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HANDBOOK:
GUIDANCE TO POST-COVID19
JOBS AND TRANSITIONS

Innovative European
Career Guidance

*Erasmus+ Cooperation partnerships
in Vocational Education and Training*

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HANDBOOK: GUIDANCE TO POST-COVID19 JOBS AND TRANSITIONS

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EVTA Belgium – Chapter 4
Psychmed Analytics Ireland – Chapter 6

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INTRODUCTION

Preface *by David J. Bourne*

Nearly thirty years ago, the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman introduced the concept of "liquid society" to describe those societies on which globalisation has had a considerable impact by transforming the way we see the world. According to Bauman, over time we have moved from a universe perceived as solid to a liquid universe. The first offered a feeling of solidity fostered by modern sociology, which considered that individuals forged solid and coherent groups within which they found not only identity but also security, and which they called "societies". The solidity of these societies was underpinned by the fact that they were based on a powerful territoriality. Combined with new technologies, globalisation would have undermined this sense of solidity by introducing both volatility beyond previously known limits and powerful universal interdependence, leaving the field open to all possibilities. In such a context of uncertainty and permanent change, individuals now focus on their present state, cannot afford to remain static and have no choice but to develop their capacity for adaptation and mobility.

Psychology has also taken up the issue. In the early 2000s, two Australian psychologists, Jim Bright and Robert Pryor, put forward a theory entitled "Chaos Theory of Careers: A New Perspective on Working in the Twenty-First Century (2005)". Chaos theory proposes a dynamic, non-linear view of career development. It suggests that careers do not follow predictable trajectories, but rather are influenced by complex and unpredictable factors. According to this theory, individuals are encouraged to adopt an exploratory approach, to be open to unexpected opportunities and to continually adjust their career choices in response to changes and challenges in the world of work. Chaos theory emphasises adaptability, reflexivity, chance and autonomous decision-making in a constantly changing work environment.

While sociologists and psychologists have produced some particularly interesting theories on how the world is changing, they had no idea of the impact that the COVID-19 crisis would have on guidance practices.

Here we present a few contributions on this subject. They touch on key dimensions encountered in the field of guidance: complexity and uncertainty, adaptability and flexibility, reflexivity and autonomy, adaptation strategies, career management as a dynamic process. These are all issues that have come to challenge day-to-day practices.

About the handbook

This HANDBOOK about GUIDANCE TO POST-COVID19 JOBS AND TRANSITIONS is composed of 6 chapters:
1. *Skills intelligence*
2. *New EUROPASS curricula and personal branding*
3. *Challenges post-covid19*
4. *VET evolution*
5. *Professional transitions over the crisis*
6. *Empathy and Psychological Aspects for Employability*

It should be considered as an ambitious way to identify the agents in a complex context: the job market after covid and other challenges.

In effect, the real context is the job market after COVID-19 and the ongoing transitions of a VUCA world (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous).

The project partners, following their expertise, have developed the content of the chapters with a rationale:

- *Skills intelligence (ref. Chapter 1) because it refers, in the context of employment, to the strategic understanding and application of skills necessary for career success, coming trends in the job market and anticipation of skills demand.*
- *New EUROPASS (ref. Chapter 2) is a tool developed by the European Commission that has to be considered a standard, a set of documents and digital tools created by the European Union to help individuals effectively present their skills and qualifications clearly and understandably.*
- *Personal Branding (ref. Chapter 2) is a strategy to promote a person looking for more effective employability, becoming interesting for anyone offering a position.*
- *Challenges post-covid19 (chapter 3) because the pandemic catalyzed a shift in career guidance, emphasizing adaptability, digital skills, and a broader perspective on global and local dynamics. Organizations have responded by focusing on employee well-being, upskilling initiatives, and agile operational strategies to thrive in this new landscape.*
- *Vocational Education and Training (chapter 4) evolved and needs to be transformed to give more chances to the students to become employable. An overview of several countries is a way to highlight the importance of this alternative way of educating (young) people.*
- *Professional transitions over the crisis (chapter 5) are emerging and the labour market is in evolution with a need to place innovative ways, approaches, and methods to facilitate professional transitions in a VUCA world.*
- *The employability is more and more related to skills that are not acquired in the formal education. Empathy and Psychological aspects (chapter 6) are considered effective to better equip the future workforce.*

The partners are different in kind, sectors, knowledge, and competencies. Accordingly, to this aspect, the chapters were developed considering:

- *Expertise and daily engagement with skills intelligence for the Employment Agency of Madrid.*
- *Knowledge of practical tools (EUROPASS) and approaches (Personal Branding) in use by the career guidance practitioners all along Italy by ASNOR associates.*
- *Detection of the challenges coming out after the pandemic to adapt and transform the educational system in accordance with the drivers as detected by the University of Turku in a national educational system that is considered one of the most effective worldwide.*
- *The evolution of Vocational Education and Training and the new trends in different countries were detected by the European Vocational Training Association (EVTA) as a leading European network in the field.*
- *Transition over the crisis is an issue that the French government has been facing for many years becoming a leading good practice for enterprises and workers in a VUCA job market. The experience of the staff from Idem Cre'Actions to support the professional transitions is an added value for the handbook.*
- *The occupational psychologists from Psychmed Analytics are describing the psychological aspects, including empathy, as the elements that will matter more and more in the coming job market.*

About the Project

OBJECTIVES

We are six partner organisations from all over Europe – Italy, Finland, Spain, France, Belgium and Ireland. We collaborate with many stakeholders, which lets us reach very large and diverse audiences. The project's results will be released as digital Open Educational Resources because we care about accessibility and sustainability.

Our goal is to innovate career guidance. The project would like to build up a new generation of professional European Career Guides able to support people to improve their career journey through learning, skills, reskilling and upskilling, work and transitions - a need more and more important, especially in difficult and evolving times.

IMPLEMENTATION
Effective and innovative career guidance should support individuals to act based on 4 elements.
› REFLECT
Starting from a personal point of view the individuals are invited to self-awareness, self-consciousness and IKIGAI (a Japanese concept referring to having a direction or purpose in life).
›› GROW
Individuals are stimulated to a lifelong learning perspective for personal and professional growth thanks to soft skills, mindsets, antifragility, upskilling and reskilling, frequent Vocational Education and Training, and networking.
››› GO OUTSIDE
To explore the possibilities and to interact with the job market thanks to personal branding, skills intelligence, networking, understanding the world and how it could affect personal careers.
›››› MANAGEMENT AND EVOLUTION
Management of a position, the evolution of careers, transitions, antifragility and challenges.

RESULTS
1. Report: Career Guidance in Europe Policies, systems and relevant cases across Europe with evidence-gathering about local and regional needs.
2. Handbook: Guidance to Post-covid19 Jobs and Transitions: Based on the need to build up quality career guidance in line with the evolution of society to be more adaptive to labour market needs and to foster employability.
3. Training Modules: Pedagogy and Psychology for Career Counselling: Training of the future career guides including antifragility, mindset building, ikigai, career counselling tips and pedagogical approaches to career guidance.
4. Digital Toolkit for Inclusion in Career Guidance: An open educational resource containing materials ready to be used to innovate and empower career guidance practices for inclusion and diversity.
5. Other
   • Multiplier events (seminars and webinars)
   • A brand-new professional profile of "European Innovator in Career Guidance"
   • Website: a database of multimedia materials
   • 2 project newsletters
   • Social Network dissemination (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn etc.)
   • Traditional media dissemination: press, newspapers, radio broadcasts
   • Leaflets in all partners' national languages

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Chapter 1: SKILLS INTELLIGENCE

1.1 - Introduction

The economic crisis triggered by the global pandemic is having a profound and negative impact on economic growth and employment. This crisis reinforces the uncertainty about the future of employment, which is already highly challenged by the digital revolution, the automation of processes, disintermediation and the disintegration of value chains in many sectors of the economy. The growth in unemployment as a result of this crisis further underlines the need to invest in the employability of individuals, particularly in the development of the professional skills that will be needed in the future.

In recent years, the digital revolution, automation, the growth of platforms or the gig economy, disintermediation and the vertical disintegration of many companies have led to the disappearance of job positions, a change in the type of jobs offered by companies and in the professional skills needed to do them.

These profound changes require new professional skills. The gap between the skills needed and those available in society has widened in recent years. Companies make this clear in their recruitment process: there are qualified positions available in the labour market. There is a shortage of skilled jobs and a shortage of candidates with the professional skills to do them.

The concept of skills intelligence emerged in the 2000s and refers to the ability to identify, acquire and apply the skills that are in demand today and will be required in the future labour market. As the labour market evolves rapidly, individuals and organisations need to keep up-to-date on emerging skills, as well as the trends and challenges that shape the labour market.

In the following module, we will learn:

- *How to anticipate skills requirements for the future labour market*
- *The emerging economic sectors and occupations most likely to generate employment*
- *How to orientate workers towards activities with the highest probability of employment*
- *The skills needed for this new scenario and how to develop them in an innovative way*

1.2 - Skills Intelligence

1.2.1 What is skills intelligence?

Predicting skills is a strategic and systematic process in which labour market actors identify future skills needs and prepare to meet them, thus helping to prevent an imbalance between supply and demand.

To remain relevant, information on skills must be kept up to date and adjusted as users need change. This requires a continuous and iterative expert-led process.

Skills intelligence refers to:

- *Qualifications currently in demand in the labour market*
- *Future labour market trends, demands and challenges*

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- *Anticipating skills requirements;*

- *Addressing skills shortages and imbalances*

- *Adapting available education and training accordingly, providing relevant educational and vocational guidance and advice.*

- *It must be constant and repeated*

- *Importance in the context of career guidance to identify gaps to be filled and develop skills to help job seekers take advantage of new opportunities.*

1.2.2 Reasons why skills intelligence is essential for preparing the future workforce/career guidance

Information on key labour market trends and demands will support guidance and advice activities, recruitment processes, the provision of education and training and professional careers.

Strategic information on skills can be very useful for policymakers at regional, national and European levels, the research community, employment services, guidance counsellors, education and training providers, employers and even individuals (young people, job seekers and others who have to make decisions about their lives).
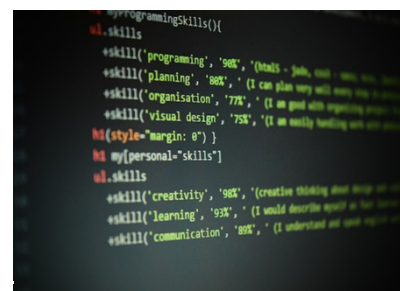
The areas in which intelligence has an impact on skills include:

o *Adaptation to changing demand*

By keeping up-to-date on the skills in demand today and those likely to be needed in the future, organisations and individuals can adapt to the changing demands of the labour market.

o *Promoting innovation and creativity*

Developing skills intelligence can help organisations identify emerging trends and opportunities, which can drive innovation and creativity. By keeping an eye on the market, individuals can identify gaps that need to be filled and develop skills to help them take advantage of new opportunities.

o *Preparing for the future*

With increasing automation and digitisation of the workforce, it is important to be informed about the skills that will be in demand. By developing skills intelligence, organisations and individuals can prepare for the future and ensure that they have the necessary skills to remain competitive in a rapidly changing labour market.

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1.2.3 - The process of skills intelligence. (Source: CEDEFOP and own data)

Quantitative and qualitative data on skills and the labour market are the necessary elements to facilitate the work and decisions of policymakers, social partners, local VET providers, career advisers and employees. These groups have different information requirements that are useful in their individual contexts.

The role of experts is to identify information requirements, use appropriate data, tools and techniques, and develop tailor-made solutions to present the results in a form suitable for users.

Informed decisions must be supported by high-quality information as increasing amounts of data and information on skills and the labour market become available. Data must be reliable.

This forecasting aims to provide information to all labour market actors on imbalances of skills and needs that may occur in the future so that they can make decisions, prepare measures and take action to meet needs and avoid imbalances of skills.

Source: 01-10-2023 www.pexels.com/

The phases to be developed in skills intelligence are:

- *defining information needs,*
  - o *by recipient*
  - o *by economic sector*
- *selecting or collecting relevant data and information*
  - o *collecting quantitative and qualitative information*
  - o *choosing sources of information*
  - o *selecting tools and methods of analysis*
- *analysing them*
  - o *specific types of information and/or indicators to be selected, how to combine them*
  - o *breakdown of information by occupation, sector, level of education, region, etc.*
- *summarising them so that they can be used by the specific user group.*
  - *The   most appropriate way of disseminating/presenting them*
  - *to   dissemination channels: web, reports, social networks, etc.*

Common tools for assessing and predicting skills needs include:

- *analysis of employer surveys,*
- *vacancy surveys, meta-search engines, job portals, etc.*
- *administrative data reports on employment, from public employment services, occupations observatories, etc.*

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- *Report on labour market trends and projections. Studies by national and international labour market agencies, use of predictive models.*

Most of the time, several sources of information are triangulated, making it possible to compensate for the shortcomings associated with each specific tool/data source.

Moreover, it is necessary to combine quantitative and qualitative methods to achieve a more global perspective.

To support users' decisions, the results should be presented in a form that is comprehensible to each user. They can be presented in a report, a website, social media, etc.

Expertise is also needed to ensure that all the above steps are followed and all requirements are met.

