

# Guide for the insertion pathway

## The project

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## The consortium



In collaboration with



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# The project

Work-based insertion allows low-skilled adults who are far from employment to return to work through specific insertion contracts. In these structures, they receive tailored support at their workstation.

The people who supervise them - **the insertion counsellors** - draw on a wealth of experience and resources to meet a multi-dimensional challenge: training and technical supervision on the one hand, psychosocial support and vocational guidance on the other. Whether they are social workers or technical supervisors, the precise profile of these support staff varies from one structure to another, as do their roles and missions.

The ACTION project aims to improve support for people in insertion by developing training and work-based insertion methods as an innovative and practical response to the needs of these people and to contemporary socioeconomic issues.

In short, ACTION supports the work of insertion counsellors by:

- Harmonising and formalising support for the target group
- *Pedagogising* the approach, equipping teams with the right tools
- Providing recommendations for support towards sustainable employment

To achieve this, the project brings together 6 partners from 3 European countries, all active in the field of the social economy and work-based insertion. The consortium has worked together to develop four complementary resources:

1. The **Profile of the insertion counsellor**, to clarify the role and enhance the practices of support teams.
2. The **Guide for the insertion pathway**, which sets out the key elements for the pathway and provides ideas and inspiration to implement them.
3. The **Insertion worker logbook**, a practical tool for monitoring and documenting the worker's progress.
4. A **toolbox for job coaching**, to improve support towards sustainable employment.

## Guide for the insertion pathway

This practical guide was created through close collaboration between ACTION project partners and professionals in socio-professional insertion professionals. Its aim is to provide a practical and inspirational resource for insertion counsellors, by highlighting the key stages or elements in the insertion process. These key elements are illustrated by examples of practices tried and tested by the professionals interviewed, as well as a series of tips and ideas implemented by those working in the field.

The content of the guide, based on interviews and field visits, brings together the expertise and experience of the French, Italian and Belgian teams. Based on their experiences, this guide summarises the essential elements of successful support and provides an insight into the practices deployed in the field. Designed to meet the complex and varied needs

of insertion structures, this guide is both a roadmap and a toolbox for structuring and strengthening support towards sustainable employment.

This guide has been developed around **4 key moments of social and technical support:**

1. **Welcoming the insertion worker** and defining the support relationship
2. **Integrating** the worker into the host organisation and on their workstation
3. **Social and professional support** during the contract
4. Preparing **for sustainable insertion into employment**, and acquiring the skills to do so

# Preamble

Insertion structures use support methods to help people facing major difficulties in the labour market to **find employment in the "traditional" economy**.

The general aim of support through and in the workplace is:

- Help individuals regain confidence through productive work.
- Develop interpersonal and social skills and acquire independence and self-confidence
- Support them towards long-term employment.

**Two types of socio-professional insertion structures** can be distinguished among those that participated and were approached as part of the ACTION project:

	<b>Springboard to employment model</b>	<b>Social insertion model</b>
<b>Type of insertion structure</b>	Organisation relatively similar to traditional companies. Insertion structure as an "airlock" to mainstream employment.	Total adaptation of the production structure to the needs and capabilities of the people it serves, rather than the other way round: segmented and simplified production processes.
<b>Pathways to insertion</b>	Work-based insertion as the final stage in a pathway to insertion. Limited time in insertion for people recruited before access to unsubsidised employment.	Work-based insertion as an additional means of supporting people. No programmed exit from the device.
<b>Aim of the course</b>	Acquire the social, relational, business and even technical skills needed to increase their employability in the "traditional" job market.	Find or negotiate a suitable place for the person in the production structure, with a view to developing the social and professional skills of those being supported.

## **Production as a means of insertion**

In work- insertion schemes, the production activity should be seen as a *support* for social and professional insertion, as long as it gives the people supported the opportunity to get back into the social insertion process.

In other words, the activity carried out by the person being supported is designed to support a job whose main role is to facilitate their professional insertion in the medium or long term, which may then be in a trade or sector other than that practised within the insertion structure.

## **Balance between insertion and production**

Aside from the diversity of business models adopted by the organisations, they are all faced with more or less the same constraint: profitability. As a result, these structures can be subject to tensions when they must meet both economic and social objectives: maintaining production requirements on the one hand, and the duty to support people on the other.

This tension varies according to:

- *The structure's model and activity*: some are relatively exempt from productivity targets, while others are forced to do so by their financing methods and sector regulations, or by the nature of their production activity (low added value products that are difficult to sell, niches or more buoyant markets, etc.).
- *The extent to which the activity is capital-intensive*: activities involving a large number of inputs (for example, for a market gardening activity: water, seedlings, farm equipment and maintenance, petrol, possible travel; or a carpentry activity: wood, cutting tools, electricity, etc.) on the one hand, and less capital-intensive activities on the other (hospitality or moving house, for example).
- *The structure's business cycle*: between very seasonal activities - green spaces, market gardening - which require a strong investment in production over a given period of the year; and structures involved in much more regular activities throughout the year.
- *The location of the activity*: between structures operating mainly in rural areas and confronted with travel problems, and those operating in more urban areas.

## **Collaboration between actors**

The key to comprehensive support, as offered by work-based insertion schemes, lies in the collaboration and complementarity of the permanent staff who supervise the target groups: social support staff on the one hand (insertion counsellors, social workers, guidance officers, etc.) and technical support staff on the other (managers, supervisors, trainers, team leaders, etc.).

