

The risk is that a certain behavioural repertoire, which proved to be effective in an earlier stage and which resulted in prior psychological success, becomes a pitfall that evolves into an obstacle preventing any further learning. Self-management, or identity and adaptability as Hall calls it, is crucial for psychological success at every stage of one's career. Career success is determined by sustaining self-reflection, self-awareness and self-assessment.
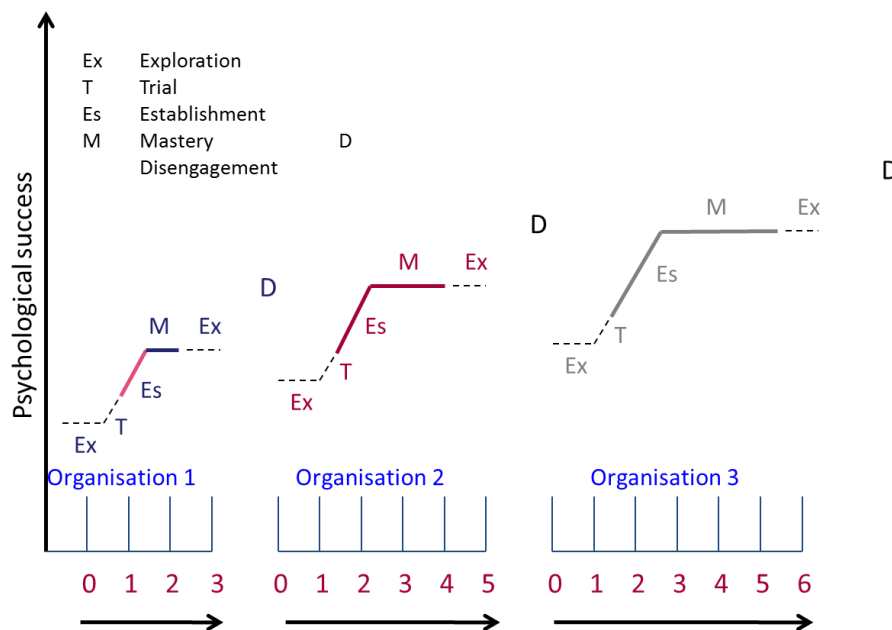

Fig.8. Mirvis & Hall. (1994, p. 371). Career stages (learning versus age): learning cycles.

The contemporary career is no longer presented by a predictable three-stage pathway with logical steps in a sequential process of growth, but instead it follows a series of shorter learning cycles in which every learning cycle is the miniaturized version of the traditional career stage model discussed earlier (cf. figure 8). The time frame of the different stages has shortened increasingly: the individual explores a job, trials and experiments and possibly establishes, but external or internal triggers open the routine behaviour after a while. This could be new technology, changes on the market or new opportunities, but also changed values, expectations or a new life situation. At this point the individual explores again and the learning cycle **explore, trial, establish, mastery** and **exit** restarts like an iterative process. In case this exploration leads to psychological success the individual is likely to adopt the new behaviour in its repertoire.

An important implication of the changed goal of success in the new model is that horizontal moves become as valuable for the individual as upward mobility. The notion of a protean career emphasizes horizontal and relational growth and values competence enrichment and enlargement. Indeed, psychological success, learning and identity are the main criteria in the protean career, as opposed to promotion, status, power and financial success in the more traditional model of career stages.

1.3.3 Relevance of career stage models

A study conducted by the Sloan Centre on Aging and Work shows the presence of the new protean career mindset in contemporary career reality. A group of employees had to indicate whether they perceive themselves in the early-career, mid-career, or late-career stage. Not surprisingly 56% of the US employees aged 50+ said they were in a late-career stage. However, 42% indicated they were mid-career, which can be seen as a sign that they believed further growth, progress and development was still possible despite their age. (Pitt-Catsouphes & Matz-Costa, 2009).

This model of careers as learning cycles seems to better fit the contemporary career environment than the traditional career stages model. If an employee aged 60+ can still experience an exploration phase and if it is possible that a youngster just entering the labour market experiences disengagement, the relevance of the distinction between early, mid and late career stages can be questioned.

Career stages and life stages appear very differently due to the greater asynchrony between life and career (Hall, 2002). The "one-life one-career imperative" (Sarason, 1977 in Hall, 2002 p. 90) does not exist anymore. In this view, career age is hence something completely different from life or chronological age.