Skills and labour market experts, statisticians and data analysts, and user experience or web development specialists (if the aim is to provide online skills intelligence) are needed. It is the experts who will identify the information needs of the users, relate them to available and reliable data and information, decide which specific types of information and/or indicators to select, how to combine them and which are appropriate for the specific target group. Developing information about skills is a process of interrelated steps carried out by experts, transforming fragmented data and information into comprehensive, practically useful knowledge.

1.3 - The Labour Market and Jobs: Current Situation, Trends And Future Impacts

1.3.1 The current labour market in Europe, job deficits and surplus of workers (Source: EURES Report)

Source: 01-10-2023 www.pexels.com/

Analysis of data provided by the EURES National Coordination Offices on labour market imbalances in the EU-27, Norway and Switzerland showed that 29 countries are experiencing labour shortages and 24 countries are experiencing labour surpluses. The occupations that dominated the list of widespread shortages were related to software, healthcare and craft occupations in construction and engineering. The occupations that dominated the list of widespread surpluses were administration, basic occupations and professional occupations in the humanities and arts.

Most of the shortage occupations (i.e. the demand for these occupations exceeds the supply of job seekers with the required skills in the required location) were rated as large-scale shortages and analysis over time shows that they tend to have been identified as shortages over the last five years. These results suggest that many of the deficits are persistent and are structural rather than transitional.

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The study places the emergence of labour market imbalances in the context of the main drivers of labour market change. These include the rapid diffusion of new digital technologies to all sectors of the European economy, the ageing European population, the transition to a climate-neutral economy and the working conditions associated with employment in different occupations.

The rapid diffusion of new digital technologies is reflected in the presence at all levels of occupations requiring STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) skills among the list of shortage occupations identified by most countries.

Europe's ageing population has contributed to the increase in several health occupations on this list, while working conditions may also be a factor in the widespread shortages in hospitality.

Shortage occupations reported by most countries, 2022

- *Truck and heavy vehicle drivers*
- *Bus and tram drivers*
- *Concreting, concrete finishing and similar workers*
- *Agricultural and industrial machinery mechanics and repairers*
- *Painters and similar workers*
- *Roofers*
- *Bricklayers and similar workers*
- *Assemblers and operators of metalworking machine tools*
- *Systems analysts*
- *Software and application developers and analysts*
- *Application programmers*
- *Healthcare assistants*
- *Medical specialists*
- *General practitioners*
- *Nurses*
- *Chefs*
- *Cleaners and assistants in offices, hotels and other establishments*
- *Electrical engineering technicians*
- *Psychologists*
- *Civil, canal and port engineers*

The list of surplus occupations includes general office workers, executive secretaries and general secretaries, with a very high number of workers.

Also included are kitchen porters, cleaners, construction workers, hand packers, shelf stockers and other basic occupations. Their inclusion on the list is consistent with the view that technology is replacing workers in unskilled occupations involving a high proportion of routine tasks.

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It may come as a surprise that some of the humanities or creative arts occupations are included in the list of surplus occupations. The list includes musicians, singers and composers, visual artists, graphic and multimedia designers, interior decorators and designers and journalists. The humanities include social workers and counsellors; sociologists, anthropologists and related disciplines; advertising and marketing professionals, public relations professionals; translators, interpreters and other linguists; philosophers, historians and political scientists.

Source: 01-10-2023 www.pexels.com/

1.3.2 General Trends in Future Skills Supply and Demand (source: ILO Report, Forecasting and Adaptation to Skills and Jobs)

The trends that will influence the demand for skills in the future labour market include:

- Demographic changes will have a varying impact, with young people needing appropriate skills and older workers needing to continue to learn and update their skills.

- The level of education has risen considerably, making it more difficult for low-skilled workers to find employment in an increasingly competitive labour market.

Globalisation and liberalisation drive international mobility, which increases the demand for transferable skills, for example in the fields of intercultural communication and foreign languages, adaptation and maintenance of new technologies.

- The organisation of work is changing, with many companies introducing more horizontal organisational structures and offering remote working opportunities using the Internet. These changes increase the demand for teamwork, initiative, leadership and management skills, as well as interpersonal and intercultural communication skills.

- Technological development and innovation are driving the demand for skills in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and information and communication technologies (ICT) are not only important for the most highly-skilled workers who contribute to more than just the high-tech sectors themselves but affect other areas, such as care and customer service.

- Climate change and the transition to a green economy have an impact on the demand for skills due to the introduction of new green technologies, new market opportunities generated by green economic activities and the reshaping of polluting jobs, as well as various new regulatory requirements and growing environmental awareness.

1.3.3 Emerging Economic Sectors Generating Employment

Source: 01-10-2023 www.pexels.com/

Technological innovation and globalisation are revolutionising the world of work. The more traditional professional sectors are being transformed, and new job opportunities are being created that were previously unknown.

New professions are constantly emerging, and employees need to undergo continuous training. This is why understanding the trends in the different economic sectors and the professional opportunities they generate are key aspects of making the right decisions in people's professional development.

The economic sectors are expected to offer the most employment opportunities in the coming years.

Hospitality and tourism. With the pandemic behind us, global tourism is looking up. According to predictions by the World Tourism Council (WTTC), the sector will grow by almost 6% annually and create 126 million jobs over the next ten years. It should be noted that tourism is one of the driving forces of the world economy. This sector offers employment opportunities for professionals in various areas and categories. From hotel managers to a large number of suppliers, the chain of workers involved in tourism is extensive and heterogeneous.

Clean energy. Given the ambitious energy scenario, the renewable energy sector could reach 38.2 million jobs globally by 2030. Thanks to Europe's strong commitment to the green transition, the green energy sector continues to be a reliable driver of job creation. Large public and private investments are expected in the environmental sector, especially in the fields of renewable energies, sustainable transport, green infrastructure, and environmental management. A wide range of profiles are needed in this sector, from professionals who research how to minimise the environmental impact of companies to engineers who advance the development of renewable energies.

Sales and marketing. Due to the advancement of technology and the Internet, marketing has become an essential part of promoting services, brand or product. Likewise, sales in e-commerce have grown exponentially in recent years. Positions in business development, corporate strategy, digital marketing, and content creation are in demand in a large number of companies, and this demand is expected to continue.

Health and care. Due to the ageing population and the concern for physical and mental well-being, health and care is also one of the sectors with the highest job creation. In this respect, daycare centres and nursing homes, as well as hospitals, are already a significant driver of employment. On the other hand, the problems associated with the lifestyle of today's society will continue to offer employment opportunities for psychology and health professionals.

Technology. ICTs are taking on a crucial role in different professional fields. Many services and products offered by companies are linked to the digital sector. For this reason, there is a rising demand for professional profiles specialised in areas such as computer science, network systems, data science, and artificial intelligence, and this is expected to continue to grow in the future.

Transport and logistics. The rise of e-commerce and international transit has generated recent employment opportunities in supply chain management and freight transport.

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1.3.4 Future job creation and displacement, 2023-2027 (Source: World Economic Forum, Future of Jobs Survey 2023)

Macro trends and technology will result in an uneven picture of job creation and destruction over the next five years, across all job categories and industries.

More than 85% of future jobs have not yet been invented, and more than half of the jobs we know today will have disappeared in thirty years or will have been transformed by digitalisation.

Over the next five years, 83 million jobs are expected to be lost globally and 69 million to be created, representing a structural labour market turnover of 152 million jobs, or 23% of the 673 million employees in the data set. This constitutes a fall in employment of 14 million jobs or 2%.

Top Roles ranked by highest net employment growth, calculated from ILO employment statistics by occupation and the growth reported by the organisations surveyed.

- *Agricultural machinery workers*
- *Heavy truck and bus drivers*
- *Vocational training teachers*
- *Machinery mechanics and repairers*
- *Business development professionals*
- *Construction workers and similar trades*
- *University and higher education teachers*
- *Electrical engineers*
- *Sheet metal and structural metal workers, moulders and welders*
- *Special education teachers*
- *Light lorry or delivery service drivers*
- *Digital transformation specialists*
- *Building labourers*
- *Sustainability specialists*
- *Specialists in digital marketing and strategy*

Top roles ranked by largest net reduction in jobs.

- *Data entry clerks*
- *Administrative and executive secretaries*
- *Accounting, bookkeeping and payroll clerks*
- *Security guards*
- *Building caretakers and housekeepers*
- *Cashiers and ticket agents*
- *Material recording and stock-keeping clerks*
- *Assembly and factory workers*
- *Postmen*

Source: 01-10-2023 www.pexels.com/

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- *Bank tellers and similar workers*
- *Commercial vendors*
- *Telemarketing workers*
- *Customer information and service operators*
- *Service and business administration managers*
- *Door-to-door salespersons, street vendors and similar*

1.3.5 Jobs with more prospects for the future

While many of today's jobs will disappear in the future, several jobs will emerge, i.e. that do not yet exist, due to rapid technological advances. For this reason, institutions and companies are promoting the training of new professionals by encouraging more specific and rigorous training. According to a report by the McKinsey Institute, the highest-demand jobs in the next decade will be STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and the healthcare sector.

Source: 01-10-2023 www.pexels.com/

To name a few, the jobs with the brightest future will be:

- *Drone pilots and traffic control, very useful for emergencies and security.*
- *3D printing designers, for many sectors, especially in industry and health in the construction of prostheses, industrial parts, etc.*
- *Road transport analysts, in the logistics and transport sector.*
- *Data or Big Data analysts, data collection for interpretation as useful information.*

Source: 01-10-2023 www.pexels.com/

- *Specialists in renewable energies.*
- *Robotic surgeons or tele surgeons.*
- *Atmospheric water harvesters, collection of water for human consumption.*
- *Creation of virtual reality, for scientific use and building experiences.*
- *Architects for smart cities and smart homes, with renewable energy and digitisation.*
- *Robotics engineering.*
- *Digital economists, in banking and e-commerce.*

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1.3.6 Sectors and professions at risk

Automation will affect all professions where repetitive or machine-replaceable processes are involved.

Below are some professions at risk of disappearing:

- *Travel agents.*

- *Call centres and customer service, replaced by AI virtual assistants.*

- *Face-to-face office workers, receptionists, and customer service, replaced by AI virtual assistants.*

- *Air, sea, or land traffic control, replaced by software and computer applications with powerful algorithms.*

- *Train driving, replaced by automated vehicles.*

- *Supermarket and retail cashiers, we already have self-service check-outs.*

- *Supermarket stockers, replaced by autonomous and robotic vehicles, which already exist.*

- *Warehouse workers, replaced by autonomous and robotic vehicles, which already exist.*

- *Journalists and news writers, replaced by web engines that process and write information with almost no need for human intervention.*

- *Banking, finance and accounting, with operators replaced by advanced software.*

- *Automated radiology and diagnostic tests, which will be performed by AI.*

1.3.7 Impact of AI (Artificial Intelligence) on the labour market (Source: OECD Employment Outlook 2023: Artificial intelligence and the labour market)

Although there is emerging evidence on the impact of artificial intelligence on the labour market, there is a significant degree of uncertainty regarding the current and, especially, future impact of AI on the labour market, as well as the most appropriate policy actions to promote the reliable use of AI.

AI appears to be different from previous digital technology changes in several respects:

• it significantly expands the range of tasks that can be automated beyond merely routine and non-cognitive tasks;

• AI is a general-purpose technology, which means that almost all sectors and occupations will be affected;

- *the speed of development is unprecedented.*

Source: 01-10-2023 www.pexels.com/

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is advancing and with it the risk of replacing thousands of employees worldwide, from those with specialist knowledge and many years of experience to those in "low-skilled" jobs.

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For example, clinical laboratory technicians, engineers, opticians, power plant operators and supervisors could be replaced, according to the report "The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on the Future of Workforces in the European Union and the United States of America".

Artificial intelligence extracts meaningful information from digital images or videos, predicts health problems or adjusts cars to adapt to changing conditions or technology that provides its users with virtual assistants.

It is essential to redesign the workforce. Providing job training and enabling people to acquire new professional skills throughout their lives will be a key challenge.

1.4 - Orientation and Development of Skills for the New Labour Context

1.4.1 New skills for the work of the future

The new characteristics of the labour market pose a challenge for employees and employers. The new models of work will demand complex and rigorous preparation from workers. Therefore, to cope with the conditions of the future, they will have to:

• Understand that they have to adapt to constant change.

• Specialise in those sectors where demand is highest.

• Strengthen the network of professional contacts to progress in the professional field.

• Update and learn permanently.

Changes in work patterns will also condition the skills and competencies required in professional profiles.

Soft Skills will be transversal to the vast majority of professions, the most sought-after being the following:

• Problem solving, to ensure the best response in complex situations.

• Analytical thinking - reasoning and reflecting via exhaustive analysis of all the information gathered.

• Creativity and capacity for innovation, which facilitates different and original solutions to problems that are difficult to solve.

• Critical thinking, which seeks to construct and establish truthful criteria on the information received.

• Emotional self-control or emotional intelligence, the capacity for emotional self-regulation in the face of adversities or changing experiences.