On a day-to-day basis, the permanent technical staff are in direct contact with the reintegrated workers schemes: on the site, in the workshop or kitchen, in the van, etc. They must therefore be vigilant in relaying to the support team any social difficulties they identify that could jeopardise their continued employment. They therefore need to be vigilant in relaying to the support department any social difficulties they identify that could jeopardise their continued employment. In other words, their ability to observe, listen and identify potential difficulties on the site for those being supported is based on a specific objective: to ensure better monitoring of the beneficiaries. The permanent technical staff contribute to and actively participate in the implementation of support when they use the worksite (or the workstation) as a support medium.

Support is global and relies on the complementarity between the permanent technical staff and their permanent psychosocial colleagues, insofar as their fields of action are quite distinct but rely on each other, through the sharing and exchange of information between players.





# I. Welcoming guests

The induction phase is essential for any insertion worker arriving at a facility. This is a vital part of the process, as it sets the tempo for the rest of the journey.

For our target groups, this dimension is even more crucial as the insertion structure is the first contact between the worker in insertion and the world of work (after a long period out of work or the first contact at all). What's more, the worker is often not well informed beforehand about what a work insertion scheme is, how it works, and what kind of supervision he or she will receive

The new worker's first impression generally depends on how they felt and experienced their arrival at the location(s) in question. It is therefore in the host organisation's interest to ensure that the worker's experience is a positive one, in which he or she feels accepted, considered and included

Welcoming and integrating a newcomer takes place in the first few days and weeks. Various factors come into play:

## 1. Building trust and connection

The rapid creation of a **bond of trust** will enable efficient and relevant socio-professional support to follow. Re-establishing trust is essential when you are dealing with people whose confidence in themselves, in others and in institutions (in the broadest sense, including our own) has often deteriorated. This bond is created and worked on at different levels, and through a number of practices that support staff can put in place:

**Get to know the person being supported:** during initial contacts (selection interview, first day, first individual interview/social assessment, etc.), an interest in the objectives of the person's presence, their motivations, their interests, any difficulties or concerns they may have, so as to get to know them better.

**Pace the various meetings between** the person being supported and the insertion players. Many organisations offer a weekly or monthly individual meeting between the insertion support worker and the worker. The same applies to field supervisors. This specific time allows the worker to escape the constraints of production and to discuss all the issues involved in the support. This meeting then becomes a routine place where it becomes possible to take a step back and reflect on one's career and the experience that is being lived. It also enables the management teams to cultivate a close relationship with the workers, by keeping abreast of their day-to-day lives

**Encourage informal conversations:** While informal discussions are a support point for psychosocial monitoring, in order to identify difficult situations and problems, doubts, tensions or even conflicts, they can also provide support for technical supervision. On a day-to-day basis, on the site/workstation, there are regular exchanges about the work done, mistakes made, points to remember, etc. These informal exchanges take place at a number of key moments, which should not be overlooked as they play an essential role in the support relationship: morning coffee, breaks, tidying up equipment at the end of the day, etc.

**Developing collective exchanges and moments:** Group meetings between workers in insertion help build a positive team spirit and foster development. Confronted with their peers in exchanges, workers will position themselves differently and develop new skills. A number of initiatives can be put in place to this end:

- Joint lunch break once a week
- Weekly meeting of all workers (permanent and insertion)
- Co-operation councils enabling people being supported to express their views on what is happening for them, on all aspects of their work and their insertion programme with the support staff. This not only helps to work on cross-cutting, non-technical skills (oral expression and communication, teamwork, tolerance of others' points of view, creativity, self-reflection and self-analysis, etc.), but also builds participation and democracy within the insertion structure.
- A group where you can work together to find a job

**Relying on key moments in the pathway:** Insertion structures also rely on key, one-off moments that allow for exchanges in a different setting and the discovery of other facets of the workers. This helps to reinforce the social aspects, which are very important for the insertion process. Particularly when the workers are mainly active on external sites. A good practice that has a major impact on cohesion and the relationship of support and trust is to regularly organise team-building activities, whatever form they take, to strengthen team spirit and also the feeling of belonging to the structure: collective meal, staff general meeting, family day, staff parties, etc.

## Good practice example: The cooperation council at the CEFF social workshop

### Initial findings

The CEFF cooperative's social workshop is a hybrid insertion space combining commercial production and educational objectives. It welcomes able-bodied, disadvantaged and disabled workers, offering them a personalised project. The cooperative provides socio-sanitary support and adapts jobs to the specific needs of beneficiaries, promoting their social insertion and respecting the mandates of stakeholders (social services, board of directors, families, etc.).

### The practice

To better reconcile production and education, a monthly meeting lasting 1.5 hours is organised during working hours with all workers (able-bodied, disabled, disadvantaged). Led by the workshop manager, the pedagogue and the person in charge of courses, the meeting encourages discussion, training and improvements in organisation, teaching and courses.

**During these cooperation councils, a discussion is organised** on themes proposed by the facilitators or emerging during the previous weeks. Each session is led and moderated by social workshop staff. The following topics are discussed: day-to-day work, learning, organisational aspects, management of the insertion process and teaching practices.

At the first meeting, brainstorming revealed three main areas of difficulty:

1. **Production:** Management of space and materials (accumulated materials, movement restrictions and increased risks); Difficulty reconciling timing and efficiency; Problems linked to transport and delivery (customer delays, costs and deadlines to be assessed).
2. **Roles, functions and group dynamics:** Limited collaboration and communication; Dysfunctional group dynamics making cooperation difficult; Confusion of roles between supervisors and insertion workers.
3. **Education:** sometimes inappropriate tone with beneficiaries; lack of time and teaching tools to teach and monitor new learning; managing expectations (idealisation) and inappropriate behaviour on the part of beneficiaries (tendency to manipulate).

