



Erasmus+ Programme – KA220-VET - Cooperation
partnerships in vocational education and training

INCLUDE - 2023-1-RO01-KA220-VET-000160043



TRAINING COURSE FOR VET PROVIDERS AND EMPLOYERS

How to prepare vulnerable categories of people, refugees included, for our modern labor market

2025

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INTRODUCTION

This course was realized during the implementation of the Erasmus+ Programme, KA220-VET - Cooperation partnerships in vocational education and training project “INCLUDE” with ID number 2023-1-RO01-KA220-VET-000160043, together with all the partner organizations from four EU countries: Romania, Italy, Spain and Ireland.

The project main objectives were to help vulnerable people to get employed by:

- Raising employers' awareness of the existing problems of vulnerable people such as NEETS and Ukrainian refugees in terms of the employment process
- Developing the organizational capacity of VET providers to prepare vulnerable people such as NEETS and Ukrainian refugees for integration into the modern labor market
- Increasing the degree of adaptation of vulnerable categories of employees such as NEETS and refugees to the rapid changes of the labor market.

Course Aim

The course provides a step-by-step, practical strategy for VET providers, NGOs, and training organisations to support people with low levels of education, NEETs, and refugees (including Ukrainian refugees) in overcoming key barriers to labour market access — especially poor educational background, lack of work experience, low self-confidence, and language barriers.



Module 1

Understanding Vulnerability and Labour Market Barriers

1. Definition of Vulnerable Groups

Vulnerable groups in the labour market are individuals who face **systemic disadvantages** that limit their access to employment, stability, and career development. Within this project, the main vulnerable categories include:

- **NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training):** Young people disconnected from both education and the labour market, often lacking qualifications, work experience, and confidence.
- **Refugees (especially Ukrainian refugees):** Individuals forced to leave their home country due to conflict, often facing language barriers, recognition issues, and psychological stress.
- **Long-term unemployed:** Adults who have been out of work for extended periods and whose skills may no longer match labour market demands.
- **Roma people:** A group often affected by discrimination, low educational attainment, informal employment, and social exclusion.
- **Migrants:** People living in a host country without full integration into its labour, social, or education systems.

Understanding the **specific vulnerabilities** of each group is essential for designing effective preparation, guidance, and training pathways.



2. Social, Educational, and Economic Barriers to Employment

Vulnerable people face **multiple, overlapping barriers**, including:

- **Social barriers:** Discrimination, stigma, lack of social networks, low self-esteem, and limited access to support services.
- **Educational barriers:** Early school leaving, lack of formal qualifications, poor literacy or numeracy skills, and limited access to lifelong learning.
- **Economic barriers:** Poverty, unstable housing, lack of transportation, and inability to afford training or work-related costs.

These barriers reinforce one another and often result in **repeated exclusion from employment opportunities**, even when motivation to work exists.

3. Impact of Low Qualifications and Interrupted Education

Low or interrupted education significantly reduces employability. Many vulnerable individuals:

- do not meet formal qualification requirements for jobs;
- lack basic transversal skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving;
- are unfamiliar with recruitment processes, CV writing, or interviews.

For NEETs and long-term unemployed adults, negative experiences with education can also lead to **low motivation and fear of failure**, requiring supportive and non-formal learning approaches from VET providers.



4. Language and Cultural Barriers Faced by Refugees

Refugees, particularly Ukrainian refugees, face additional challenges such as:

- limited knowledge of the host country language;
- difficulties understanding workplace norms, rules, and expectations;
- differences in work culture, hierarchy, communication styles, and time management.

Language barriers affect not only job access but also **health and safety**, teamwork, and long-term retention. Cultural misunderstandings may lead to isolation or conflict if not addressed through guidance and mentoring.

5. Labour Market Expectations in the Service Sector

The service sector (hospitality, retail, beauty services, food services) is often more accessible to vulnerable groups but has specific expectations:

- reliability, punctuality, and customer-oriented behaviour;
- basic communication skills;
- ability to follow procedures and work in teams;
- adaptability to fast-paced environments.

Employers value **practical skills and attitude** more than formal qualifications, making this sector suitable for step-by-step integration when proper preparation and support are provided.



Module Outcome

At the end of this module, VET providers and trainers will:

- understand who vulnerable labour market groups are;
- recognise the main barriers affecting employability;
- be able to adapt training and guidance to real-life constraints;
- better align preparation pathways with labour market realities.

This foundation supports all subsequent modules and ensures a **learner-centred, inclusive, and realistic approach** to labour market integration.

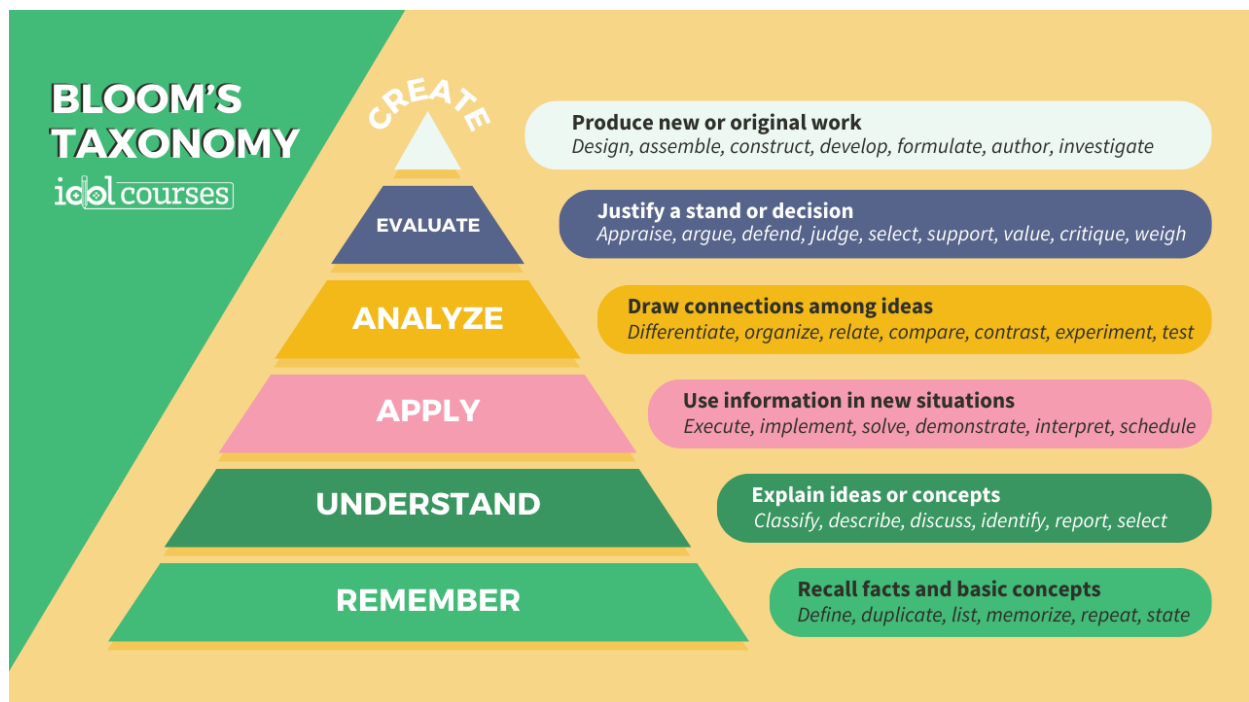
Module 2

Profiling and Individual Needs Assessment

This module supports VET providers, trainers, and counsellors in understanding each vulnerable participant as an individual, beyond formal qualifications. Proper profiling and needs assessment are essential to designing realistic learning paths and increasing employability.

1. Initial Assessment of Skills, Experience, and Learning Needs

The first step is to conduct a structured but accessible initial assessment. This should gather information about the participant's educational background, work experience (formal or informal), language level, digital skills, and personal circumstances.





Assessment tools should be simple, non-intimidating, and adapted to low literacy levels, using interviews, guided discussions, practical tasks, and visual aids. The goal is not to exclude, but to understand starting points and learning gaps.

Purpose:

To obtain a clear picture of the participant's background, abilities, learning gaps, and employment readiness.

Concrete activities:

- Structured **intake interviews** using simple language and visual aids.
- Short **skills self-assessment questionnaires** (with assistance if literacy is low).
- Practical tasks (e.g. preparing a simple meal, cleaning a workspace, basic computer use).
- Observation during group activities or workshops.

Advice for VET providers and employers:

- Avoid relying only on CVs or certificates.
- Focus on **what the person can do now**, not only on past formal education.
- Create a safe, non-judgmental environment to reduce anxiety.

2. Identifying Transferable and Informal Skills

Many vulnerable people lack formal certificates but possess valuable **transferable skills** acquired through life experience, informal work, family responsibilities, volunteering, or previous employment.

Examples include teamwork, manual skills, customer interaction, problem-solving, reliability, and time management. Trainers should actively help participants recognise and name these skills,



strengthening self-confidence and providing a basis for skills-based employment pathways.

Purpose:

To recognise skills acquired through life experience, informal work, family responsibilities, volunteering, or migration journeys.

Concrete activities:

- Guided storytelling sessions (“Tell me about a normal day you managed”).
- Mapping daily tasks to work skills (e.g. childcare → responsibility, time management).
- Group discussions identifying skills gained outside formal employment.
- Skills-mapping charts using icons and examples.

