

# aβer

learning tools for preventing functional  
and secondary illiteracy

## Universal support tools for groups at risk functional illiteracy

**Akademia WSB**  
**WSB University**



Alphabetter - learning tools for preventing  
functional and secondary illiteracy

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## Introduction

In the mini handbook on the Alphabetter website we describe the practical pedagogical tools developed and tested during the project activities to support people affected by or at risk of functional illiteracy. They have been prepared in a universal version: on the basis of the developed common methodology, their practical operationalisation has been prepared, assumptions have been made and exemplary cultural adaptations have been presented, which can serve as model practices for the application of the proposed solutions. This allows for a wide possibility of adapting a given solution to very diverse social conditions. In the following chapters, the reader can easily find numerous graphics showing their possible forms. All material has been translated into English. The document also provides instructions on how to apply the proposed tools in contexts other than just those in which the pilot was implemented.

The educational materials developed as part of the project were translated into English during the course of the project. Together with numerous supplementary materials, they are available on the following websites:

<https://wsb.edu.pl/erasmus-alphabetter-learning-tools-for-preventing-functional-and-secondary-illiteracy/project-s-result-tools> and <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/>.

In the field of functional illiteracy we pay special attention to the cultural and linguistic diversity existing in the social world. Referring to the well-known distinction in cross-cultural research between cultural analysis of the emic type (in some simplification: an approach based on the belief that elements of a cultural nature e.g. such as words in a specific language are primarily specific and incomparable) and the etic type (there are cross-cultural universals, e.g. abstract elements of meaning that can be expressed in any language) we focused on the etic perspective. At the same time, some elements of the realised implementations of the universal tool were contextually adapted (e.g. graphic materials) due to their deep embedding in the cultural context (e.g. linguistic, legal, organisational, which is, after all, a prerequisite and normal procedure for adapting a universal tool of the etic type,) were developed in language-specific versions.

We developed and tested four different very specific forms of implementation of the universal methodology. Each partner in the Alphabetter project coordinated joint work on one of the implementations. With this arrangement, each partner became responsible for the cultural adaptation of the results of the joint work. Due to the linguistic and cultural context in which the piloting of each tool adaptation took place, one partner became particularly responsible for the process. However, at each stage and for each tool, the work was carried out jointly and on the basis of complementing each other's competences. The tools were designed according to the assumption of multimodality, which required the continuous pooling and coordination of expertise from different areas. The different partners, due to their unique expertise, brought their unique knowledge and experience related to the specifics of their previous activities at each stage:

- 1. WSB University - experience in enhancing the social interactivity of designed learning tools and strategies for cultural adaptation of learning materials; as a result, designed tools include procedures to match the interactional dynamics of particular types of social environments;
- 2. University of California San Diego - expertise in the design and evaluation of validated tools to assist people affected by functional and secondary illiteracy in migrant communities; UCSD representatives provided the main ideas, principles of tool development and evaluation, and the application of equity policy in the design of educational tools aimed at migrants;
- 3. the European Center of Entrepreneurship Competence & Excellence (Austria) - experience and knowledge of the use of graphic elements in the creation of literacy tools and methodologies for working with migrant families; the participation of the Austrian partner was materialised e.g. in the form of the development of procedures for shaping all graphic elements according to the principles of cultural adaptation to the needs of the target group;
- 4. ENAIP VENETO IMPRESA SOCIALE (Italy) - experience and expertise in the preparation of implementation multimedia presentations and tutorial videos tailored to the

needs of migrants and knowledge of typical communication problems of refugees; the Italian partner developed principles to support training aimed at people at risk of functional illiteracy with audiovisual materials;

- 5. MEPCO, s.r.o. (Czech Republic) - experience of working with public institutions and the needs of institutional clients not directly related to the education sector; the methodology and all educational solutions designed by the Alphabetter consortium include procedures for adapting them to the legal and institutional context of a given country.

On the basis of the analysis of standard cases of pedagogical tool development, the principle was adopted that the tools would take the form of specific preparation instructions referring to mutually agreed assumptions. In this way, an innovative result of a universal nature possible for use by actors from different countries was created. Of course, due to the specific cultural and linguistic context, it has to be adapted in each case to meet the needs of the specific target group. The document describes procedures for adaptation and provides concrete examples of such adaptation. These are intended to serve as model practices for the proposed solutions.

In the course of working together on the tools, the consortium decided to modify and expand on the original idea of creating graphic material in the form of a comic strip with a specific protagonist ('Paragraph-man'), which for cultural reasons would have been less suited to people belonging to certain migrant groups. Simply calling it 'Paragraph-man', in the context of the decision to work on a tool aimed at migrants, could be perceived as stigmatising and suggestive of the criminal nature of the experiences of these communities. This perspective was the result of an educational visit to San Diego, but also of extensive consultation of the solution with expert organisations from Europe. In the end, guided by considerations of the universality of the new approach, we opted for tools of a less controversial nature (narrative-interaction multimodal solutions), yet empirically proven to meet the needs of the people we are targeting with the educational materials developed. The refocusing of the work on developing the tool did not constitute an abandonment of the originally envisaged concept of the comic strip and, by analogy, the tools developed fit into its framework. After all, the comics formula is very broad, and its openness to new and less obvious forms is a constitutive feature of the genre. The determinants of this convention are the pictorial nature, the iconicity of the signs, the sequentiality, the use of frames and their semantic linking; in these criteria, without a doubt, the proposed tool fits perfectly. At the same time, the tools are characterised by features that are at the heart of the assumed concept, i.e. educational character and interactivity. As mentioned, the comic strip is intrinsically an open-ended genre, and its diversity is not only determined by the multiplicity of its functions (e.g. social, therapeutic, educational, psychological, diagnostic comics), but also by the multiplicity of its formal dimensions (e.g. comic cards, comic playing and learning cards, interactive comics, online comics, "strips" (comic strips), comic stencils, memes, comic infographics, photo books, murals and graffiti, etc.).

Each of the proposed tools, in line with the multimodality approach, refers to graphic or visual elements that support communication and allow adaptation in a new place of life. The tools are composed of a collection of graphics or visuals, instructions and examples of their practical adaptation and use. Each tool can be used very easily with any audience once it has been adapted to a specific purpose, e.g. explaining what a child's parents' cooperation is with the school they attend, in a way that is adapted to local regulations. The advantage of using flexible graphic tools in the project as an open form of communication - in relation to the comic strip in its traditional (book) form - is that it is an innovative solution, allowing users to generate different narratives that make up a comic strip-type story. The innovation lies in the flexible adaptation of the amount of information provided to the needs of the people using the tool. In the manual, we have described what are the alternative ways of obtaining and selecting the most relevant graphics) for free use. As the evaluation shows, the materials are evaluated as attractive and practically useful. The educational materials refer to important public procedures for social adaptation, which, supported graphically and visually, are an innovative method of developing literacy. During the final conference organised by the consortium with the participation of educators-practitioners, the presented educational materials met with appreciation and wide interest.

## **Application of the Community-Based Literacy Equity Design Framework methodology: identification of existing services and resources, assessment of challenges and needs - country specifics**

### **Poland**

Our target group is Ukrainian families living in Poland and holding a residence card. These include both economic migrants and war refugees, whose children attend Polish primary schools and can be agents in strengthening their parents' literacy skills.

In the case of the Ukrainians, social and cultural adaptation in Poland causes them to focus on the most urgent matters of existence. They are currently immersed in the Polish language environment and therefore their contact with the written language (Ukrainian uses a different alphabet) is very limited, which probably leads to functional illiteracy. These people learn or assimilate Polish, but this process further impoverishes their advanced abilities to understand and create complex meanings in the new social and cultural reality in which they find themselves. The problem is the symbolisation of their own experiences and the creation of their own identity (of Ukrainians in Poland), which is essential in the process of socio-cultural integration. These people need literacy tools to effectively symbolise their situation in a culturally contextualised way. Support is needed for parallel and consistent acquisition of skills in Polish, while continuing to learn to read and write in Ukrainian.

We intend to take advantage of the functioning of Ukrainian children in the Polish school environment and the involvement of parents in supporting them. In cooperation with schools, we intend to create a tool that is disseminated by the children, but helps both children and parents to better adapt to the Polish cultural and linguistic context. Family problems often surface in crisis situations, e.g. health problems, financial problems, discrimination in the workplace, family breakdown. Resolving these problems requires advanced skills in symbolising one's situation (a family living at the cultural crossroads) and Polish language competence in dealing with Polish social services. In many situations, parents, due to their limited knowledge of the Polish language, are unable to be actively involved in supporting their children's education and communicating with schools and teachers. Low language competence makes it difficult to understand a culturally different reality. The school is often the first institution to identify the family's problem and interact with them. This is the case even when the specific problem is related to, for example, mental health, domestic violence or problems in accessing health care services.

### **Ukrainian migrants in Poland: general situation**

Overseas migration is the movement of people in international space. It is associated with social and economic changes. The reasons for migration are triggered by various aspects, such as natural disasters, economic difficulties, changes in the political forces of the country we live in or a free, unprovoked decision based on the desire to get to know other countries. Migration has accompanied mankind since the dawn of time and now seems to be gaining momentum. The main aspects of migration are: changes in the emigrant's permanent place of residence, changes in the professional and social structure.

Migration is a collective process, it is reflected in social as well as cultural organisation, as it radically changes the way of life, behavioural patterns and symbolic world of migrants. Migrants who decide to change their place of life have to go through a complex process influenced by many social and psychological factors. The factors determining the change must be strong enough for the individual to be able to overcome any doubts and problems that arise on the way to departure. Such changes are never caused by a single motive, but rather by a combination of certain circumstances that make the individual decide to leave a familiar environment. A distinction is made between 'push' and 'pull' factors in relation to the influence of the country to which the emigrant is leaving and the country they are leaving.

Push factors (push factors from the country of origin):

- Low wages,
- High unemployment,
- Poor working conditions,
- Poor future prospects,
- Poor economic situation in the country, limited housing opportunities,
- Excess of people of working age,
- The disappointments and frustrations of the formation of the new regime,
- Armed conflicts,
- Restrictions on human rights.

Attraction factors (factors of attraction to the target country):

- Low levels of unemployment,
- High employment opportunities,
- Reduced visa requirements,
- Opportunities for favourable earnings,
- Positive attitudes towards foreigners and ethnic minorities,
- Other economic opportunities (opportunities to gain new qualifications, learn new technologies).

While there is a strong demand from public and research institutions to identify the actual size of the stock of foreigners residing in Poland, estimating the size of this population is not easy. This is mainly due to the fact that the institutions compiling such data - such as the Central Statistical Office (CSO) and the Office for Foreigners (UdSC) - collect and present them in different ways. Furthermore, a significant part of migration is circular and there is also illegal migration, which is difficult to measure.

Currently, Ukrainian nationals are by far the dominant group of third-country nationals in Poland. In 2019, they accounted for 64.2% of foreigners residing in Poland. The scale of labour migration of Ukrainians to Poland in the last five years is estimated at 0.4-2.1 million people. Discrepancies in the estimates are due to seasonal fluctuations, periodic returns to the homeland and taking up employment without completing all the formalities prescribed by law. According to estimates by the Institute for Economic Forecasting and Analysis (IPIAG), in 2020, 751.8 thousand foreigners may be working in the shadow economy in Poland, accounting for 70% of the total number of employed foreigners.

Since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, more than 3 million Ukrainian citizens have crossed the border into Poland. Today, we estimate that around 1.6 million remain in Poland. From 15 March 2022 to the end of June 2022, employers reported employing 200,101 Ukrainian nationals on the Polish labour market (data from the Ministry of Family and Social Policy). It should be noted that due to the uncertain political situation related to Russian military aggression, the number of Ukrainians residing in Poland is changing rapidly.

In order to address the most urgent life problems and the issue of professional integration of migrants from Ukraine, the Polish government has, as an emergency measure, enacted a special 'Law on Assistance to Ukrainian Citizens in Connection with the Armed Conflict on the Territory of Ukraine'. The law was enacted on 12 March 2022, with legal effect from 24 February 2022. An amendment to this law was adopted on 8 June.

The Act of 12.03.2022 on assistance to citizens of Ukraine in connection with the armed conflict on the territory of that country (Journal of Laws, item 583, as amended) introduced facilitations in the legalisation of employment for citizens of Ukraine who came to Poland from the territory of Ukraine in connection with the warfare conducted on the territory of that country and for citizens of Ukraine holding the Card of the Pole, who, together with

with their immediate family arrived on the territory of Poland due to warfare. Solutions related to the simplified form of legalisation of employment also apply to Ukrainian citizens who legally resided in Poland before 24.02.2022.

One of the key solutions contained in the Act on Assistance to Citizens of Ukraine is the possibility of legal employment on the Polish labour market. The Act provides for a solution enabling Ukrainian citizens legally residing on the territory of Poland to take up employment without the need to obtain a work permit or without fulfilling the obligation to submit a declaration on the intention to entrust work, i.e. under simplified rules. An employer is entitled to accept for employment on the basis of simplified forms of employment a Ukrainian citizen who:

- legally arrived on the territory of Poland as of 24.02.2022 from the territory of Ukraine and declares his intention to stay in Poland, and
- holds a valid resident title.



The Polish government has also provided Ukrainian refugees with access to labour market facilities, Polish language courses, retraining opportunities, but also facilitated the nostrification of diplomas and professional qualification certificates.

Ukrainian citizens who left their homeland as a result of Russian aggression can legally stay in Poland for 18 months from 24 February 2022. This applies to those who came to Poland from Ukraine and declared their intention to stay on the territory of our country. A path for further legalisation of the stay of Ukrainian citizens who fled the war is also provided for. Persons whose stay on the territory of Poland is or has been recognised as legal are granted a temporary residence permit. It is granted for a period of 3 years at a time, starting from the date of the decision.

The law provides for the assignment of a PESEL number to Ukrainian citizens who arrived in Poland due to the war. This solution will allow a number of public services to be provided to these persons. For this purpose, a special procedure is provided for obtaining a PESEL number on application containing a catalogue of basic data. This is a procedure that allows obtaining a PESEL number without the need to demonstrate a legal basis for having one.

