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ACTIVE VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

PILOT IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

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REPORT ON THE PILOT IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVE VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE FOR YOUNG REFUGEES AGED 16-24

The active vocational guidance program is a dynamic procedure aiming at improving the personal and professional potential of every participant. Every person, especially the target group of young refugees/asylum seekers, requires help as to what kind of work would be most suitable for him/her keeping in view his/her abilities and aptitudes. Vocational guidance is a process of assisting the participants to choose an occupation, prepare for it, enter up and progress on it.

The program sought to foster group dynamics, focusing on qualities such as interaction, mutual assistance between members of the group, and working towards the achievement of a common goal. It was based on the principles of multiculturalism and respect for the diversity of the different cultural values of the target group.

The group of young refugees-participants has special and unique characteristics, such as different educational backgrounds and experiences from their country of origin, young age, multiculturalism, especially traumatic events such as loss of family members, social isolation, sudden change of their life and social environment, unemployment and obstacles entering in the labor market. As they face a new environment in the host country, one of the main goals of this group is to create connection, a sense of belonging and cohesion, therefore, another target was to help the participants in building good social relationships.

The duration of the program was **106 hours** and particularly **69 hours vocational guidance, 15 hours entrepreneurship consulting** and **22 hours Visits to the vocational training schools** of the Manpower Employment Organization.

The educational techniques implemented were mainly emotive/experiential in order to promote the equal participation of every person and reinforce their self-esteem.

The active vocational guidance program focused in exploring the skills and competences of the target group and in educational and professional information related to tourism and technical occupations of the Greek Manpower Employment Organization Vocational Education Schools.

1st PHASE: COMMUNICATION AND CREATING A CLIMATE OF ACCEPTANCE

Through this phase the emphasis was on getting the group members acquainted with one another and ensuring good relationships between them. The counselor had to:

- Define his/her role
- Ensure confidentiality
- Respect for diversity and multiculturalism
- Analyze the aims of the program and the approach followed
- Present the context, the duration of the program, the techniques that would be used and their optional integration
- Exploring needs and expectations

2nd PHASE: SELF-UNDERSTANDING & Enhancement of self-esteem

The main objective of applying a program of active vocational guidance to a distinctively sensitive social group is the fostering of self-understanding and in extension the strengthening of self-esteem.

The purpose of this unit was to motivate this group of people to collect information that would assist them in developing a clearer picture of themselves based mainly on their experiences, their feelings, their behaviors, their needs, and their attitudes, and apply techniques aimed at reinforcing self-confidence.

Information was collected from the participants regarding their achievements. More information was taken by giving them certain exercises such as questionnaires about their skills, aiming at evaluating the strengths and weaknesses and match them with the job opportunities.

Determination of horizontal and professional skills.

This unit provided the possibility for participants to realize and recognize:

- Their existing horizontal and professional skills
- How to make best use of their skills
- Their weaknesses in knowledge, capabilities and skills
- The necessary actions that need to be taken for their improvement and development
- Their labor values and personal characteristics

Correlating the profile of the young refugees with tourism and technical professions (bakery pastry, electrical engineering technician, hairdressing art, cooking art, carpenters etc). This profile correlation is the result of individual counseling services from KANEP/GSEE which sought to match their capacities/skills with those required by tourism/technical professions.

3rd PHASE: INFORMATION

- Educational information was provided related to technical and tourism professions, focusing specifically on the possibility given to young refugees to acquire knowledge and skills through vocational training programs, as well as on the modalities for registering to such training if they wished to do so.
- Professional information/job opportunities in technical and tourism professions. A mechanism is established to constantly update refugees on openings in the labor market, and on tendencies and human resource demands of Greek companies. More specifically this mechanism provides information on:
 - Title of profession
 - Definition
 - Nature of work
 - Working conditions
 - Special personal characteristics
 - Education
 - Job opportunities
 - Possibilities for employment
 - Occupational rights
 - Perspectives for business activities and prerequisites for opening new businesses

4th PHASE: VISITS to the vocational training schools of the Manpower Employment Organization (OAED) and to the laboratories of the schools.

These visits were carried out with a view to providing an overall perspective of training opportunities. The VET Teachers presented the training conditions and the laboratories of VET Schools.

The objective was to offer to participants a vocational guidance process that would help them to develop a view over their own abilities and to collect practical experience in a variety of occupational fields.

Feedback: The visits were followed by the meeting of the group in order to express their views over the visits and the required skills and abilities related to technical and tourism faculties.

5th PHASE: ENTREPRENEURSHIP CONSULTING:

The program has added a 15 hours Entrepreneurship Consulting with the aim of providing key information to individuals wishing to grow their own business. 5 sections were developed: a) Potential business profile b) Business concept c) Market research d) Marketing e) Financial planning.

6th PHASE:

⇒ Developing an Action Plan

- Making or updating a professional decision

At the end of the session, the participants in the program expressed their views on the session. Assessment session of the program and feedback. They planned or updated their professional decision. There was also discussion and reporting on desires and suggestions of participants on further vocational education and training actions.

⇒ Identifying the process of implementation of actions towards their professional integration

Program 's benefits:

- ✓ Activating young refugees/asylum seekers through counseling and vocational guidance
- ✓ Strengthening of self-esteem and creation of good social relationships
- ✓ Decision taking and developing an action plan which aimed at defining actions towards their professional integration

OTHER ACTIONS

1. COUNSELOR SELECTION REQUIREMENTS

- Implementation of the Active Vocational Guidance Program was undertaken by Vocational Guidance Counselors. Specifically, the Vocational Guidance Counselors undertook the task of providing counseling - vocational guidance to a group of asylum seekers, with the aim of facilitating and supporting beneficiaries in their integration.
- Selection Criteria for the Vocational Guidance Counselors were also defined.

2. EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL FOR YOUNG REFUGEES GUIDANCE – ADDRESSED TO ACTIVE VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE COUNSELORS

- Guide for Counselors
- Emotive Activities (for Counselors)