Advice:

- Many vulnerable people **undervalue their own skills**—support them in recognising strengths.
- Employers should consider informal skills as a **starting point for training**, not a limitation.

3. Motivation and Employability Profiling

Understanding motivation is crucial for preventing drop-out and ensuring engagement. Profiling should explore:

- personal goals and expectations,
- willingness to learn and adapt,
- barriers affecting motivation (fear of failure, past discrimination, trauma).



Employability profiling combines skills, attitudes, availability, and support needs, helping trainers tailor interventions and identify realistic employment sectors.

Purpose:

To understand motivation levels, expectations, fears, and readiness for work.

Concrete activities:

- Motivation interviews focusing on interests and goals.
- Simple employability scales (e.g. confidence, punctuality, teamwork).
- Role-play exercises simulating workplace situations.
- Short group reflections on “What I expect from a job”.

Advice:

- Do not assume low motivation—often it is **fear or lack of confidence**.
- Use encouragement and realistic goal-setting to build engagement.

4. Individual Learning and Integration Plans

Based on the assessment, each participant should receive an **individual learning and integration plan**. This plan outlines:

- learning objectives (technical, digital, language, transversal skills),
- preferred learning methods (practical, visual, mentoring),
- timeline and milestones,
- support measures (mentoring, counselling, language support).

These plans should remain flexible and be reviewed regularly according to progress and changing needs.



Purpose:

To transform assessment results into **clear, achievable steps** towards employment.

Concrete activities:

- Co-creation of an **Individual Action Plan** with the participant.
- Defining short-term goals (e.g. attend IT training, improve language basics).
- Setting learning priorities linked to labour market needs.
- Regular review meetings to adjust the plan.

Advice:

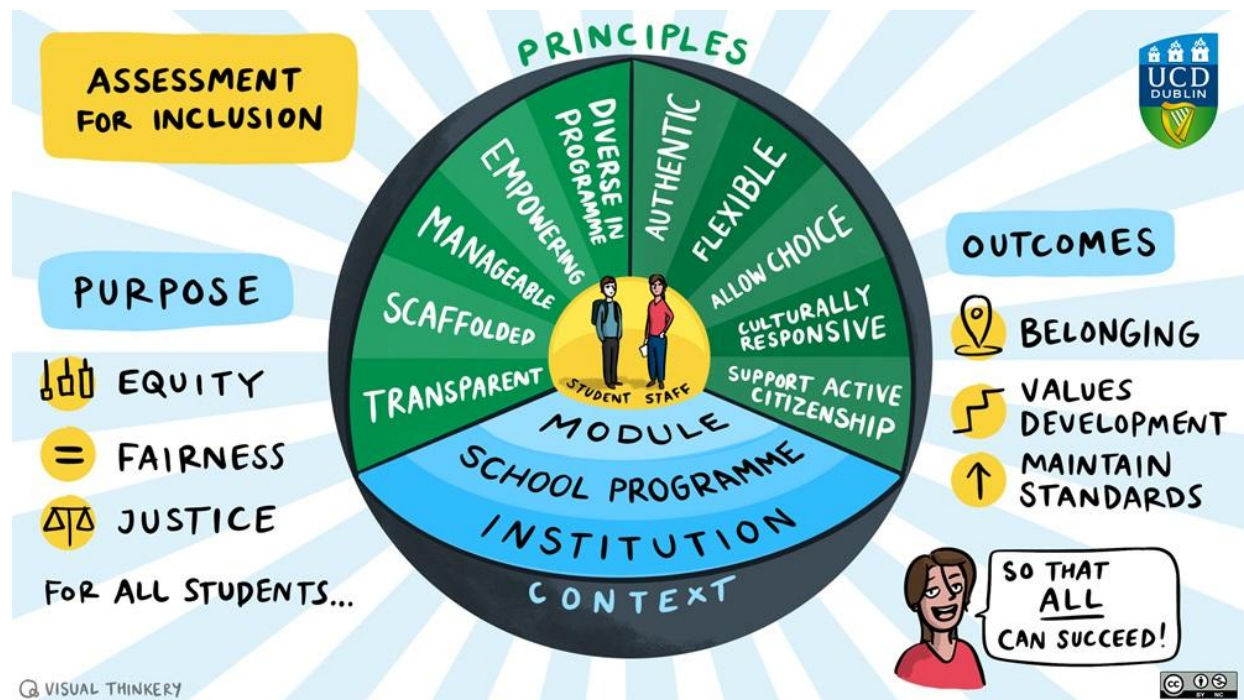
- Plans should be **flexible and realistic**, not bureaucratic.
- Employers can align onboarding or mentoring with these plans.

5. Gender-Sensitive and Culturally Aware Assessment Approaches

Assessment processes must respect cultural backgrounds, gender roles, and personal sensitivities. Trainers should:

- ensure safe and respectful communication,
- avoid stereotypes and assumptions,
- provide female-friendly spaces when needed,
- consider childcare responsibilities, cultural norms, and trauma-related issues.

A culturally aware approach builds trust and ensures equal access to opportunities, especially for women refugees, Roma participants, and migrants.



Purpose:

To ensure assessments are inclusive, respectful, and free of bias.

Concrete activities:

- Separate interviews when cultural norms require it.
- Awareness sessions for staff on gender roles and cultural differences.
- Use of same-gender assessors when appropriate.
- Allowing extra time and support for participants with trauma backgrounds.

Advice:

- Avoid stereotypes; treat each participant as an individual.
- Cultural sensitivity improves trust, participation, and long-term outcomes.



Outcome of Module 2:

By the end of this module, VET providers and trainers will be able to carry out inclusive profiling and needs assessment processes that support personalised learning paths, increase participant motivation, and lay the foundation for sustainable labour market integration.

- ✓ Better understanding of participants' real capacities and needs.
- ✓ Increased confidence and self-awareness among vulnerable people.
- ✓ More effective matching between participants, training pathways, and jobs.
- ✓ Stronger cooperation between VET providers, NGOs, and employers.

Module 3

Basic Employability and Life Skills

3.1 Work Ethics and Workplace Behaviour

Work ethics and appropriate workplace behaviour are fundamental employability competences, especially for vulnerable groups such as NEETs, refugees, long-term unemployed, or Roma people, who may have limited or fragmented work experience. Many vulnerable individuals are unfamiliar with formal workplace norms due to informal employment histories, long periods of unemployment, or cultural differences.

Work ethics include punctuality, honesty, respect for rules, responsibility, reliability, and commitment to tasks. Workplace behaviour refers to how employees interact with colleagues, supervisors, customers, and the organisation as a whole. Understanding hierarchy, following instructions, respecting diversity, and maintaining professional conduct are essential for integration and retention.





In the service sector, behaviour is particularly visible, as employees interact directly with customers and represent the company. Poor understanding of expected behaviour can lead to misunderstandings, conflicts, or early drop-out, even when technical skills are adequate. For refugees and migrants, cultural norms around authority, gender roles, communication style, or customer interaction may differ significantly from host-country expectations.

Developing work ethics is therefore not about imposing rigid rules, but about **clarifying expectations, building mutual understanding**, and **supporting adaptation** in a respectful and inclusive manner.

Activities

- Group discussions on “What makes a good employee?”
- Role-play scenarios (arriving late, receiving feedback, dealing with mistakes)
- Analysis of real workplace cases from partner countries
- Creation of a “Workplace Behaviour Code” together with participants

Advice for VET Providers

- Use practical examples instead of abstract rules
- Avoid judgement; explain “why” behaviours matter
- Integrate cultural comparison exercises
- Reinforce positive behaviour through feedback

Advice for Employers

- Clearly explain workplace rules from day one
- Avoid assumptions about prior work culture
- Lead by example through management behaviour
- Address issues early through dialogue, not sanctions

3.2 Time Management and Responsibility

Time management and personal responsibility are critical competences for labour market integration, yet they are often underdeveloped among vulnerable groups due to unstable life conditions, informal work patterns, or lack of structured daily routines. Long-term unemployment, precarious housing, family responsibilities, or trauma can significantly affect a person's ability to plan, prioritise, and respect schedules. In the service sector, time management is directly linked to operational efficiency, customer satisfaction, and teamwork. Employees must arrive on time, respect schedules, manage breaks, complete tasks within deadlines, and coordinate with colleagues. Responsibility goes beyond punctuality; it includes taking ownership of tasks, informing supervisors about difficulties, and understanding the consequences of one's actions. For refugees and NEETs, difficulties with time management are rarely due to lack of motivation but rather to lack of experience in structured environments. Teaching these skills requires empathy, gradual learning, and practical tools rather than strict enforcement.





By developing time management skills, vulnerable participants gain not only employability but also greater autonomy, confidence, and control over their personal and professional lives.

Activities

- Daily schedule planning exercises
- “Typical workday” simulations
- Task prioritisation games
- Reflection sessions on causes of delays and solutions

Advice for VET Providers

- Teach time management step by step
- Use visual tools (calendars, checklists, reminders)
- Link time management to personal goals
- Monitor progress gradually, not punitively

Advice for Employers

- Offer clear schedules and written instructions
- Be flexible initially while expectations are learned
- Assign simple responsibilities first
- Recognise improvements, not only mistakes

3.3 Communication Skills and Teamwork

Effective communication and teamwork are essential transversal skills, especially in service-oriented jobs where collaboration and customer interaction are daily requirements. Vulnerable individuals may struggle with communication due to language barriers, low self-confidence, cultural differences, or previous negative experiences with authority and institutions.