Source: 01-10-2023 www.pexels.com/

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- *Self-learning, the ability to learn how to learn and acquire new knowledge.*

- *Resilience, capacity to overcome a situation and come out stronger.*

- *Flexibility, for better adaptation to change and unstable environments.*

- *Teamwork, ability to coordinate with other people to develop a joint project.*

Source: 01-10-2023 www.pexels.com/

Hard Skills, related to the digitisation of processes and technological advances, such as:

- *Technological expertise and the use of digital tools and skills (software, computer applications, etc.)*

- *Design, programming and monitoring of applied technology.*

The new generation of workers will be distinguished by:

- *multidisciplinary expertise*

- *the digital transformation of professions.*

- *greater autonomy in the performance of their work*

- *specialisation in their area of expertise*

- *development of project-based and collaborative work*

- *globalisation will mean developing them in different territories and cultural environments.*

The digitalisation processes in all sectors will require professionals trained in several disciplines at the same time, with hybrid profiles combining traditional and technological professions.

1.4.2 Lifelong learning: Upskilling and reskilling

According to the study "Jobs lost, jobs gained: workforce transitions in a time of automation" by the McKinsey Global Institute, between 75 million and 375 million workers (3% to 14% of the global workforce) will need to change careers by 2030 due to automation, artificial intelligence and digitisation.

It is vital to look at the upcoming scenario and see how it will affect profiles and professions in the future. Forecasting the difficulties and obstacles while looking ahead to the next ten years, will prevent many people from being left out of the market or facing severe difficulties in finding employment.

Reskilling and Upskilling are two tools for the continuous updating and recycling of professional profiles

- *Reskilling means retraining, i.e. the training of a worker for another position through the provision of new skills and competencies.*

- *Upskilling means training professionals in new skills and competencies that allow them to grow in their current role.*

We need to highlight the importance of upgrading and improving the technical skills of workers and narrowing any skill gaps that may exist, as doing nothing could result in a professional deficit. This is why upskilling and reskilling aim to prepare labour markets for new changes.

Likewise, lifelong learning is a strategic value for workers, who maintain their qualifications permanently over time, increasing their employability and reducing their vulnerability to unemployment.

As an example, these tools are very useful for providing access to the labour market for the long-term unemployed over the age of 55. In many countries with high ageing rates, the skills of older professionals remain unexploited, due to prejudice, stereotypes and major barriers that continue to hinder their access to the labour market. It is therefore important to emphasise the usefulness of reskilling and upskilling, enabling professionals to maintain and improve their skills throughout their working lives, regardless of age, and preventing obsolescence.

1.5 - Conclusions

Some of the ideas to be highlighted from this chapter are:

- *It is essential for individuals and organisations to keep up-to-date on emerging skills, as well as the trends and challenges that shape the labour market.*

- *Information on key labour market trends and demand supports orientation and counselling.*

- *Forecasting skills is a strategic and systematic process to identify future needs for skills and to meet them.*

- *Demographic changes, level of education, globalisation and liberalisation, technology, new work organisation and the transition to a green economy are all factors that will affect the demand for skills in the future labour market.*

- *Many of today's jobs will disappear in the future, but new jobs, that do not yet exist, will emerge due to rapid technological advances.*

- *Sectors such as tourism, clean energy, marketing and sales, logistics, health and technology are potential generators of employment in the future.*

- *There is much uncertainty over the impact of AI; many jobs, both low and high-skilled, are expected to disappear, but new ones may be created.*

- *Changes in work patterns will condition the skills and competencies required in professional profiles.*

- *Soft skills such as problem-solving, analytical thinking, and creativity, among others, as well as hard skills such as technological know-how, will be essential for the new working environment.*

- *In the current scenario of changes in the labour market and professions, it is essential to prepare people for the work of the future.*

- *Continuous learning, reskilling, and upskilling are tools for the continuous updating and recycling of professional profiles.*

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Chapter 2: NEW EUROPASS AND PERSONAL BRANDING

2.1 - INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we introduce the basic approaches to building up quality career guidance in line with the evolution of society to be more adaptive to labour market needs and to foster employability.

The first part is about the Europass tools developed by the European Commission to support the management and communication of learning and careers.

The second part is about a process, a mindset to be used to define and promote an individual professional profile.

2.2 - EUROPASS

Europass is a set of online tools and information to help people manage every step of their personal learning and career.

It promotes effective communication about skills and qualifications in Europe. The European Commission provides this service free of charge and in 30 different languages. In this chapter, we introduce the basic approaches to building up quality career guidance in line with the evolution of society to be more adaptive to labour market needs and to foster employability.

Source: 04/07/2023 from https://europa.eu/europass/en

2.2.1 Why Europass is relevant for career guidance?

It represents an opportunity to present different and relevant elements of personal skills, qualifications, and experiences in a way that is common in all of Europe and also in different languages.

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2.2.2 How to create a Europass profile

The first step is to create a free profile with Europass, of all the skills, qualifications and experiences in one secure, online location including the details about:
- work experiences.
- education and training experiences (including diplomas, titles and certifications).
- language skills (it is possible to self-assess the language skills in line with the self-assessment tool using the Common European Framework for Languages (CEFR).
- Digital skills (it is possible to create a list of all digital skills, including tools and software, in use in job or studies, as well as the tools used in spare time (e.g. social media, blogging, gaming) – it is possible also to test the Digital skills
- Projects participation
- volunteering experiences, and other important achievements.
- reference letters or other documents that describe your achievements in your personal Europass Library

The Europass profile can be created in one or more European languages.

2.2.3 How to use your Europass profile?

Your Europass profile connects you with the next step in your career.

- Use your Europass profile to reflect on your interests and career goals.
- Use your Europass profile to track your development and demonstrate your achievements to your employer.
- Get suggestions for interesting jobs and courses relevant to your profile.
- Share your profile with employers and recruiters for new job opportunities.
- Share your profile with educational institutions for new courses and training opportunities.
- Share your profile with guidance counsellors to receive career advice.
- Prepare applications. Keep a record of all your applications and prepare CVs and cover letters.

Your Europass profile is your record of your achievements. By continually updating and adding to your profile, you will always have access to an up-to-date picture of all your skills. All your personal information in your Europass profile is secure, and you are the only person who can access the information and share it with others.

2.2.4 - Over the CV: Europass TOOLS and INFO

Europass is not only a CV and it includes a series of tools such as:
- Europass Cover Letter to highlight your motivation to apply for a specific job or opportunity and demonstrate why you consider yourself to be the best candidate. Your cover letter should refer to examples in your CV and describe why these are relevant to the job vacancy you are applying for.
- Test your Digital Skills as above mentioned.
- Job & Skills Trends: Investigate and discover which jobs are in high demand across the EU

- *European Digital Credentials for learning: Create a series of portable digital documents to describe and certify:*
  - *qualifications (e.g., professional certificates, university diplomas and other learning achievements),*
  - *activities (e.g., participation in classes and non-formal learning events),*
  - *assessments (e.g., transcripts of records), and*
  - *entitlements (e.g., right to enrol in learning opportunities, or to undertake an occupation.*
- *Compare national qualifications frameworks across Europe: collect information about national qualifications frameworks and qualification levels by comparing 2 countries' national qualifications and see the equivalent European Qualifications Framework (EQF) level*
- *Europass Mobility: It is a document that can help you to showcase skills acquired during your experience in another country e.g., traineeship or a semester studying abroad.*
- *Europass Certificate Supplement: It is a document that provides information that makes it easier for employers and educational institutions to understand your vocational qualification. The Europass Certificate Supplement describes:*
  - *the purpose of your qualification,*
  - *its level,*
  - *its learning outcomes and*
  - *information on the relevant education system.*
- *Diploma Supplement: It provides information on your achievements, including course credits, grades, and what you have learned.*
  It contains information confirming:
  - *the type and level of qualification awarded,*
  - *the institution that issued the qualification,*
  - *the content of the course and results gained,*
  - *details of the national education system.*
  This information can make it easier for an employer or education institution to understand your qualifications and for you to take the next step with your learning and career.

INFO
Europass is not only a CV and it includes a series of relevant info about:
- *Learning in Europe – Finding more information about studying in different countries, finding courses, information and support, planning learning and studying abroad.*
- *Work in Europe – Finding more information about working in different countries, finding jobs, information and support, planning a career and working abroad.*

Source: 04/07/2023 from https://europa.eu/europass/en

2.3 - PERSONAL BRANDING

2.3.1 What is personal branding?

Personal branding refers to a conscious and intentional effort to create and influence public perception of an individual by positioning them as an authority in their industry, elevating their credibility, and differentiating themselves from the competition, to ultimately advance their career, widen their circle of influence, and have a more considerable impact.

In effect, the effort is on communicating and presenting a distinct professional identity or image to the world, and it is especially relevant in today's digital age, where social media and online platforms play a significant role in professional networking and job opportunities.
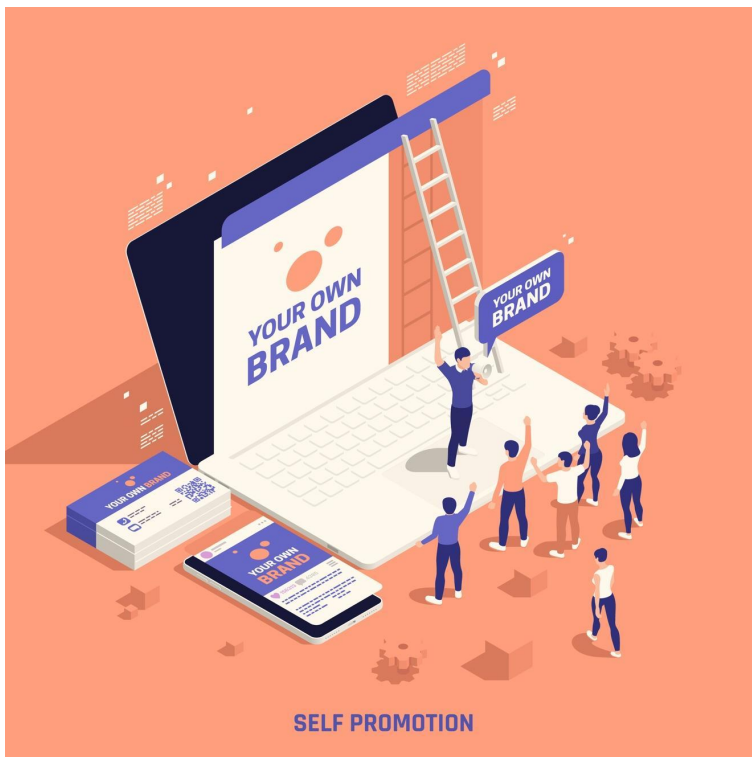
Source: 04/07/2023 - Image by macrovector on Freepik

It involves intentionally managing and shaping how others perceive you and your skills, expertise, values, and overall presence.

Personal branding includes various elements, such as your appearance, behaviour, online presence, communication style, expertise, and reputation. It involves understanding your strengths, values, and passions and effectively communicating them to your target audience.

It is important to curate and maintain a constant online presence through platforms like LinkedIn, personal websites, blogs, and social media profiles.

Additionally, personal branding extends to offline interactions, such as networking events, conferences, and professional relationships.

The benefits of personal branding include increased visibility and recognition, enhanced career opportunities, the ability to attract clients or employers, and the establishment of a positive professional reputation.

It allows you to differentiate yourself from your peers and competitors and build a strong personal brand that aligns with your goals and aspirations.

However, it's important to note that personal branding should be authentic and genuine.

Because personal branding points out, and in some cases, glorifies, certain positive characteristics of an individual, it is not unlike traditional branding of products and companies. This puts individuals in the place of products, in which their efforts to appear more human are subverted.

Source: 04/07/2023 - Image by macrovector on Freepi

2.3.2 How to Build Your Personal Branding?

Source: 04/07/2023 - Image by storyset on Freepik

THREE steps to build up a Personal Branding

	FIRST STEP **KNOW YOURSELF AND GET TO KNOW** • **Self-assessment** (passions, values, personal goals and vision). • **Being evaluated by others** (what is expressed externally - starting from those closest to us). • **Know my competitors** (who are they? What do they have in common with me? What do they have different from me?). • **Target: whom do I address?**

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SECOND STEP

EXPRESS

- *Choose the right **tools** to share your brand (LinkedIn, social media, CV including your success but also your failures)*

- *It is important to be:*
  - *Clear.*

  - *Consistent about the contents.*

  - *Constant - following a strategic communication planning.*

THIRD STEP

ANALYZE

Opportunities offered by the web.

***Web reputation** based on:*

- *Engagement level of posted content.*

- *The number of followers, likes, reshares.*

- *Sentiment on content.*

- *Blogs/Sites – analytical data.*

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2.3.3 A practical tool to build your Personal Branding

The Personal Branding Canvas is a practical tool really useful to anyone willing to build personal branding.

By replying to the questions it is possible to build up relevant personal branding.

It is available for free at: https://bigname.pro/personal-branding-canvas/
It is also available in Spanish, Portuguese, Turkish, Russian, German and French.