The discussions helped to identify priorities for action to enhance educational output and effectiveness: Adopting consistent communication, including non-verbal communication; Developing self-awareness to better manage stress and interactions; Encouraging and fostering collaboration; Avoiding conflicts and negative alliances between staff; Valuing beneficiaries by establishing constructive relationships and attitudes. Since then, the following meetings have been used to work on these points as a roadmap, but also to deal with any other relevant points or current events.

### What we remember

Since its launch in 2023, the initiative has continued with good monthly participation. Feedback has been positive, with notable improvements in workspace management, reduced conflict between colleagues and better communication on critical issues. Participants appreciate this space for confrontation and support, which contributes to smoother collaboration between all stakeholders.

## II. Insertion into the workplace

As work is seen as a means of insertion, the aim of work-based support is first and foremost to restore the individual through productive activity. This means getting back to work, developing interpersonal and social skills, (re)discovering the world of work, and gaining independence and self-confidence. The support we provide covers all these aspects.

Insertion is a key stage in the process of welcoming the person and defining the objectives and resources that will be developed. It also involves enabling the worker to find their place within the structure and in relation to their colleagues

### 1. Clarify the work environment

The working environment and its understanding are often taken for granted by most workers. However, whether they are young, have no professional experience, come from other countries, work for a family business or are self-employed, many people are unaware of the rules and players involved in the smooth running of a company. A clear presentation of the working framework is therefore essential, bringing everyone up to speed on the guidelines and expectations of work within the insertion structure.

Workers must be able to situate themselves within the employing organisation as a whole, and integrate the essential and priority information relating to their work as well as the organisation and activity of the organisation. As soon as a recruit is taken on, most facilities provide for a certain number of times or meetings to explain this working framework:

**Visit to the premises:** Visit to the site before the contract is signed: interview with the supervisors and support staff; visit to all the sites where the structure operates, the administrative and activity premises, tour of the workstations, etc.

**Explanation of the employment contract:** joint reading of the contract, description of the pay slip (hours worked, holiday, contributions, etc.).

**Introduction to the teams:** First meeting with the future team and the worker's colleagues (organisation chart), presentation of a colleague's daily work ("live my life" method) and the role of the insertion company.

**Explanation of the different times of the day:** Specify the procedures for starting work and the worker's working hours, the places and times for breaks, the organisation of work over the month and the year.

**Presentation of the rules governing labour relations:** Presentation of the work rules (reading and explanation of the essential parts), compulsory posting of the rules on the premises, including decentralised premises (e.g. in the worksite van) and on an intranet where available, reminder of the rules in disciplinary procedures.

**Presentation of the bodies and organs representing workers** to enable them to express themselves: works councils, prevention services, trade union delegation, etc. Explain the channels for listening or appealing (management, workers' representative, social law, etc.) and any voluntary participatory bodies.

**Distribution of a welcome booklet** acting as a "welcome kit" and summarising all the elements set out above, in addition to others:

- Practical and technical information about the job (job description, technical sheets, timetables, map/plan of the facility, etc.),
- Equipment required (badge, locker keys, work clothes/personal protective equipment, etc.),
- Company presentation sheet (history, organisation chart, goods and services offered, etc.).

## **2. Set expectations and prepare the workstation**

Welcoming new workers also means giving them a clear idea of what is expected of them, both from the point of view of their involvement in their professional project and their day-to-day practical activity. This involves preparing the workstation and visiting their new working environment. This involves providing clear and precise information about the work environment and what the worker will be doing:

- Show the different activities that the person will be doing,
- Set production targets (output, times, results to be achieved, etc.),
- Designate the site/workstation and the technical supervisor directly responsible, so that he or she can be briefed on how the site works and what is expected of him or her.

To achieve this, structures tend to:

**Assign** the worker an insertion counsellor, a technical supervisor, and a direct manager.

**Specify the support objectives:** this is done during the first interview with the psychosocial adviser (clarification of the expectations/objectives of the professional project: personal investment, active research, response to requests, participation in forums or training courses).

**Specify the job objectives:** explain how the site works and what is expected of it, show the different activities that the worker will be required to carry out, give the production objectives (rate, times, results to be achieved, etc.).

**Plan a "frequently asked questions" type meeting during the first days/weeks after taking up the job:** To help the worker gradually assimilate the information given to him/her, plan a meeting time and possibly a paper or digital medium to go over the basic information.

# III. Socioprofessional guidance

**Socioprofessional insertion** refers to the process by which low-skilled individuals and/or those who are far removed from the labour market and encounter various social difficulties gain access to stable employment and become socially integrated society.

Within the insertion structures, support is therefore provided on both a social and a professional level, insofar as the two are closely linked: social 'stability makes it possible to invest in work, and work, by putting people in motion and earning a wage, also makes it possible to unblock social problems.

The aim of social support is to help remove barriers to work and support people with daily life issues (health, housing, mobility). One of the aims of this support is to provide overall support for the individual, by accompanying and supporting him or her in dealing with certain problems. First and foremost, it aims to strengthen the person's capacity for self-analysis, by offering them a support system to help them reflect on and deal with their own situation and find ways to improve it.