Communication skills include listening, expressing needs clearly, asking for clarification, giving and receiving feedback, and resolving misunderstandings respectfully. Teamwork involves cooperation, mutual support, respecting diversity, and understanding one's role within a group.

Refugees may face language limitations and fear of making mistakes, while NEETs may lack experience in professional communication settings. Miscommunication can easily be misinterpreted as lack of interest or competence, leading to exclusion or conflict.

Training communication and teamwork skills helps vulnerable participants integrate socially, build trust with colleagues, and feel part of the organisation. It also reduces tensions and increases productivity within diverse teams.

Activities

- Role-plays with colleagues and customers
- Team problem-solving tasks
- Active listening exercises
- Non-verbal communication activities

Advice for VET Providers

- Create safe spaces for practice without judgement
- Use simple language and repetition
- Encourage peer support
- Integrate intercultural communication topics

Advice for Employers

- Foster an open communication culture
- Encourage questions and clarification
- Pair new employees with supportive colleagues
- Address conflicts early and constructively

3.4 Building Self-Confidence and Resilience

Low self-confidence and reduced resilience are common among vulnerable groups due to repeated rejection, discrimination, trauma, or long-term unemployment. Many participants underestimate their abilities and fear failure, which can limit their engagement in training and employment opportunities. Self-confidence is the belief in one's ability to perform tasks and learn new skills. Resilience is the capacity to cope with difficulties, adapt to change, and recover from setbacks. Both are crucial for sustainable employment, particularly in the service sector where stress, customer pressure, and fast-paced environments are common. Developing these competences requires positive reinforcement, realistic goal-setting, and recognition of progress. Vulnerable individuals need to experience success, even in small steps, to rebuild trust in themselves and the labour market. Strengthening confidence and resilience not only improves employability but also contributes to mental well-being and social inclusion.



Activities

- Strengths identification workshops
- Success story sharing
- Stress management exercises
- Guided reflection on challenges overcome



Advice for VET Providers

- Focus on strengths, not deficits
- Set achievable short-term goals
- Use positive feedback consistently
- Integrate psychosocial support when needed

Advice for Employers

- Acknowledge effort and progress
- Avoid public criticism
- Offer supportive supervision
- Encourage learning from mistakes

3.5 Understanding Employer Expectations

Understanding employer expectations is a decisive factor for job retention. Vulnerable participants often lack clear information about what employers expect beyond technical tasks: attitude, flexibility, customer orientation, teamwork, and willingness to learn.

Employers may assume these expectations are “common sense”, while for vulnerable jobseekers they are often implicit and unclear. This gap can lead to misunderstandings, frustration, and early contract termination.

Explicitly addressing employer expectations helps align both sides and creates realistic mutual commitments. It empowers vulnerable people to meet expectations consciously and enables employers to communicate more transparently and inclusively.

Activities

- Employer talks and Q&A sessions
- Analysis of job descriptions
- Mock performance evaluations



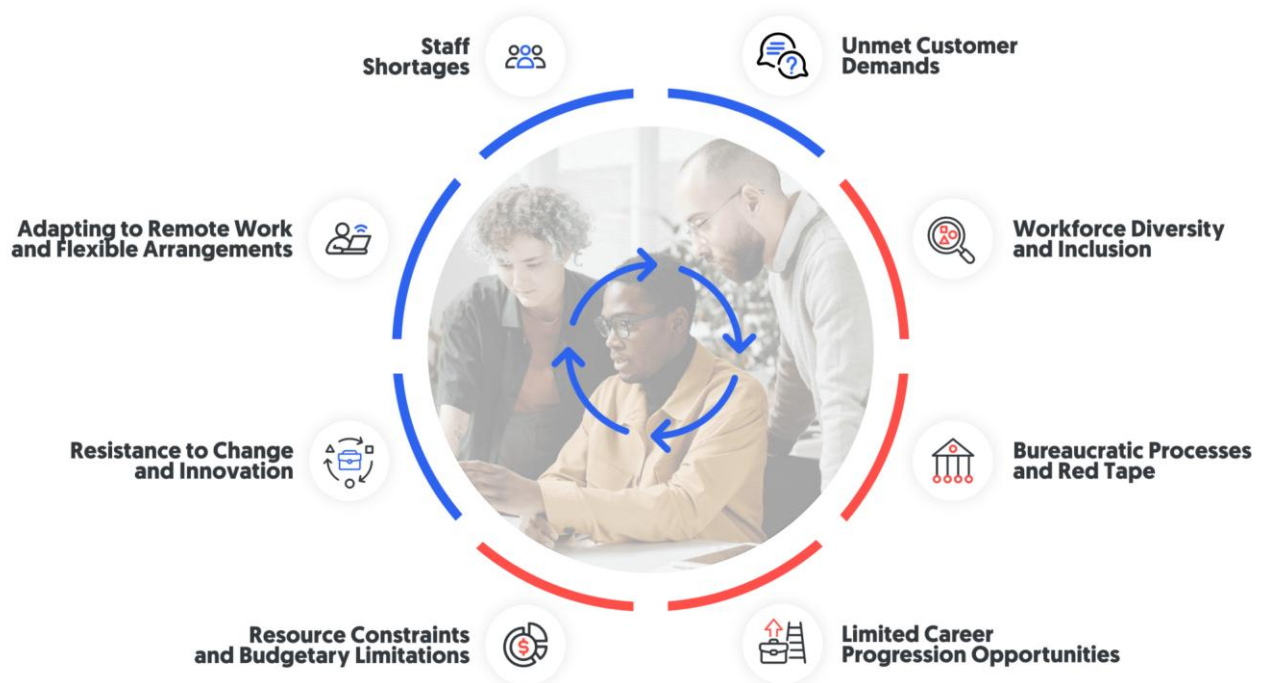
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- Reflection on workplace rules

Advice for VET Providers

- Invite employers to training sessions
- Translate expectations into simple language
- Use real job examples
- Prepare participants for feedback

Advice for Employers

- Clearly explain expectations from the start
- Avoid ambiguous instructions
- Provide regular feedback
- Adapt expectations during the integration phase





Module 4

Language Support and Communication for Employment

1. Functional Language for the Workplace

Functional language refers to the basic, practical language needed to perform daily tasks at work, rather than formal grammar or advanced linguistic structures. For vulnerable people—especially refugees, migrants, and low-skilled jobseekers—functional language is the key to employability and job retention. It includes understanding simple instructions, asking for clarification, responding to requests, and communicating basic needs (e.g. asking for tools, breaks, help, or feedback). In the service sector, functional language is closely linked to routine actions: greeting customers, confirming tasks, following hygiene or safety rules, and interacting politely with colleagues. Many vulnerable learners already possess partial language knowledge but lack confidence or structured opportunities to use it in real work contexts. Training should therefore prioritise **usefulness, repetition, and context-based learning**, not linguistic perfection.

Activities

- Daily routine dialogues (start of shift, end of shift, breaks)
- Matching tasks with simple instructions (“Clean table”, “Serve customer”)
- Listening exercises using short, real workplace commands

Advice for VET providers

- Teach language through **tasks**, not textbooks
- Use repetition and predictable routines
- Encourage learners to speak even with mistakes



Advice for employers

- Use clear, short sentences
- Avoid slang and idioms
- Check understanding through demonstration

2. Job-Related Vocabulary for the Service Sector

Job-related vocabulary enables vulnerable employees to understand tasks, tools, spaces, and roles in the workplace. In services (hospitality, cleaning, retail, beauty, food services), vocabulary is often repetitive and practical, making it ideal for targeted learning. Instead of generic language lists, vocabulary training should be **sector-specific**, visually supported, and directly linked to actions.

Many learners face cognitive overload when exposed to long word lists. Effective learning happens when words are linked to **objects, actions, and places**. For example, learning the word “counter” while physically pointing to it, or “reservation” through role-play. Vocabulary learning also increases safety, as misunderstanding instructions may lead to accidents or service errors.

Activities

- Picture-to-word matching (tools, uniforms, spaces)
- Labelling real workplace objects
- Flashcards with images and simple definitions

Advice for VET providers

- Limit vocabulary to what is immediately useful
- Use images, symbols, and real objects
- Revisit the same words in multiple sessions

Advice for employers

- Provide visual labels in work areas
- Introduce new words gradually
- Encourage colleagues to support vocabulary learning



3. Communication with Supervisors and Colleagues

Effective communication with supervisors and colleagues is essential for inclusion, performance, and retention. Vulnerable employees often hesitate to speak due to fear of making mistakes, cultural distance, or past discrimination. This can lead to misunderstandings, stress, and isolation. Training must therefore focus on **empowering learners to ask questions, express difficulties, and receive feedback.**

Communication skills should include polite requests, reporting problems, understanding instructions, and responding to feedback. Equally important is non-verbal communication—body language, tone, eye contact—which varies across cultures. A supportive work environment that encourages questions and clarifies expectations significantly reduces drop-out risk.