Nevertheless the added value of the traditional career stage model is that it points at the different development needs of individuals during the early, mid and late career stages related to life. The meaning of work changes over the course of life. Whilst in the early career stage the development need is to develop action skills and to find a balance between autonomy and support on one hand, competition and collaboration on the other, during the midcareer stage, the need is to redefine the role in the organisation by broadening one's view and exploring new roles like developing others. 'This is when the person has to master learning how to learn' (Hall, 2002). During midcareer adaptability and identity are very important since self-reflection leading to self-awareness fuels the necessary behavioural changes needed to stay employable. And finally, the development need of late career is focused on preparing for the detachment from work. Understanding these differentiated development needs is relevant when managing careers and should be considered when implementing policies, practices and processes.

Another argument to still consider career stages as relevant is that, even if the new model is increasingly accepted and adopted, there are still a lot of individuals that behave according to the traditional model and pattern. This is why we have to make them aware of the changed career reality in order to safeguard their employability in the long run.

Hence the concepts of "career and life stage are still relevant to modern careers, but they have more complex interactions and overlays" (Hall, 2002: p 91). Regular career stages as presented in the traditional model, are not as clearly defined as in the past (Hall, 2002) due to the increasingly complex environment in which careers unfold. As mentioned a career is currently rather a pathway with different successive learning cycles, which are in essence 'miniaturized versions of the more traditional career stages' (Hall, 2002). A career is a

process of continuous learning with plenty of transitions, switches and changes which has a discontinuous character by nature. How can this irregular and unpredictable nature of the modern career be managed in a sustainable way?

1.4 Sustainable career management

Sustainable career management refers to those career policies that facilitate the workforce in working longer, differently and with a higher number of employees. As career management is generally considered to be an important functional domain of HRM, sustainable career management refers to all the processes and practices that manage the development of individuals along a path of experiences and jobs (Hall, 2002), with respect for employees, openness towards different stakeholders and in view of continuity. Sustainability in careers, however, does not automatically equal lifetime employment in one single organisation.

Sustainable career management can be considered at different levels: system, organisation and individual. In this paper we elaborate on the individual level. For an elaboration of sustainable career management at the system level, we refer the interested reader to white paper 1 (De Vos & Gielens, 2014a). The organisational level was addressed in white paper 2 (De Vos & Gielens, 2014b).

For organisations, sustainable career management means more than designing an attractive career perspective for (core) employees. Underlying the notion of sustainable career management is the *principle of balancing*: a balance between organisational and individual needs; between support and active involvement of employees; between a tailor-made approach and inclusion of all employees; between the present and the future. In this sense, sustainable career management is considered as a sub-part of sustainable HRM characterized by respect for employees, openness for different stakeholders, and continuity (De Prins, De Vos, Van Beirendonck & Segers, 2014). From this balancing perspective, six ingredients of sustainable career management can be discerned. In what follows, these six dimensions will be described.

This framework has been developed based upon the research conducted as part of the Chair "Sustainable Careers" (Ans De Vos). This research consisted of a survey among a sample of 782 organisations, case studies in 15 organisations, and a currently ongoing employee and line manager survey in a subset of organisations.

Fig.9. De Vos A. (2013). Overall framework for Sustainable Career Management

2. Dimensions of sustainable career management

2.1 Active involvement of employees

Sustainable career management is not a 'taking care' policy but, on the contrary, acknowledges the employee in his or her role of 'career owner' (Hall, 2002; Greenhaus et al., 2010). In the end, it is the employee who is in the driver seat, not the organisation. This means that facilitating self-awareness and self-directedness are intrinsic and inherent components of sustainable career management. Employees have to reflect themselves about their career needs, their competencies, and their career identity. This requires a career management that acknowledges boundaryless careers – not limited to the boundaries of the organisation - and that employees do not limit their reflections to these boundaries.

Every practice on the individual level should address somehow this dimension of active involvement. Indeed, agency, self-directedness, autonomy and taking charge of one's career are crucial components of sitting in the driver seat of the career. This is why this dimension is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for sustainable career management on the individual level.

Specific examples of good practice discussed in this paper that focus on active involvement are Profiler, Cité des Métiers and the validation of acquired experience (VAE). The Profiler forces the individual to reflect on his or her competencies and urges to assess and explain these competencies. Cité des Métiers appeals to the initiative of the individual to seek career

counselling. The VAE stimulates the individual to reflect on his or her competencies and hence becomes more aware of strengths and weaknesses.

2.2 Career support

Career management that enables sustainable careers recognizes that self-awareness and self-directedness are meta-competencies that do not come as a given and that employees need to be supported in developing these career competencies. Sustainable career management hence involves supportive practices and processes. Practices that develop employees' career competencies and that facilitate individuals in making their career choices, not making these choices on behalf of them.