At the same time, full access to the Polish labour market was guaranteed to Ukrainian citizens. In order to take advantage of this solution, the employer must, within 14 days, notify the competent labour office via the [praca.gov.pl](https://praca.gov.pl) portal of the employment of a foreigner. In this way, Ukrainian citizens can also benefit from labour market services in the form of, inter alia, job placement, vocational counselling and training - on the same principles as Polish citizens. Citizens of Ukraine may undertake and carry out economic activity on the territory of Poland on the same principles as Polish citizens, provided they obtain a PESEL number.

The Polish economy has been experiencing a high demand for foreign labour for several years, caused by a shortage of native workers on the labour market. At the same time, research conducted in Poland by Work Service in 2019 ('Labour migrations of foreigners from Ukraine and Asia to Poland') and by the Polish-Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce in 2019. (Social profile of a labour migrant from Ukraine, <https://www.pol-ukr.com/wp-content/uploads/PUIG-PIZ-Raport-2019.pdf>) clearly indicate a low level of matching between the competences of foreigners and the needs of the labour market. As can be seen from the declarations of Ukrainian workers, the vast majority of them believe that they perform work below their qualifications. The results of the analysis of the professional situation of Ukrainian workers in large cities, carried out over the years 2015-2018, showed that 59.9% of migrants from Warsaw, 55.3% of migrants from Wrocław, 50.3% of migrants from Lublin and 48.3% of migrants from Bydgoszcz declared that they perform work below their qualifications, while according to the results of the survey 'Foreigners in Warsaw', Ukrainians are divided into two groups - 51% declared that they found a job in line with their qualifications and 47% - below their qualifications. In accordance with their qualifications, 90% of EU foreigners work, among foreigners from other countries the percentage is 67%.

Employers in Poland are rated well by the majority of Ukrainian employees. 57% of respondents have a good or very good attitude towards their bosses and 39% have a neutral attitude. The attitude of Ukrainian employees towards their Polish colleagues is very positive. 53% rate the Poles they have worked with very good or good. A further 37% of Ukrainians have a neutral attitude.

Almost 60% of the surveyed Ukrainian workers feel satisfied with their work in Poland, 13.5% are dissatisfied. This opinion is not influenced by the issue of taking a job below level education. It is influenced by on it whereas satisfaction with earnings and positive assessment of the workplace (including atmosphere, relations with co-workers, development opportunities, attitude of Poles towards them as foreigners). Similar conclusions can be drawn from the survey on satisfaction with work in Poland in 2020 of temporary workers from Ukraine: 93% of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with relations with co-workers, working conditions (82%) and the attitude of Poles towards immigrants (73%) were also highly rated. Satisfaction with salary was indicated by 65% of respondents.

The range of possible tasks to be carried out by the Polish regional authorities includes professional activation and the integration and social activity of Ukrainians legally residing in Poland:

1. profiling of the foreigner's needs and potential (expectations vs. opportunities on the local labour market).
2. organising courses, training or other forms of education or helping to find and finance available training, courses or other forms of education.

3. support with necessary formalities related to recognition of education and qualifications
4. counselling career guidance and support with process activation and professional activation, a in setting up and running a business in Poland
5. support in the job placement process (provided by public employment services and other labour market institutions) and in contacts with employers.

In addition, it is possible to promote integration in society through individual development and strengthening activity in various areas of social life for Ukrainians:

- providing support assistant integration developing individual social integration pathway for adults and providing support in contacts with institutions and in everyday life situations.
- Provision of legal, psychological and psychotherapeutic assistance related to mental and physical health - also in connection with the experience of migration, as well as a clash with cultural differences or differences resulting from a change in the previous environment of the foreigner and his or her family.
- provision of Polish language courses, courses and training in cultural orientation and other areas useful for social integration
- Providing the necessary translation and support in dealing with public and private institutions (e.g. opening bank accounts, acquiring property, fulfilling civic duties, using public transport or obtaining a driving licence, taking advantage of assistance (including social and housing), education, development, leisure and cultural facilities.
- Supporting the integration of foreigners in schools and the activities of the main stakeholders in the school environment (e.g. assistance during school classes and in the contacts of guardians with the educational institution, organisation of workshops and training for teachers and parents on both Polish culture and the culture of the countries of origin of foreign students, integration events).

The problem of professional integration of foreigners has been included in a number of government strategic documents: Long-term National Development Strategy. Poland 2030; The Third Wave of Modernity; Medium-term National Development Strategy. Poland 2020; Human Capital Development Strategy; Social Capital Development Strategy. Most of these became outdated after the outbreak of war in Ukraine.

In response to the problems of professional integration of Ukrainians in Poland, the Minister of Family and Social Policy announced the call for applications "Together We Can Do More - 1st edition of the Programme for Activation of Foreigners for 2022-2023" within the framework of the Ministry's Programme for Activation of Foreigners for 2022-2025. The direct recipients of the proposed activities within the submitted applications, i.e. project beneficiaries, will be foreigners legally residing in Poland who require support in one or more priority areas specified in the Programme. The Programme will take into account in particular foreigners who came to Poland from countries in crisis situation, e.g. related to military operations conducted on their territory (including Ukraine). An additional advantage of the bids submitted in the current edition of the Programme will be the inclusion of a group of foreigners who were evacuated to Poland last year as part of the government's support of allies from Afghanistan or who found themselves in a particularly difficult situation in connection with evacuation from the areas covered by military operations in Ukraine. The programme will be launched in 2023. The activities planned by AWSB are complementary to it.

## ITALY

# 1. Focus group: motivation for selection and description of the specifics of the approach in the context of literacy improvement

## Specificity of approach: Functional illiteracy and the labour market

Social exclusion creates a growing inequality between those who are privileged and relatively secure and those who are disadvantaged and marginalised, who do not have access to employment and suffer from financial insecurity, marginalisation and exclusion from economic life.

Disregarding workers with literacy difficulties can jeopardise the necessary modernisation of enterprises. In fact, semi-literate workers are an obstacle to the spread of new production methods and new technologies. How can we introduce machines and methods that mobilise semi-permanent cognitive abilities in a company that wants to be competitive and that increasingly require the use of reasoning, abstraction, prediction, calculation, reading?

From a purely economic point of view, the impact of functional illiteracy is very often underestimated. It is a phenomenon that gives rise to additional costs: the additional burden of serious accident rates, wage supplements to make up for the shortcomings of one or the other, increased time due to the employment of additional staff, to which must be added the effects of a lack of production of goods due to a lack of optimal qualifications.

A deficit in adaptability to the demands of employment is not without consequences for the workers themselves. Apart from causing accidents at work, functional illiteracy is a source of absenteeism and demotivation. This situation reduces mental flexibility (in fact, the lack of recognition of acquired knowledge makes it difficult to plan a medium-term professional future), as well as geographical mobility, which requires the reconstitution of reference points and new paths, which is not always easy for those who lack a frame of reference and basic knowledge.

We often hear students and unemployed people protesting with the cry "work is a right", but work is not a right. Let's explain this phrase better: the right to work means that the state/government does everything to ensure that everyone, without discrimination, has the opportunity to work. The right to work mentioned in the Italian Constitution means exactly that: work is a right that must be earned. If this were not the case, it would mean that any unemployed person could go to a judge and demand a job. This is not possible. What is possible is to go to a judge and ask not to be discriminated against in the *w o r k p l a c e*. A job, however, has to be won for yourself by *l e a r n i n g* and staying current. If you don't have the means or other economic opportunities to train and study, the state/government must guarantee them to you. Not a job, but the opportunity to work. The state/government cannot force any person to sign an employment contract with a company. Not working is also a right.

With this in mind, we decided to focus on a specific target group.

The selected target group of the ENAIP is people over 30 years of age, with a predominance of unemployed men and women over 55 years of age (especially the long-term unemployed) who want to return to the labour market. They are poorly educated and consequently unemployed or in unskilled occupations.

This target group faces daily challenges. Lack of qualifications and low levels of education make it extremely difficult for these people to find a job, both because of their lack of skills and their inability to look for work and return to the labour market. Therefore, the main need of the target group is to acquire basic skills to understand how the labour market works, optimise the job search and then find a job that is suitable for them.

One of the main barriers faced by these individuals is the inability to find the right organisation to support them. Moreover, the difficulty in finding the most appropriate (career) pathway

and last but not least the difficulties in training to acquire the skills needed to find a job. Therefore, a targeted labour market reintegration path with specific occupational profiles (OML - labour market operators) helping to overcome functional illiteracy can contribute to reducing this phenomenon. Labour market operators conduct preliminary interviews to identify the personal and professional resources of unemployed people that can be utilised on the labour market, according to possible job mediation. In particular, they are responsible for developing a professional development plan with the users, in line with previous skills and new skills to be acquired during the training; monitoring the objectives set in relation to the match between demand and labour supply; accompanying the users on their paths of entry and/or re-entry into the labour market; managing the relationship with companies interested in these professional profiles.

With this in mind, we can equip OML with some tools and use e-learning to combat functional illiteracy.

Quality education is, of course, the only way to prevent functional illiteracy: reading and revising different texts can help to improve reading comprehension and written expression. For adults, the key is lifelong learning, which still applies to a low percentage of the workforce, 30% compared to the OECD average of 43%. In a country with high rates of functional and computer illiteracy, how can online courses be a solution?

In fact, e-learning has the potential to support continuing education and training:

- It stimulates the use of the internet, smartphone, tablet or computer in other ways than on social networks;
- Offers entertaining methods of learning through gamification i simulations, helping people with literacy difficulties to understand real-life situations and make decisions;
- It offers the possibility to enjoy the same content in different ways: text, video, audio;
- It breaks down the cognitive load that can make learning difficult for employees who are not already used to learning by breaking down learning topics into micro-topics;
- It encourages proactivity and self-directed learning, giving participants the choice of what they learn, when, where and for how long;
- Helps to track training needs before, during and after training with detailed statistics;
- It makes corporate compliance more engaging and stimulating through blended, social live learning formulas.

Understanding the content of texts and documents of all kinds, being able to evaluate numerical variables in everyday life and using technology and the Internet for professional purposes are essential skills for social and professional life in the new millennium. eLearning helps to ensure that everyone achieves these skills through its ability to engage all types of learners in an interactive and flexible way.

In general, the problem of functional illiteracy should not be left to the traditional education system alone, but must become the focus of integrated policies that combine cultural and educational goals with social and employment ones. It is therefore necessary to bring the learner as close as possible to the educational and training offer in his/her workplace, and to take into account the general needs of the individual and his/her family situation

## **ENAIIP Veneto activities**

ENAIIP Veneto designs and manages vocational training courses for young people, adults, companies and apprenticeships. It also provides counselling and job-shadowing services; deals with professional qualifications and retraining; proposes pathways for the recognition and validation of skills acquired in the work environment and extracurricular training contexts; analyses individual formal and informal skills and draws up individual skills dossiers. The organisation is accredited by the Veneto Region for training and employment services and has a UNI EN ISO 9001/2015 certified management system.

Among the actions to support the unemployed, ENAIP Veneto uses a number of tools issued at regional and/or national level. Among the most important can be mentioned:

1. **Assegno per il Lavoro (Cheque for a Job)** is an active policy tool funded by the Veneto Region to combat long-term unemployment by supporting unemployed people over 30 years old in their search for a new job through free counselling, training and job placement services. The Labour Cheque consists of a bonus, up to a maximum value of €5,796, which citizens can spend at accredited employment services in exchange for personalised outplacement assistance services such as guidance, counselling, training, upskilling and job placement or reintegration support by matching job offers with demand. Labour Cheque's trial period ended on 15 May 2022. From this date, it is no longer possible to apply online or at the employment centres in Veneto.
2. **OML (labour market operator) profile.** The OML provides a reception service by profiling users and providing information on the use of employment services and measures. It conducts individual and group interviews, using tools and procedures defined by the Office, to identify skills and needs, offering support in knowing correctly the opportunities related to active employment policies. This activity is carried out through interviews involving an in-depth study of the recipient's problems and characteristics, including an analysis of their experiences and the structuring of a tailored intervention, which includes support in identifying training and/or employment pathways.
3. **Next Generation WE.** These are free training courses aimed at strengthening the professional profiles of unemployed people in order to access the labour market, according to the specific and real needs of the local companies involved from the start. The initiative foresees two lines of intervention defined according to the target group:
  - Line 1 Adults (unemployed 'over 30'), which is a continuation of the Work Experience interventions promoted under the previous 14-20 programming;
  - Line 2 Young people (unemployed "under 30"), which provides, in addition to EC for entry into the profession, a type of EC dedicated to "professions of the future", aimed at acquiring and improving skills related to innovative professional profiles, with a particular focus on the area of environmental sustainability and the effects of changes resulting from the acceleration of industrial, digital and environmental transformation.

Project proposals for both action lines can be submitted by institutions accredited by employment services and higher education. EUR 10 million has been earmarked for this initiative and three project submission windows are planned.

#### 4. National Action Plan for Employment (GOL)

It is a national programme called Guarantee of Employment (GOL), aimed at job placement through the provision of specific active labour policy services, within a personalised service pact defined between unemployed people and employment centres for job placement.

The objectives of the programme are:

- disadvantaged or vulnerable workers (young NEETs under 30), disadvantaged women, people with disabilities, mature workers (55 years and older);
- unemployed without income (unemployed for at least six months, other less employable workers - young people and women, also not vulnerable - self-employed people who have stopped working or with very low income);
- employees with very low incomes (the so-called 'working poor') whose income from employment or self-employment is below the incapacity threshold according to tax regulations;
- self-employed persons who permanently cease their professional activity.

## A community-based approach

Regarding the community-based approach, Enaip Veneto will follow two directions. On the one hand, it will be able to use the OML, both for the creation of the tool and for pilot experiments; on the other hand, it will be able to broaden the target group for dissemination and experimentation by collaborating with CPIA (Provincial Centres for Adult Education).