Activities

- Role-play: asking for help, reporting a problem
- Practice phrases for feedback (“I understand”, “Please repeat”)
- Group discussions on cultural communication styles

Advice for VET providers

- Simulate real communication scenarios
- Address cultural differences openly
- Reinforce that asking questions is positive

Advice for employers

- Encourage open communication
- Assign a clear contact person or mentor
- Give feedback calmly and constructively



4. Simple Strategies for Overcoming Language Anxiety

Language anxiety is one of the main hidden barriers to labour market integration. Many vulnerable people fear being judged, laughed at, or misunderstood. This fear often results in silence, avoidance, or early resignation from jobs. Overcoming language anxiety requires **psychological safety**, gradual exposure, and positive reinforcement.

Learners should understand that mistakes are part of learning and that communication effectiveness matters more than correctness. Confidence grows when learners experience small successes, receive encouragement, and feel accepted. Training should include emotional support, peer validation, and stress-reduction techniques.

Activities

- Confidence-building exercises (short presentations, pair work)
- Sharing personal experiences in a safe group
- Positive feedback circles

Advice for VET providers

- Create a non-judgmental learning environment
- Celebrate progress, not perfection
- Address fear openly

Advice for employers

- Show patience and empathy
- Avoid public correction
- Acknowledge effort and improvement



5. Use of Visual Aids, Role Play, and Peer Support

Visual aids, role play, and peer support are among the most effective tools for language learning with vulnerable groups. Visuals reduce reliance on text, role play allows safe practice, and peer support builds solidarity and inclusion. These methods are particularly effective for learners with low literacy or interrupted education.

Peer learning—pairing newcomers with more experienced workers—supports both language development and social integration. Role play prepares learners for real situations (customers, supervisors, conflict), while visuals ensure clarity and memory retention.

Activities

- Role-play customer interactions
- Visual instruction boards
- Buddy or peer-mentor systems

Advice for VET providers

- Combine visuals with action
- Use repetition through role play
- Encourage peer learning

Advice for employers

- Appoint workplace buddies
- Use pictograms for tasks
- Support learning during work, not only before employment



Module 5

Digital Skills for Labour Market Access

5.1 Basic Digital Literacy

(computer, smartphone, internet use)

Digital literacy is a **fundamental prerequisite for labour market access**. For vulnerable people, lack of basic digital skills often results in exclusion from job opportunities, public services, and communication with employers. Many NEETs and refugees possess smartphones but lack structured knowledge on how to use digital tools effectively for employment-related purposes.

This section focuses on **functional, confidence-building digital skills**, starting from turning on a device to navigating basic applications. Emphasis is placed on practical use rather than theory, ensuring learners understand how digital tools relate directly to employment tasks such as receiving job offers, accessing schedules, or communicating with supervisors.

Digital literacy also supports **independence and autonomy**, reducing reliance on intermediaries and empowering participants to manage their own job search and professional communication.

Activities

- Hands-on sessions using computers and smartphones
- Basic navigation exercises (keyboard, mouse, touchscreen)
- Internet browsing tasks (searching for a workplace, checking maps)
- Using Wi-Fi and mobile data safely



Advice for VET Providers

- Use **step-by-step demonstrations** and repetition
- Work in small groups with peer support
- Avoid technical jargon; use clear, simple language
- Allow enough time for practice and mistakes

Advice for Employers

- Do not assume basic digital skills
- Offer simple instructions for digital tools used at work
- Provide visual guides for internal systems

5.2 Online Job Search Tools and Platforms

Most job opportunities today are advertised online through job portals, social media, and company websites. Vulnerable jobseekers often struggle to identify reliable platforms, create profiles, or understand job advertisements. This section equips learners with the ability to **search, filter, and recognise suitable job offers**, particularly in the service sector.

The focus is on **trusted platforms**, basic keyword use, and understanding essential information such as job requirements, working hours, and location. Learners are also guided to recognise fraudulent job offers and avoid exploitation.

Activities

- Guided exploration of national and EU job portals
- Searching jobs by keywords (e.g. cleaner, kitchen assistant, salon assistant)
- Reading and analysing simple job ads
- Comparing online and offline job search methods



Advice for VET Providers

- Use **real job advertisements** from local labour markets
- Explain job ads line by line
- Encourage learners to save and revisit offers

Advice for Employers

- Publish **clear and simple job descriptions**
- Avoid unnecessary requirements
- Provide contact options beyond complex online forms

5.3 Creating and Updating a Europass CV

A CV is often the first contact between a jobseeker and an employer. For vulnerable people, writing a CV can be intimidating due to low education levels, fragmented work experience, or lack of formal qualifications. The **Europass CV** offers a **simple, structured, and recognised format** that helps present skills clearly, including informal and transferable competences.

This section teaches participants how to **create, update, and adapt** a Europass CV, focusing on clarity, honesty, and relevance rather than perfection.

Activities

- Creating a Europass CV step by step
- Identifying skills gained from informal work or daily life
- Updating CVs for different job profiles
- Peer review and trainer feedback

Advice for VET Providers

- Focus on **skills and experience**, not gaps
- Support learners individually
- Use examples from similar profiles



Advice for Employers

- Value Europass CVs as structured and transparent
- Focus on skills rather than formal education
- Offer CV feedback when possible

5.4 Email Communication and Online Applications

Email is a primary communication channel for employers. Vulnerable people often lack confidence in writing emails or completing online forms. This section focuses on **basic professional communication**, teaching learners how to send simple, polite, and effective emails and complete online applications without stress.

Participants learn how to attach CVs, write short messages, and respond to employer replies, helping them feel more confident and professional.

Activities

- Creating an email account
- Writing simple job application emails
- Attaching documents correctly
- Completing sample online application forms

Advice for VET Providers

- Provide **email templates**
- Practice through role-play
- Reinforce professional tone and clarity

Advice for Employers

- Keep application forms short and clear
- Accept email applications when possible
- Avoid overly complex digital recruitment systems



5.5 Digital Safety and Data Protection Basics

Digital inclusion must go hand in hand with **digital safety**. Vulnerable people are often at risk of scams, identity theft, or misuse of personal data. This section introduces **basic online safety principles**, ensuring participants know how to protect their personal information when applying for jobs.

The goal is awareness, not fear: learners understand what information is safe to share, how to recognise suspicious messages, and where to seek help if problems arise.

Activities

- Identifying safe vs unsafe websites
- Recognising scam emails and fake job offers
- Creating strong passwords
- Discussing real-life examples

Advice for VET Providers

- Use real scenarios and visuals
- Repeat key safety messages
- Encourage asking for help

Advice for Employers

- Communicate transparently about data use
- Protect applicants' personal data
- Build trust through ethical recruitment

Module Outcome

By completing Module 5, learners gain **practical digital autonomy**, enabling them to search for jobs, apply confidently, communicate professionally, and protect themselves online—essential competences for **sustainable labour market integration**.



Module 6

Job Search and Application Skills

1. How to search for suitable jobs

For vulnerable people, job searching is often confusing, overwhelming, and discouraging. Many participants lack knowledge about where jobs are advertised, how to identify realistic opportunities, or how to match their skills with job requirements. Refugees and NEETs may also face language barriers, digital exclusion, or limited social networks, which further restrict access to job information.

This section focuses on helping learners understand **where to look for jobs**, **how to choose realistic options**, and **how to avoid informal or exploitative work**. Emphasis is placed on service-sector opportunities (hospitality, cleaning, retail, beauty, caregiving), where entry-level positions are accessible and skills can be developed on the job.

Concrete activities

- Mapping exercise: “Where can I find jobs in my area?”
- Guided search on local job portals and company websites
- Group discussion on formal vs informal employment
- Job-matching exercises using real vacancies

Advice for VET providers

- Use simple language and real examples
- Focus on local labour market realities
- Work closely with employers to identify vacancies

Advice for employers

- Advertise vacancies in accessible formats
- Collaborate with NGOs/VET providers for outreach
- Clearly indicate entry-level opportunities



2. Understanding job offers and requirements

Many vulnerable jobseekers struggle to understand job advertisements due to complex language, unfamiliar terminology, or unrealistic requirements. Refugees may misinterpret legal or contractual terms, while NEETs may feel discouraged by qualifications they do not formally possess. This section teaches participants how to **read job offers critically**, identify essential vs optional requirements, and understand working conditions, schedules, and expectations. The goal is to reduce fear, prevent misunderstanding, and empower learners to apply confidently.

Concrete activities

- Analysing real job advertisements together
- Highlighting “must-have” vs “nice-to-have” requirements
- Explaining contracts, working hours, and wages
- Role-play: asking clarifying questions to employers

Advice for VET providers

- Translate job offers into simple language
- Use visual symbols and examples
- Encourage questions and discussion

Advice for employers

- Use clear and inclusive job descriptions
- Avoid unnecessary qualification barriers
- Be transparent about conditions



3. Preparing a simple CV and cover message

For many vulnerable people, the CV is a major barrier. Some have never written one, others have gaps in employment, informal experience, or foreign qualifications not recognised locally. This section promotes **simple, skills-based CVs**, focusing on abilities, motivation, and willingness to learn rather than formal education. Participants learn how to create a short CV and a basic cover message, including through the **Europass CV** platform when appropriate, adapted to low literacy and language levels.