Socio-professional support will therefore focus on:

- Day-to-day support for a range of issues (health, housing, mobility)
- Support in building a career plan

## 1. Individual and collective support

It is one of the main activities of socio-professional support. Social support is a process that considers the specific needs of each individual being supported, offering them ongoing, personalised support in relation to a set of precise objectives to be achieved. Certain elements are therefore essential:

**Getting to know the people we support:** Develop a good knowledge of and interest in the people being supported (active listening, open-mindedness, special attention and interest in their needs).

**Structured intake interview:** use of a structured interview guide to gather important information about the person being supported:

- Socio-professional background: previous experience, challenges and obstacles (social, professional, cultural) encountered, skills acquired, assets that can be developed.
- Identifying needs and expectations: needs in terms of training, psychological support, help in finding a job, expectations in terms of follow-up
- In terms of building a relationship of trust: through a stance based on equality (the support worker puts him/herself on the same level as the person being supported in his/her relationship) and on the reliability of the relationship being built (respect for the wishes and words of the person being supported, showing that he/she is present and available).

**Setting personalised objectives:** Define clear, achievable objectives that are tailored to the individual profile of those being supported

- *Individual action plan*: Create an action plan with the support person that includes specific, clear and achievable objectives and concrete steps and deadlines for reaching these objectives.
- *Skills and needs assessment*: Carrying out assessments to identify existing skills in the professional area(s) to be improved.
- *Regular reviews of objectives*: Organise follow-up sessions to reassess objectives, discuss progress and adjust the action plan if necessary.

**Develop a posture of adaptability:** Although the general framework of support is collective, it must also be able to adjust to the specific needs of each person being supported.

- *Flexible and available working hours*: offer flexible working hours for follow-up interviews or training time.
- *Reacting quickly to change*: being ready to adjust the support plan in the event of unexpected changes in the supported person's life (family or financial constraints, etc.).

**Setting up collective activities, such as workshops,** which may relate to:

- *Living together*: raising awareness among supported workers of tolerance, open-mindedness, solidarity, respect, the challenges of interculturality and gender issues in the workplace (respect for cultural diversity, prevention of sexist and sexual violence, reminders about discriminatory behaviour, etc.).
- *Everyday life*: Housing (applying for accommodation, tenants' rights and duties, keeping your home tidy, etc.) / mobility (repairing and getting around by bike, finding out about public transport) / administrative formalities (public employment service and unemployment, trade unions, family allowance fund, tax, civil status, mutual insurance and healthcare)
- *Digital technology and digitisation*: acquisition of basic digital skills, access to computer equipment, access to and use of online services (public administration, banking, health, children's schooling, transport and mobility, etc.).
- *Culture and self-development*: group visits to museums (monuments, exhibitions, etc.), theatre (work on self-image, oral expression, non-violent communication), socio-cultural activities (development of individual creative expression) and sports (health/well-being, development of cross-disciplinary skills: participation, mutual aid and solidarity, team spirit, collaboration, etc.).
- *Well-being*: self-confidence or self-esteem, relaxation, stress management, public speaking, health and healthy living, etc.

**Good practice example:** "Work well, Feel well", collective practice of mindfulness and relaxation for the well-being of workers

## Initial findings

Chronic stress at work can lead to burnout syndrome, characterised by exhaustion, increased mental distance, negativity and reduced professional effectiveness. Although our reactions to stress are largely automatic, they can be influenced by the way we think, our attitudes and our physical state. Regular practice of mindfulness, which involves paying conscious attention to the present moment, can significantly reduce stress and anxiety and promote resilience and overall well-being.

## The practice

In March 2024, the "Work well, feel good" project was launched within the [CEFF cooperative](#) with the aim of preventing burnout syndrome and promoting well-being at work through mindfulness and relaxation. Here are the main elements of the project:

### Objectives:

- Acquire knowledge about the phenomenon of stress and how it can develop into burnout syndrome.
- Learn simple stress management strategies using mindfulness, breathing and relaxation techniques.

### Planned activities:

- Guided relaxation, breathing and meditation practices,
- Body-listening practices,
- Group sharing and discussion,
- Psychoeducation on the use of mindfulness practices to manage stress and prevent burnout,
- Sharing of slides and material on the issues addressed.

**Supervision:** The sessions were led by an expert in relaxation techniques and CEFF's work pathway manager (specialising in bio-systemic psychotherapy).

**Participants:** The meetings were open to all workers of the cooperative (able-bodied, disadvantaged and/or disabled), both volunteers and paid workers, and took place in the afternoon. The project welcomed an average of 10 participants from the cooperative's various areas of activity.

## What we remember

Participation and feedback have been positive, with benefits noted both at work and in daily life. The cooperative plans to repeat this initiative and invest in similar worker well-being projects, focusing on preventing burnout, managing conflict and improving relationships.



## 2. Building a career plan

At the heart of socio-professional support lies the definition and implementation of a **career plan**. One of the main responsibilities of insertion counsellor is to help workers choose a career direction and/or implement a career plan. They check and build on the worker's motivations, professional and personal interests and the factors that triggered the project, to identify the worker's strengths and any weaknesses, without passing judgement.

The career plan is a projection that guides the person being supported throughout their socio-professional insertion process. It offers a structured and personalised vision of the worker's professional future.

And in practical terms, how can we support them in this?

**Guidance and orientation:** For the insertion players, this involves **guiding and helping the person being supported to define and implement their professional project and career plan**.

- If the person being supported already has a career plan, the aim will be to encourage them to seek further information on their choice of career, with a view to making it realistic and achievable.
- If the person being supported does not yet have a definite career plan, the aim will be to help them ask themselves questions about their desires, skills and professional abilities, and to help them gather information and extract the essential points/use them to define their plan.