In order to create a pathway and a tool capable of preventing functional illiteracy and contributing to the reduction of unemployment in the above-mentioned target group, ENAIP Veneto has started to collaborate with the University of Verona (Department of Psychology), which is conducting in-depth research on the subject; a topic on which scientific literature remains very scarce to date.

Focus groups were initiated and conducted to analyse the selected target group, its characteristics and needs. CPIAs (Provincial Centres for Adult Education) were involved in the analysis through individual interviews with staff. Adult education is promoted by CPIAs (Provincial Centres for Adult Education), they are a kind of autonomous educational institution with their own staff and a defined teaching and organisational structure. CPIAs are divided into 'territorial service networks' organised at three levels: Level A: administrative unit; Level B: teaching unit; Level C: training unit.

CPIAs are very important because they cover a very large group of adults who may fit into our chosen target group. With CPIA's contribution, it will be easier to carry out the next pilot phase and eventual dissemination of the tool.

The community-based approach that Enaip Veneto intends to pursue with the project concerns the use of the OML, as Enaip is an institution accredited by the Veneto region and can make the Alphabeter project available to test the project tool on a sample of 400 users.

In particular, Enaip Veneto has more than 60 OMLs and more than 400 users (unemployed people, jobseekers, migrants, people with disabilities) on which it implements a policy of orientation professional orientation, upgrading qualifications, retraining, integration social inclusion and the alleviation of discomfort. Through the use of tools that can develop digital skills, OMLs are the only professionals who can give advice / counselling through online portals in the Veneto region, so in this project they will be the main stakeholders of the experiments with the tools.

## AUSTRIA

### Kindergartens and after-school care facilities

Kindergarten covers the care of children until they reach compulsory school age. There are different forms of elementary education: crèche, kindergarten, after-school care and children's group, playgroups and mother/father day care. Elementary education institutions are the first educational institutions in a child's life. Compulsory schooling in Austria does not start until the age of six, but education does not start with compulsory schooling. Kindergarten is the basis for further success in educational careers, which is why the primary sector is the lowest basic level of education (cf. OECD, European Union, UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015, p. 19).

After the crèche or Kita (day care centre), children aged three and over can attend kindergarten on a voluntary basis; since the pre-school year 2010/11, half-day kindergarten has been compulsory and free of charge for all children in year six (Bundesministerium für Familien und Jugend, 2014).

Throughout the world, care and education of infants and children takes place in groups (cf. Dollase, 2015, p. 30).

The definition of 'pre-school group' can be found in the law of the province of Upper Austria. In legal terms, it is defined as a group of educational and childcare facilities whose provision is mainly aimed at children between the ages of three and the start of school (§2 Absatz 1 Satz 3 Oö.-KBBG).

The heterogeneity of group composition in the primary sector encompasses many criteria, such as age, educational class, religion, nationality, education, but also personal and pedagogically relevant distinctive criteria ( e.g. temperament, athleticism, . ..) ( cf. Dollase, 2015, p. 185).

After-school care centres are childcare facilities for girls and boys of school age - from six to 12 years. Outside school hours (after school and on non-school days), they offer a comprehensive range of childcare services. The main tasks of after-school care centres concern supporting children in their development, in acquiring learning skills, in organising learning processes and in taking responsibility for their own actions and the affairs of the group (Deutscher Bundestag 2005, p. 254).

## **Educational partnership with parents**

Preschools and after-school care centres are not only educational institutions. They are also service providers under special conditions. On the one hand, children are accompanied in their development and, on the other hand, it is a complementary institution to the family. The aim is also to support parents in their educational tasks. Educational partnership is a very important pillar of pedagogy. The continuous exchange and constructive cooperation between educators and parents is a factor for optimal child development (cf. Bäck, Hajsan & Bayer-Chisté, 2011, p. 99).

The younger the children are, the more important and crucial it is to work closely with parents. Young children are not yet linguistically capable of expressing themselves about their day. Documentation and detailed discussions with parents therefore play a key role here. Especially during the adaptation period, a detailed and trusting exchange between parents and educational staff is essential (cf. Stamer-Brandt, 2020, p. 29).

### **The objectives of the educational partnership are as follows:**

- Establish a relationship based on partnership and clarify mutual expectations,
- Signalling openness i transparency and informing o the work of pedagogical work in the organisation,
- Sharing information about the child as a basis for pedagogical work,
- Offering opportunities for participation (collaboration, co-determination, co-decision),
- Enabling opinion processes,
- Advise and support parents on developmental issues,
- Accepting constructive criticism through a complaints management system,
- Integration of migrant parents (seeing cultural diversity as enrichment, taking into account special needs) and
- Networking, i.e. opening up the organisation to the outside world and networking with other relevant organisations (cf. Bäck, Hajsan and Bayer-Chisté, 2011, p. 99).



## Methods of working with parents

The teaching staff has a wide range of methods at its disposal for working with parents. Particularly in the initial period, the so-called adaptation period, the introductory interview and the trial period are important. Introductory and parents' evenings form the basis for cooperation in a spirit of partnership. Door-to-door talks are the most common form of daily contact with parents. Although they should be used intentionally, parent calls should be used for more complex or in-depth issues. Telephone calls are also increasingly used, especially since the coronavirus pandemic. Educational partnerships can also be supported by the media. Wall charts, letters from parents, surveys, homepages and forums are some examples. Wall charts and letters from parents are particularly frequently used. They provide a good way to share information that affects all parents. Organisational and factual information can be communicated in this way to avoid long conversations when raising children (cf. Bäck, Hajszan & Bayer-Chisté, 2011, p. 108).

Parents are primarily responsible for their child's upbringing. This means that they are also the first point of contact in kindergartens and after-school care centres. Parents and educational staff should work together. The individual situation of parents should also be taken into account. This requires a live meeting (cf. Roth, 2013, p. 16).

## Written communication

As described above, a significant part of the educational partnership with parents in kindergartens and out-of-school facilities uses writing and reading: notice boards, announcements, surveys or letters to parents. Deadlines, projects or generally applicable rules are communicated clearly and unambiguously in this way. More complex topics can be communicated with greater precision in writing. (cf. Bäck, Hajszan & Bayer-Chisté, 2011, p. 99).

However, this form of communication entails some difficulties for a large proportion of parents in a nursery or after-school group.

## Migration and diversity as a challenge

As educational institutions, primary educational institutions are currently facing professional challenges. Transculturalism as a diverse social element, equal participation, lack of staff, increased proportion of migrants and many other aspects of recent decades challenge vocational counsellors for innovative solutions. Especially children, but also parents are supported and encouraged (cf. Beckord, 2011, p. 10 ff.).

An important task here is to take into account and understand the diversity of personal - but also cultural - needs (cf. *ibid.*, p. 27).

## Functional illiteracy

Functional illiterates have lower reading skills than the assumed knowledge base (cf. Bundesverband Alphabetisierung und Grundbildung e.V., 2022, p. 4).

Functional illiteracy is a term that was only introduced in the mid-twentieth century and implies that the social minimum requirement for written language proficiency is not met, so that social participation is limited by a lack of written communication in all areas of life. Some parents in educational institutions may also have imperceptible literacy difficulties. It is difficult to determine exactly how many people are affected. There also seems to be a problem in determining when a person can read and write 'sufficiently' to cope with everyday life. Moreover, many adults find strategies to keep these difficulties hidden, and thus the number of people affected increases (cf. *ibid.*, p. 21).



## Our conclusion

Educational professionals are therefore faced with a difficult task. On the one hand, they have parents for whom clear written information is very important and also serves as an educational partnership. In addition, they have to reach out to parents whose language and writing competences are lower. Especially for information that is sent to all parents, a repeated personal conversation is almost impossible apart from the daily group routine with many young children. Therefore, it is necessary to create a way to reach parents through letters without overburdening them.

## CZECH REPUBLIC

Doležalová (2005, p. 40) provides a summary of the specific characteristics of functional literacy, which is the result of an analysis of functional literacy definitions and requirements in society:

- Rich structure skills reading, writing i arithmetic in terms of in terms of quality and scope.
- Ability to work with continuous and discontinuous texts that are richly structured and packed with information.
- Participation of higher levels of thought operations when working with textual information.
- The ability to work with information 'outside the text', i.e. information that a person needs to solve a task that is not contained in the text.
- They apply literacy and numeracy skills when solving a specific task or problem, usually from everyday life.
- The complex of knowledge and skills possessed by a functionally literate person is open-ended.

Reading, literacy and comprehension are also terms often used to describe literacy levels. Fisher (1999) defines reading or word recognition as "the process of converting letters into words and the ability to pronounce them correctly" (p. 57). The results of word recognition tests can be misleading as they only indicate a person's ability to identify words and not their comprehension.

Readability is defined as the ease with which written or printed information can be read. It is based on the measurement of several different elements in a given piece of printed material, such as the level of language used and the layout and design of the page (Hasselkus, 2009). These variables affect the extent to which a group of readers will be able to read the writing style of a selected printed passage.

In comparison, reading comprehension is the extent to which individuals understand what they have read (Fisher, 1999; Koo, Krass, & Aslani, 2005). It is the ability to grasp the meaning of a message - to understand its essence. A health professional can determine whether comprehension of health instructions has occurred by noting whether clients are able to correctly demonstrate or recall in their own words the message they have received

## Reasons for lack of adult literacy

Doležalová (2005) provides a basic overview of the factors influencing functional literacy and essentially divides them into objective and subjective factors. Objective factors of functional literacy are further divided into macro-environment factors, local environment factors and micro-environment factors.

### Objective factors

Macro-environmental factors refer to the characteristics of the state and public administration, mentioning mainly economic and cultural-political factors.

#### 1. economic factors

- demanding technological procedures

- rapid changes in production technologies and workforce structure
  - communication through new communication technologies and media (in addition to text, image transmission or information processing) - visual culture, communication with institutions in an increasingly formalised way
  - the emergence of new types of richly structured texts (at work and in everyday life)
  - infrastructural support, i.e. development and quality of education
  - an increase in the number of people employed in services (...)
2. Cultural and political factors (focused on pedagogical background):
- ensuring compulsory schooling and the right to education
  - high level of education: learning content is richly complex, material and methodological aspects of education are provided
  - general education also in vocational schools (Rabušicová, 1998, p. 20)
  - teacher training at university level
  - appropriate opportunities for different types of education, a wide range of educational programmes responding to the addition of new types of literacy, retraining, etc. as part of lifelong learning
  - political and ideological influences on the development of education

### **Local factors in relation to:**

1. different areas (regions)
- in slums, ethnic neighbourhoods (ghettos), economically backward areas that are associated with poverty and unemployment (illiteracy or low levels of functional skills are passed on from parents to children)
  - in areas with limited accessibility to schools (due to distance)
2. groups
- working migrant groups
  - marginal groups
  - lower social strata with a weak economic base, with low cultural motives and needs and with limited opportunities for advancement (social, economic and cultural)

### **Microenvironmental factors**

are mainly narrowed down to so-called 'family factors', which seem to be crucial from the author's point of view, and she therefore presents them in the form of a table in her paper, which lists factors of high and low literacy (Doležalová, 2005, p. 54).

### **Subjective factors**

In addition to the objective factors briefly outlined above, the level of functional skills of adults is also influenced by subjective factors, which include both innate predispositions of the individual and acquired characteristics and experiences. The most important of these are as follows:

- age
- ability and readiness for further education
- intellectual level

- ability to work proactively with information
- free properties
- experiencing illiteracy or insufficient literacy skills
- readiness to change, ability to adaptability adaptability to changes structural and technical change, to changes in employment, flexibility

Genuneit (1996) summarised the causes of low levels of functional literacy in the concept of consequences of old and new forms of poverty, namely:

- economic poverty (low economic status of families of people with low levels of functional literacy),
- social poverty (social exclusion and discrimination against people with low levels of functional literacy),
- communication poverty (lack of communication (reading, writing, speaking) in families with low functional literacy, preference for television, etc.)
- pedagogical poverty (rigidity of the education system, one-size-fits-all approach, insufficient support for literacy development, etc.)
- poverty political (insufficient implementation of changes w structures school structures and teacher training) (Döbert, Hubertus, 2000, p. 45, Nickel, 2002, p. 4).

Concept searching for causes reduced levels literacy functional illiteracy in adulthood is also supported by a special case of functional illiteracy, so-called secondary illiteracy (sekundärer Analphabetismus) (Hubertus, 1995), discussed by Nickel (2002, p. 3). This concept assumes that the more or less successful acquisition of literacy skills during schooling is followed over the years by a process of forgetting and loss of knowledge and skills, resulting in a deficiency compared to a socially defined minimum level of literacy.

A possible complement to this argument is the phenomenon known as secondary functional illiteracy. i.e. a decline in literacy levels (Gavora, 2000a, p. 35), which is justified by a change in information acquisition preferences, where reading is gradually being replaced by electronic media that rely on the mediation of visual messages (especially television), thus not cultivating literacy skills as before.

It is likely that this strategy carries over into adulthood in the form of avoiding the use of literacy skills for fear of revealing one's inadequacy. Nickel (2000) gives examples of strategies used by people with low levels of functional literacy: avoidance of activities in which literacy skills can be used, excuses (forgetting glasses, dislocated finger, injured hand, etc.), delegation (delegating authority to others). It is clear that this approach is also a barrier to the development of functional skill levels, it also points to the dependence of people affected by such disabilities on help from those around them, and to the limitation of activities in which they can participate 'without fear'.

## **Socio-economic factors influencing functional illiteracy in the Czech Republic**

### **Education**

According to SIALS/PIAAC, those with less than a high school diploma are very likely to be among those whose literacy skills are considered inadequate. The difference in the level of functional literacy between other educational levels was not so striking. The relationship between parental education and functional literacy levels showed that parental education influences the literacy levels of adult offspring. Data on parental education served as a proxy measure of family socio-economic status. If we were to compare the education of the parents and the education of the respondents, we find that the relationship is

extremely strong, and the results can serve as a basis for theories on intergenerational transmission.

## **Age**

Younger respondents performed better on functional skills tests, but, as Matějů (2002) noted, internationally young people experienced a large decline in functional skills compared to their peers of the same age from other countries.