Concrete activities

- Creating a one-page CV template
- Identifying skills from daily life and informal work
- Writing short cover messages
- Guided use of Europass CV

Advice for VET providers

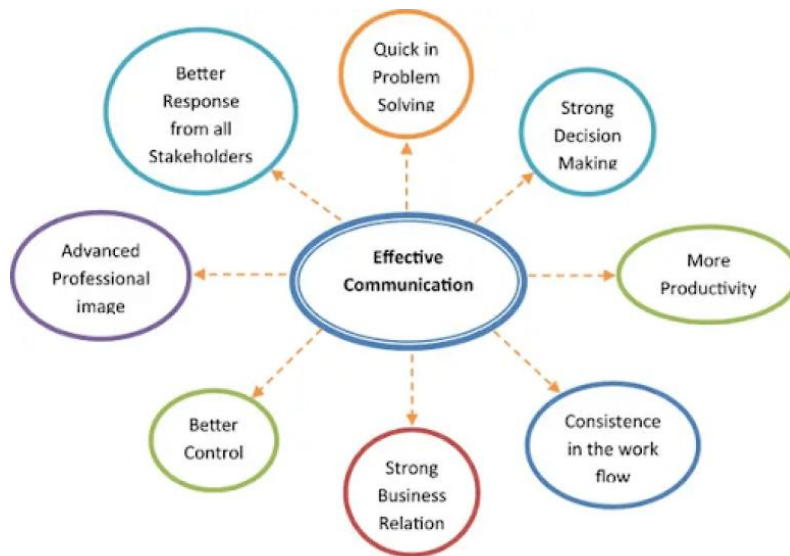
- Accept non-traditional experience
- Provide templates and step-by-step support
- Offer individual coaching

Advice for employers

- Focus on skills and attitude
- Accept simplified CVs
- Support first-time applicants

4. Interview preparation and simulations

Interviews are stressful, especially for people with low self-confidence, language difficulties, or past discrimination experiences. This section helps learners understand what interviews are for, what employers expect, and how to communicate honestly and calmly.



Role-playing and simulations reduce anxiety, improve communication, and build confidence. Cultural differences in behaviour, body language, and self-presentation are also addressed.

Concrete activities

- Mock interviews with trainers/employers
- Practising common interview questions
- Body language and communication exercises
- Feedback sessions

Advice for VET providers

- Create a safe, non-judgmental environment
- Repeat simulations multiple times
- Use visual cues and simple questions



Advice for employers

- Be patient and supportive
- Focus on potential, not perfection
- Allow practical demonstrations

5. Managing rejection and maintaining motivation

Rejection is common in job searching and can be devastating for vulnerable people, reinforcing feelings of failure and exclusion. This section focuses on resilience, emotional support, and long-term motivation. Participants learn that rejection is not personal, how to ask for feedback, and how to continue searching without losing confidence.

The aim is to build persistence, realistic expectations, and emotional strength.

Concrete activities

- Group discussions on rejection experiences
- Motivation and goal-setting exercises
- Personal success stories
- Stress management techniques

Advice for VET providers

- Offer continuous encouragement
- Track small achievements
- Provide counselling support if needed

Advice for employers

- Give constructive feedback
- Encourage re-application
- Promote inclusive attitudes



Module 7

Work-Based Learning and Practical Preparation

1. Importance of Practical Training and Internships

Work-based learning is a key element for integrating vulnerable people into the labour market, especially for those with low formal education, interrupted learning paths, or limited work experience. For NEETs, refugees, Roma, and long-term unemployed people, **learning by doing** is often more effective than classroom-based instruction alone. Practical training allows participants to experience real working conditions, understand workplace routines, and apply skills in a meaningful context.

Internships and practical stages help bridge the gap between training and employment by exposing participants to employer expectations, work culture, and professional standards. They also reduce fear and uncertainty related to the workplace, increase self-confidence, and help participants identify their strengths and areas for improvement. For employers, work-based learning offers an opportunity to observe potential employees in real conditions and to contribute actively to social inclusion.

Concrete Activities

- Short-term internships in the service sector (hospitality, retail, beauty, cleaning, catering)
- Workplace observation days
- Job shadowing with experienced employees
- Simulated work tasks before real placements



Advice for VET Providers

- Prepare participants psychologically and practically before placements
- Select workplaces that are supportive and inclusive
- Maintain close contact with employers during internships

Advice for Employers

- Offer clear tasks suitable for beginners
- Focus on learning and adaptation, not only productivity
- Provide feedback in a constructive and supportive manner

2. Preparing Participants for Workplace Placements

Successful work-based learning depends on adequate preparation. Vulnerable participants often lack familiarity with workplace norms, schedules, communication styles, and expectations. Preparation reduces anxiety, prevents misunderstandings, and increases retention during placements. Participants should understand basic rules such as punctuality, hygiene, teamwork, and respectful behaviour.

Preparation also includes explaining rights and responsibilities, workplace safety, and what to do in case of difficulties. Cultural orientation is essential for refugees and migrants, helping them adapt to local work practices and communication styles.

Concrete Activities

- Pre-placement orientation sessions
- Role-play of workplace situations
- Basic health and safety briefings
- Discussion of workplace rules and expectations



Advice for VET Providers

- Use simple language and visual materials
- Address fears and questions openly
- Prepare individual placement profiles

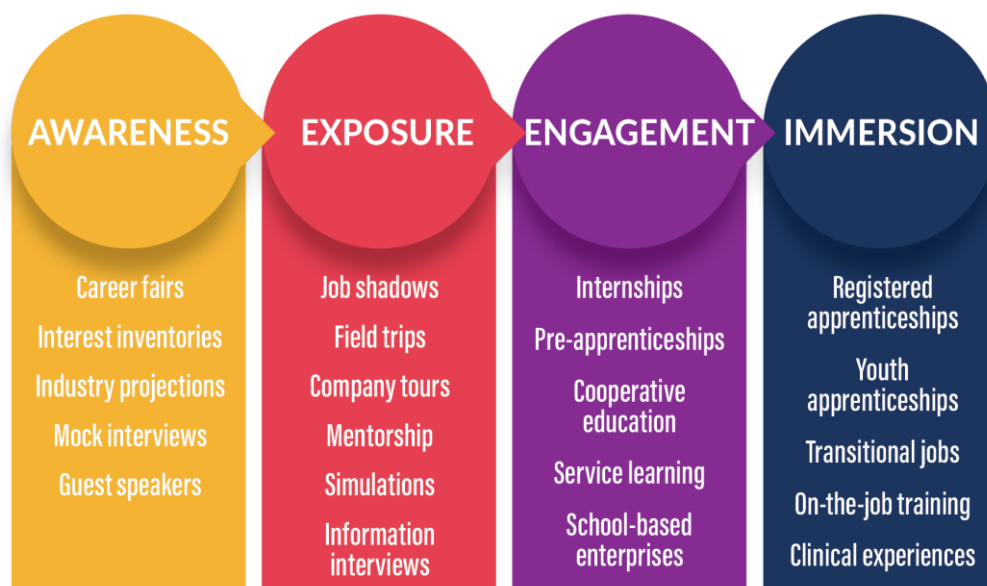
Advice for Employers

- Welcome participants on the first day
- Explain rules clearly and patiently
- Avoid assumptions about prior experience

3. Learning by Doing: On-the-Job Learning Methods

On-the-job learning allows participants to acquire skills progressively while performing real tasks. This approach is especially effective for people with limited theoretical learning capacity or language barriers. Learning should be structured but flexible, starting with simple tasks and gradually increasing complexity.

Continuum of Work-Based Learning Models Across Phases





Demonstration, repetition, and guided practice are essential. Participants learn best when tasks are explained visually, demonstrated by a mentor, and practiced repeatedly with feedback. Mistakes should be treated as learning opportunities rather than failures.

Concrete Activities

- Step-by-step task demonstrations
- Daily task repetition with supervision
- Visual instructions and task cards
- Short daily feedback sessions

Advice for VET Providers

- Encourage reflective learning after each workday
- Support participants in documenting what they learned
- Coordinate learning goals with employers

Advice for Employers

- Demonstrate tasks rather than only explaining them
- Allow time for repetition and learning
- Encourage questions and curiosity

4. Cooperation with Employers and Mentors

Effective work-based learning requires strong cooperation between VET providers and employers. Mentors play a crucial role in guiding vulnerable participants, offering support, and modelling appropriate workplace behaviour. A good mentor builds trust, explains tasks clearly, and provides encouragement.

Cooperation ensures that placements are meaningful, adapted to participant needs, and aligned with learning objectives. Regular communication helps address issues early and improves outcomes for both participants and employers.