Source: 05/07/2023 from: https://bigname.pro/personal-branding-canvas/
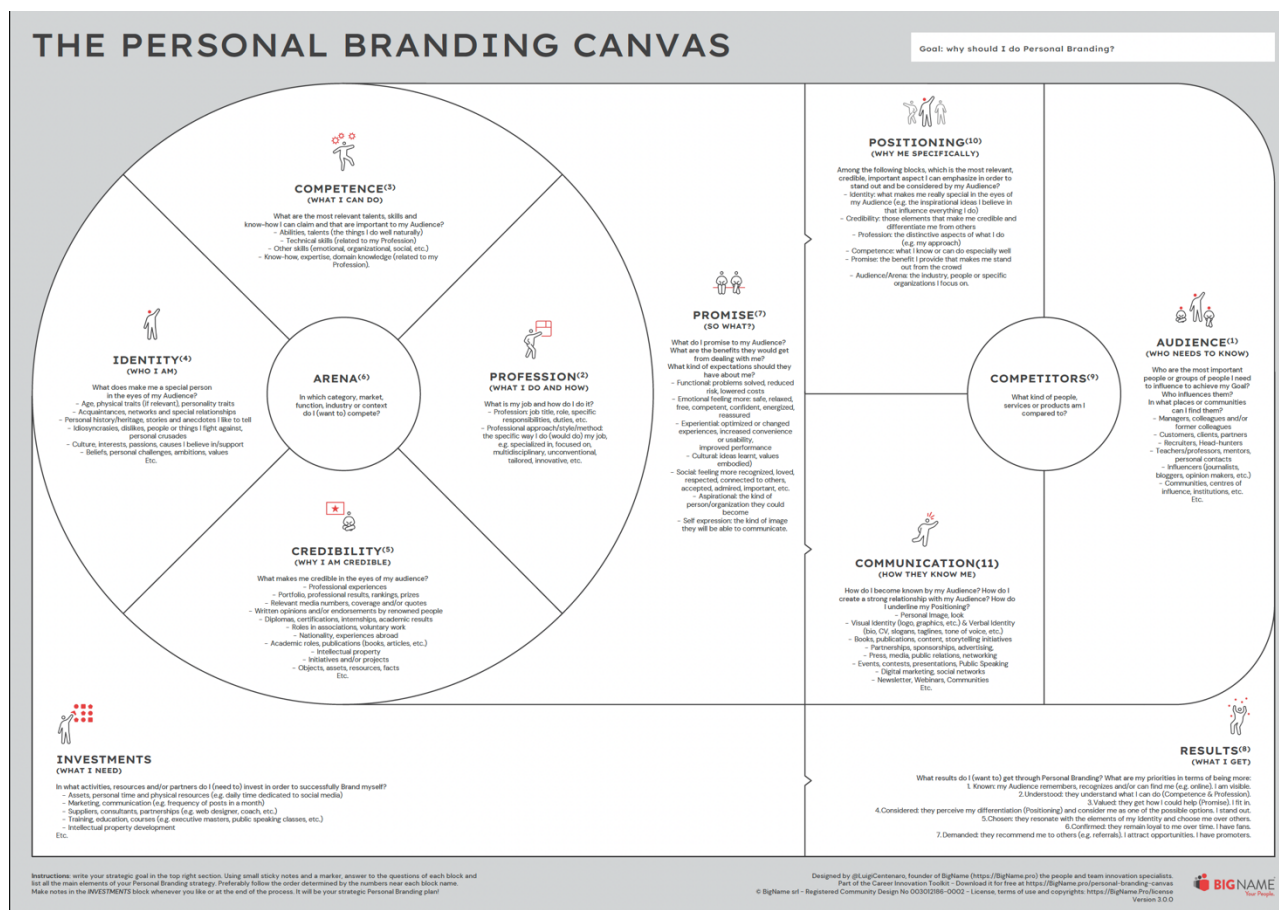
2.4 - Conclusions

The use of Europass tools helps to standardise, at the European level, the recognition and detection of personal skills, abilities, learning and educational titles. Once this process is recognised it is time to build a personal reputation, or better, a personal brand to communicate with the support of digital tools a person by differentiating oneself from the competition, to ultimately advance their career, widen their circle of influence, and have a larger impact in terms of employability.

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- *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Personal_branding*

- *Definition of a Personal Brand vs. Personal Branding: https://personalbrand.com/definition/*
- *The Personal Branding Canvas https://bigname.pro/personal-branding-canvas/*

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Chapter 3 - CHALLENGES POST-COVID-19

INTRODUCTION

This chapter looks into the challenges and noteworthy developments in the world following the COVID-19 pandemic. It begins by providing an overview of pre-existing megatrends and then delves into how the global pandemic has influenced career guidance within the context of these pre-established megatrends. The last two sections illustrate the specific changes that have resulted from the pandemic and detail how various organisations have responded to these new challenges.

3.1 - Background: World before covid19: Megatrend

Megatrends before COVID19

Mega-trends are 'those developments already underway and nearly impossible to change over the coming decade' (ESPAS Global Trends Report By 2023). Global mega-trends were set out in the ESPAS report in the year 2019 as follows:

1. *Global warming. Increasingly sophisticated climate models tend to revise the expected global temperature rise by 2050.*
2. *Demographic imbalance. We will still be around 8.6 billion people in 2030, but the population will be unevenly distributed between countries. High population growth is in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and the EU's southern neighbourhood. In the rest of the world, the population will be stalling or decreasing and ageing.*
3. *Urbanisation. Two-thirds of the world's population will live in big and medium-sized cities.*
4. *Economic growth continues. Trade tensions could destabilise the global economy, and a slowdown in China and the US would affect the global economy. The world economy will continue to grow, mostly in developing countries, with China surpassing the US as the most significant global economy by 2030.*
5. *Energy consumption will continue to rise, especially in non-OECD countries. Oil, coal and gas will continue to meet most of the world's energy demand. Solar and wind are the cheapest sources of new power development for at least two-thirds of the global population.*
6. *People are highly connected. Easy connections have reduced inequalities within societies' digital connectivity, especially regarding access to education, living conditions in cities versus the countryside, remote work, the ability to maintain digital social contacts and many other details of daily life (such as contactless payments).*
7. *Polynodality. Instead of polarisation, societies are becoming more complicated and diverse. Our future will be different regarding the distribution of power and also the nature of power.*
8. *Global leadership needs to renew. The global challenges posed by public health, environmental security, natural disasters, and cyber security (and others) have intensified as globalisation and interconnectivity. Containment of local or sectoral crises is increasingly complex, and many leaders demand a renewal of multilateral governance. Poverty levels are rising in the developing world, and there is the potential for open conflicts between polarised superpowers.*

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Lifelong guidance policy and practice in the EU

Global megatrends refer to society's framework within which individuals are guided in their careers. In 2020, the European Union defined in *Lifelong guidance policy and practise in EU 11* characteristics that define high-level governance.

Features are as follows:
1. Lifelong guidance legislation;
2. Strategic leadership;
3. Scope of the provision in different guidance contexts;
4. Lifelong guidance and lifelong learning strategies and policies;
5. Coordination and cooperation;
6. Delivery of guidance;
7. Labour market information;
8. ICT strategy;
9. ICT operationalisation;
10. Professionalisation and
11. Evidence of the impact of lifelong guidance.

Source: 31/08/2023 from https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/14/17/10981 Wang et al. 2022. Conceptual model of the megatrends according to their influence on and consequences for global development.

3.1.1 Migration

How has COVID-19 affected career guidance in relationship in the context of workforce mobility?

In their 2022 article published in the Sustainability Journal, Wang and colleagues offer a thorough evaluation of the worldwide megatrends and the influence of the digital economy on the transformation of professional career management, with a particular focus on Asian nations amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The examination indicates that certain megatrends have altered the way professional career development takes place.

Technological progress has led to the emergence of novel digital work platforms. When properly regulated, these platforms offer viable job prospects for individuals. The digitisation of employment services has facilitated the utilisation of extensive data, enhanced the effectiveness of placement services and personalised career assistance, and delivered a more precise evaluation of the job market.

The development of technology has made it possible to develop better workforce service systems available through different channels and devices. This also includes information systems that provide personal physical services. Integrating digital tools such as facial recognition technology, QR codes, and data analytics software has become more common. Utilising labour market information has also become a critical factor in ensuring an efficient career development process in the digital economy.

Effective planning, a goal-driven mindset, curiosity, seeking out new educational opportunities, tenacity, adaptability, positivity, and a readiness to take risks are essential attributes for individuals embarking on the relocalisation process. Connectivity, financial planning, and healthy work-life balance are pivotal elements in successful employment narratives.

The pandemic has brought significant changes to career counselling. These changes have led to innovative frameworks that allow individuals to utilise their resources and improve their careers and overall quality of life through both professional and personal growth[1]. For businesses, career development programmes with active involvement from management have emerged as a unique solution to enhance employee engagement. The digital economy has a profound impact on economic growth and a new kind of employment structure.

In underprivileged countries, COVID-19 raised eight significant themes, including access to education, challenges for girls, racism, inadequate infrastructure in impoverished rural schools, households led by children, education during the pandemic, food security, and the lack of career guidance in low-income schools. In less developed countries, aspirations for education and careers abroad are common; for many families, securing a good job in European countries is paramount. Naturally, COVID-19 has impeded or even halted progress along this career trajectory.[2]

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[2] *Pillay, I. (2021). The impact of inequality and COVID-19 on education and career planning for South African children of rural and low-socioeconomic backgrounds. African Journal of career development, 3(1), 7. Retrieved 2023-08-31.*

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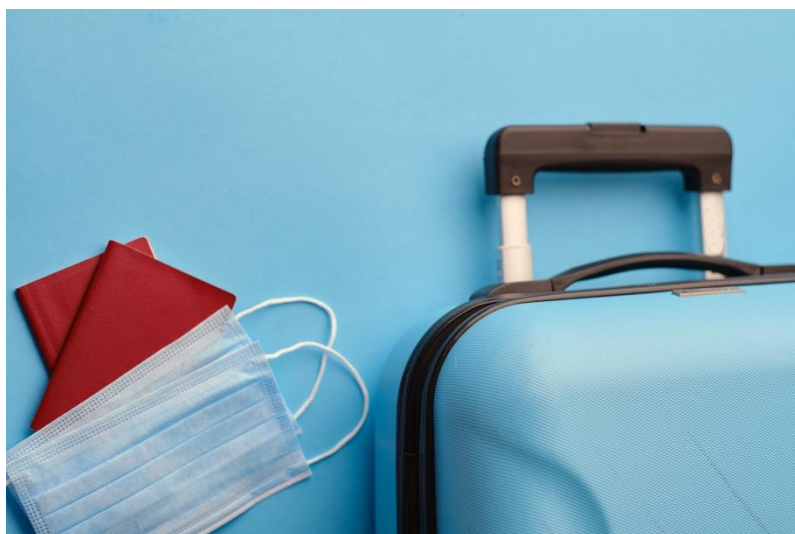
Source: 01/10/2023 Image by boyarkinamarina on Freepik

3.1.2 Digitalisation

Sustainable career guidance process

COVID-19 changed counselling online. Before COVID, much of the guidance was face-to-face. In contrast, distance learning techniques are familiar from the time before COVID-19. Benefits include, for example, [2]:

- *The cost of training can be reduced, for example in the form of rent for premises and travel expenses. However, additional resources are needed to develop the methods. Ensuring the quality of the guidance process and customer satisfaction is essential.*
- *It is possible to produce flexible and tailored training processes. Differentiation is easy.*
- *Remote technology can be offered to the masses. However, it must be remembered that technology is not accessible to everyone. Individualisation and self-directedness require guidance and collaboration with companies' separate resources.*
- *The transfer of information and follow-up actions can be fast. At the same time, thorough consideration must be given to data security, cyber security risks, and preserving trade secrets.*
- *The shareability and continuity of training processes are easy. Achieving access to information and using remote technology can be easy if implemented correctly.*
- *Productivity and communication skills can be improved without compromising the quality of guidance processes, especially if all parties involved in the guidance process are involved in the development (trainees, trainers, educational institutions, business representatives, national and international regulators).*

Technology offers primary benefits for career guidance, such as lower expenses and schedule flexibility, without compromising on the quality of counselling. This highlights the necessity for a re-evaluation of the traditional distance counselling system.

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3.2 - CAREER GUIDANCE IN A POST-COVID19 WORLD

Development and utilisation of competence

Preparing a skilled workforce for jobs today and in the future is a significant concern worldwide. The labour shortage encourages labour mobility, country-of-origin training, and increasingly changing careers. Employed people and the economy's growth depend on the skills of the people available and how they are utilised.

Developing competence and acquiring complementary skills in different cultural environments is a major global challenge. The ability to learn and adapt to new situations is the most essential working life skill of our time. It is a big challenge for career guidance. Career counsellors must develop their understanding of international situations. International cooperation and discussion of converging practices have become increasingly important. Creating common standards helps the workforce navigate constant change, retrain and adapt to new work situations successfully.[3]

Simulated learning and online work training can be cheaper than studying, training or working on-site for many organisations. For example, the company and the employee can save on time and travel expenses. On the other hand, employees need a laptop computer, a reliable internet connection, and a smartphone. What jobs can be done remotely? Can all skills be developed virtually? The pandemic has forced companies to reevaluate work arrangements and resources and changed practices significantly toward more flexible multi-location work.[4] [5]
The digital strategies of higher education institutions also guaranteed alternative solutions during the health crisis, which have required a more profound analysis after the pandemic to identify elements that are suitable as permanent solutions. The pandemic questioned the working methods and opened up perspectives on new methods and possible success factors.[6]

How has COVID-19 transformed the dynamics of the working life and then methods of conducting work?
The pandemic changed working life and ways of doing work, and thus, it significantly impacted career guidance. All those of school and working age took a massive leap in digital skills, and the digital skills of all citizens also improved as many public services went digital. Work quickly became global, so suddenly, everyone worked virtually, and it no longer mattered where work was done. The competition has intensified, and the increased work intensity is here to stay. It is possible to look for know-how to do the work anywhere, and the skill of assembling successful teams is a new factor that increases competitiveness.