**Involving the worker in the construction of their career plan:** A career plan can only take shape if the supported worker is fully committed to it. To achieve this, it is crucial to get them actively involved through practical exercises, concrete activities or training times that give them the real experience of building a project. In this context in particular, an exchange with colleagues and/or mentors (supervisors, work placement supervisors, workers of local companies, etc.) can be proposed to receive suggestions and feedback on their project, but also on the work they are doing.

**Practical job-seeking support:** as the insertion contract is intended to serve as a springboard towards sustainable employment, it is important to work on practical job placement. This is done by supporting workers in their practical job-seeking activities: building CVs, writing job applications, searching for jobs through the appropriate channels, preparing for interviews and selection tests, etc.

**Strengthening workers' motivation and commitment to their project:** The *psychologisation* of motivation in workers consists of considering motivation as an innate personal quality, unequally distributed between individuals. The problem with this approach is that it can make support staff feel powerless and unable to influence the psychology of those they support. To avoid this, **motivation should be seen as a dynamic process** that the support worker can influence through concrete actions and appropriate levers

## Inspiring practice : “La cravate solidaire” mobile workshops

### Initial findings

People who are a long way from employment find it difficult to access the job market because of a lack of preparation for interviews, a lack of appropriate clothing and a lack of understanding of recruiters' expectations. These obstacles are particularly pronounced among marginalised groups or those in precarious situations. It is therefore essential to propose innovative solutions to improve their employability and self-confidence.

### The practice

La Cravate Solidaire's mobile workshops are an innovative initiative offering interview preparation coaching, makeovers and professional photos, all on board a converted lorry for half a day. The initiative is open to people who have been out of work for a long time, as well as workers from our Social Insertion Workshop.

The main stages of the workshops are

1. **Interview preparation:** Participants receive personalised advice on their posture, their speech and the expectations of recruiters.
2. **Makeover:** Candidates receive a complete makeover, including appropriate clothing for interviews.
3. **Professional photo:** A professional photo is taken to enhance their LinkedIn profile or CV.
4. **Post-workshop follow-up:** A follow-up is carried out after the workshop at 1, 3 and 6 months to assess the impact of the workshop and suggest adjustments if necessary.

To take part, candidates must be actively looking for a job, training course, work placement or sandwich course, have a defined career plan and, ideally, have an interview scheduled. They must be available for half a day and complete an online questionnaire, attaching their CV.

### What we remember

La Cravate Solidaire's mobile workshop initiative is innovative because it offers comprehensive, personalised support to jobseekers. By combining interview preparation, makeovers and professional photos, it enables candidates to present themselves in the best possible light, boosting their confidence and increasing their chances of success. The use of a converted lorry makes it possible to reach a variety of audiences and to travel easily to areas where needs are least well covered. This mobile and integrated approach is an effective response to the challenges faced by people who are a long way from employment.

**Good practice examples:** Motivating people on insertion programmes to move towards sustainable employment: getting away from a psychologising approach

## Initial findings

Motivation is often seen as a key condition for successful insertion. There are those who are motivated, who get involved, who are proactive and who can succeed in their career plans. And there would be others who are unable to get moving, to plan and to take the necessary steps to integrate, particularly in the field of ordinary work. This dichotomy often leads to a psychologisation of motivation, making it into a personal resource with which everyone is endowed in different ways.

## The practice

Motivation can be seen as the result of several actions carried out for and with the worker. This way of looking at it allows us to give support staff an active role in motivating people in work insertion by acting on different levers that encourage workers to act.

Acting on motivation requires the use of a range of levers. What will motivate people?

- **Having a clear objective:** Knowing where you're going motivates you to take the necessary action. Note that the objective is different from the result. The result is a consequence of the action.
- **Being valued:** We all need to be reflected in a positive light: we start from our assets and not from the obstacles to employment. We tend to focus only on the criticisms, so we need to value the person 10 times over. We ask for a single point on which the worker wants to work.
- **Making decisions by/for oneself:** Helping workers decide what they want to work on, what they want to do. The role of the support worker is to help them see things clearly and to provide solutions.
- **Putting yourself into action:** It's not what you say that motivates you, but what you do. Taking action (work experience, immersion, meeting an employer, etc.) shows you the real opportunities.
- **Benefit from professional networks:** Opportunities are a way of getting people moving. To do this, the support worker must be able to make their network available to the workers.
- **Be responsive:** Dynamism is created and maintained by responsiveness. For example, you need to be able to offer job vacancies *quickly*. This allows you to measure real opportunities and keep them in action.
- **Having a choice:** The amount of choice on offer shows that you can have a choice. When there is only one offer, the choice boils down to yes or no; when there are several offers, the choice moves between the offers themselves (prioritisation).

## What we remember

This innovative initiative invites us to look beyond a psychologising view of the motivation of supported workers and proposes a list of concrete levers to act on motivation and help create and maintain the motivation necessary for successful insertion into the world of work.

### 3. Parallel work with partners

The support provided is not intended to replace other supporting schemes. Most of the problems encountered are related to matters for which outside organisations are more competent: housing, mental health, social rights, debt, etc. Partnerships with local players are therefore essential for social insertion organisations. This can take the form of partnerships upstream and downstream of the action, or during the action itself: collaboration and cross-fertilisation of work, exchange of information and mutual referrals, events and workshops, dedicated duty offices, etc.