INTERNSHIP CHECKLIST

STEP ONE: Know Yourself

- ✓ I have identified my personal strengths, skills, interests, and values
- ✓ I have made a list of possible job titles/fields of interest
- ✓ I can name two or three careers/jobs I am considering pursuing

STEP TWO: Know Where You Want to Intern

Company Name	Location	LinkedIn Connection
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		

- I have researched organizations / companies of interest and have identified 8 potential employers for the type of internship I'm seeking

Concrete Activities

- Assigning a workplace mentor
- Regular check-ins between VET providers and employers
- Joint evaluation meetings
- Mentor guidance sessions

Advice for VET Providers

- Select employers committed to inclusion
- Train mentors in basic coaching skills
- Support mentors throughout the placement

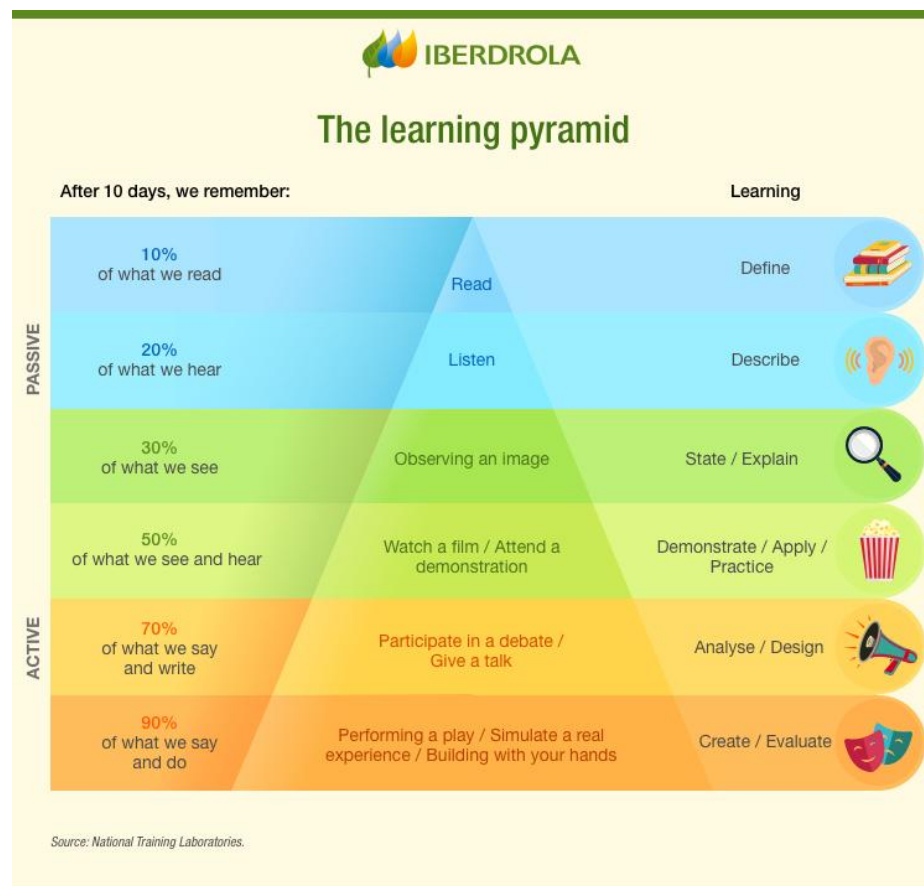
Advice for Employers

- Choose patient and supportive staff as mentors
- Allocate time for mentoring duties
- Recognise mentoring as a valuable contribution

5. Monitoring Progress During Practical Stages

Monitoring progress ensures that learning objectives are met and difficulties are addressed in time. Vulnerable participants may face challenges such as low confidence, communication issues, or personal problems that affect performance. Continuous monitoring allows for timely support and adaptation of tasks.

Progress monitoring should be simple, supportive, and focused on development rather than evaluation. Feedback should highlight achievements and suggest concrete improvements.





Concrete Activities

- Weekly progress checklists
- Short feedback forms from mentors
- Participant self-reflection sessions
- Final evaluation meeting

Advice for VET Providers

- Use simple monitoring tools
- Maintain regular contact with participants
- Adjust placements if necessary

Advice for Employers

- Provide honest but supportive feedback
- Focus on progress, not perfection
- Inform VET providers about any concerns early

This module prepares vulnerable participants for real labour market experiences while supporting employers and VET providers in creating inclusive, effective, and sustainable work-based learning pathways.



Module 8

Psychosocial Support and Motivation

1. Addressing Stress, Trauma, and Insecurity (especially for refugees)

Many vulnerable learners—especially refugees, long-term unemployed people, and individuals from marginalised communities—carry significant psychological burdens that directly affect their employability. Refugees may have experienced war, forced displacement, loss of family members, unsafe journeys, or prolonged uncertainty. NEETs and long-term unemployed people often face chronic stress, shame, and a sense of failure due to repeated rejection or exclusion from education and work. These experiences can lead to anxiety, lack of concentration, low self-esteem, distrust in institutions, and fear of new environments such as workplaces or training centres.

Psychosocial support in VET and employment preparation does not mean therapy, but **creating stable, predictable, and supportive learning conditions**. Trainers and employers need to recognise signs of distress (withdrawal, irritability, absenteeism, low motivation) and respond with empathy rather than punishment. A trauma-informed approach focuses on safety, choice, respect, and empowerment. When learners feel emotionally safe, they are more open to learning, communication, and integration into work environments.

Concrete activities

- Short group discussions on “What makes me feel stressed at work or training”

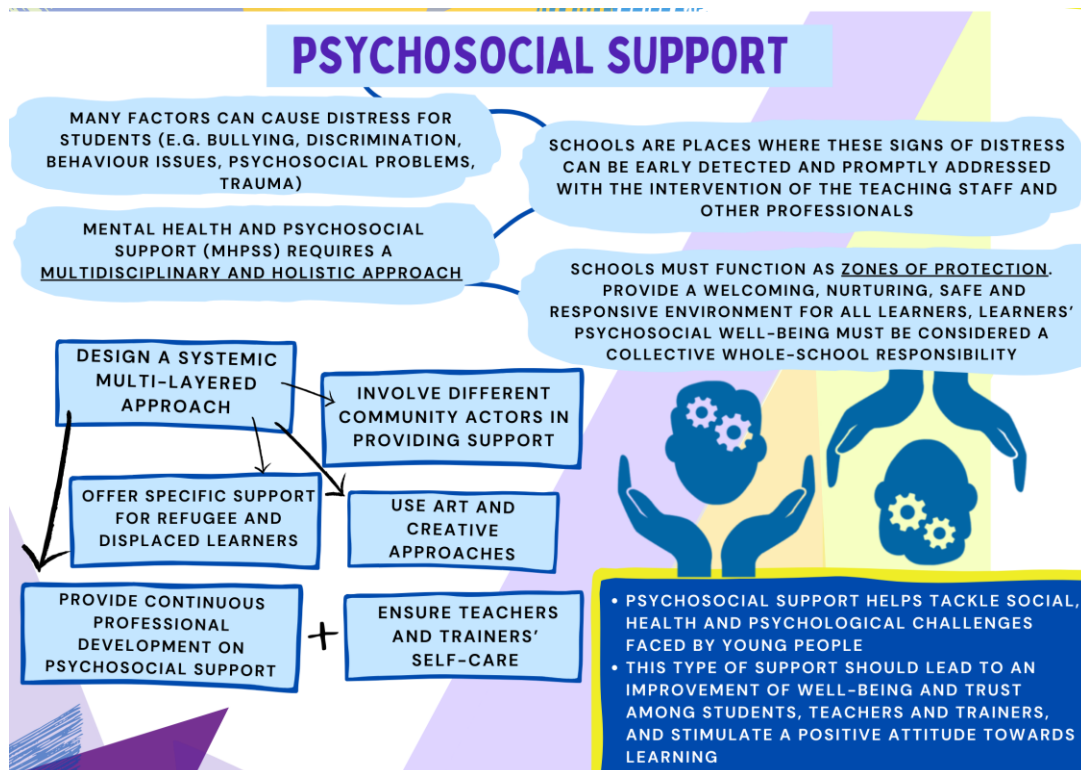
- Stress-mapping exercises (identifying stress triggers and coping strategies)
- Simple relaxation techniques (breathing, grounding exercises)
- Clear daily routines and agendas to reduce uncertainty

Advice for VET providers

- Train staff in basic trauma-informed education principles
- Avoid sudden changes in schedules or rules without explanation
- Use clear, calm, and respectful communication
- Allow flexibility when learners experience emotional difficulties

Advice for employers

- Be patient during the adaptation period
- Avoid aggressive communication or public criticism
- Provide clear instructions and realistic expectations
- Understand that stress reactions are not lack of motivation





2. Building Trust and a Safe Learning Environment

Trust is the foundation of any successful integration process. Vulnerable learners often come from environments where institutions failed them or treated them unfairly. As a result, they may initially appear distant, suspicious, or disengaged. Building trust requires consistency, transparency, and genuine interest in the person behind the learner or employee.

A safe learning environment is one where mistakes are accepted as part of learning, diversity is respected, and learners feel they belong. Trust grows when trainers and employers keep promises, apply rules fairly, and listen actively. Psychological safety enables learners to ask questions, admit difficulties, and try new tasks without fear of humiliation.

Concrete activities

- Group agreements on respect and confidentiality
- Ice-breaker activities focused on shared experiences
- Regular one-to-one check-ins
- Celebrating small successes publicly

Advice for VET providers

- Create clear codes of conduct based on respect
- Encourage participatory learning instead of authoritarian methods
- Address conflicts immediately and fairly

Advice for employers

- Assign a stable supervisor or mentor
- Encourage questions and feedback
- Treat all employees equally, regardless of background



3. Motivation Techniques for Low-Confidence Learners

Low confidence is one of the main barriers preventing vulnerable people from entering or staying in employment. Many learners underestimate their abilities, focus on failures, or believe they are “not good enough.” Motivation must therefore be rebuilt gradually through achievable goals, positive feedback, and visible progress.