What effects did COVID-19 have on the community spirit?
The post-pandemic world has brought with it permanent changes that pose new challenges for career counsellors. Both the world of work and society have experienced permanent changes. Today's world of work requires unique expertise and favours individuals who are flexible, self-directed, fast learners, willing to work together in a team, and share a common vision.

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[3] Kukreja, P. (2020). The G20 in a Post-COVID19 World: Bridging the Skills Gaps. Future. *Retrieved 2023-08-31.*

[4] *Bilsland, C., Nagy, H., & Smith, P. (2020). Virtual Internships and Work-Integrated Learning in Hospitality and Tourism in a Post-COVID-19 World. International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning, 21(4), 425-437. Retrieved 2023-08-31.*

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[6] *Frison, D. (2023). Higher Education in Post-Covid19: The Digital Transformation of Work-Integrated Learning Programmes. Re-thinking Adult Education Research. Beyond the Pandemic, 241. Retrieved 2023-08-31.*

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The company's most crucial challenge is to utilise the potential of experts and build teams that look in the same direction. IIn the coming decades, what is expected from the employee is not based on mantras - the pandemic allowed thinking outside the box, and similar scrutiny is here to stay. We may abandon taking care about unnecessary little things and become more prepared for exceptional situations.

Remote work, independent of time and place, affects the community. Companies and educational organisations must reassess whether existing structures and technologies enable collaborative working. Flexibility and community require different resources than just technical execution.

When an employee has the right to self-determination about working methods, it is necessary to consider what kind of individuals are thriving, where the success stories for the next decade will be born, and where new opportunities will come. Do we have experts who can do well in a more accessible situation? What kind of people do well? The world would anyway become more accessible and sensitive. Everyone must have a clear direction. The individual's responsibility increases, and the manager's task is to provide the framework.

3.2.1 CASE 1

Revolutionizing Immigrant Employment: Innovative approaches in Belgium and Finland

Social networks play a crucial role in career development and life, with particular significance for immigrants, who often rely on these networks to access vital information regarding job opportunities and working conditions in their host countries. This case delves into the experiences of immigrants in Belgium and Finland, highlighting the importance and challenges associated with leveraging social networks[7]. Cultural and language disparities can pose obstacles to building effective social connections, but these challenges can be mitigated through systematic and patient networking practices.

Networking is considered one of the critical skills for a successful job search and career building. However, finding professional networks in their new home country can be very challenging. Social networks can be seen as social capital. Language, communication styles, and work culture-related issues are substantial barriers to building a network and entering the job market. Mentoring offers a new perspective for job seeking and career guidance because, in mentoring, people provide their human capital as a resource for job seekers and promote networking.

Working life is fragmented, and social networking and social capital have become increasingly important. Unstable employment and fixed-term contracts are more common. Numerous employment openings are typically not formally advertised, but rather shared internally or through social networks and social media. It is believed that approximately 75% of jobs are filled through this concealed job market[8]. Networking is one of the most effective ways to access hidden employment opportunities.

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[7] **Kinos, S., Van den Berckt, I., Pambukhchyan, R., Kiijärvi-Pihkala, M., Kaartinen, O., & Pirttikoski, V. (2023).** Kulttuurinäkökulmat monikulttuurisissa mentorointityösuhteissa. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching & Mentoring, 21*(1). Haettu 2023-08-31.

[8] **CareerLink (2015).** Vinkkejä piilotyömarkkinoille pääsemiseksi. Haettu 2023-08-31.

Networking requires effort, just like a traditional job search. One practise piloted in Finland and Belgium to promote networking was the "*Networking Steps model*." Career counsellors need help with obstacles, such as a lack of regional vacancies and many temporary job contracts. Job seekers with low skills often received brief job contracts, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The professional network of people with a migrant background is usually tiny, and they do not always see the benefits of professional networking. When job seekers have no intrinsic motivation to find a long-term job or struggle with social problems (e.g., homelessness), they do not attend appointments. In such situations, it is challenging to help the job seeker.

Source: 01/10/2023 https://networking2work.weebly.com/steps.html

A *digital platform* and application were developed in Belgium to aid immigrants' employment in Flanders, emphasizing mentoring. The platform categorizes its users into four groups: talent (refugees, migrants), mentors, employers from various industries, and organizations like universities, government bodies, and civil society groups. It facilitates networking and communication among users, being multilingual and providing open spaces for interaction, sharing publications, promoting activities, and enabling planning of meetings and activities.

Effective communication and collaboration among individuals from diverse cultures may require additional effort, considering differing thought processes. The conduct of individuals in the host country can sometimes hinder effective networking due to cultural differences impacting personality, thoughts, actions, and communication styles.

The pandemic has notably shifted networking to the virtual realm, presenting a hurdle with the tendency towards formality in virtual networks. However, effective networking often thrives in informal settings. The pandemic's impact has accelerated the need to digitize integration processes, including networking, despite challenges like regulatory requirements (WCGA and GDPR) that may deter users from adopting new digital tools. Nonetheless, the case demonstrates that digital applications serve as excellent additional tools for professional networking and providing mentoring support in immigrant networks.

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3.2.2 CASE 2

Online career guidance for immigrants in Finland

Finland, known for its vast distances, tackles the challenge of offering career guidance to international job seekers in rural areas. Innovative solutions have been employed, such as integrating career guidance into online training since 2015[9] and entrepreneurship online coaching for immigrants in 2019. The SIMHE services (Supporting Immigrants in Higher Education in Finland) operating in ten universities have increasingly moved career guidance online in recent years. This not only caters to remote individuals but also leverages technology for wider accessibility. These initiatives demonstrate Finland's dedication to adaptability and innovation in aiding immigrant integration and professional growth.

During the pandemic, the experiences gained from online integration training provided a model for a quick, complete online transition in teaching and guidance. The provider of online integration training moved 905 immigrant students, 70 teachers, and career counsellors online in a week. If the training concept had not been designed to be accessible to both students and teachers and, therefore, extremely easy, it would not have been successful. There was not a common language, and digital competencies were mainly weak. Even now, it is a demanding job because numerous slow groups of students with almost zero language skills are studying on their own devices, primarily mobile phones. Most career counsellors and teachers did not have experience with online counselling at the time.

According to experiences gained in Finland, successful online counselling must be technically, pedagogically, and linguistically accessible. Virtual meetings can simulate the interactive dynamics of face-to-face meetings. In order to ensure the seamless functioning and understanding of technology in an online counseling context, it is useful to present a single challenge to all participants. Equality is realised when everyone involved in the situation is online. If some of the supervisees are online and some are on-site (hybrid-situation), those online will always be in a worse position in the interaction. When the permanent legalities of online counselling are learned with one tool, and the counsellor knows what is at least required to create a smooth online training and interaction situation, the information is valuable when new programmes are introduced in organisations.

In online supervision and a well-mannered online meeting, the golden rules are a working video and voice connection and a chat where you can write. Those with a daily online routine online can be guided by the meetings. Video conferencing, such as Zoom Meeting or Google Meet, is used for online control. An accessible, low-threshold communication channel is needed with which the supervisee can easily approach the supervisor or a peer. Lastly, a permanent place is required where the supervisor and the supervisee can find the necessary information.

When developing a new career guidance online entity, it is needed to choose where the online course will work. For example, a secure website, Microsoft Teams and Moodle, often used in university courses, can serve as a home nest. The counsellor knows and manages the pieces of the whole online. What happens in the background while the control situation is in the network class? Where is the controllable contact information? Where are tasks and instructions distributed? Where are the functions returned, and how are they not evaluated? Can the evaluation be done digitally, or does checking and evaluating the returns to the assignment require hours of manual work? A lot of data accumulates, and there needs to be a system and

[9] Hartikainen, A., Ahola, M., Apiola, M., & Sutinen, E. (2020, September). The immigrant integration online training program in Finland. In *2020 43rd International Convention on Information, Communication and Electronic Technology (MIPRO)* (pp. 872-877). IEEE. Retrieved 2023-08-31.

a suitable place to store it. Working time resource usage is very much about what can be done automatically and what can't be done.

Interaction online is always the driver of the situation. Online guidance essentially includes the following questions: Can you see? Do you hear? Can you find it? Since the instructor can't get behind the back to show what the supervisor needs to do, the instructor must use a directive manner of speech as the chairperson of online meetings. "I write these important dates in the chat. Can you find the chat? It can be found on the bottom right, a small message bubble; click, and the chat will open". The instructor can show, for example, paths related to returns when he shares his screen during a web control situation. Again, a controlled speech is needed: "Is it visible now? I'm sharing the screen; is this Moodle front page visible?" When the instructor is sure that the page is visible, the guidance is continued, "Here, when you scroll down under this schedule heading, the assignment return dates will appear there. Click on it, and you should now see the dates." Activating speech helps the participants understand what part of the screen they need to follow. It is better to ask by first name if the participant sees the right view than to explain things too quickly and without the participant knowing what the talking head means. If the instructor talks in an online session, the participant's concentration quickly falters when staring at the screen does not offer anything that requires active participation. The instructor's digital skills include showing the topic and what he is talking about by sharing the screen or drawing and writing on the digital whiteboard. The counsellor should rethink their initialisation: How could the matter be handled with the help of questions? For example, before the online meeting, the supervisee familiarised himself with the online material with warm-up questions and small group work.

Many immigrants possess a lot of know-how and skills from their home country and the desire to engage in work that corresponds to their know-how skills acquired through the world's ever-changing conditions. Changes can be caused by, for example, a pandemic or a war. Career counsellors have encountered new situations that require creativity. The documentation related to the trainees' training may have been completely lost due to the war, or the trainees may have lived in the intermediate spaces of different countries in search of global earning opportunities. The prospects for continuity can also be fragmented; careers and work are sought regionally and simultaneously in several countries. In addition to the challenges, options for opening the mobile labour market can be seen in international counselling situations. Counsellors are facing something new. The person to be guided must be met as an individual, regardless of where the guidance situation occurs.

3.3 - Conclusions

From insecurity to recreation and fresh approaches

Global megatrends and crises affect the fact that there are common problems and shared responsibilities worldwide. The demographic imbalance between developing and developed countries is growing, and at the same time, it forms unifying factors when the search for labour and know-how takes place worldwide. In terms of security of supply, the availability of experts is critical, especially in developed countries. Attracting and recruiting professionals is raised as one of the essential solutions.

Challenges are solved working together, and efforts are made to find a consensus on common global goals. The European Union has defined Lifelong guidance policy and practise in the EU for career guidance. These rules have been included in the legislation of almost thirty EU countries.

The concept of what jobs and what kind of labour market a young person will face after graduating has been in transition for a long time. Familiar job titles are changing, and a flexible and entrepreneurial attitude is emphasised in working life, to which young people relate their career aspirations. In addition to the internal development of companies, the working life of the future is in continuous global development and is forward-looking. The employee must know how to hold conversations that enable good performance and have the basic skills to learn, analyse information, and see connections.

The tense dividing lines of the new work come to the fore, especially between the public and private sectors, local and remote work, and entrepreneurial and institutionalised work forms. What kind of work contains the most degrees of freedom, and what type of work has the most risks? Reforms that increase flexibility can also bring uncertainty.

How do you stand out in your future career? There is reason to believe that we are mentally stronger when we get used to challenges and changes. Resilience and diverse skills develop network-like, ecosystem-like working expands. The time for multi-year strategies is over. The world is changing fast, and companies and working life must reflect the change. However, the need for innovation and creativity remains the same, and the communities have to be in the same space and have direct interaction. The career counsellor has to prepare the supervisees more and more through human skills in order to answer about dynamism and effectiveness requirements because they are increasingly taking centre stage in the post-COVID world.

The world and work have transitioned even before the pandemic, but the global crisis accelerated change and offered new approaches. The wave of change accelerated, and people are more ready to change after the pandemic than before. To survive, the seed of accepting change sprouts. Career guidance also has the opportunity to take some new steps towards a globalised world.

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Chapter 4 - THE DEVELOPMENT OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN EUROPE

In this chapter, we go back to the history of vocational education and training. We follow the development of this education to what it is now. We also focus on the different ways this educational system has developed itself in several EU countries and try to give the reader an idea about the importance of this alternative way of educating (young) people. Also, the initiatives of the European Commission will be mentioned.
Vocational education stands for craftsmanship and (manual) skill. From building houses, building infrastructure, and growing food to preparing meals: craftsmanship makes it possible for people to live. Over the years, good craftsmanship has always been valued.

It is precisely in the last few decades that the image of craftsmanship has changed. Parents and children opt for education in which they have to do less with their 'hands', while intellectual work has increasingly become valued. As those directly involved in vocational education, we think this is a wrong choice. Everyone should choose the education and profession that suits them best. Vocational education in particular should play a more prominent role in this.