**Good practice examples:** Insertion structure & social prescriber: working together to support the insertion process

#### Initial findings

Workers in insertion facilities often come from pre-existing support programmes (social services, public employment service, etc.). As a result, they are often involved in a number of different approaches and pathways/plans for insertion with each person/organisation that supports them

#### The practice

The person prescribing the pathway may play a direct and ongoing role throughout the insertion contract. In some structures, a counsellor or social worker from the prescribing body (in this example, in Belgium, an insertion counsellor from the CPAS, the local public body responsible for social action and the insertion of disadvantaged people) takes part in the periodic interviews of each worker it sends to the structure in question.

There is therefore active collaboration between the social support worker at the host structure and the prescriber. This allows for a useful exchange of information in both directions: the social support worker is aware of the objectives being pursued and the situation of the worker; the insertion agent monitors the smooth running of the insertion contract and the progress of the worker, his objectives, his plans for the future, etc.

It is also an added value for the beneficiary himself, who benefits from comprehensive support and does not have to be a conveyor belt of information between the various people who support him in his path, avoiding duplication and the associated administrative burden (multiple appointments and communications, repetition of information, etc.).

This is all the more important as, in this specific case, it is the CPAS that is the guarantor of vocational guidance, and it is the insertion agent who will take over the support of the worker at the end of his contract, to lead him towards the next stages of his job search.

#### What we remember

The proper circulation of information is essential to avoid an information gap between what the worker is experiencing in the employing organisation and the more global pathway to insertion orchestrated by the prescriber. This way of working makes it possible to provide comprehensive, integrated support that greatly benefits all the parties involved.

# IV. Professional insertion and skills

It is at work, i.e. during a professional activity, that the person being supported develops their learning, skills and social and professional abilities. To maximise the learning effects of the programme, certain elements should not be overlooked.

## 1. Integrating soft skills

In work insertion, the beneficiary is less involved in learning the specific skills associated with the job he or she is currently doing, than in integrating a whole range of 'soft' skills and abilities that are essential for insertion into the labour market.

**Soft skills**, or behavioural competencies, play a crucial role in the employability of people undergoing social insertion. As a complement to technical skills, *soft skills* have been the subject of much discussion, and there are numerous models and theories that enable them to be integrated into training and socio-professional insertion schemes for adults. Broadly speaking, they can be grouped into 3 dimensions (Bunk's model):

- **Methodological skills**, which refer to the notions of adaptability and autonomy (adapting, being autonomous, planning, anticipating, analysing, solving problems, critical judgement, quality of work, etc.);
- **Social skills**, which refer to the notion of sociability (communication, teamwork, insertion, confidentiality, etc.);
- **Contributory skills**, which refer to the concepts of organisation and participation (taking into account one's own ability to intervene, prioritising, organising, professional awareness, etc.).

These behavioural skills are increasingly sought after and praised by employers. Technical skills are obviously important, but *soft skills* can make all the difference when it comes to getting a job - and keeping it. What's more, for people on the labour market, working on soft skills not only makes them more adaptable to the demands of the workplace, but also improves their self-confidence and social inclusion.

There are several ways of integrating them into insertion programmes:

### **Methodology for integrating soft skills into the careers of reintegrated workers schemes:**

**1. Identifying soft skills needs, by means of an initial assessment** in order to define improvement priorities and objectives. Tools such as observation grids or self-assessments can then be used to diagnose the behavioural skills of each worker, which can be explored in greater depth during an individual interview to gain a better understanding of the strengths and specific needs of each person.

**2. Development of soft skills through practical exercises**, integrating their evaluation (via observation) into everyday professional life. For example: proposing collaborative assignments (teamwork) to carry out a project or achieve a common goal, or testing problem-solving through practical exercises, reflecting on procedures to improve them, analysing accidents or problems that have occurred to identify areas for improvement, etc.

**3. Targeted support and training, including themed workshops** (see below)

**4. Follow-up and evaluation of progress, through regular meetings.** By planning regular progress reviews to take stock of each person's situation, the coach can more easily identify and discuss any difficulties encountered, and adjust objectives if necessary.

**5. Valuing acquired skills:** for under-qualified people, valuing acquired soft skills can be an interesting way of compensating for the lack of a diploma. Open badges<sup>1</sup> are an interesting avenue to explore in this respect (see below).

**Gamification & Serious games:** Games are a relevant training tool for working on and developing workers' behavioural skills. It allows real-life practice, to better understand what soft skills are, how to juggle with them and mobilise them in a way that is appropriate to each context. The game reveals its own skills and assets... *Serious games* are an interesting tool in this respect, combining a 'serious' intention (educational and (in)formative) with a playful medium.

**Advice for coaches:** when it comes to soft skills, setting an example is key. To enable workers to acquire soft skills, they need to work in an environment that values and promotes them:

- Adopting a caring and encouraging attitude, with positive, non-judgmental communication
- Encouraging and stimulating teamwork, solidarity and mutual aid within the group and between colleagues
- Provide concrete examples of expected and prohibited behaviour in a professional context: not smoking while on duty, not insulting or provoking customers or colleagues, respecting working hours and breaks, etc.
- Encourage self-reflection: Ask questions that stimulate awareness and improvement.
- Make your skills visible: Link the soft skills you are working on to concrete achievements to give them meaning.

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<sup>1</sup> Several European projects have focused on this issue, including the Erasmus+ [RAFT](#) and [NextStep4SFC](#) projects

Good practice example: *Chasseur de job*, a serious game on behavioural skills

### Initial findings

It's not always easy to tackle soft skills in training with adults. Several European projects have enabled those working in the field to develop tools and methodologies to equip professionals in this area. This is the case with the [OPC-SFC](#) and [Step4-SFC](#) projects, which have produced their own methodology and a series of resources for integrating behavioural skills (SFC) into training programmes.