Effective motivation focuses on strengths, not deficits. Recognising informal skills (care work, manual skills, survival strategies) helps learners see their own value. Motivation increases when learners experience success, feel useful, and understand how training connects to real jobs.

Concrete activities

- Strengths identification exercises
- Short-term achievable tasks
- Visual progress charts
- Personal success stories sharing

Advice for VET providers

- Use positive reinforcement consistently
- Set realistic and personalised goals
- Avoid comparisons between learners

Advice for employers

- Acknowledge effort, not only results
- Give constructive, private feedback
- Offer gradual responsibility increases

4. Peer Learning and Group Support

Peer learning reduces isolation and builds belonging. Learning with others who face similar challenges normalises difficulties and creates mutual encouragement. Group support helps learners exchange coping strategies, practice communication, and develop teamwork skills essential for employment.

Mixed groups (refugees, NEETs, long-term unemployed) foster intercultural understanding and empathy. Peer mentors—former beneficiaries who succeeded—can become powerful role models.



Concrete activities

- Group problem-solving tasks
- Peer mentoring pairs
- Role-play in small groups
- Group reflection sessions

Advice for VET providers

- Encourage collaborative learning
- Balance group composition carefully
- Facilitate respectful dialogue



Advice for employers

- Promote teamwork and buddy systems
- Avoid isolating vulnerable employees
- Encourage informal peer support

5. Referral to Specialised Support Services When Needed

Some learners face challenges that go beyond the scope of VET or workplace support, such as severe trauma, mental health issues, housing insecurity, or legal problems. Recognising limits is essential. Proper referral to specialised services protects both learners and organisations.

Effective referral systems rely on cooperation with NGOs, social services, psychologists, employment offices, and migrant support centres. The goal is not to exclude learners, but to ensure they receive the right support at the right time.

Concrete activities

- Mapping local support services
- Creating referral protocols
- Information sessions with social workers

Advice for VET providers

- Build partnerships with support organisations
- Respect confidentiality and consent
- Follow up after referrals

Advice for employers

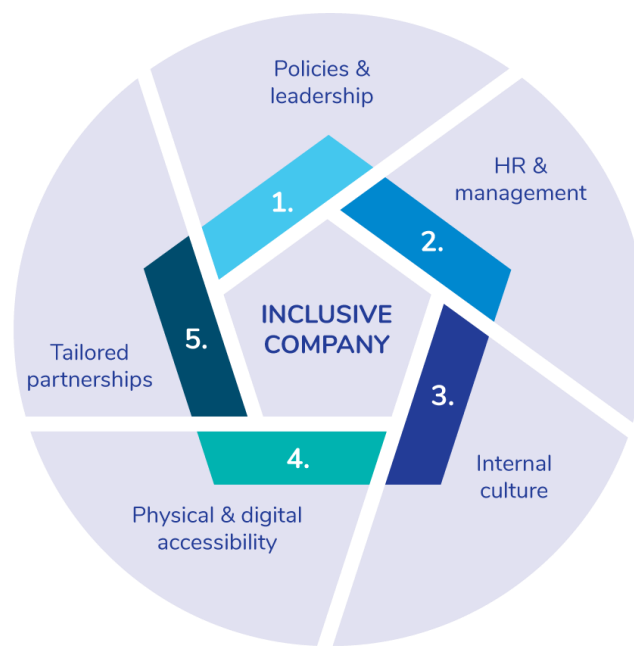
- Know local support contacts
- Encourage employees to seek help without stigma
- Collaborate with NGOs when needed

Module 9

Cooperation with Employers and Stakeholders

1. Role of Employers in Inclusive Labour Market Integration

Employers play a central role in transforming labour market access for vulnerable people from a theoretical objective into a real opportunity. Beyond offering jobs, employers contribute by shaping inclusive recruitment practices, providing supportive work environments, and recognising potential beyond formal qualifications. For vulnerable groups—such as NEETs, refugees, Roma people, or long-term unemployed—employers often represent the first point of contact with the formal labour market. Their openness, flexibility, and willingness to adapt determine whether integration is successful or short-lived. Employers who understand vulnerability are better prepared to address learning gaps, cultural differences, and adaptation challenges, turning inclusion into a mutually beneficial process.





Concrete activities

- Employer awareness workshops on vulnerability and inclusion
- Employer-led presentations about real workplace expectations
- Company visits for learners before placement
- Joint employer–trainee orientation sessions

Advice for VET providers

- Involve employers early in training design
- Clarify employer expectations to learners
- Select employers committed to mentoring and inclusion

Advice for employers

- Focus on skills and motivation rather than deficits
- Assign responsible staff for mentoring
- View inclusion as an investment, not a risk

2. Cooperation between VET Providers, NGOs, and Public Services

Effective labour market integration requires coordinated action between VET providers, NGOs, employers, and public institutions. Each actor brings complementary expertise: VET providers ensure skills development, NGOs offer social and psychosocial support, public services facilitate legal and administrative procedures, while employers provide real job opportunities. Structured cooperation prevents fragmentation, duplication of efforts, and loss of beneficiaries during transitions. Long-term partnerships ensure continuity and sustainability beyond individual projects.

Concrete activities

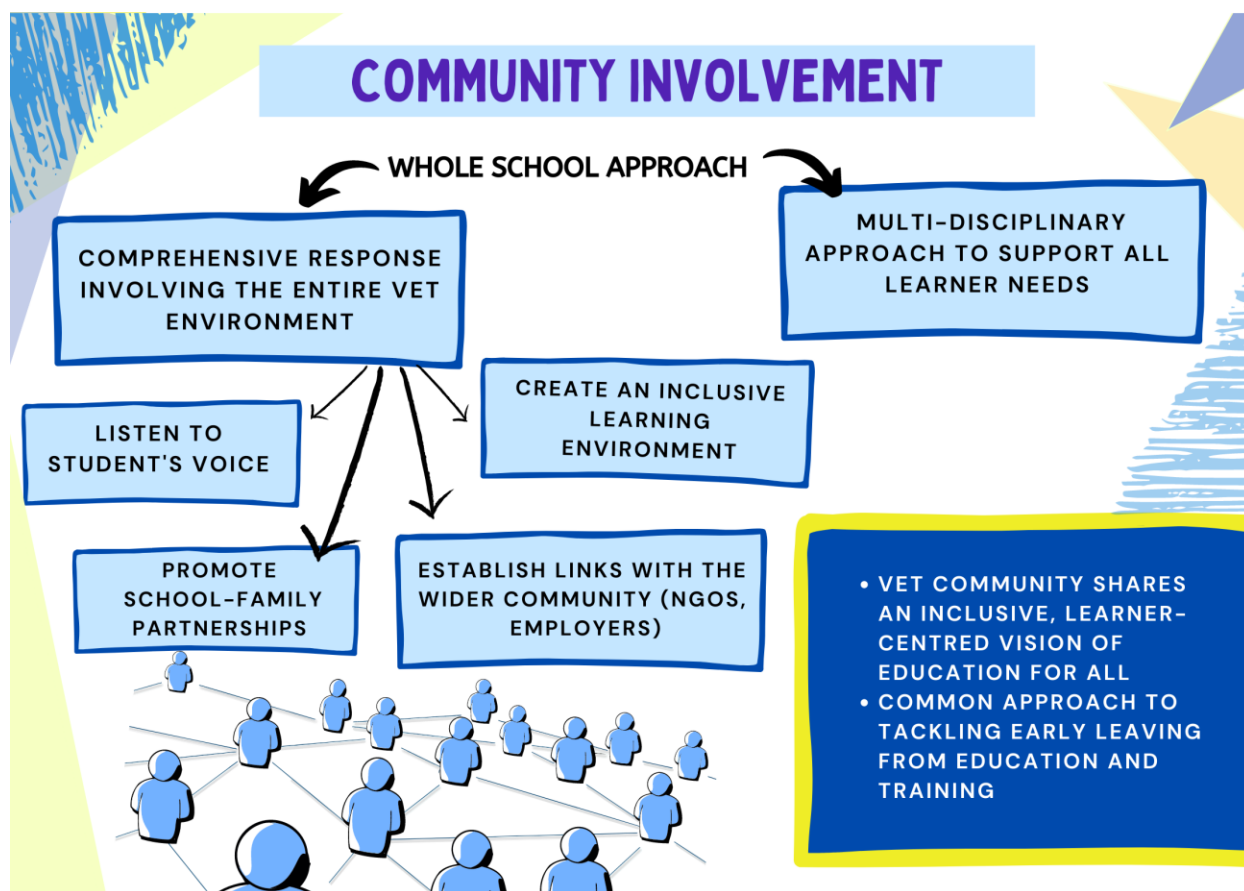
- Local cooperation agreements
- Regular coordination meetings
- Shared referral systems for participants
- Joint action plans for vulnerable groups

Advice for VET providers

- Act as coordinators of local networks
- Maintain updated stakeholder contact lists
- Share progress information responsibly

Advice for employers

- Use NGOs and VET providers as support resources
- Communicate challenges early
- Participate in local employment networks



3. Preparing Employers to Receive Vulnerable Learners

Many employment failures are caused not by the lack of skills of vulnerable learners, but by insufficient preparation of employers. Employers need guidance on communication styles, cultural sensitivity, learning pace, and realistic expectations. Preparing employers reduces misunderstandings, stress, and early drop-out.