But how did this come about? For that, we need to chart the development of vocational education in Europe. After all, vocational education in Europe has developed throughout history in response to the changing needs of society and the economy.
Its origins can be traced to several historical developments and periods:

4.1 - Middle Ages

In the Middle Ages, there were craft guilds, in which craftsmen and artisans organised themselves to protect their interests and pass on knowledge to younger generations. Apprentices were trained in the workshops of masters, where they learned the skills and knowledge of the trade. This system laid the foundation for the early forms of vocational education.

4.2 - Industrial Revolution

With the rise of the Industrial Revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries, the economy changed dramatically. Factories and industrial processes demanded specialised skills and knowledge. This led to the creation of technical schools and vocational colleges, which taught practical knowledge and technical skills to meet the demands of the industrial labour market.

Source: https://www.gettyimages.nl/

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4.3 - Late 19th and 20th centuries

In the late 19th and 20th centuries, vocational and technical education was further developed and formalised. Countries began to include vocational training in their education systems, often distinguishing between general education and vocational education. This provided wider recognition of craftsmanship and technical expertise.

Source: https://www.historischnieuwsblad.nl/

4.4 - European cooperation

After World War II, European cooperation in education began to develop. The European Social Fund (ESF) and programmes such as the Erasmus programme promoted the exchange of knowledge and best practices between European countries.

This led to greater harmonisation and coordination of vocational education and training at the European level.

4.5 - Bologna Process

Launched in 1999, the Bologna Process aimed to create the European Higher Education Area by harmonising degree structures and promoting mobility and quality. This process also had an impact on vocational education, as it promoted the recognition of vocational qualifications and the development of competency-based approaches.

Source: https://www.csee-etuce.org/en/

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4.6 - Contemporary developments

Today, much attention is being paid to the modernisation of vocational education and training in Europe. There is a shift towards more practice-based and competence-based approaches to better match the needs of today's labour market. Digital technologies and flexible learning pathways are also playing an increasing role in vocational education.

In short, vocational education in Europe has emerged from a combination of historical traditions, industrial developments, and educational policies that evolved to match the changing demands of the economy and society.

Vocational education in Europe has undergone significant changes over the past 75 years, driven by social, economic, and technological developments. Here are some key trends and developments:

1.   Diversification of training:
In recent decades, vocational education in Europe has expanded and diversified. In addition to traditional craft and technical subjects, there are now courses for sectors such as healthcare, tourism, IT and business services.

2.   Cooperation between education and industry:
There has been a greater emphasis on cooperation between educational institutions and industry. This cooperation is aimed at improving the connection between training courses and the needs of the labour market. Internship programmes, company visits, and practical learning experiences have become more common.

3.   Lifelong learning:
Rapid technological innovation and changes in the labour market have made lifelong learning increasingly important. People are encouraged to continuously acquire new skills and knowledge to adapt to changing circumstances.

Source: https://lllplatform.eu/

4.   Digitalisation and technology:
The rise of digital technologies has led to new professions and skills. Vocational education has adapted by offering courses on digital skills, programming, data analysis and other technological areas.

5.   Quality assurance and standardisation:
More attention has been paid to ensuring the quality of vocational education through standardisation of curricula, assessment criteria, and competency frameworks. This has helped improve the recognition of degrees and skills across national borders.

6.   Inclusiveness and equal opportunities:
There has been a greater emphasis on inclusiveness and providing equal opportunities in vocational education. This means that educational institutions strive to make vocational education accessible to diverse groups, regardless of background or disabilities.

Source: https://www.canstockphoto.com/

7.   Hybrid learning models:
With the rise of online learning, hybrid learning models have become increasingly common. Students can learn both on campus and online, which offers flexibility and lends itself well to lifelong learning.

4.7 - Future trends

Looking to the future, some trends are likely to continue to play a role in the development of vocational education in Europe[10]:

1.   Focus on sustainability:
Given the increasing focus on sustainability and environmental issues, vocational education institutions are likely to develop programmes focusing on sustainable technologies and practices.

2.   Digital transformation:
Technological advances will continue to create new skills and occupations. Vocational education will have to adapt to prepare students for jobs that do not even exist today.

3.   Flexibility and personalisation:
With an increasingly diverse student population, there will be a need for flexible and customised learning pathways to meet different learning needs.

4.   Further collaboration with industry:
Close links between education and industry will continue to ensure that graduates are well-prepared for the current and future labour market.

5.   Innovative assessment methods:
Traditional examinations are likely to be complemented by more practice-based assessments, such as projects, simulations, and portfolio assessments.

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[10]   *More information on the perspective on the future of VET can be found at:* https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/projects/future-vet

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6.   Globalisation of skills:

With the increasing globalisation of the economy, skills will increasingly need to be internationally recognised, which may lead to more standardisation and cooperation between countries.

Overall, vocational education in Europe will continue to adapt to the changing demands of society and the labour market, with an emphasis on flexibility, relevance, and inclusiveness.

4.8 - Differences in the development of vocational education within Europe

There are significant differences in the development of vocational education between European countries[11]. These differences are influenced by factors such as historical context, cultural norms, economic conditions, and educational policies.

Here are some examples of variations in the development of vocational education in European countries:

- *Germany is often seen as an example of a highly developed vocational education system. The country has a long tradition of vocational training with a strong focus on practical skills and close cooperation with companies. Students follow a dual system, learning both in school and in the workplace. This system has led to a strong connection between education and industry.*
- *Switzerland, like Germany, has a dual vocational education system that is hands-on and has close links with industry. The Swiss system is known for its flexibility and wide range of vocational training, including high-quality technical and craft training.*
- *The Netherlands has undergone significant changes in vocational education in recent years. There has been a shift from the classic distinction between academic and vocational education to a more integrated system that values skills, both practical and theoretical. The Dutch system emphasises individual study choices and offers flexibility in educational pathways.*
- *France has historically had a stricter separation between general and vocational education. However, the country has taken steps to reform vocational education and put more emphasis on practical skills and workplace experience. It has invested in modernising vocational training to better match the needs of the labour market.*
- *Vocational education in Finland is known for its strong emphasis on practical learning and strong support for individual learners. The country has invested in strengthening the status of vocational education and improving the quality of training.*
- *The United Kingdom (UK) has a more diversified system with different training routes, including vocational colleges, technical colleges, and universities. Efforts have been made in recent years to strengthen links between vocational education and industry, although in some cases, these could be developed further.*
- *Italy has a complex education system in which vocational education historically had less prestige than general education. In recent years, however, the country has taken steps to reform and strengthen vocational education. Italy has introduced reforms to make vocational education more attractive and more responsive to labour market needs. Greater emphasis has been placed on practical skills and workplace learning. As in other European countries, Italy has strengthened cooperation between educational*

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[11] For more details about the VET systems in all EU member states (plus Iceland, Norway and the UK), please check the link: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/countries

institutions and industry. This has resulted in internships, apprenticeships, and partnerships between schools and companies. It has also worked hard to create flexible learning pathways to allow students to adapt to changing working conditions and support lifelong learning.

- **Ireland** has undergone significant changes in vocational education in recent years, particularly aimed at addressing the needs of a rapidly changing economy. For example, Ireland has invested in building closer relationships between vocational education institutions and employers to ensure that training is relevant to the labour market. With the rise of technology and digital skills, Ireland has emphasised the provision of courses and training in areas such as IT, data analytics, and technical skills. There has also been a move towards more modular and flexible programmes to enable students to build specific skills and knowledge relevant to their career goals. In particular, Ireland has also invested in career guidance and support to help students make informed career choices and contribute to a smooth transition into the labour market.

- **Spain** has also worked hard to strengthen and modernise vocational education to better match the demands of today's labour market. For instance, Spain has implemented reforms to modernise vocational education and offer more practice-oriented skills that match employers' needs. Again, increased cooperation between vocational education institutions and companies is signalled to promote internships, apprenticeships, and practice-based learning. Spain has also worked to improve the recognition of vocational qualifications and skills, both nationally and internationally. Moreover, efforts have been made to provide adults and working professionals with opportunities for upskilling and retraining to keep their skills up-to-date.

All these examples illustrate some of the variations in the development of vocational education in Europe. Each country has its own approach and challenges, but there are also common goals, such as strengthening the link between education and the labour market, adapting to technological change, and providing inclusive learning opportunities.

It is important to note that developments in each of these countries are constantly evolving, and the points mentioned provide a general overview of trends and changes in vocational education.

4.9 - Ongoing European cooperation

A lot of hard work is being done at the European level by many network organisations to develop vocational education at the European level further.

Organisations such as the European Vocation Training Association (EVTA) (and many others) are trying to realise knowledge exchange between the different member states and initiate partnerships in many ways.

Some examples of ways in which work is being done at the European level to improve cooperation within vocational education from different member states:

1.   Erasmus+ Programme:
The European Union's Erasmus+ programme provides funding and support for various educational initiatives, including vocational education. The programme enables students, teachers and professionals to gain experience in other Member States, sharing knowledge and practices and promoting cooperation.

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Erasmus%2B_Logo.svg

2.   European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA):
This initiative aims to increase the quality and quantity of apprenticeships and places in Europe. It brings together public authorities, businesses, trade unions and other stakeholders to forge partnerships and create awareness of the importance of apprenticeships.

3.   European Qualifications Framework (EQF):
The EQF is a common framework that makes qualifications from different countries comparable, facilitating mobility and recognition of skills within Europe. This helps promote cooperation between vocational education institutions and create common standards.

Source: https://www.maintworld.com/R-D/Application-of-European-Qualification-Framework-EQF-in-Maintenance

4.   *Cedefop:*
The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training abbreviated as Cedefop, is a European Union agency dedicated to the development and promotion of vocational education and training (VET) in Europe. It was founded in 1975 and is based in Thessaloniki, Greece.

Cedefop performs several important functions and tasks related to VET in Europe. For example, Cedefop conducts research on trends and developments in VET. It analyses labour market needs, identifies skills shortages and needs, and helps policymakers make decisions based on factual information. For more details on Cedefop, please check the link: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu

The agency collects and disseminates information on good practices, innovations and policy initiatives within VET. This helps European Union Member States learn from each other and work together to improve their education systems. Cedefop also acts as a hub for networking and promoting cooperation among various stakeholders in the VET sector, including policymakers, education and training institutions, trade unions, employer organisations and researchers. Based on its research and analysis, Cedefop provides policy advice to the European Commission and EU Member States on VET issues. It contributes to the development of strategies and policies to improve the relevance, quality and effectiveness of VET systems.

5.   *European sectoral cooperation initiatives:*
There are also several sectoral cooperation initiatives at the European level targeting specific industries, such as ICT, healthcare, engineering and so on. These initiatives bring together stakeholders from different countries to harmonise curricula, develop joint training programmes and facilitate skills transferability.

These examples illustrate the efforts being made to improve cooperation within vocational education at the European level to facilitate student and worker mobility, as well as sharing best practices and promoting common standards.

6.   *EPALE*
EPALE stands for the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe. It is a European, multilingual, and inclusive community that brings together experts in the field of adult learning. This community encompasses a diverse range of individuals, including adult educators, trainers, support personnel, researchers, academics, and policymakers.

Funded by the Erasmus+ program, EPALE plays an integral role in the European Union's overarching strategy to advance and enrich learning opportunities for adults, ensuring inclusivity and quality.

EPALE fulfils this mission by actively bolstering the adult learning professions. It facilitates a platform for members to forge connections and glean insights from peers across Europe. This is made possible through a range of channels, including blog contributions, interactive forums, the Partner Search tool, and supplemented by in-person gatherings.

One of EPALE's key offerings is its repository of high-quality, accurate information pertinent to practitioners in adult learning. As time progresses, part of this valuable content is expected to be provided by members themselves.

More specifically about VET, EPALE has a Community of European VET practitioners, which allows professionals to discuss various topics, such as online/distance learning, green skills, social inclusion, and learning mobility.
For more details on EPALE, please check the link: https://epale.ec.europa.eu/nl/why-epale.

4.10 - Conclusions

The above list is far from exhaustive. Moreover, developments within individual countries and between different member states, whether initiated by the European Commission or not, are moving so fast that at the time of writing this chapter, the content is already outdated.

One thing is certain: vocational education remains unchanged while the professions trainings for young people are crucial for the economies of different member states to function. . The lack of well-trained professionals is seen as a major problem in every country. Continuous efforts will therefore be needed to further improve the quality of education, and apprenticeships as well as with the role and cooperation with business. The fact that the role of the practical trainer is also mentioned only to a limited extent in this chapter is perhaps a sign of things to come.

After all, you learn a trade primarily in practice. The business sector offers that practice. Increasingly, internships are an important part of vocational training. But precisely the content and supervision during these internships could use a quality boost in almost all cases. The training of trainers who take on this role of teacher in practice should be much more structured and certified. The resulting quality boost will directly contribute to improving the image of vocational education. Would that be a great starting point for yet another European project?

Source: https://endurance.nl/

4.11 - Bibliography And Sources

A specific source bibliography is difficult to give, as this topic is based on a broad historical development over several centuries and countries. You can find more information in history books on education and professional development in Europe, as well as articles and research papers on the subject.

Some relevant books are:
- "The Making of the European Spatial Development Perspective: No Masterplan" edited by Louis Albrechts, Deniz Korfalı, and Wil Zonneveld.
- "Vocational Education and Training in Europe" edited by Joao Santos and Stephen McLeish.
- "The History of Vocational Education and Training in Europe: Cases, Concepts, and Challenges" edited by Lorenz Lassnigg and Johanna Lasonen.