## **Gender**

Of all the factors monitored, gender had the least impact on the level of functional skills achieved. This means that male and female performance in functional skills tests was relatively equal.

## **Employment and daily life**

Information on the use of literacy in work and everyday life confirmed the well-known saying that practice makes perfect. Conversely, respondents who have jobs that do not require literacy skills and who never process textual information in their leisure time have very low levels of functional literacy. The lack of use of literacy skills in everyday life means a real threat to the quality of life of the individual and his or her family.

It is clear from the above that preventing low literacy is a complex and multi-layered process that needs to take place in many areas of people's lives. The cooperation of various actors from among politicians, employers, educational institutions, non-profit organisations, regional authorities, the media and other support institutions (libraries, cultural centres, etc.) is needed. At the same time, it is necessary to improve the quality of pedagogical measures during compulsory education, which should ensure an optimal level of literacy for their development in the subsequent stages of life (lifelong learning).

### **3. Designing solutions: an introduction to tool development**

Indicate the concretised objectives, the nature, the assumed impact of the tool, the locations where the pilot will be carried out and guidance on the practical implementation of the pilot.

## Designing solutions: MEMO Card tools

### Objectives:

#### Main objective:

Reduction of secondary and functional illiteracy Specific

objectives:

Improving the functioning and facilitating the integration of refugees, including the reduction of barriers related to the integration of Ukrainian refugees in Poland and more widely in the EU - focusing on problems arising from the use of the Latin alphabet by Cyrillic speakers.

Improving the functioning of people experiencing problems with secondary and functional illiteracy in the modern world.

To create the most versatile and flexible tool that can be used for written communication by those working with people experiencing secondary and functional illiteracy.

### Nature

The tool developed as part of the project will consist of modules, which are closed substantive or methodological units. Modules will be divided into blocks if necessary. Modules will have at least two distinct parts - tentatively named minimum and maximum scope.

The individual modules will be separate entities that can be introduced in almost any order. Some modules may be omitted, merged or expanded, if the specific characteristics of the audience so permit/require.

The methodology is to activate participants as much as possible by using appropriate forms of activities. Maximum involvement of participants will be possible by focusing on practical issues, indicating that the acquired skills have a direct impact on improving the functioning (communication) of a given participant with his/her environment. This will be reflected in learning materials, saturated with tasks, the completion of which will, on the one hand, give the participant satisfaction and, on the other hand, allow him or her to visualise tangible benefits resulting from the mastery of a given skill/knowledge.

The tool will take into account the differences in the phonetic sound of the same letters in the different languages of the EU countries, raising awareness of the pitfalls of transcription and transliteration from and into Cyrillic. A special module will be dedicated to the rapid recognition of Latin characters - e.g. place names on signposts, railway stations, etc. - in situations requiring quick orientation.

The tool will be as versatile and flexible as possible, so that it can be adapted to the specificities and needs diagnosed by the various partners, as well as to the changing situation - potential new waves of refugees, new directions of migration, emerging challenges (e.g. climate refugees, i.e. people fleeing areas affected by climate catastrophe).

## Assumed impact of the tool

We assume that the tool will not be an alternative to traditional school or extracurricular education. It will become a potential opportunity to quickly compensate for communication deficits that prevent full and efficient functioning in the modern world, often even at a rudimentary level (e.g. correct reading of a street or town name in Poland by a person fluent in the Cyrillic alphabet, but having problems with the Latin alphabet, writing/reading their name, surname or address).

Correct and effective use of the tool should enable the participant to acquire at least basic skills after the class:

- to record your name and address and to recognise this data if it is recorded;
- recognising place names and pronouncing them in a way that allows identification (particular emphasis will be placed on distinguishing names with a similar sound {Siemianowice / Świętochłowice}, long and compound two-word names [Dąbrowa Górnicza, Jastrzębie Zdrój} and those containing many Polish diacritics {Łódź });
- correct completion of official forms (identification of orders and correct transcription of Ukrainian names);
- understanding descriptions that appear in everyday life (e.g. names and ingredients of products, timetables, descriptions on road signs, information in health care facilities);
- the use of Latin keyboards, both virtual and computerised;
- sending short messages via instant messaging.

## Pilotage

Issues related to the details of the pilot are impossible to determine precisely at this stage. The dynamic situation of refugees, organisational and legal changes in their situation, successive waves of emigration and re-emigration make the situation unpredictable. An approach that is as flexible and adaptive as possible will be needed, assuming an immediate response to possible sudden changes in the situation.

## Guidance on the practical implementation of the pilot

The current situation allows us to assume that the primary form of contact with refugees from Ukraine will be the use of social welfare institutions and NGOs. This will be facilitated by cooperation with refugee centres, where it will be possible to reach more potential pilot participants at the same time.

## The implementation path for the pilot will be as follows:

- identification and recruitment of a group of participants, possibly representative. At present, all indications are that these will be Ukrainian women, most often with children and therefore inactive or not very active in the labour market;
- an initial test of competence and proficiency in the Latin alphabet with a diagnosis of deficits and identification of immediate needs - the first step will be to write your name in Latin;
- substantive next steps with ongoing evaluation and immediate changes and improvements to the methodology. It will be necessary to involve two people in the activity - the trainer and the evaluator (but actively supporting the trainer where necessary and possible);
- extensive evaluation of the effectiveness and relevance of the courses, including both an evaluation survey and tests (pre-test and post-test, in the latter case also at the end of the stages or modules). This will be complemented by extensive surveys conducted with selected participants
- development of recommendations post-pilot, including proposals changes and improvements to the tools used. These recommendations will also take into account the opinions of the pilot participants.

## Video modules for jobseekers

### Main objective:

Reducing functional illiteracy among jobseekers (unemployed over 30).

### Specific objectives:

Improving the functioning and facilitating the integration of unemployed people into the labour market, including the reduction of barriers related to functional illiteracy,

Improving the labour market functioning of people experiencing functional illiteracy problems, helping them to improve basic skills related to "learning to read", "numerical calculations", "effective communication", "use of modern technology", and general understanding and use of text and numerical calculations to manage daily life and employment tasks among low-skilled adults who are at risk of social exclusion.

## Nature

The tool developed by the project will consist of short video modules (7), which are closed content or methodological units recorded and uploaded to the Alphabetter project's Youtube channel. The tool to be developed will consist of short video modules (6 or 7), which are closed content or methodological units recorded and uploaded to the Alphabetter project's Youtube channel. The tool to be developed will join the OML toolkit when interviewing users. It will be part of the skills profile. The skills assessment consists of the development of an individual skills sheet, as a product of a process of analysis of training, work and social experiences, which allows the identification of skills and elements that can be strengthened by the addressee, in order to develop a professional development plan to achieve specific goals. The use of this tool will make it possible to facilitate and support the next phase of the tutoring and counselling service.

PR2 of the Alphabetter project will consist of 6/7 video clips that can be disseminated by the OML during orientation calls with users in the

18 centres Enaip w northern Italy. We have 76 OML, who can work in up to 4 ENAIP Veneto training centres each.

## ENAIP Veneto: Location and premises

- BELLUNO + VICENZA AREA
  - Feltre
  - Longarone
  - Vicenza
  - Bassano del grappa
- PADVA REGION
  - Padua
  - Citadella
  - Piazzola sul B.
  - Conselve
  - Piove di Sacco
- ROVIGO AREA
  - Rovigo
  - Porto Viro
- VENICE + TREVISO AREA
  - Dolo
  - Noale
  - Chioggia
  - Conegliano
- VERONA AREA
  - Verona
  - Legnago
  - Isola della Scala
  - Headquarters in Padua

Tel +39 049 8658911 - [direzione@enaip.veneto.it](mailto:direzione@enaip.veneto.it) - [www.enaip.veneto.it](http://www.enaip.veneto.it)



In this phase of tool development, we can certainly benefit from the excellent European Erasmus project + named DECENT 1 (Digital strategies of Enhancement of the basic skills among adults as a Chance to fight against functional illiteracy).

The main objective of the project was to increase the effectiveness of the fight against functional illiteracy among low-skilled adults at risk of social exclusion in six European countries.

We can use some of the content of the training modules developed by the DECENT project and adapt them to our target group.

The following are modules (video clips) that Enaip Veneto can develop and adapt to the selected target group represented by jobseekers over 30 years of age (unemployed, women, migrants, people with disabilities).

#### Video clip 1. SPiD - Public Digital Identity System

The Public Digital Identity System (SPiD) is a digital identity consisting of a pair of strictly personal credentials (username and password) with which to access online services of public administrations and private members. Simple, secure and fast, SPiD can be used from any device: computer, tablet and smartphone whenever you find the 'Enter using SPiD' button on a website or service application. The video explains the procedure for obtaining SPiD.

#### Video clip 2. Employment agencies

Comprehensive survey of employment agencies, digital registration and access. Agencies offer services such as matching supply with demand, training and outplacement support. The video is a step-by-step guide to using search engines to find agency websites, using the Adecco agency as an example. Detailed registration process, including data entry, CV upload and consent to data collection. Benefits of registration, access to personalised job listings and filtering options without registration. Emphasis on proactivity for jobseekers. It concludes with a list of employment agencies and websites, encouraging people to apply to multiple agencies to increase their chances of finding a job.

#### Video clip 3. Job search websites

This video tutorial provides a comprehensive overview of job search sites and their features. Viewers will learn how to access and use the main job search platforms, with a particular focus on the INDEED site as an example. The tutorial covers the registration process, including creating a free account and uploading a CV. It explains how to search for jobs using the appropriate filters and provides tips on how to carefully read job adverts before applying. In addition, the tutorial shows how to manage profiles and CVs, including updating qualifications and job preferences. The video also mentions the potential use of general ad sites for job searches. Overall, this tutorial equips jobseekers with the necessary knowledge and practical steps to effectively navigate job sites and maximise their chances of finding suitable employment.

#### Video clip 4. EUROPASS CV

The video tutorial offers a comprehensive guide to writing a Europass Curriculum Vitae (CV) and its importance in any job application. It explains the standard format and online platform for creating personalised CVs and cover letters. Users can choose from a variety of templates, customise the look and preview the document before generating a PDF version. The tutorial also highlights the digital skills assessment function and emphasises the importance of optimising LinkedIn profiles for job search and networking. Overall,

<sup>1</sup> <https://decent.erasmus.site/dissemination-materials/>

The tutorial equips viewers with the necessary knowledge and tools to create an effective Europass CV and increase their professional visibility.

#### Video clip 5. Effective communication

The main purpose of this video tutorial is to show how to communicate with others and between people, what tools/skills we can use and how to express our needs, feelings and words in a way that the person who is listening can understand. Communicating and making sure the information is received with the right meaning is key. To communicate effectively, each person needs to know what to communicate, how, when, to whom, and the information needs to be communicated in an understandable way. Communication is a two-way process and is not just about exchanging information, messages, ideas or feelings, but also refers to the creation and sharing of meaning. It is a channel through which people are able to connect with each other.

#### Video clip 6. Interview

This video tutorial contains tips on how to effectively prepare for a job interview. Viewers will learn the importance of researching the company, dressing appropriately for the position and practising self-presentation. The tutorial highlights the importance of demonstrating motivation and emphasising soft skills during an interview. It also includes tips on asking the right questions to show interest and professionalism. In addition, the video advises on the importance of being honest about previous experiences and avoiding forbidden topics during an interview. Non-verbal communication is discussed, with tips on maintaining eye contact, a firm handshake, appropriate facial expressions and tone of voice. By following these tips, the audience will be well prepared and confident to move on to the next stage of the interview.

#### Video clip 7. Employment contracts

This video tutorial provides a comprehensive overview of employment contracts in Italy. It explains the concept of the employment contract and its importance in regulating the rights and obligations of employees and employers. The tutorial highlights the different types of contracts, including employment contracts and their advantages for companies. It delves into important aspects of the employment contract such as job description, place of work, remuneration and terms and conditions of employment. The role of national collective labour agreements (CCNLs) in defining rights and obligations is highlighted. In addition, the tutorial covers the two main types of contracts: those under the Labour Code, others under the Civil Code, and elaborates on various specific types of contracts, such as indefinite, fixed-term, part-time and apprenticeship contracts. Overall, it offers a valuable insight into the Italian employment contract landscape.

#### Pilotage

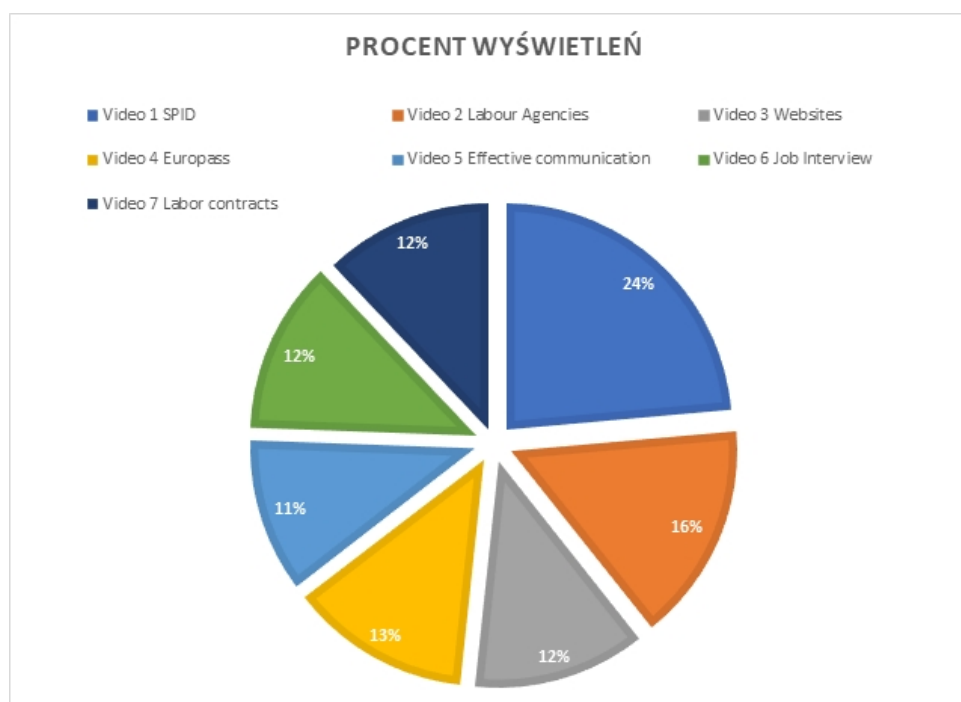
Ms Elvira Natale and Ms Claudia Pagnussat, career counsellors and active labour market policy project managers at Enaip Veneto, collaborated on the design of the video clips and piloted a workshop tailored to teachers (OML) working with unemployed people over thirty years old. The target group was unemployed people, including those receiving income support and migrants who were trying to enter or re-enter the labour market. These people were supported by national and regional programmes in which ENAIP Veneto participates, with the main funding coming from the GOL - 2021-2025 (Workers' Employment Guarantee Programme). The workshops aimed to meet the specific needs of this group, who often had no formal education, had been out of the labour market for a long time and faced challenges related to language barriers, lack of digital skills, gaps in knowledge of labour law and access to reliable sources of information.