Clear roles, structured onboarding, and awareness of vulnerability-related challenges contribute significantly to successful integration.

Concrete activities

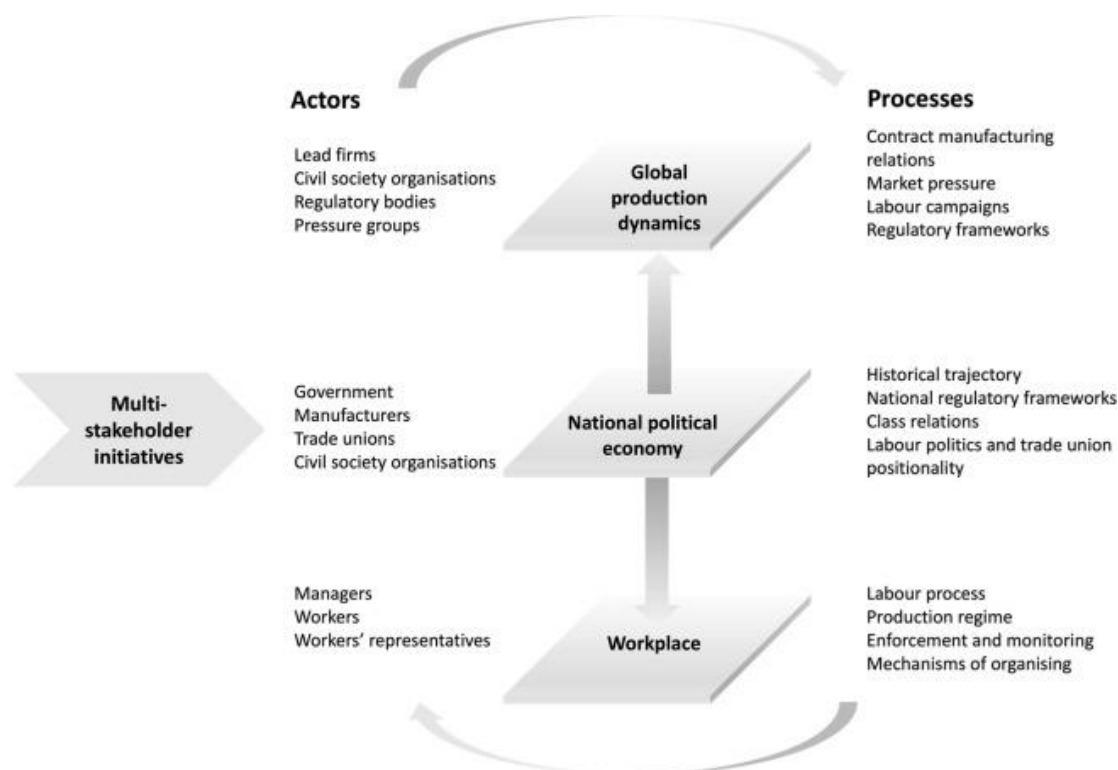
- Employer briefing sessions
- Short guides for inclusive onboarding
- Mentor training workshops
- Pre-placement expectation alignment meetings

Advice for VET providers

- Provide employers with simple guidance tools
- Facilitate open dialogue before placements
- Support employers during initial adaptation period

Advice for employers

- Create simple onboarding plans
- Allow learning time and mistakes
- Encourage open communication



4. Mediation and Follow-up After Employment

Post-employment follow-up is essential for long-term success. Vulnerable employees may face difficulties after hiring, including stress, communication problems, or adaptation challenges. Mediation by VET providers or NGOs helps resolve conflicts early and supports both employer and employee. Regular follow-up ensures stability, confidence building, and gradual independence of the employee.

Concrete activities

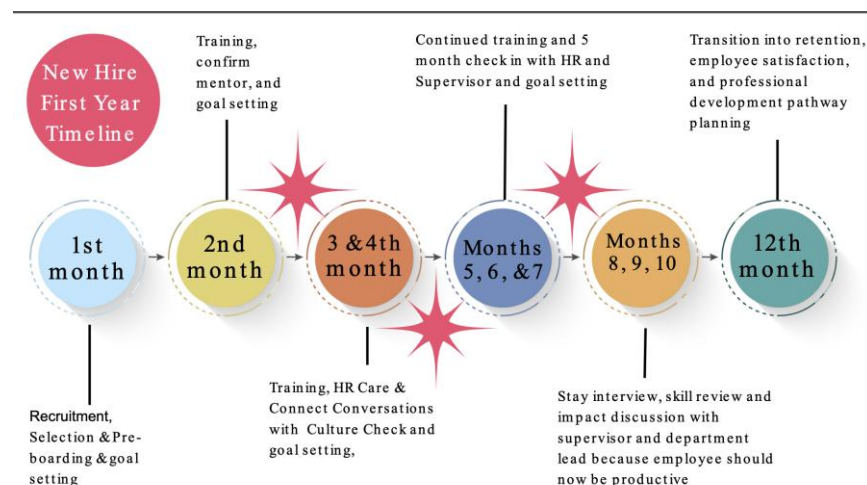
- Scheduled follow-up calls or visits
- Mediation meetings if issues arise
- Progress monitoring tools
- Employer–employee feedback sessions

Advice for VET providers

- Maintain contact for at least 3–6 months
- Act as neutral mediators
- Document progress and challenges

Advice for employers

- Report difficulties early
- Participate in mediation constructively
- Recognise improvement, not only performance





5. Preventing Early Drop-Out

Early drop-out is often caused by unmet expectations, lack of support, or personal challenges rather than inability to work. Prevention requires early identification of warning signs such as absenteeism, disengagement, or stress. A supportive, flexible approach combined with cooperation between stakeholders significantly increases retention rates and job satisfaction.

Concrete activities

- Early warning indicators checklist
- Regular mentor check-ins
- Flexible task adjustment
- Reinforcement of motivation and progress

Advice for VET providers

- Train mentors to detect risk signs
- Intervene early and discreetly
- Adapt support intensity when needed

Advice for employers

- Be patient during adaptation
- Encourage dialogue instead of sanctions
- Value effort and progress



Module 10

Monitoring, Evaluation and Sustainability

1. Monitoring learning and employability progress

Continuous monitoring is essential when working with vulnerable learners, as progress is often non-linear and influenced by personal, social, and economic factors. Monitoring should focus not only on technical skills, but also on attendance, motivation, self-confidence, communication, and adaptation to work routines. Simple, regular check-ins help VET providers and employers identify early signs of disengagement or difficulty and respond before problems escalate. Monitoring employability progress also means following the transition from training to employment and the first months at work, when vulnerable people are most at risk of dropping out.

Concrete activities

- Weekly short progress talks with learners
- Observation sheets during training or internships
- Monthly employability follow-up meetings

Advice for VET providers

- Use simple indicators (attendance, task completion, confidence level)
- Document progress in short monitoring sheets, not complex reports

Advice for employers

- Provide informal feedback during daily work
- Signal early if difficulties appear

2. Simple evaluation tools for VET providers

Evaluation should be practical, accessible, and adapted to low-skilled learners. Short questionnaires, visual scales (smileys, colours), and guided discussions are more effective than written tests. Evaluation should cover both learning outcomes and personal development, such as improved autonomy or communication.

Concrete activities

- End-of-module feedback forms with symbols
- Group reflection sessions
- Employer feedback forms after internships

Advice for VET providers

- Combine qualitative (discussion) and quantitative (simple scores) tools
- Adapt language to participants' comprehension level

Advice for employers

- Focus evaluation on behaviour, reliability, and progress, not only speed



3. Adapting training paths based on results

Monitoring and evaluation results must lead to action. Training paths should remain flexible, allowing adjustments in pace, content, or support level. Some learners may need extended practice, additional language support, or individual mentoring.

Concrete activities

- Revising individual learning plans
- Adding extra practice sessions
- Redirecting learners to alternative roles

Advice for VET providers

- Treat adaptation as normal, not failure
- Involve learners in decisions about changes

Advice for employers

- Allow gradual increase of responsibilities
- Adjust tasks to current skill level





4. Supporting long-term employability and retention

Sustainability means supporting learners beyond initial employment. Follow-up at 1, 3, and 6 months helps consolidate employment, address conflicts, and maintain motivation. Retention improves when learners feel supported and recognised.

Concrete activities

- Follow-up calls or meetings after employment
- Mentoring continuation for first months
- Recognition of progress milestones

Advice for VET providers

- Keep contact after placement
- Act as mediator if problems arise

Advice for employers

- Offer constructive feedback and encouragement
- Acknowledge small achievements

5. Sustainability of training programmes beyond the project

To ensure sustainability, tools and methods developed should be integrated into regular organisational practice. Partnerships with employers, NGOs, and public services should continue beyond project funding.

Concrete activities

- Integrating modules into regular VET courses
- Reusing materials with new groups
- Maintaining employer networks

Advice for VET providers

- Embed project tools into standard curricula
- Train new staff using developed resources



Advice for employers

- Continue inclusive recruitment practices
- Share experience with other companies

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