The same remark applies to this dimension, being that every sustainable practice on the individual level should address somehow this dimension of career support. If we expect individuals to be self-directed and take up agency, policy makers and organisations should provide the right tools, processes, structures and resources to facilitate individuals in achieving this self-steering attitude. As such, career support is an important addition to active involvement of the employee.

Good examples of career support are the Elan+ program and the Jobclub 45+ project. The Elan+ program teaches employees in the banking sector the techniques of task analysis and jobcrafting. The career guidance track includes a reflection on the questions "who am I?", "what do I want and gives me energy?", "what are my strengths??" and "what am I doing right now?". This process leads to an increased self-awareness, enables the development of career competencies and empowers employees the make the right career choice. Jobclub 45+ tries to build the self-confidence and self-awareness of senior employees looking for a new job.

2.3 Inclusive approach

From a strategic human capital approach, it seems to make sense that career management is focused on so-called 'critical talent' (Lepak and Snell, 2002). Sustainable career management, however, does not focus exclusively on those employee segments that are critical to the organisation because of their shortages in critical skills, age-related concerns or other timely reasons. Sustainable career management entails policies directed to different target groups and avoids focused attention to only a limited percentage of the workforce, for whatever reason this might be. As a result of a too selective or exclusive focus on a limited part of the workforce, combined with a rather reactive approach, the gap between demand and supply on the internal labour market can become very wide.

An inclusive approach can be found in the practice 'Stevig in de steigers', a career guidance tool for less educated workers which responds to the growing need for these lower-educated employees to strengthen and widen their sets of competencies. Organisations usually exclusively use coaching for so-called 'high potentials', executives, or other higher-educated employees. This tool enables organisations to drastically lower the threshold for their internal supervisors to also coach lower-educated employees, thereby making career coaching more inclusive.

2.4 Enabling a tailor-made and individualized approach

An inclusive approach does not mean uniformity or equality. Quite the opposite applies: career management that embraces all employees acknowledges at the same time that those employees are very diverse in their aspirations and talents. According to the life stage and the broader context of life, the needs of employees and their view on their career can vary (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006). This calls for a dynamic perspective on careers, instead of a passive and inflexible system that aims to capture the dynamics of career expectations in to one complex system. Rather, this dynamic perspective on careers implies an open view on careers and a culture that allows talking about career development in an open way also within the organisational context. This might, for instance, include facilitating I-deals or individualized agreements between individuals and their employers (Rousseau, 2005) and hence moving away from providing only standard career options that hold for all individuals. It means facilitating an "n = 1 approach". I-deals are voluntary, personalized agreements of a non-standard nature negotiated between individual employees and their employers regarding terms that benefit each party (Rousseau, Ho, and Greenberg, 2006). These individual negotiated arrangements are becoming widespread in today's workplace as organisations and individuals experience a growing need for customization and individualization of various aspects of the employment relationship (Rousseau et al., 2006).

A good example of this dimension is the Elan+ program as it allows for an individualised approach of crafting one's job to one's needs in an open culture. A safe environment is created to question the obvious and to discuss the non-discussable.

2.5 Focus on employability and workability

Career management essentially comes down to a matching process of individual and organisational needs (Baruch, 2004). Sustainable career management addresses this matching process with a long-term view in mind by focusing on ways to ensure employability of employees in the short and the long run, with explicit attention also for their work ability and vitality, i.e. the sustainable employment of employees. Sustainable employment is defined as employees having the opportunity to perform work with preservation of health and well-being during their working life, now and in the future (Van der Klink, Bültmann, Brouwer, Burdorf, Schaufeli, Zijlstra, and Van Der Wilt, 2011). The value aspect of work is emphasized: work must add value for the organisation as well as for the employee to be sustainable. This implies that sustainable career management is more than matching current organisational needs with available competencies on the internal or external labour market (De Vos and Dries, 2013). A focus on employability implies attention for the **career potential** of individuals, enabling their growth and facilitating their career security by investing in the development of competencies and talent (De Vos, De Hauw, and Van der Heijden, 2011). By workability, we mean attention for a sustainable work pressure in order to safeguard the physical, psychological and sociological ability of people to work (Ilmarinen, Tuomi, and Seitsamo, 2005). Careers imply a time frame and this is also connected to the idea of sustainable careers: no short-term view on overambitious challenges in a job today with the risk of burnout tomorrow, but attention for a workable career that will last even longer for the younger generations.

A good example of a case with a focus on workability is Labour centre 'de Wroeter' where employees with physical problems due to the heavy work are supported and redirected to other jobs. An exemplary case of employability is the Profiler which explicitly addresses the career potential of individuals as it makes use of latent talent and underutilised assets.