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Chapter 5 - Professional transitions and health crisis

Introduction

This chapter addresses the issue of professional transitions in the recent health crisis. Vast changes in the labour market were observed during this period, which led the French State to take specific measures and to put in place an innovative mechanism to facilitate professional transitions collectively: "TransCo".

This device, which complements the possibilities of individual professional transitions already existing, is presented here, as well as concrete examples of its implementation within two French companies.

5.1 - Broad changes in the labour market

The world today is perceived as increasingly Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous, and it is decked out with the acronym VUCA. Whether of an ecological, energy, climate or digital nature, transitions have clearly invited themselves to the table of change and lead individuals to have to adapt quickly to new contexts.

Source: Image by fatmawatilauda on Freepik

This is how the health and economic crisis which imposed itself recently has profoundly upset not only the landscape of jobs but also that of vocational training. Many jobs have indeed disappeared, and others have been forced to change, sometimes radically.

According to the Ministry of Economy, Finance and Recovery (***), the Covid-19 health crisis caused 296,000 job losses in 2020, or 1.2% of jobs in France. Certain professional sectors have been particularly affected by the forced shutdown of activity for several months: trade, accommodation and catering, arts and entertainment, financial and insurance activities as well as the manufacture of transport equipment. These sectors now show uneven "post-crisis" rebound rates.

On the other hand, specifies the Ministry, other sectors, for some already in tension before the crisis, are in strong demand for recruitment. This is particularly the case for health, medico-social accommodation, construction, education and IT. So many sectors therefore offer great job opportunities for people looking for professional retraining.

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New ways of working quickly emerged from the first months of the pandemic, favoured using the internet.

Career transitions have also been particularly affected, as companies have had to adapt quickly to remote working environments and significant and particularly unpredictable economic changes.

In a certain way, this event constituted a catalyst for a process of evolution already initiated some years ago. Thus, Élisabeth Borne, Minister of Labour, Employment and Integration considers that "The health and economic crisis has accelerated changes in the labour market and brought out new challenges around vocational training. »(*)

5.2 - Post-COVID Labor Market Trends

The post-COVID labour market is constantly changing, but some trends are clear. First, jobs that can be done remotely are becoming more common. Companies have thus realised that they can reduce costs by having remote personnel, and it also allows the employees concerned to choose where they want to live and work.

Digital skills have become more important than ever. Businesses have had to adapt quickly to remote working environments, and that means digital skills such as online project management, remote collaboration, and online communication are essential.

In addition, professional sectors that have been directly and immediately affected by the pandemic, such as hotels, restaurants, and tourism, have experienced a significant drop in demand. This forced the employees concerned to consider retraining and acquiring new skills to give another direction to their professional careers. For others, the health crisis has truly been a powerful trigger to envision a new future, both personal and professional. Thus, during the health crisis,

Source: 01/10/23 Photo by ooceey from Pixabay

5.3 - Health crisis and individual professional transition projects

The question of professional transitions naturally existed long before the health crisis. It nevertheless seems interesting to establish a precise inventory of the situation concerning the conversion projects of French assets in 2020. This was precisely the subject of the survey carried out in France by the BVA Institute from 19 to June 25, 2020, with a representative sample of 1,000 working people.

This survey provides particularly useful results for understanding not only retraining practices but also "the motivations, the factors of change, as well as the obstacles that prevent taking action. » (**)

The research work carried out also sheds light on the influence of the health crisis on the wishes of French workers to turn the page on their professional lives following the pandemic.

The first observation is particularly interesting since it indicates that professional retraining already concerns nearly one in two people (48%). The people in question have already either considered, started or made a professional transition.

In the context of the health crisis, it appears that 18 % of working people have begun to question the possibilities available to them in terms of professional development. Two main motivations are mentioned by the people concerned: the need to give meaning to one's work (58%) and the need to integrate personal constraints (31%).

While the health crisis seems to have played a positive role for some people in the process of reflection on the question of possible professional development, it has also had more negative effects: 5% of working people have decided to suspend their project and 5% did not see the professional transition project they were working on come to fruition.

The Ministry of Economy, Finance and Recovery also took an interest in the impact of the health crisis on employment in a note dated June 24, 2021, from the Directorate General of the Treasury (DGT) entitled "Skills and intersectoral job reallocations after the crisis " (***).

The mobility potential for employees in the most vulnerable professional sectors is presented in this document. The DGT note also provides a very useful reminder of the various retraining tools already available and underlines the need to communicate better on the various individual support systems for professional retraining, which are:

- *Professional Development Counseling (CEP*

- *The Professional Transition Project (CPF)*

- *Optional preparation for employment (POE) is aimed at job seekers wishing to practice a profession in a sector identified as providing employment.*

A recent study conducted by France COMPETENCES (****) among 886 people who have initiated or completed professional retraining over the past 5 years, however, underlines an important point: " No system (advice on professional development, skills assessment, help with business creation or incubation, support from an HR department, training, etc., is not preponderant in professional retraining courses. The results of this study highlight a cumulative and desynchronized use of these systems, depending on opportunities and needs, which are themselves evolving. The authors of the report in question go even further by emphasising that the individual mobilisation of the proposed measures is ultimately much more a matter of "tinkering" and adaptation strategies than a real global strategy that has been developed for a long time.

Another important point revealed by the study: multiple factors influence the commitment to a professional retraining process. While dissatisfaction with job content or employment conditions is a preponderant condition, other factors also come into play: opportunity, the

existence of a prior project, and personal or health problems. This therefore calls into question a uniform and linear vision of reconversion,

5.4 - Accompanied collective retraining

Various methods of individual support have thus existed for a long time in France. However, professional retraining is not just an individual process. Indeed, the health crisis has led to the creation of a new professional but collective retraining system: Collective transitions (or TransCo). It should be noted that it was co-constructed with the social partners.

Deployed in France since January 15, 2021, as part of the Recovery Plan, this new system offers companies that are encountering difficulties, due to the health crisis or changes in the labour market, to allow their employees whose employment is weakened, to convert to a job that recruits close to home.

The support offered is organised around two objectives:

- support companies affected by the impact of the Covid crisis and anticipate economic changes.

- support voluntary employees whose jobs are threatened, in retraining towards a profession of the future, buoyant or in tension.

Operationally, a list of promising professions in the territories is drawn up by the Regional Directorates for the Economy, Employment, Labor and Solidarity (DREETS) after consulting the Regional Committee for Employment, Orientation and Vocational Training (CREFOP) and consultation of OPCO (Skills Operators) and Transitions pro branch observatories.

It should be noted that the retraining of the employees concerned can be envisaged via long training (lasting up to two years) financed by the State or validation of acquired experience (VAE). Thus, they benefit from specific support to access a buoyant profession (emerging professions from new fields of activity or professions in tension in sectors which are struggling to recruit) in their area of life.

Thus, to guarantee them secure retraining paths towards growth professions, the State finances all or part of the training and remuneration of employees, depending on the size of the company: 100% for companies with less than 300 employees; 75% for companies with 300 to 1,000 employees and 40% for companies with more than 1,000 employees.

This arrangement offers undeniable benefits, including shared resources, peer support and the ability to leverage collective expertise and networks.

5.5 - Pioneering companies in the TransCo system

The Derichebourg and Monoprix groups were the first to commit to the Transition Collective scheme. Their volunteer employees, cash desk hosts, followed a 14-month training course as caregivers (combining distance learning and work situations) at the end of which, after obtaining their state diploma, they were recruited within an establishment of the Korian group, the European leader in care for the elderly and fragile.

By signing an experimental employment and career management agreement with management on May 20, 2021, a majority of Monoprix trade unions made it possible to implement the new collective transition system in question. This agreement thus opened up the possibility for volunteer employees to embark on a retraining process towards a particularly buoyant profession: nursing assistant. The Monoprix-Korian agreement initially concerned three Ile-de-France departments: Yvelines, Hauts-de-Seine and Seine-Saint-Denis. A dual objective was pursued here: to develop employability and to reduce the tension in professions encountering recruitment difficulties.

The Monoprix group wanted to support its employees in anticipating the changes in some of its businesses. Especially that of cashiers. Indeed, the company found itself confronted like other retail brands with the consequences not only of the digitisation of its businesses but also of the evolution of consumption patterns and in particular remote orders. Monoprix customers have changed their purchasing methods through faster, simpler and more digital payment methods, leading to a necessary change in jobs. The combination of these changes ultimately threatened several jobs. This is why the brand has initiated a reflection to reposition some of its employees both internally and externally (TransCo).

Source: 01/10/2023 https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/formation-professionnelle/formation-des-salaries/transitions collectives/

Two developments present:

On the one hand, for some employees in the distribution sector, the difficulties mentioned threatened their jobs and, on the other hand, the care sector needed staff since nearly 220,000 positions were to be filled in 2022, the health crisis having, in particular, led many professionals in this sector to quit their jobs.

Naturally, as provided for in the system, only voluntary employees have accessed the TransCo system thus set up. At any time during the training, they had the possibility of requesting an interview to rejoin the company. It should also be noted that they kept their salary on a full-time basis as well as all their rights (paid holidays, health insurance, bonuses, profit-sharing, etc.) throughout the training.

To support employees in this period of both collective and innovative professional transition, a monitoring committee has also been set up.

The objective of this first partnership set up with the Korian Group was to enable employees in the cash register sector to convert to the profession of caregiver.

Finally, thanks to the TransCo system, around forty employees have been trained to become nursing assistants at Korian, a specialist in retirement homes and senior residences.

5.6 - Conclusions

The post-pandemic labour market appears more flexible and dynamic and presents opportunities to make either individual or collective transitions to new professional fields. The decisive element in a world that has now become "VUCA" is to remain constantly informed about the evolution of the labour market and to continue to develop new skills.

The TransCo system developed during this period is an example of an innovative measure that has enabled employees to successfully convert collectively in a very specific context. Such a system would seem to be adapted and developed in other countries facing problems of collective professional reconversion.

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Chapter 6: - Empath and Psychological traits necessary for employability

6.1 - Introduction

Every profession and job requires certain skills and personal traits to carry out this occupation. These skills and jobs are usually acquired through education and on-the-job learning but to better equip the future workforce with the aforementioned, we must distinguish between skills and personal traits and how they can be acquired.

Skills are acquired through continuously doing the skill through operational tasks. Personal traits are acquired and developed as a result of environmental and educational influences. PCharacteristics and qualities often form and solidify once an individual is employed, yet they remain subject to change. Skills and personal traits are usually listed on the job description according to the company's values. Skills are personal traits that are harder to assess and cultivate, and it is important to know skills and personal attributes complement other aspects of the person, such as education and on-the-job learning.

The diagram illustrates how learning at work occurs:

Competency Based Learning
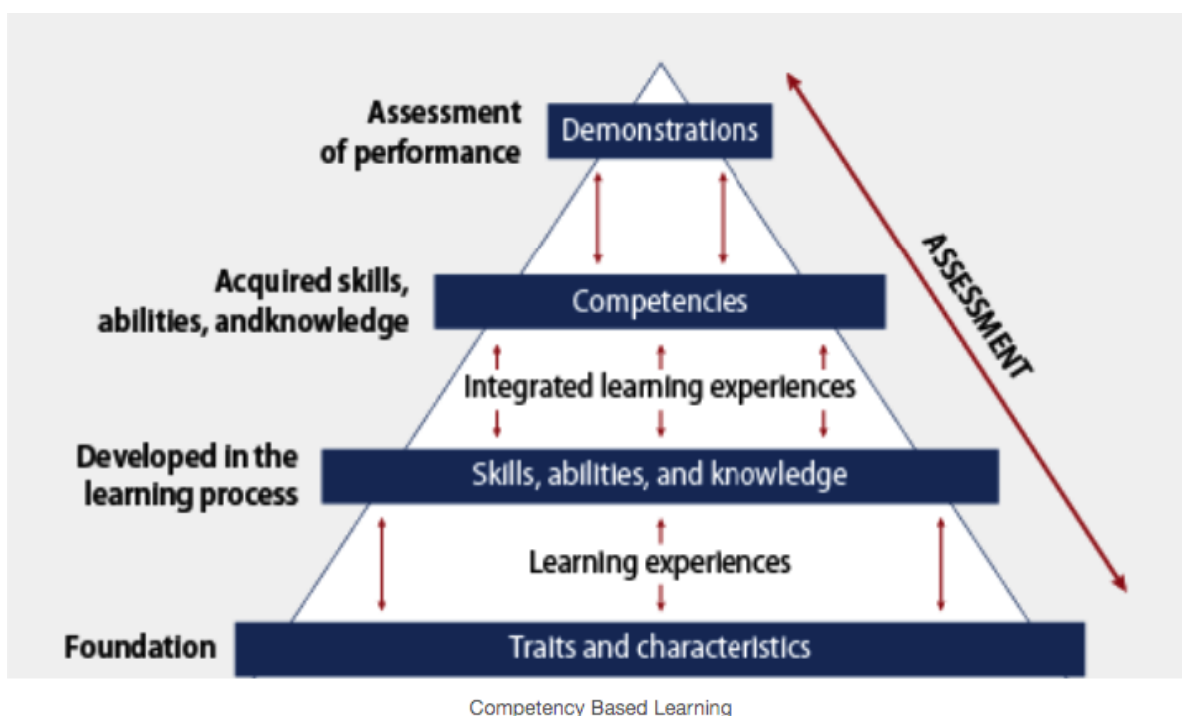
Source: 01/11/2023 Joseph ZuvaT. Zuva - ENHANCING SUSTAINABLE LIFELONG LEARNING THROUGH COMPETENCY BASED EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN ZIMBABWE POLYTECHNICS

6.2 - Empathy

What is empathy and why is it becoming more important?