The main objectives of the workshop were to enable the participants to search for future work independently, to increase their competences in their chosen fields of work and to support their active citizenship. In order to achieve these objectives, the content of the workshop focused on digital competence training, upskilling, retraining and career guidance and counselling support. Adapting the tools and approach to the characteristics and needs of the participants, the workshop aimed to provide practical and relevant support, enabling the participants to make successful progress on the road to

employment.

As a result of the methodology, a series of 7 video tutorials were created, as described earlier, to help teachers support the target group's return to the labour market. These videos were made available on YouTube with open access, allowing users to watch them themselves and revisit them as needed. During subsequent meetings with the operators, users engaged in discussions about the content covered in the videos.

In September 2023, the total number of impressions on Alphabetter's Youtube channel was 356. Below is a graph with the percentage of impressions:



Video 1 SPID

Video 2 Employment agencies Video 3

Websites

Video 4 Europass

Video 5 Effective

communication Video 6 Job

interview Video 7 Employment

contracts

In order to assess the effectiveness of these instructional materials and gather user feedback, a comprehensive survey was developed. This survey combined elements of self-assessment with questions designed to assess users' understanding of the video content. This survey provided valuable information on how the video tutorials were received, understood and used by the target group.

## Assumed impact of the tool

To assess the impact of the video tutorials, the feedback survey designed in Google Forms was divided into four sections to evaluate the effectiveness and reception of the tool.

## Structure of the survey

Part 1 Geographical data - nationality, gender, education level

- Recent employment, length of

unemployment Part 2. Satisfaction - material,

length, layout

- Transparency, practicality, accessibility

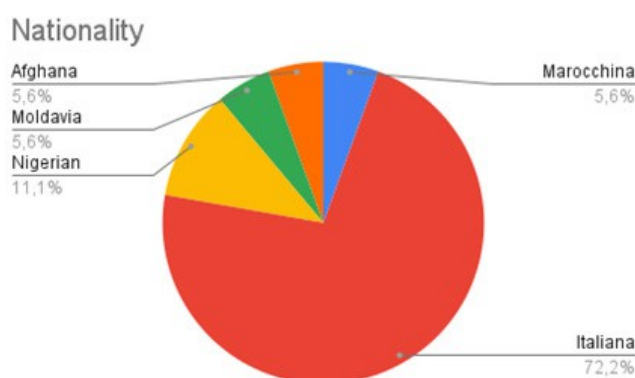
Part 3 Self-evaluation - What was new, what did I learn?

- General understanding

Part 4 Suggestions - strengths of the tool, areas for improvement

The first section contained the demographics of the target group, followed by a second section assessing their overall satisfaction with the training videos, highlighting accessibility and clarity. The third section included self-assessment questions assessing understanding, learning outcomes and difficulties encountered. The fourth and final section focused on the perceived effectiveness of the videos to suggest improvements in the quality of the training. When analysing the data collected, an initial challenge was encountered in obtaining a meaningful sample of participants, due to the low digital literacy levels of many individuals. While the YouTube video tutorials gained a significant number of views, only a small percentage of responses were received via the Google form. Nevertheless, we were able to obtain 20 compilations of the form, offering an initial insight into the results of the training and the perceived effectiveness of the tool.

Analysing the demographic data, a consistent proportion of foreign users emerged, although the majority of respondents were Italian. The level of education varied, with the majority of users indicating secondary education, some holding VET qualifications or diplomas and a few even holding degrees or master's degrees. This indicates minimal cases of functional and secondary illiteracy at higher levels of education, although not entirely absent.



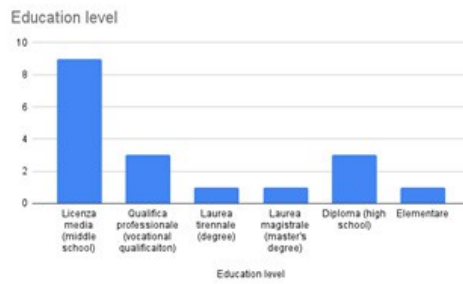
Afghan nationality 5.6%

Moldovan 5.6%

Nigerian 11.1%

Moroccan 5.6%

Italian 72.2%



Educational level

Licenza media (secondary school)

Qualifica professionale (professional qualification)

Laurea triennale (degree)

Diploma (secondary

school) Elementare

Other open-ended questions, added to deepen the knowledge of the sample, provided insights into participants' previous work roles and length of unemployment. Patterns emerged, revealing a history of practical and low-impact roles, such as factory or shop workers. It is noteworthy that many participants expressed a desire for more rewarding positions, probably stemming from previous experience. Periods of unemployment ranged from 3 months to 3 years, with two exceptions of 6 and 15 years. Differences in understanding skills were noticeable between the long-term unemployed and those who had recently lost their jobs. It should be noted that the low number of long-term unemployed participants may also be related to the digital challenges faced by these individuals, potentially affecting their ability to complete the survey.

Last employments

condominium doorman  
ice cream maker sales clerk  
waiter hotelier chefs assistant  
receptionist  
factory worker leather worker  
shelf stacker unemployed nursing home  
business development  
security guard  
construction worker

Length of unemployment (in months)



Recent employment

estate porter ice cream  
maker salesman

hotelier assistant chef waiter

receptionist factory worker

leatherworker

warehouseman unemployed care home

business development

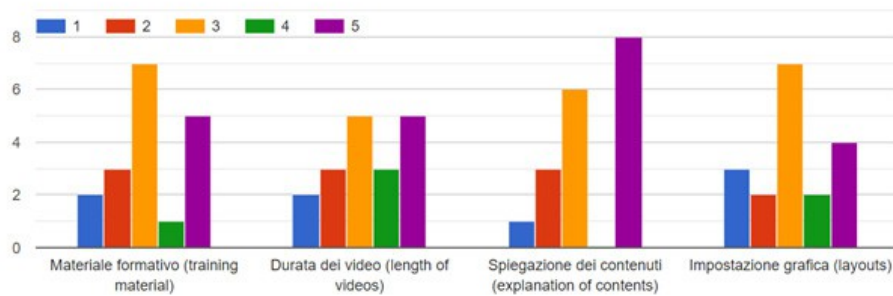
bodyguard

construction worker

Length of employment (in months)

The satisfaction rating section uses a scale of 1 to 5. Overall, the films were well received, with only

a small percentage indicated 'low' satisfaction. However, for a nuanced interpretation, both aggregated and individual results suggested that some users may not have fully engaged with the survey, potentially due to digital barriers. Therefore, the quantitative data should be interpreted with caution, also taking into account open-ended responses.



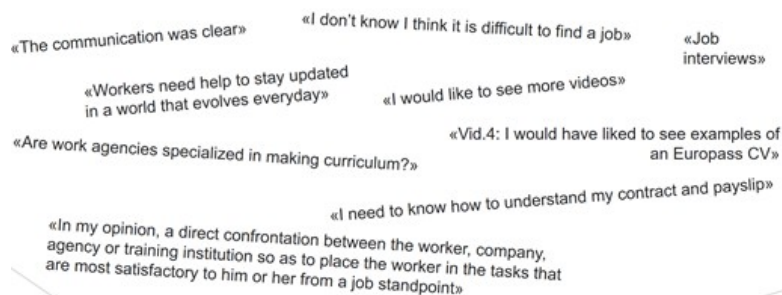
Materiale formativo (training material) Durata del video (length of video) Spiegazione dei contenuti (clarification of content) Impostazione grafica (layout)

The qualitative data did indeed provide insightful answers, in particular highlighting digital and language barriers, especially among foreign users. Some difficulties with understanding were also revealed. For example, in response to the question "Write three KEYWORDS that you think are important in this training", users often provided general descriptions of the training (e.g. useful, interesting, engaging) rather than the expected content-related terms (e.g. job search, websites, curriculum). This highlights the importance of not only improving digital skills, but also language and content understanding to increase employability.

In the last section, user comments revealed a common desire for more practical examples to accompany the video explanations.

In summary, the results of the survey were invaluable in assessing the needs, starting points and differences in our target group of unemployed people over 30. This information will assist in the potential development of additional resources to effectively address these needs. Ultimately, the survey results contribute to increasing the effectiveness of the training initiative and optimising its impact on participants' pathways towards reintegration into the labour market.

### The needs of our target



The needs of our target group

"Communication was clear" "I don't know, I think it's difficult to find a job." "Interviews"

"Employees need help to keep up to date in a world that is evolving every day" "I would like to see more films".

"Vid.4: I would like to see examples of Europass CVs".

"Do employment agencies specialise in creating CVs?" "I need to know how to understand my contract and slip

disbursements" "In my opinion, it is necessary to have a direct confrontation between the employee, the company, the agency or the training institution in order to place the employee in the tasks that are most satisfying for him/her from a work point of view."

## **Pictogram system to support communication with migrant families**

### **Introduction to instrument development**

In educational institutions, information is provided to carers through written notifications. We asked education staff in our region what they observe in the practice of providing written information and what needs they have noticed from carers and professionals.

### **Examples of responses from the interviews:**

"As for 'drinks and snacks will be provided', some parents often just read 'drinks and snacks' and then bring drinks and food!"

"Parents often just look at the information and read the key words. But this is often not enough to understand the information."

People perceive their environment largely visually. Images can be used to convey a wide range of information. The basic idea behind the development of our research tool is the visual presentation of targeted information for parents whose language skills or reading competence are not sufficient to read and understand ordinary textual representations. Images facilitate and help to better understand texts.

### **Indicate the specific objectives and assumed impact of the tool.**

The basic idea behind the development of our research tool is the visual presentation of targeted information for parents whose language skills or reading competence are not sufficient to read and understand ordinary textual representations. Images facilitate and help to better understand texts. In this way, even unfamiliar terms can become visually accessible to parents, as images simplify understanding of meaning. Images also arouse curiosity and motivate parents to browse and read the information on bulletin boards or in letters to parents.

### **Type of tool**

In order to best understand what is to be communicated, we recommend using images before textual information, as the human brain perceives visual information thousands of times faster and can process it more easily than, for example, textual content.

### **What should be taken into account?**

- Choice of font (neutral, sans-serif)
- Letter spacing (do not block or compress)
- Text structure (as few different shades, font sizes, etc. as possible).
- Font size (easy to recognise)
- Pictogram (clearly recognisable, as consistent as possible)

- Clear amount of text
- Concise, clear language (makes it easier to read)

## Locations where the pilot project will be implemented

An important part of pedagogical work in the primary sector is the exchange with parents. It supports the joint building of relationships, which in turn supports the overall well-being of the child. The instrument is used in primary educational establishments (nursery and after-school care). Information is communicated through the instrument in these establishments via notice boards and letters to parents.

## Comments on the practical implementation of the pilot project

Create template forms for effective communication with parents.

### Possible themes:

- Start of the school year, start of kindergarten
- Clothing,
- Activities
- festivals/events
- Projects
- Joint letters
- Creation of pictograms (free version in Word) or photos
- Creation of image files for themes
- Create a sample list

Examples:



## Guidelines for the practical implementation of the pilot project

The exchange with parents in primary educational institutions manifests itself in many ways: sometimes there are language barriers, sometimes there are differences of opinion, often there are short chats and exchanges. However, personal contact with mothers and fathers was and is always an important issue. In this sense, this tool is a valuable contribution to meeting parents at a level that does not embarrass or humiliate them because of their lack of literacy, whatever the cause of this problem.



At the beginning of the kindergarten/school, initial information is communicated via text and pictograms to the teaching staff, who in turn pass it on to the parents. Initial feedback from the teaching staff provides the first conclusions for subsequent forms of contact. After the implementation period, the teaching staff is asked whether the tools were helpful, what was missing and what was positive in order to be able to take the next steps.

## Empirical study

The main objective of the following chapter is to test the developed tools for their practical, quality-assured implementation by means of an appropriate methodological procedure.

The choice of methodology, the presentation of the sample, the presentation of the results and the conclusions can be found in this chapter.

## Study group

Central to the interviews is the targeted and reasoned selection of interviewees. Practical research factors such as the availability and willingness of interviewees also play a key role in the selection process (Gläser & Laudel, 2010).

As Austria is severely understaffed in basic educational institutions and the testing of the tool required specialists to dedicate their time, only a few responses were obtained for the first time. The implementation took place - as the specialists emphasised - largely "for the benefit of the researchers".

In particular, ten professionals from the researchers' working environment were interviewed. These included:

No.	Professional group	Place of work	Age	Gender
1	Primary school teacher	After-school care	55	Woman
2	Primary school teacher	After-school care	49	Woman
3	Primary school teacher	After-school care	35	Woman
4	Primary school teacher	After-school care	33	Woman
5	Primary school teacher	After-school care	29	Woman
6	Primary school teacher	Kindergarten	52	Woman
7	Primary school teacher	Kindergarten	48	Woman
8	Primary school teacher	Kindergarten	37	Woman
9	Primary school teacher	Kindergarten	36	Woman
10	Primary school teacher	Kindergarten	27	Woman

In addition, four parents whose children attend primary schools were interviewed. These were women aged between 23 and 31.