2.6 Anticipating for the future: a proactive approach

Career management that results in sustainable careers can only be effective when it operates proactively: looking forward to the future, thereby surpassing the so-called 'gravity law' and transcending the dominant tendency to selectively allocate our attention to what's needed here-and-now (De Vos, 2013). Reacting to problems stemming from the outflow of large groups of baby boomers, dealing with the sudden leave of a core employee or responding to the needs of specific target groups in order to ensure engagement and retention can take up a substantial part of an organisation's daily career management priorities (De Vos and Dries, 2013). However, the danger exists that the focus on these types of measures, which mainly aim to 'cure' a current situation, will undermine the focus on more anticipating and proactive measures.

From an individual perspective, proactivity implies, amongst other things, anticipating on changes in one's occupation, organisation or sector and the implications for ones required versus current occupational expertise. It also entails considering the possible long-term consequences of current career decisions. For instance, what might be the effects in the long run of working part-time, of not participating in any development activities, of not considering possible alternative jobs, …? Even though career decisions should not be considered as rational decisions of which the outcomes are highly predictable, a proactive approach means that individuals have sensitivity for the consequences of their career decisions (De Vos, 2013).

An exemplary case of a proactive approach is the Career Potential Methodology since it includes in the measurement of employability the capacity of reflecting on the trends, developments and discontinuities in an occupational field in order to understand the consequences of these developments in terms of development needs. Moreover the Career Potential Methodology measures the level of balance which refers to the focus on the current job versus attention for the career as a whole. In this way the individual is enabled to take thought career decisions with a long term perspective.

IV. Conclusion

In this final chapter the conclusions are presented. First we discuss the general tendencies, second we present the overall conclusion.

1. General tendencies

The dynamic nature of careers urges us to adopt a lifecourse approach when we strive to understand careers and make them more sustainable. In this respect it is important to be aware of the 'prism' of age (Pitt-Catsouphes et al., 2012) and thus to recognize the differences between career age, chronological age, generational age, normative age etc.

Careers not only are complex but also complicated. This means that they are highly unpredictable and increasingly non-linear. Careers unfold in a rapidly changing context and operate in an interconnected network. Hence individual career paths often make more sense in hindsight. A potential pitfall here is to over-rationalise the decision-making process that individuals go through with regard to their career development. Nevertheless certain patterns emerge from these modern and flexible career pathways: the increasing importance of self-directedness when shaping one's career represents such a pattern. Consequently it is possible to define strategies to cope with this dynamic nature of the new career and to make it more sustainable. As we have seen (cf. chapter 2) we distinguish three strategies to foster the self-directedness of individuals, thereby addressing attitudes as well as behaviors. Given the difficulty to change habits and behavior it is important to apply multiple but aligned measures in order to create the right context in which individuals take charge of their career. Only in this way attitudes and behaviours can be affected in a more sustainable way.

Another pitfall in this context is the undesired creation of a so-called Matthew effect when stimulating individuals to become more self-steering: those who are already more self-directed actively seek for and receive career support and opportunities, and as a consequence become even more autonomous, whereas those employees who would benefit relatively more from coaching of career attitudes and competencies - because they have less self-directed skills or are not aware of the consequence for their employability in the long run - tend to drop out. How can we reach this latter group of employees who are currently not able or uninterested in getting in the driver seat of their career? This is a question we should bear in mind.

When we look back at the sample of submitted examples of good practice it is remarkable that in only one example of good practice, namely the work-life balance employee program from IDEA in Spain (cf. chapter 2 3.9), women were explicitly targeted. In this program the female representation gap in management roles as well as the gender inequality was addressed. This is surprising since women encounter a lot of practical obstacles and boundaries when getting in the driver seat of their career. These obstacles and boundaries are not related to intrapersonal individual factors but are rather due to external contextual factors (like pregnancy). Hence this target group could benefit from additional initiatives taken by organisations and policy makers.

Next we increasingly see examples of good practice that activate and reinforce the self-reflective competencies of individuals. Programs like Elan+, VAE, Profiler, Stevig in de steigers and Cité des Métiers explicitly address the agency of individuals. Self-directedness is enhanced by these examples of good practice and in doing so the awareness regarding the new career reality is created. The fact that the examples of good practice are not limited to critical talent and sometimes even explicitly address lower-educated individuals leads to a more inclusive and thus sustainable career management practice.

Finally the role of education is crucial if we want to teach the younger generation how to manage their career. Indeed, education has to support the development of the career meta-competencies, which enable and support self-reflection, self-awareness and self-management in general. Practices, tools and processes should address the development of these meta-competencies, starting from adolescence in the context of high school and university. A lot of progress can and should still be made in this respect.