On this basis, in 2019, during a *Creathon* on the theme of soft skills in the training sector in Wallonia (Belgium), a team of participants is developing a prototype of a game to raise awareness of soft skills based on this methodology. That is how **Chasseur de job** was born (meaning : « job hunter »)

### The practice

In this game, participants are placed in a job search context. They have to take part in several job interviews for different professions. Each candidate must showcase their soft skills (or SFC) during these interviews and hope to land the target jobs.

**How the game is played:** Each player receives job cards, which they use throughout the game (some are realistic, others are more silly). A game is played over several rounds, with each round comprising the same three stages:

1. **Research:** The first player turns over the SFC cards on the table. It is these SFC cards that will be valued by everyone during the interview stage.
2. **The job interview:** Each player has to convince the other players that their job is the one that best responds to the SFCs revealed by the cards on the table. To win the round, you have to convince more than the other competitors that the job you interviewed for is the one that best mobilised the SFCs in question.
3. **Recruitment:** The players vote for the candidate who put up the best fight. At the end of the game, each player's points from each round are added together to decide the final winner.

A debriefing after the game reviews the different concepts and how everyone felt about them.

**Who can use it with?** There are so many applications, because the game is adaptable:

- Context: guidance process, training, job search, socio-professional insertion scheme, etc.
- (Young) adults benefiting from insertion and training initiatives, or training and insertion professionals wishing to learn more about FCS (trainers, insertion advisors, social workers, supervisors, etc.).

### What we remember

This game has been tested on several occasions within the [AID network](#), both with supervisory staff and with beneficiaries. It is a fun, innovative and appropriate tool, which raises awareness of what an SFC is and how to apply them in practice by applying them to a range of different professions.

It is available both physically and [electronically](#), so that anyone can print it out and make it their own, [via the FormaForm website](#) (a Walloon initiative for training trainers).



## 2. Hard skills

While soft skills are essential, *hard skills* should not be neglected. Since economic activity imposes an obligation to produce, workers will inevitably have to acquire skills that are useful at their workstation if they are to be productive and progress in their job. This will certainly enable them to acquire skills that will be useful elsewhere in their career.

But how do you go about doing this?

**Teaching at the workplace:** Work-based insertion schemes are unique in that they use everyday work situations as teaching opportunities. This training process enables a worker to acquire new skills on the job.

Several factors can encourage learning at the workplace:

### - **Training methods :**

- Learning by doing: In insertion structures, the preferred teaching approach is "learning by doing". This method makes it possible to acquire knowledge through observation, active participation and the transformation of experience, with a view to involving the worker as much as possible in their work experience.
- Peer training: mentors or pairs pass on their knowledge. The expected effect is both to empower the worker passing on the knowledge and to teach the person receiving the knowledge. Peers learn techniques by passing on their knowledge.
- Training through role-playing: To build confidence and develop workers' skills, the technical supervisor can suggest role-playing exercises on a daily basis to deepen the learning process. For example, on the basis of the site work carried out that day (alternative scenarios, re-enactment of actions, etc.) or in preparation for subsequent sites (how it will be done, forecasting the sequence of events, etc.).
- Dedicated trainers: in some organisations, a tutor-trainer is appointed to support, monitor and develop the skills of reintegrated workers schemes, mainly on the job, through individual coaching (see below).

### - **A wide range of learning materials:**

- Daily briefing: Restate the mission, its objective and how to carry it out; review specific technical skills or safety rules.
- Display instructions and models: Provide posters or printed photos with procedures, tools/equipment, instructions, etc. Visual tools are preferable, as they make it easier for people with language difficulties to understand: booklet with photos, summary mission sheets, procedure sheet with photos of the steps, video tutorials, etc.
- Handling: actual handling is an important tool for memorising and assimilating information. It is therefore useful to provide practical exercises and experiments for workers, enabling them to learn and acquire useful information without the pressure of achieving productivity targets.



**Access to external training:** Whether training is an obligation imposed on a structure, or whether it is organised on a completely voluntary basis, it constitutes an interesting lever in the service of workers' careers and a real opportunity. However, there are many obstacles - both for the individual worker (lack of motivation, etc.) and for the organisation itself (organisation of production, economic tensions, etc.). There are a number of levers that can be used to overcome these obstacles, including: adapting the pace of work (providing part-time production hours for full-time contracts) where possible, optimising slack periods (e.g. in winter for horticultural activities), developing partnerships with training operators to make the offer more flexible, mobilising the financial support available for training (paid educational leave, time credit, sector funds, etc.).

### Initial findings

Medialys' core business is mediation on public transport in the Lyon metropolitan area. Reinserted workers receive classroom training on four main topics relating to their job as mediation agents on the public transport network (ticketing, network knowledge, commercial relations and conflict prevention). These courses are sometimes difficult to follow and understand for these workers, many of whom have little command of the language.

### The practice

Medialys has set up an **individualised tutoring** system based on these four training courses, to ensure that workers have a sufficient command of their workstations. After each classroom training session, the tutors go over the points covered with each worker. This tutoring ensures that the content has been properly assimilated and enables the elements that need to be learned to be reviewed, using appropriate teaching tools.

**This work can be carried out in the field:** for example, in sales relations, being present at an underground station means that you can respond to real customers and the workers can make rapid progress. For other items requiring real concentration, or depending on the individual's difficulties (concentration, language level, etc.), follow-up can be offered in the classroom.