## Methodology

A guided interview method was chosen to explore experiences with the tool. A transcript was then compiled and the results were later analysed using qualitative content analysis.

Guided interviews are customised interviews conducted with the help of an interview guide. It is oriented exclusively towards the guiding questions. In order to make the setting as informal and natural as possible, the completeness or adherence to the order of the guide questions is not taken into account (cf. Gläser & Laudel, 2010, pp. 41-42).

## The education specialists were asked the following questions:

- How has communication with parents gone so far?
- What features of letters to parents do you think are helpful for facilitating reading?
- To what extent have you noticed differences in the way information is provided compared to previous years?
- What else would you change in your letters to parents?

## Questions for parents were:

- How is information directed to parents from the institutions?
- What parts of the letter to parents I presented did you not understand? What questions were left unanswered?
- What aspects of the letter to parents were helpful? In what ways?
- What changes to the parents' letter could make the information easier to understand?
- What methods have you chosen to clarify aspects that are not understood?

First, the interviewee's consent was obtained for the audio recording and a brief explanation was given about the subject of the interview.

The recorded and transcribed data were analysed using qualitative content analysis according to Philipp Mayring (2015). The strength of this method is to draw conclusions about certain aspects of the material by means of systematic analysis. The transcribed text is broken down into smaller units, which are then processed step by step. This is done according to a theory-based category system (cf. Mayring, 2016, p. 114).

## Results and conclusions

Based on the choice of methods and research approach described above, selected results will be presented in the next chapter, which will lead to general conclusions on further research methods and tools.

## Previous experience with letters to parents

Overall, the tool received positive feedback. Many parents found the tool very helpful. It is also practical to save time, as many parents do not need more detailed explanations.

*"We have many parents, who consider this as easier. Now quickly read letters and probably remember the pictures".*

*"I can just hand over a piece of paper and that's it. I don't need to explain anything more, a note is enough."*

## Advantages of the tool

The chosen clipart and short text are an important advantage. This saved time and conveyed important information quickly.

*"The pictures are already helping. So a bit of text and a lot of pictures and stuff. Maybe a few pictures. I think a lot of parents who can't read very well are grateful. They don't have to ask, they can just look and know they haven't missed anything."*

Parents with a different mother tongue have noticed that they do not have to ask so many questions now.

*"With some parents speaking another language it was helpful. I was able to point to the picture straight away."*

*"The pictures helped me a lot. I didn't have to translate the text. I knew immediately what it was about."*

## Disadvantages of the tool

Some professionals were already using clipart for letters to parents. The idea was not new to them, but it was useful.

*"For me it was nothing new. It was more like remembering things I already knew. Other topics would have been more interesting."*

Two respondents expressed concern that parents would feel slighted to receive such simply designed letters.

*"I hope the parents don't feel we are making fun of them."*

## Individuality and company specificity

Letters to parents are w large largely designed individually by pedagogical specialists. It is important to them that their individual design style stands out.

*"I miss my personal character a bit. It's always clear which group has written what. This template is too standard for me."*

Moreover, there are often specific specifications from the company. These specify what the letter to parents should look like. Perhaps there should be a logo on it or certain formatting should be adopted.

*"It would help me if there were pictures of all the important subjects, we all have the same subjects."*

*"My company doesn't even allow that. Then I would really have to change everything. So I'd rather write a letter to my parents myself."*

## Wishes and needs

Some professionals mentioned that they would like to see more themes so that they can find ideas. Most opinions were that photos should be used instead of clipart. These would be more realistic and harder to access than clipart.

*"Cliparts are handy, you can just download them from Google. But the pictures are - as if to put it - more tangible."*

*"Other topics would have been more interesting."*

*"We also talked about how real pictures would be much better."*

The diagrams below provide a general overview of the research findings. The interviewees' statements were interpretively scaled by the researchers.

Feedback



The 9 people interviewed gave more positive than negative feedback.

1 person shared more negative than positive opinions. 4

people interviewed gave neutral opinions.

Use of the template



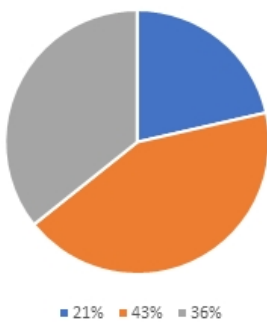
3 people asked would use the template in its current form 5

people asked would use the template with minor modifications.

4 interviewed would not or could not use the template.

The 2 people interviewed did not say whether they would use the template.

Cliparts or photos



3 people interviewed think cliparts are appropriate. 6

people asked would prefer to have photos rather than

cliparts. 5 people asked did not specify their

preference.

## Conclusions

The evaluation of the results showed that the tool is not fundamentally new. Professionals have already learnt in training how to communicate letters to parents briefly and clearly. Templates for letters to parents can only be adopted in part because they often do not correspond to the wishes or requirements of the company.

As several professionals, as well as parents, mentioned that they would prefer pictures, but that they were difficult to access, this was considered a necessary next step. Therefore, publicly available pictures showing materials, situations or other desirable aspects in primary educational institutions would be helpful.

## Principles for creating supporting municipal forms

### Objective:

As part of the Alfabetter project, MEPCO in the Czech Republic in cooperation with the municipality of Brno-střed will focus on dealing with issues of functional illiteracy of its employees in the office and the interaction of citizens in relation to the municipality in everyday life. The main objective is to increase functional literacy and comprehensibility of selected documents/processes of the municipal office.

### Nature

Before designing solutions, it is important to identify the general problem, its consequences and potential target group. According to Gavora (2000), texts produced by state administrations in general should undergo fundamental changes. Gavora also draws attention to the fact that the texts addressed to citizens by state administrations and some private organisations (laws, ordinances, regulations, instructions, notices, questionnaires, etc.) are often complicated, unclear and, worst of all, written so that they can be understood by an expert and not by the citizen to whom they are addressed. It should be the endeavour of the state administration to make the documents comprehensible, thus bringing the language and wording closer to the citizens.

The above problem is part of a larger social change, the main elements and implications of which are as follows:

- Increasing volume and complexity of information
- An ageing population
- Increasing sophistication of technology
- Increase in the number of immigrants speaking Czech as a second language
- More people living in poverty

The most vulnerable groups of people potentially affected by low levels of functional literacy in relation to citizens' activities are as follows:

- Economically disadvantaged persons
- Older adults
- Immigrants (especially illegal immigrants)
- People for whom Czech is a second language
- Racial minorities
- Secondary school leavers

- Unemployed persons
- Prisoners
- Urban and rural residents
- People with poor health due to chronic mental and physical problems

## Assumed impact of the tool

Functional literacy development solutions differ from so-called traditional literacy development in that they cease to be an isolated, separate activity, let alone an end in itself, but treat illiterates in a group context in relation to a given environment and with development in mind. A basic feature of a functional literacy programme is that it is tailored to collective and individual needs. It is "t a i l o r - m a d e "; differentiated according to the environment and adapted to specific economic and social goals. Functional literacy uses an intensive approach as a step towards the eventual acquisition of vocational skills and useful knowledge. Functional literacy programmes are variable and flexible and take into account immediate goals and specific situations.

The Alfabetter project does not include a comprehensive solution to this broad problem. Rather, the solution in the Czech Republic will focus on the consequences of functional illiteracy rather than on its roots, while at the same time making practical improvements in communication between the municipality and its citizens. More specifically, the solution will implement methods to reduce the gap between the literacy demand of written instructional materials and the actual reading level of the recipients by addressing certain basic linguistic, motivational, organisational and content-related principles. This includes the preparation of special visual aids for selected forms and updating the texts on the forms and the municipal website.

## Pilot approach

Certainly, the best solution for improving workers' general reading and comprehension skills would be to strengthen their basic general education, but this process will take decades. What is needed now are ways of writing or transcribing information material commensurate with clients' current comprehension and reading skills.

It is possible to reduce the discrepancy between the literacy requirements of written instructional materials and the actual reading level of clients by following some basic linguistic, motivational, organisational and substantive principles.

Linguistics refers to the type of language used and the grammatical style.

Motivational principles focus on elements that stimulate the reader, such as relevance and attractiveness of the material.

Organisational factors relate to layout and transparency.

Content principles refer to the load and density of information concepts (Bernier, 1993). Wood et al. (2007) describe the Language, Information and Design (LID) method for creating easy-to-read materials.

## Guidance on the practical implementation of the pilot programme

These elements will be examined in relation to the design or revision of instructional materials for readers with low literacy levels.

However, before writing or rewriting a text to facilitate reading, some preliminary planning steps should be taken to ensure that the final written material will be adapted to the target group (Davis et al, 1998; Doak et al, 1996; Kessels, 2003). These steps are as follows:

- Decide what the recipient should do or know. In other words, what is the purpose of the instruction? What results do we want to achieve?
- Select information that is relevant and needed by the recipient to achieve behavioural goals. Limit or completely discard extraneous and useful information, such as history or detailed processes. Include only the most important main ideas: who, what, where and when, along with new information related to what the reader already knows. Remember: you don't need to know how an engine works to drive a car.
- Choose other media to complement written information, such as photos, presentations, models, audio and video recordings. Even weak readers will benefit from written material if it is combined with other forms of message delivery. Take, for example, the field of advertising. Advertisers communicate their messages with words, but often in combination with powerful, action-packed visuals.
- Organise topics into sequences that follow a logical order. Prioritise to present the most important information first. If the topics are equally important, start with the more general ones as a basis for building on the more specific ones. Start by defining the purpose. In your list of items, place the key facts at the top and bottom, as readers remember best the information presented first and last in the sequence.
- Determine the preferred level of difficulty of the material

## Approach

**CONTENT** Clearly define the purpose of the material. Decide when and how the information will be used. Use behavioural objectives that cover the main points. Verify the accuracy of the content with experts. Provide information

"how to do it" so that the learner achieves the objectives. Present only the most important information (three to four main ideas: who, what, where and when). Relate new information to what the audience already knows. Present content that is relevant to the audience and avoid cultural bias in writing and graphics.

**ORGANISATION** Titles should be short but include words that clearly convey the meaning of the content. Provide a table of contents for long material and a summary to review the content presented. Present the most important information first. Use subject headings. Let the first sentence of each paragraph be a topic sentence. Include only a few terms in each paragraph. Use short, simple sentences that convey only one idea at a time; limit the length of the entire text. Limit lists to no more than seven items. Present each idea in a logical order.

**LAYOUT/GRAPHICS** Choose large, legible print (minimum 12-point font) and use non-glossy paper. Headings and subheadings should be in both lowercase and uppercase; avoid fancy lettering. Use bold or underlining to emphasise important information. Use plenty of spacing between segments of information. Use large margins and keep the right-hand side margins unaligned. Provide a question and answer format for patient-nurse interaction. Choose double spacing (between lines of text), type style (serif) and font (print size) for ease of reading. Design a colourful, eye-catching cover that suggests the message in the text.

**LINGUISTICS** Sentences should be short (ideally 8-10 words, but no more than 20 words). Write in the active mode, using the present tense and the pronouns you and your to engage the reader. Use one- or two-syllable words where possible; avoid multisyllabic words. Use words that are familiar and understandable to your target audience. Avoid complex grammatical structures (e.g. multiple compound sentences). Limit the number of terms. Focus content on what the audience should do and know. Use positive statements; avoid

negative messages. Use questions throughout the text to encourage active learning. Give examples that recipients can relate to personal experiences/circumstances. Avoid double negation and value words. Clearly define terms that may be unclear to the audience.

**VISUALISATIONS** Include simple, culturally sensitive illustrations and photographs. Use simple illustrations, but only if they enhance understanding of relevant information. Choose illustrations and photos that are free of unnecessary distractions. Communicate a single message or point of information in each visualisation. Use visual elements that are relevant to the text and meaningful to the audience. Use drawings that are recognisable to the audience, reflecting familiar images. Use images for adults rather than children (use cartoons sparingly). Use captions to describe illustrations. Use clues such as arrows, underlines, circles and colours to give a sense of the subject matter and highlight key information. Use attractive and appropriate colours for the audience (for older people, use black and white and avoid pastel shades, especially blue, green and purple).

### Goal-oriented approach

**Direct observation** - this means going to the area in question to observe and interview city officials and their interactions with citizens. This method gives excellent results, but is lengthy and therefore expensive.

**Expert opinion** - the specialists of the development team ( the Alphabetter project team) responsible for tracking and implementing improvements in the field are often in a position to provide the necessary information regarding the level of knowledge of the populations under consideration.

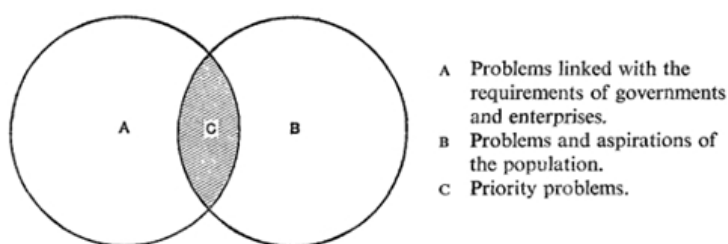
**Survey by questionnaire** - municipal officials and professionals are asked to answer a questionnaire on various interactions with citizens. After analysing the results, it is possible to determine the level of knowledge of the people concerned. The three approaches indicated above are generally amenable to a variety of combinations, depending on local opportunities and possibilities.

### Problem-oriented approach

In the pursuit of specific goals, constant problems arise whenever various obstacles of a different nature block progress towards the chosen objects. These obstacles are essentially related to the skills and attitudes of individuals and to interpersonal relationships. The identification of problem situations is undertaken immediately after the initial enumeration of problems. For each problem, it is necessary to classify it from the perspective of the municipality/citizens in order to prioritise it. Priority problems are investigated and acted upon.

Defining priorities involves: classifying problems in order of urgency in view of the objectives; classifying the aspirations of the population in order of importance; selecting priorities.

First priority will be given to problems and aspirations lying within the zone of intersection of that set which represents the problems linked with the requirements of governments and enterprises and that representing the needs and aspirations of the population.