At present many organisations depart from the assumption that their workforce possesses the necessary career competencies to navigate their careers, or they expect other institutions to take care of this. Yet reality shows that many employees do not enter the labour market equipped with these career competencies. If they do not possess a basic level of career meta-competencies, these self-reflective competencies cannot be activated by the good practice as described above. Organisational or policy measures that focus on sustainable careers but which assume that individuals already possess the competencies required to take charge of their careers, hence risk to turn out to be less successful than intended.

In this sense, career counselling measures (like discussed in White Paper 1, De Vos & Gielens, 2014a) can be an important vehicle in leveraging the effects of practices aimed at the individual level but an even more proactive approach would be to include the development of career competencies in the curriculum of high schools and universities.

2. Overall conclusion

In this paper we described a number of individual level practices and tools in order to stimulate sustainable careers.

The list of examples of good practice described here should not be considered as an exhaustive or complete list. On the other hand this paper encompasses a broad range of practices which all have potential value for transfer to other countries. This document should therefore be seen as a guide for further discussion during and after the learning seminar in view of possibilities for transfer to the reader's home country.

Finally we can say that the examples of good practice, discussed in this paper, are showing that important steps can be made on the individual level concerning sustainable career management. However we have to emphasize that the third learning seminar represents only one perspective, being the individual level. The other two perspectives, namely the system and the organisational perspective, are strongly connected to the individual level. The

system level was addressed during the first learning seminar in Seville (January 2014), the organisational level was addressed during the second learning seminar (July 2014).

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VI. Appendix

n°	Name	Country	Actor	Company	Level	Topic	Focus	Target
1	Age Management in Helsinki	Finland	government	City of Helsinki	Company, system	Generation management	inclusive, proactive	All workers
2	Employee Assistance Program	Spain/ Andalusia	agency of innovation Andalusia	Agencia IDEA	Company, individual	work-life balance, flexibility, gender equality	Workability, flexibility	women
3	Elan+ program	Belgium/ Flanders	Banking sector Febelfin	Dynamo	Company, individual	Task analysis and Jobcrafting as a method of career guidance in the banking sector	Workability, career support, tailor made	All workers, special focus on senior workers
4	Jobclub 45+	Belgium - Wallonia	educational organisation / sectorial level	CEVORA	system, individual	assist jobseekers 45+ to find a job	employability, inclusive, career support	senior workers
5	Training advice 50+	Belgium - Wallonia	educational organisation	CEVORA	system, individual	assist older employees to develop their skills	employability, inclusive, career support	Senior workers 50+
6	Stevig in de steigers	Belgium/ Flanders	educational organisation & non profit	Vlerick Business School & vzw Wonen en werken	Company, individual	tool for career guidance of less educated workers	inclusive, career support, employability	Lower educated employees
7	Valorisation of acquired experience - Platform	Belgium/ Wallonia	network of universities	CIUF (Interuniversity council of the French Community of Belgium	system, individual	standardisation process for validation of prior competencies	active involvement employability, career support,	Experienced workers
9	Profiler	Belgium/ Flanders			Company, individual	management innovation	active involvement employability, proactive, tailor made,	all workers
10	Cité des Métiers	France & international	all stakeholders involved	public bodies, employment offices, organisatio	system, individual	one stop shop for career advice	active involvement, employability, career	all workers

				ns		support	
11	Labour centre	Belgium/ Flanders		De wroeter	Company, individual	creating a sustainable work context	workability, employability	all workers (lower educated)
12	iGemba: Operational Excellence on the shopfloor	Belgium	operational management	Barco	company, individual	autonomous teams	employability	all workers
13	Employability Potential Method	Netherlands	academic & consultancy	Knowvium: Applied Science Company	company, individual	assessment of employability	employability, workability	All workers
14	Startit KBC	Belgium/ Flanders		KBC	individual	promoting entrepreneurship	employability, career support	entrepreneurs
15	M-WIM	Germany / Lower Saxony	metal industry employer association & trade union	Association of stakeholders	industry, company	Improvement of the framework for occupational and vocational training in enterprises and	career support, anticipating	SME's
16	The InnoOmnia Lifelong Learning Entrepreneurship Hub	Finland / Espoo	Omnia, The Joint Authority of Education		System, individual	Fostering new ways of learning	employability, career support, anticipating	start-ups, entrepreneurs & teachers
17	Career Potential Methodology	Netherlands	academic & consultancy	Knowvium: Applied Science Company	company /individual	assessment of employability	Employability, workability, career support	