Follow-up is based first and foremost on a **relationship of trust**, made possible by the face-to-face setting. Tutoring **is based on the person's knowledge**, and uses a variety of tools: a guide, a game with labels for metro stations, maps showing types of transport, tickets, staging, etc.

In addition, these working sessions help to **identify the difficulties encountered** by the workers (sight, hearing, cognitive problems, language skills, illiteracy, etc.) so that they can be dealt with by the social worker or vocational insertion counsellor.

#### Objectives of the tutor-trainer position:

1. **Providing on-the-job training** and acquiring the knowledge and postures needed to welcome and inform transport network customers.
2. **Tailor this training to the difficulties faced by each individual.** Language skills, for example, are crucial. Reviewing the different topics, explaining the vocabulary used and giving standard sentences to answer will give workers the tools they need.
3. **Work on mastering the tools given to workers:** how to read a guide, what a table of contents is for, understanding how a double entry table works, etc. This dimension is aimed at more cross-disciplinary learning that can be reused in other circumstances or professions.
4. **Accurately identify the difficulties encountered** by workers, difficulties that they are often unable to conceal face-to-face (sight, reading, etc.). Identifying these obstacles and responding to them is an integral part of the insertion programme.

### What we remember

The position of tutor-trainer is particularly interesting in that it takes place on the boundary between several players. The tutors meet the needs of the workstation, without any production constraints, as this is a time dedicated to learning. Over and above this, the tutors work on acquiring general skills (finding your way around, reading a guide, using a table of contents, etc.) which increase the employability of the workers. Finally, face-to-face learning time often allows workers to open up and address important issues, some of which can be dealt with through socio-professional support.

### 3. Valuing and recognising skills

In conjunction with skills training, the challenge is to recognise and promote the skills acquired by workers. In fact, for a group of people with a low level of qualifications and often little schooling, and therefore often no qualifications, it is important to be able to acquire and claim a certain number of qualifications or skills, acquired during the insertion contract or previously. This recognition plays a central role in access to employment, not only by objectifying skills but also by reinforcing self-image and self-confidence.

In this context, it is useful to develop partnerships and links with existing organisations and schemes that provide access to forms of certification, such as:

- The **validation of skills** or the **validation of acquired experience**, which make it possible to obtain forms of diploma (titles, certifications) for skills acquired outside the school context (professional experience, training, etc.).
- Systems for the recognition and **equivalence of foreign qualifications and diplomas**, which are often complicated for foreign nationals to understand, but useful for enhancing the value of an educational or academic career pursued in another country.
- **Certificates, licences and other vocational qualifications**, whether related to the position held during insertion or more cross-disciplinary, can enable workers to obtain qualifications that are useful on the job market: safety, well-being and prevention, working at heights, specific products and materials, digital technology, etc
- **Open badges** are another interesting area to explore. An Open Badge is a digital certification that recognises skills, achievements or (in)formal learning. They can be developed by anyone, and attest to the acquisition of a technical skill or cross-disciplinary skills. Once obtained, the badge can be shared online (LinkedIn, CV) or used in job applications

Good practice example: Open Badges "*Activating Vocation and Personal Development*"

## Initial findings

People with little or no education find it difficult to access the labour market and training, mainly because of initial selection based on qualifications. What's more, a large proportion of people's real skills (up to 70%) often remain invisible or unrecognised.

## The practice

**ADVP Open Badges** (*Activation of Vocational and Personal Development*) are digital tools for certifying skills, whether acquired formally or informally. This initiative enables:

- Anyone, regardless of their level of formal education, to have their skills recognised and their career choices validated. This includes transferable skills (e.g. project management, communication) and skills specific to a profession.
- Companies should recruit individuals based on real, proven skills, not just academic qualifications.

The ADVP workshops focus on three main phases:

- **Skills identification:** Participants are helped to recognise and formulate the skills they have acquired through different experiences (work, voluntary work, personal life).
- **Skills inventory:** A detailed skills map is drawn up, including technical skills, interpersonal skills and transferable skills.
- **Skills validation:** The skills identified and inventoried are validated by trainers or peers and certified in the form of digital badges. These badges can be shared on online professional platforms such as LinkedIn and are recognised by institutions such as Pôle Emploi.

Open Badges provide instant and portable recognition of skills, facilitating professional mobility and access to training and employment opportunities.

Badges can be used on:

- Several job search websites
- Social networks such as LinkedIn
- CVs (including the European Europass model) and portfolios

## What we remember

The ADVP Open Badges initiative is innovative because it revolutionises the way in which skills are recognised and validated. Unlike traditional certification methods based on diplomas and academic qualifications, Open Badges take a more holistic and inclusive approach. They value the practical skills and know-how often acquired outside formal educational frameworks. This initiative thus promotes a better match between the skills of individuals and the needs of the labour market, particularly for those who are often excluded from traditional training and employment channels.

## Appendix | Repository of tools for insertion pathways

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In addition to the information provided in this guide, the ACTION project partners have also collected a series of tools for organising support for people in work insertion.

These tools come from the partner organisations or their networks, and are all tried and tested in the field, used by social and/or technical support workers.

These tools are freely available to you for inspiration via an online catalogue. You can take advantage of them to adapt them to your own needs and the way you provide support.

You'll find a range of different tools, organised under several headings depending on their purpose:

- **Welcome & insertion**
- **Psychosocial follow-up**
- **Skills assessment & evaluations**
- **Workstation/Technical skills**
- **Soft skills**
- **Other and misc.**

The tools are available in either French or Italian.

**To access this directory of tools, go to the shared space [accessible via this link](#).**



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