Determining priorities includes: classifying problems according to urgency in relation to objectives; classifying the aspirations of the population according to importance; selecting priorities.

Priority will be given to the problems and aspirations that lie in the intersection zone of this set, which represents problems related to the requirements of governments and businesses and those representing the needs and aspirations of the population.

A Problems related to the requirements of governments and businesses.

B Problems and aspirations of the population.

C Priority problems.

The suitability of written materials for different audiences depends not only on actual grade-level demand, which can be measured by readability formulas, but also on elements of the text, such as technical format, concept density, and the accuracy and clarity of the message. It should not be forgotten that knowing the target audience in terms of motivation level, reading ability, experiential factors and cultural background is also crucial in determining the appropriateness of printed information as effective communication tools (Meade & Smith, 1991; Weiss, 2003). Even good readers may not respond to important written information if they are not motivated to do so or if the material is not appealing to them. Despite the well-documented potential of written materials, they are often too difficult to read even for motivated citizens.

## **Pilot outcome: Updated municipal forms and information materials**

Two city forms/instructions in Brno have been updated based on the approach described above:

- Adaptation process for new employees in the office (internal instructions for employees)
- Issuing birth certificates (forms and instructions to citizens).

The need to update these specific areas was identified during the focus group meetings. Town hall staff analysed all processes in the town hall in terms of internal and external communication. The primary criteria were the error rate, further questions and correction needs from the recipients of information within the observed processes and the potential for improvement.

## **The following improvements have been made:**

Adaptation process for new office staff (internal instructions for employees)

The previous form of the instructions within the process was a 10-page PDF document based on textual information, partly structured, but with longer texts and no visualisation of the process. Examples of the document can be found below:

Building on the Alphabetter project, city staff used the new approach methodology and modernised communication accordingly, resulting in a PPT document made available on the intranet explaining the adaptation process to staff. This approach not only simplifies the understanding of the process, but enables the recipients to adapt the new approach to reading the instructions, improving their skills and readiness to understand other instructions on city processes as well. Examples of the document can be found below:

Examples of the document can be found below:

[illegible]

Issuing of birth certificates (forms and instructions to citizens)

The previous form of instructions within the process was a text document, partly structured, but with longer texts and without visualisation of the process. Examples of the document can be found below:

Based on the Alphabetter project, municipal staff used the new approach methodology and modernised the communication accordingly, resulting in a printable PPT document explaining the birth certificate process. This approach not only simplifies the understanding of the process, but also enables recipients to adapt the new approach to reading the instructions, improving their skills and readiness to understand other municipal process instructions as well. Examples of the document can be found below:

Examples of the document can be found below:

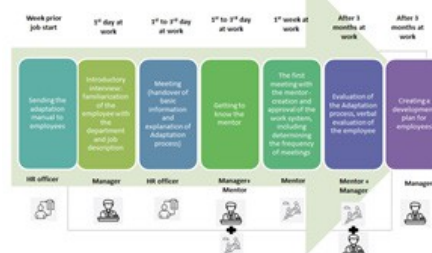
#### Adaptation process for new office employees



#### Roles within adaptation process



#### Adaptation process MČ Brno-střed



#### Activity list

Tick completed activities with the symbol:



- ☐ Receiving the adaptation manual
- ☐ Entrance interview: my familiarization with the department and job content
- ☐ Meeting with the personnel officer (handover of basic information and explanation of the adaptation manual)
- ☐ Getting to know the mentor
- ☐ The first meeting with the mentor - creation and approval of the work system, including determining the frequency of meetings
- ☐ Evaluation of the adaptation process, verbal evaluation of the employee, creating a development plan for employees

## 4. Evaluation of tools

Description of the assumed procedure for evaluation of the tool and its further development: Feedback from the community, Iterative revision

### MEMO cards

The choice of the appropriate evaluation method depends on the nature of the problem being studied, the purpose of the research, the resources available, the specificity of the tools and the social context. Depending on the type of study and purpose, there are many different research methods, such as experimental research, survey research, observational research, qualitative research, quantitative research, statistical data analysis, etc. Each of these methods has its own unique features, techniques and procedures that enable the researcher to obtain the information and conclusions needed.

The evaluation of the developed MEMO card tool was carried out primarily using a quantitative method - a diagnostic survey based on a simple self-administered questionnaire to measure attitudes towards different elements of literacy support technology. In addition, a qualitative approach in the form of participant observation was used: the implementers of the study described their reflections and direct observations of the Memo card training. Both methods enabled the systematic collection of information and drawing of conclusions about the usefulness of the Memo card tool.

The diagnostic survey method is one of the most popular research techniques used to gather information and diagnose specific phenomena, problems or needs. It is a research technique based on the use of a specially designed questionnaire or survey that is completed by respondents.

The survey as a research technique has several important features. Firstly, it allows for the rapid collection of data from a larger number of respondents, which, in the context of the Memo card evaluation, allowed for the collection of the entire group of people attending the training. Secondly, it is relatively easy to implement and conduct, both in traditional form (e.g. a paper survey) and online. Thirdly, a survey ensures standardisation of the data collection process, as all respondents are asked the same set of questions. The survey as a research technique is a commonly used tool for data collection in social and opinion research. Its advantages include ease of implementation,

the possibility of collecting data from a large number of respondents and the standardisation of the survey process. However, the design of the survey and the analysis of the collected data require an appropriate approach and consideration of potential limitations.

A survey questionnaire is a specific form of questionnaire containing a set of questions to be answered by respondents. It is a research tool that is used to collect data from respondents in order to obtain information about specific variables, opinions, attitudes or experiences. A survey questionnaire can take different forms depending on the type of study and the research objectives. A questionnaire in Ukrainian distributed after the training in paper form was used to evaluate the Memo cards.

1. The course of the evaluation took the following form: The purpose of the diagnostic study was defined. First, we defined the questions we wanted to find answers to. In this case, it was to find out the feelings of the Ukrainian families participating in the training about the Memo card tool and its usefulness in a migration situation.
2. Precise diagnostic post-test procedures were designed. We defined the research methods and tools that were used. As we decided to use a survey technique, we prepared a simple questionnaire with appropriately adapted questions. The questionnaire was prepared in Polish and then translated into Ukrainian by a professional translator.
3. Determining the selection of respondents: we determined that all adults attending the Memo card training would participate in the study. There were 20 participants in the training, 18 women and 2 men. Age: 17 - 58 years old. Refugees from Ukraine living in Tychy, unemployed, declaring a desire to stay in Poland for at least 6 months, considering permanent residence. The motivation for learning Polish was the desire to improve their functioning in Poland and possibly to take up employment. The group participated in Polish language classes, the memo cards were part of the broader classes. Recruitment was carried out by the Foundation for the Development of Social Economy as part of a wider project to help Ukraine. The only criteria were willingness to participate in the classes and refugee status, according to Polish legislation.
4. Conducting the survey: The evaluation questionnaires were distributed on the last day of the training implementation, approximately 20-30 minutes after the end of the training in paper form. Respondents were informed of the voluntary nature of participation in the evaluation survey and assured of the anonymous nature of the survey.
5. Carrying out data analysis: After collecting the questionnaires with the responses, all results were entered into a database in the Atlas.ti software. We used simple statistical methods and graphical data analysis techniques to obtain the final results and draw conclusions from the survey.
6. Development of a short evaluation report: The final step was the final interpretation of the results in the context of the main objective of the study and the preparation of the Memo tool evaluation report. The report includes a summary of the results, conclusions, recommendations and possible limitations of the study.

The entire evaluation process was conducted in accordance with ethical standards, we protected the privacy of the respondents and were concerned for their welfare.

The evaluation was carried out in cooperation with the organisation: Foundation for the Development of Social Economy, which, as part of a ministerial project to help refugees from Ukraine, has been providing comprehensive training and counselling activities since June 2022, from learning the Polish language, to classes describing cultural differences, to career counselling and specialist courses. To date, more than 200 people have benefited from the assistance. As most of them are mothers with children, childcare is organised during the classes.

The MEMO game cards prepared as part of the project were used with a group of 20 Ukrainians learning the Polish language. The research group can be considered representative of the population of Ukrainian war refugees in Poland. All respondents had been in Poland for approximately 8-10 months. The literacy support trainings were part of the socio-therapeutic activities organised for the migrants and (according to the trainers' observations) provided a relaxing element, although they aroused emotions, especially during the competition in pairs. The easiest way to make progress was to swap cards - according to the methodology, cards with captions and graphic elements were replaced (on the fourth class)

cards with signatures alone, which required participants to read the cards correctly in Polish and understand their content. Observations of the instructors show that a few minutes' play during each class allows participants to master the phrases on the cards within five classes. However, it should be noted that the cards contained only basic phrases, at most a few words. After analysing the pilot results obtained, it can be cautiously concluded that, at this basic level, training with Memo cards is, according to the participants, an attractive and useful tool for rapid mastery of Latin alphabet reading for everyday Cyrillic speakers.

After the pilot, participants were asked to rate their satisfaction and the usefulness of the cards during the activities on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 represented the worst rating and 5 the best. The results are shown in Figure I. A clear preponderance of those who were satisfied can be seen. The only rating of '2' came from a person who had difficulty remembering the cards, which caused her considerable frustration. In addition, at the end of each activity, participants were asked if they were satisfied with the use of the MEMO cards during the activity, they answered YES/NO. Chart II shows the number of YES responses during the following activities. It is clear that as the cards were used in class, participants liked them.

When asked about the use of the cards, they responded that they were an excellent educational tool for children, and parents attending the classes often also used them at home during educational games with their children.

When asked about other benefits and advantages, participants mentioned:

1. improving memory. The game requires memorising and finding pairs of pictures or cards. Regular practice of this skill leads to improved symbolic communication skills in a new language environment.
2. Improving concentration and attention on reflexive processing of linguistic and graphic symbols. Playing requires focus of attention and concentration on a task. Regular playing helps to develop concentration skills and improve the overall ability to focus attention, which was particularly valued by parents of Ukrainian children who often experienced various traumas related to war, being a refugee, etc.
3. Stress reduction. Playing can also be a great way to relax and reduce stress. Focusing on the task at hand and taking your mind off your daily worries brings relief and improves your mood.
4. Improved social interaction. The game was used to establish peer relationships between Polish and Ukrainian children.

The evaluation of the pilot clearly shows that the MEMO game cards prepared as part of the project are an effective and useful tool for Ukrainian refugees to quickly learn the basics of the Latin alphabet. After overcoming initial reluctance (some associated the MEMO game as a game only for children, they did not see its usefulness in learning the language and the alphabet), the tool was liked, the participants themselves demanded this part of the classes, and also asked for sets of cards for themselves, for home use. This allows for a final conclusion - the tool was aptly chosen for the problem (ignorance of the Latin alphabet), it is a valuable methodological tool with developmental potential.

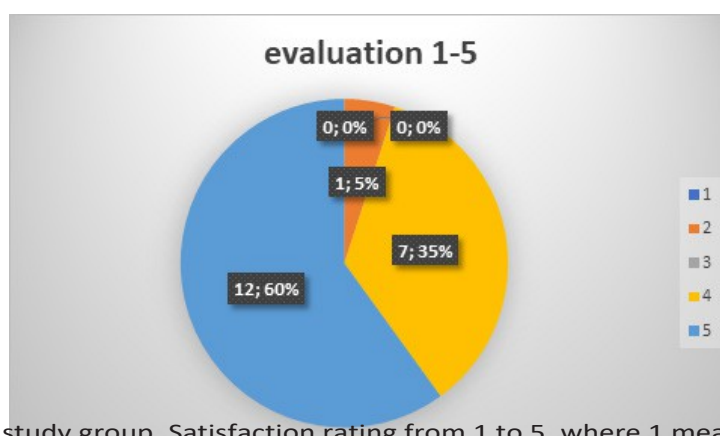


Chart I Evaluation in the study group. Satisfaction rating from 1 to 5, where 1 means no satisfaction, 5 means

complete satisfaction



Chart II. Evaluation at the end of each class. Question: Are you satisfied? Yes No Number of YES answers at the next class

The questionnaire was designed in Ukrainian and read as follows:

Please rate the usefulness and effectiveness of the use of MEMO cards for learning Polish, with 1 being the weakest and 5 being the best:

1. How would you rate the ease of remembering phrases and sentences with MEMO cards?
2. How do you assess the accuracy of the associations of the text with the graphic elements.
3. How would you rate the ease of mastering the MEMO game rules.
4. How would you rate the possibility of using MEMO cards for educational games with children.
5. How would you rate the effectiveness of MEMO cards in learning Polish in general.

## Video modules for jobseekers

As described in the previous chapter, the evaluation tool has a dual function: on the one hand, it measures the user's level of self-assessment, which can express a scale of values regarding the degree of understanding and usefulness of the proposed content; on the other hand, it measures the effectiveness of the tool itself, as a tool to mitigate the phenomenon of functional illiteracy. Perhaps the most interesting aspect that emerges from the respondents' answers is precisely the difficulty of interacting with digital devices. Although the language used was very simplified to facilitate understanding, it was often the case that the user found it difficult to understand certain concepts. A possible solution to this problem could be a video tutorial preparation session and a personal explanation of how to complete the evaluation questionnaire. Labour market operators who already use the usual tools may find this collection of videos an effective addition to their toolkit. We can therefore assume that there will be more video views and more completed questionnaires in the coming months, as OML's work does not end with the completion of the Alphabetter project.

## Pictogram system to support communication with migrant families

### Extended project objective and further research questions

Based on feedback from the first round of research, the tool was further developed under the name 'PiConnect: Image-based Parent Communication', with a clear focus on working directly with teachers and their

commitment from the first stages of work.

### **Extended project objective:**

The main objective was to create, together with the professionals, a collection of images with a year cycle theme that could be used by the educators themselves as required.

### **Research process:**

As the partner institutions involved in the previous project year had left, a new kindergarten and two new after-school programmes were involved. Prior to the development of the tool, a pre-survey was conducted in all participating establishments. The purpose of the pre-survey was to get an overview of the type of communication with parents in the establishments and to get initial ideas from educators for the specific implementation of the tool. The pre-survey was therefore also a needs assessment. The interviews were then transcribed and analysed. Transcriptions can be requested from the project team if needed.