As AI and globalisation are exerting a great influence on the way we work as well as labour market trends and the skills that employees need not just to succeed but to progress in their careers. Soft skills such as empathy, communication, teamwork and self-awareness are becoming more crucial in the workplace.

While some routine labour tasks will be carried out by computer technologies and cause many jobs to become extinct, these technologies will also allow for the creation of new employment opportunities involving skills such as creativity, empathy, and social and emotional skills.

There is a much greater emphasis being put on empathy in the classroom and in the workplace to try and motivate many to become more responsible citizens to help combat the more recent problems of global warming, wildlife extinction, and natural disasters and to help use cleaner energy and more sustainable ways to work and live.

The OECD Learning Compass 2023 distinguishes between three different types of skills(OECD,2018):

- **Cognitive and meta-cognitive skills** *include critical thinking, creative thinking, learning to learn and self-regulation.*
- **Social and emotional skills**, *which include empathy, self-efficacy, responsibility and collaboration*
- **Practical and physical skills**, *which include using new information and communication technology services.*

Social psychology describes empathy in three parts:
- **Feeling the same as the other person**
- **Feeling our distress in response to their pain**
- **Feeling compassion toward the other person**
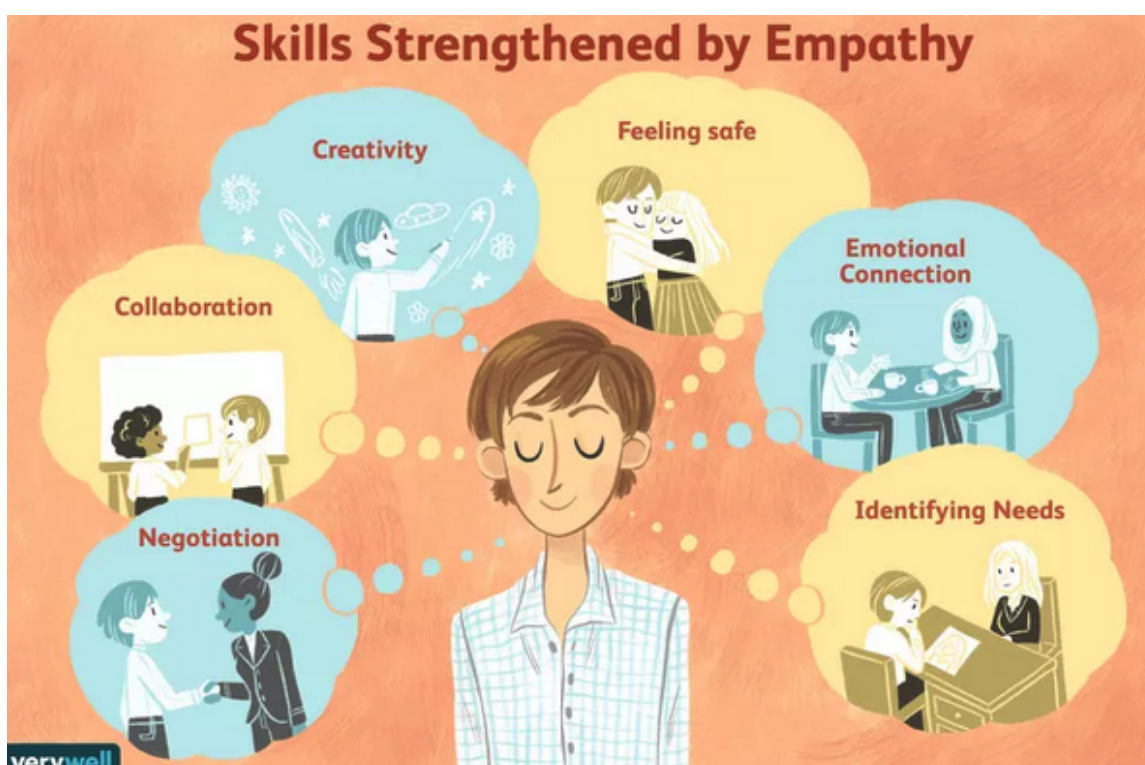
There are 3 types of Empathy:
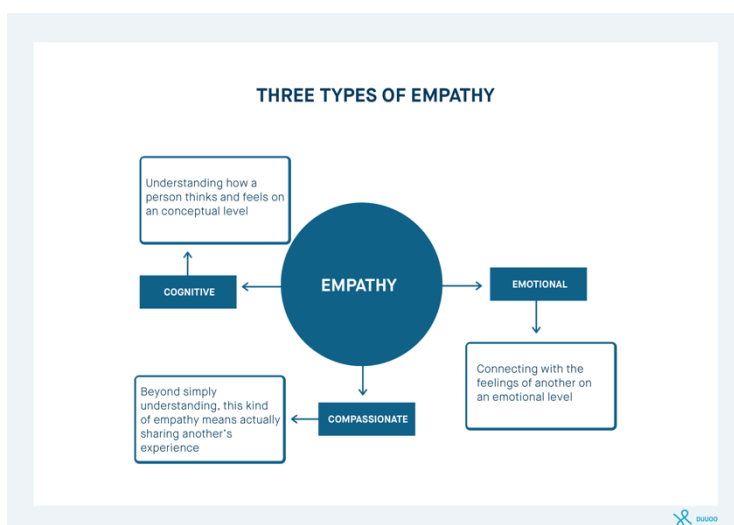
To expand on this, psychologists Daniel Goleman and Paul Ekman view *empathy in three categories*:

- **Cognitive empathy:** by understanding how a person thinks and feels, we become better communicators, relaying information in a way that connects with the other person
- **Emotional empathy:** by sharing the feelings of another, we can build and nurture emotional connections
- **Compassionate empathy:** by going beyond understanding others and sharing their experiences, we look to take action, and help however we can.

Empathy allows us to "put ourselves in another's shoes" and therefore gain a different perspective of the situation which in turn strengthens our ability to plan, persuade, negotiate, sell, market and improve many of the skills we learned throughout our education. Empathy is the key to sharpening situational judgement and leadership which can help any employee to excel in the workplace and secure that promotion.

6.3 - Why Empathy matters?

Empathy is important because it allows us to facilitate connections with others but according to DUO, an online publication: "Essentially empathy is a neutral data gathering tool that enables you to understand the human environment which you are operating in business and therefore make better predictions, craft better tactics, inspire loyalty and communicate clearly".

Source: 01/10/2023 https://www.verywellmind.com/cognitive-and-emotional-empathy-4582389

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- *Emotional skills will be more necessary especially if technology replaces many jobs*
- *Societal changes will require more people with Empathy*
- *Skills such as empathy will improve academic and labour market prospects*

6.4 - How is empathy relevant to Career Guidance

According to Forbes Empathy fosters the following outcomes in the workplace.

It is important to note that empathy can positively enhance leadership skills and attributes and if we are to encourage the cultivation of empathy in our workforce, it must start in the classroom. Forbes found that:

- *Innovation. When people reported their leaders were empathetic, they were more likely to report they were able to be innovative—61% of employees compared to only 13% of employees with less empathetic leaders.*
- *Engagement. 76% of people who experienced empathy from their leaders reported they were engaged compared with only 32% who experienced less empathy.*
- *Retention. 57% of white women and 62% of women of colour said they were unlikely to think of leaving their companies when they felt their life circumstances were respected and valued by their companies. However, when they didn't feel that level of value or respect for their life circumstances, only 14% and 30% of white women and women of colour respectively said they were unlikely to consider leaving.*
- *Inclusivity. 50% of people with empathetic leaders reported their workplace was inclusive, compared with only 17% of those with less empathetic leadership.*
- *Work-Life. When people felt their leaders were more empathetic, 86% reported they could navigate the demands of their work and life—successfully juggling their personal, family and work obligations. This is compared with 60% of those who perceived less empathy.*

6.5 - How to Develop Empathy

Empathy can be naturally present or can be developed through various means:

- *Psychometric testing - Allows is to receive feedback on our attitudes strengths and weaknesses as well as identifying if we are empathetic although it may be difficult to ascertain how empathetic one is*
- *360 reviews – allow our work colleagues or peers to evaluate us in the workplace and give feedback on our personal empathy although this method is very subjective and not very reliable*
- *Mentoring – this can be used as an excellent tool to develop empathy*

6.6 - Is just having empathy enough to progress your career?

For any job requiring subject-specific knowledge of course one needs to attain the knowledge and cognitive skills but empathy can enhance any employee's performance and therefore career.

6.7 - The general Psychological traits which will help with Career Progression

A small-scale study was carried out to try and identify the personal traits that can help with career progression or promotion.

- *40 people were surveyed*
- *20 skilled employees (University education), 20 unskilled employees (No education)*
- *Employees at all levels filled out a survey and were asked what personal traits they thought were important for promotion.*
- *They were asked questions such as: Why do you think your colleague was promoted?*
- *While education does help with the foundational acquirement of skills and skills are important, personal traits are important too*
- *These personal traits were measured through psychometric testing in some cases and interviews were also conducted.*
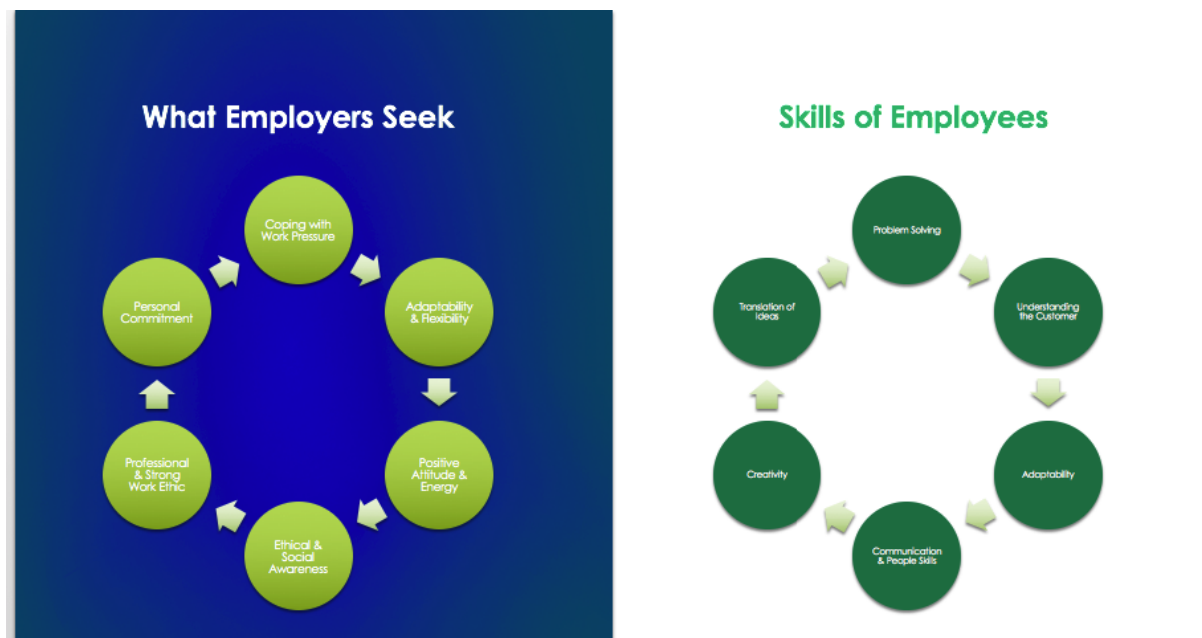
The results from this survey concluded that these were the top ten personal traits along with education or subject-specific knowledge that will help with career development and getting a promotion:

1. *Likeability/Approachability*
2. *Integrity*
3. *Honesty*
4. *Curiosity/ eager to learn/lifelong learners*
5. *Innovative/problem solver*
6. *Ability to Strategize*
7. *Strong recognizable personal Brands*
8. *Generous with their time and knowledge*
9. *Positive image management e.g. can-do attitude*

One must become aware or become aware of their personal traits if they do wish to develop them to help with career promotion. These are the methods used to identify and improve or change personal qualities.

1. 360 review
2. Psychometric testing
3. Managerial review - developmental conversations
4. Self- reflection
5. Job shadowing
6. Mentoring

Recap of many different interrelated factors which

6.8 - Conclusions

Ireland has a well-educated workforce and with an unemployment rate of 4.5% (ERSI, 2023) the workplace is very competitive with many people striving to secure a promotion. While education is the primary means by which a graduate get their first job and progresses up the initial career ladder, the more senior a person reaches in their industry or field, the more their soft skills become more evident and scrutinised and in many cases, it is these soft skills and or personality traits alone that can help a person to get promoted. This chapter has covered many of these traits and has touched on how one can gain awareness of their strengths and learn to develop these traits to allow them to excel in the workplace.

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