Following the initial survey in the kindergarten, initial photos were taken of items commonly used in everyday teaching and sorted by category. These were made available to the kindergarten teachers on a USB stick and used in subsequent letters to parents.

### **Expanded research questions:**

After the test with the new letters to parents, guided interviews were again conducted with educators and parents in the kindergarten and the practicality of the 'PiConnect' tool was assessed with the following extended research questions:

How does the new tool generally perform in practice?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of working with the tool?

How did feedback on the tool compare with the previous year?

To date, a total of ten interviews in the daycare and three interviews in after-school care have been conducted and evaluated. The research process in after-school care is not currently complete (July 2023). In this case, nine more interviews and their evaluation are planned; these can be conducted and evaluated after the summer holidays in the participating educational facilities. The results will be included in the final report.



## 2. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

### 2.1. Kindergarten

#### A. Preliminary questionnaire

Educators: A preliminary survey showed that there is a strong emphasis on personal communication in the kindergarten. However, there are also written announcements directly at the front door and on various notice boards. The educators were very receptive to the tool from the beginning and saw it as a useful support:

"Yes (...) I think this sticker topic is quite cool because we always discuss it at parents' evenings. At the beginning of the kindergarten year it is quite understandable for all parents (...). But during the pre-school year (...) suddenly a small thing like, for example, slippers becomes a problem for us because of the gym (...). And so perhaps we would have the opportunity not to let (the subject of slippers) be forgotten for a whole year". (KP1, Z. 36-44).

During the initial survey, there were no direct suggestions for handling. In order to create a photographic tool, teachers could imagine that photos could also be taken with the children. Suggestions that they could take photos themselves and add them to folders were also well received.

Parents: the parents interviewed are generally satisfied with the way information is communicated at the kindergarten. The announcements are easy to understand and teachers are always available for questions. However, they also noted that announcements are often very simple and inconspicuous and are often overlooked, especially on the notice boards:

"[...] and also there is an information board next to the front door. Mmm there, you can see it well there, so I find it there, but it's easy to miss the information because there's often a lot hanging on it" (E1, Z. 16-18).

This led to a recommendation to make the adverts more colourful and visible or clearer:

"[...] they could be embellished a bit to make them more eye-catching too. (...). Maybe with pictures" (E1, lines 45 and 47).

#### B. Running the test

Teachers: nursery professionals were able to easily apply the photos in their letters to parents. The photos were sorted into consistent categories and were very easy to find:

"Completely positive. And it worked out great for us - for me as the person who used it" (KP4, Z. 30-31).

For more topics, teachers suggested ordering by subject:

"Yes, it was well laid out and easy to find. If you were looking for something, you knew ... So you found it quickly. This (note: division by season) is quite a good idea" (KP5, lines 6-7 and 14).

When asked whether a change in communication with parents could be observed, the answers varied. One teacher said that parents are looking at the announcements more carefully since the implementation of the project:

"It can already be said that when there are pictures on the notices to parents, they are noticed by more parents or faster by parents because they are simply more noticeable" (KP4, lines 5-7).

The other teacher interviewed was not able to make this observation. Overall, the tool was very well received by the teachers. They were very happy with the idea, but also with the



implementation and application, and were able to envisage further work with it.

Parents: surveyed parents in the kindergarten immediately noticed the newly designed announcements. They were positively received by parents:

'Yes, [...] I noticed it straight away. You could recognise them quite well, they were more colourful and much more striking than the others' (E3, line 5-6).

Both parents interviewed also stated that they looked more carefully at letters from parents:

"You still look more if there's a picture on top. Mhm, and it's just more attractive and maybe partly more understandable" (E4, Z. 35-37). 'I noticed them much quicker and read them straight away and didn't go past them' (E3, Z. 9-10).

## 2.2. After-school care

Note: The research process at the school day centre is currently ongoing (see note on page 2) and the results will be included in the final report.

### A. Preliminary questionnaire

Educators: As in kindergarten, the initial survey of after-school care centres could focus on the necessity and importance of personal communication between parents and educational partners. To date, written notifications and a communication brochure were in place. The after-school teachers were also very receptive to this tool from the very beginning.

In contrast to the pre-service teachers, the out-of-school teachers have already made specific suggestions on how to use the tool. Particularly important to them is that the tool should be easy and logical to use, in order not to waste time resources. In addition, it must be easy to use for people who are not very computer proficient:

"I think because we are all not IT people, the tool has to be very simple to use and easy to use. For example, when it comes to the cloakroom and what to bring with you, there is a button straight away. For example, bags of slippers. So that it can be called up straight away and without having to do a lot of different clicks, because that is also time-consuming. It has to go easily' (HP2, Z. 60-65).

In addition, the first suggestions have already been made regarding the positioning of the photos:

"At best sorted by category, and ... ahm..., yes just snacks, or clothes corresponding to the seasons, or what I need for a trip" (HP3, Z. 70-73).

When it came to ideas for creating the tool, the out-of-school teachers were open to different approaches, but here the children were also to be involved in the process. The idea that they could take and upload photos themselves was also welcomed. However, there was a question about the possibility of generalisation, as not all teachers or institutions work in the same way:

"[...] creating with educators I also think is good. However, this cannot be completely generalised because every teacher works differently" (HP3, lines 85-87).

## 3. Conclusions

Based on the 15 qualitative interviews conducted so far, the extended research questions can be answered as follows.

I How does the new tool work in practice?

The images have been arranged in clear categories and can be easily found by educators. The professionals interviewed so far have been convinced by the tool from the presentation of the idea to the test run and can imagine working with it in the future.

s What are the advantages and disadvantages of working with the tool?

From the point of view of the professionals interviewed so far, the tool is a useful support for practice. On the one hand, it can be observed that parents pay more attention to letters from parents. From the perspective of the educators in the participating kindergarten, the language does not lead to comprehension problems. However, from their experience in other kindergartens, the tool is a very good way to support parents with different kinds of language problems. No disadvantages were identified.

s What was the feedback on the tool compared to the previous year?

The further development of the tool has been very well received by teaching staff in nursery and after-school care, as well as by parents. All points of criticism of the first survey can be improved with the new tool: According to the professionals, the pictures are real and unambiguous, which has improved the first point of criticism. The fact that only the photos were made available meant that teachers could use them when needed. In this way, both the desire for flexibility in design and the requirement for organisational guidelines could be met. Further subject areas are planned for the current semester, but teachers can also add further required subject areas to the photo folders themselves at any time.

Feedback on 'PiConnect' has been exclusively positive, with no suggestions for improvement.

## 4. Appendix

RESEARCH TEAM AUSTRIA

Sezifische Forschungsmethoden I: Fragestellungen und Projektkonzeptionen  
Project management: Sen. Scient. Mag. Dr. Veronika Michitsch  
Project collaboration: Raphaela Gischa, BA Nadja Payer, BEd. Yuri N. Tarache Piñeros, BA Ingrid Zaja



# AlphaBetter

Learning tools for preventing functional and secondary illiteracy.  
With a focus on parents in kindergarten and after-school care.  
An international research project under Erasmus + and KA2.

**FUNCTIONAL ILLITERACY**

Functional illiterates have learned the written language and have basic skills in reading and writing, but these do not meet the requirements of everyday language use. Their level of competence is below the socially relevant minimum standards, especially in the area of reading competence, which limits their social participation in all areas of life (cf. Büchner 2011, p. 31). This also affects parents in educational institutions - mostly unknown by pedagogical professionals or teachers.

The exchange with parents is an important part of pedagogical work that often confronts professionals with a difficult task. On the one hand, they have parents who value transparent written information. On the other hand, they must also manage to reach those parents who have little or no language competence. The result is a need for needs-based parental communication that reaches as many parents as possible (cf. Beckord 2011, p. 26).

Literacy:  
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Büchner, P. (2011): Über die Bildungsbedeutsamkeit der Familie und Mechanismen der Reproduktion von Bildungsarmut. In Bundesverband für Alphabetisierung und Grundbildung e. V. (Hg.): Funktionaler Analphabetismus im Kontext von Familie und Partnerschaft (S. 31-42). Münster: Waxmann.

**RESEARCH CONCEPT**

In direct cooperation with paedagogical professionals in kindergarten and after-school care the project team will develop a photo tool to visually support written information texts. The visualisation of the texts should also reach parents with low reading skills. The tool will be tested directly in the participating kindergartens and after-school care centres and then evaluated by the research team.



Excursion with the prospective school children

On Monday, June 26, 2023, we will go by bus  
to the mobility park of the ÖAMTC in  
Villach.

Departure: 07.30 (meeting point 07.15)

Return: approx. 12.00 at the kindergarten

Lunch: 12.00-12.30

Please bring a backpack with snacks, waterbottle and headwear!



Dear parents!

As we are going to Friesach on Tuesday (04.07.), our game day will take place on Wednesday, 05.07.

In addition, on Wednesday we will celebrate Birthday  
with our  
"Summer Children.



CZECH REPUBLIC

An evaluation of the development and piloting of updated municipal forms based on the alphabetical approach was carried out using qualitative and quantitative methods. The approach also varied according to the specific form, as outlined below:

Approach to piloting/ evaluations	Qualitative	Quantitative
Adaptation process for new office staff (internal instructions for employees)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Interviews with the HR manager, selected managers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Structured form - new employees</li></ul>
Issuing of birth certificates (forms and instructions to citizens)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Interviews with selected reception officers</li></ul>	

Evaluation of the adaptation process for new office staff

Qualitative method: interviews with HR staff and selected managers

Main question: How has the implementation of the pilot form update improved the adaptation process for new employees:

Main responses:

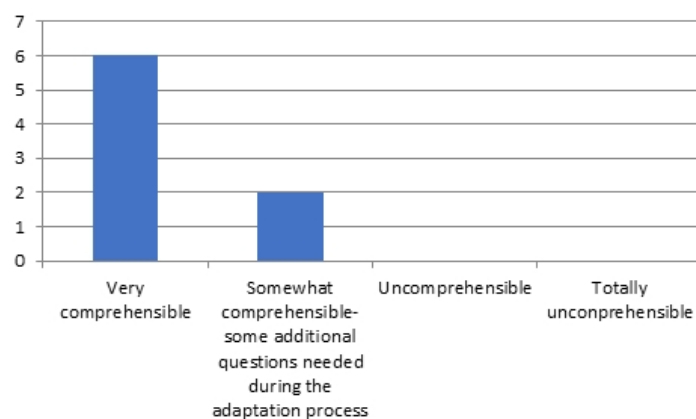
- Fewer questions from new employees to HR staff and managers, especially right after their

employment.

- New employees have increased their own initiative and responsibility in the adaptation process
- New employees proactively ask about next steps in the process
- New employees are more familiar with the whole process
- Realising that functional illiteracy issues are widespread but have not been addressed in the past
- Efforts to use the approach of visualising and simplifying documents, instructions also in other programmes and communications.

Quantitative method: Structured form - new employees

Question on the adaptation process introduced in the general satisfaction form: How do you perceive the instructions for the adaptation process in the organisation?



Very understandable Somewhat understandable - Not understandable Completely

incomprehensible during the adaptation process

additional questions needed Issuance of

birth certificates (forms and instructions to citizens) Qualitative

method - interviews with selected reception officers

Main question: How has the implementation of the pilot update of the form improved the process of issuing birth certificates?

### Main responses:

- Well-structured and visual instructions are helpful - we use them for citizens who we think need extra support and hand them printed versions of the document.
- We experience fewer additional questions from citizens and confusion when working with the agenda.
- The new instructions also have potential for foreign audiences, especially migrants, with whom we have been dealing a lot over the past year.
- Citizens only ask specific questions about the agenda, the overall basic process is much clearer to them and we do not have to answer basic questions.
- A realisation that functional illiteracy issues are widespread but have not been addressed in the past.

## Summary

The aim of the Alphabetter project was to develop and test a toolkit to support the integration of adults who are functionally illiterate. An adult who is functionally illiterate finds it difficult to engage in activities in which literacy is required to function effectively in the community and/or is essential for his or her own development (UNESCO, 1978). As assessments of functional illiteracy are dependent on the literacy requirements of a given context, the Alphabetter project team took an expansive, multidimensional view of (in)literacy to include different forms of basic literacy, including civic, financial, vocational and legal literacy.

Literacy needs vary from context to context, as do the demographic composition of communities and overall literacy needs. Taking these differences into account, each Alphabetter project partner chose to design and implement a toolkit tailored to the specific needs of their communities. These needs were identified through a community engagement process involving focus groups with members of the identified target populations; each team then developed a unique set of tools to support specific functional literacy needs.

In Poland, for example, given recent migration trends related to the war in the region, a team from WSB University developed a card game to support Ukrainian refugees to learn the basics of the Polish language as a way to get to know and integrate into Polish life. Then, in Italy, ENAIP identified the need to support the labour market literacy skills of adults over 30 (and mainly over 50) who have experienced long-term unemployment. Accordingly, they designed seven short video clips to familiarise adults with vocational training organisations and websites and to illustrate effective written and oral communication skills in the job application process.

As for Austria, a team from Alpen-Adria-Universität Klagenfurt noticed that an increasing percentage of migrant families needed support to get involved in their children's education. Therefore, they designed a toolkit to support parents' information literacy that visually communicated important school-related information, such as which activities their children would participate in and what supplies they would need to bring. Finally, based on the difficulties many adult workers and community residents had in engaging with formal municipal processes, a team from MEPCO in the Czech Republic adapted a set of written forms into condensed and visually appealing documents to promote employment and legal skills.

Each team tested their tools with the community of interest and evaluated their effectiveness in supporting identified literacy needs. Overall, each toolkit was found by community members to be helpful in promoting their engagement in identified literacy practices. In all contexts, users also suggested improvements to the tools that each team plans to include in future iterations.

The team is very well placed to have a profound impact on their communities, engaging in this and future international collaborations to support effective adult functioning and personal development.

Dr Megan Hopkins

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learning tools for preventing functional  
and secondary illiteracy