

# THE STRESS OF MANAGING WELLBEING

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**Abstract:** *After the successful selection project from 2012, a new European project Wellness – Skills for true wellbeing, Project N°. 527797-LLP-1-2012-1-RO-GRUNDTVIG-GMP, has started on 01.01.2013. The project will last for 2 years and it is managed by the Romanian partners of the consortium. The project members are seven partners from six countries, two of them being universities. This project aims at equipping adult education professionals and learners in skills that will allow them to monitor their level of wellbeing and, when needed, to apply self-regulation strategies in order to return to satisfying level of wellness.*

*The specific aims and objectives of the project include: to examine the needs of adult education professionals (teachers, trainers, managers, administrative staff), in particular assess their baseline level of wellbeing and problems that they have that affect the level of their wellbeing, to examine the needs of adult learners, in particular assess their baseline level of wellbeing and problems that they have that affect the level of their wellbeing, to spread the awareness that wellbeing is necessary foundation for effective teaching and learning, to empower the adult education staff and learners to take responsibility for their wellbeing, to provide the adult education staff and learners will tools that will help them to manage their stress level effectively, expand their creativity, enhance their communication skills, increase their self awareness, to produce high quality resources (in-service seminar, guide book, internet platform) for adult education professionals etc.*

*From a management point of view challenges are related to the: different professional, cultural and occupational background of the consortium members. The managing team will have to focus on: managing people, time and budget. This role is especially challenging as the managing partner is the interface between EACEA and all the other project partners.*

**Key words:** *business communication, commercial correspondence, language of economics*

**JEL classification:** A29

## Introduction

Skills that ensure sustainable wellbeing are fundamental to one's ability to make the best use of his/her potential, cope with life challenges, work fruitfully and contribute to other people's lives in a meaningful way. After the successful selection project from 2012, a new European project Wellness – Skills for true wellbeing, Project N°. 527797-LLP-1-2012-1-RO-GRUNDTVIG-GMP, has started on 01.01.2013. The project will last for 2 years and it is managed by the Romanian partners of the consortium. The project members are seven partners from six countries, two of them being universities. The participating organizations are: from Romanian – the West University of Timisoara as managing partner, from Cyprus, ShipCon Limassol Ltd, From Italy: Promimpresa and FormAzione Co&So Network, from Slovenia DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION CENTRE (public body), from Poland The University of Humanities and Economics in Lodz and from England Health Psychology Management Org. Services. This project aims at equipping adult education professionals and learners in skills that will allow them to monitor their level of wellbeing and, when needed, to apply self-regulation

strategies in order to return to satisfying level of wellness. As a result they will be able to use their potential fully as they will have access to their inner resources such as clear and focused thinking, visionary thinking, imagination, deriving wisdom from their experience, problem solving, intuition, emotional balance, ability to connect with others in respectful and meaningful way, motivation, energy etc. The proposed project is designed to directly address the needs of educators and learners by equipping them with a set of diverse abilities thus enabling them to expand their existing paradigm of education and in turn inspiring and motivating themselves and others towards greater and more fulfilling achievement. It will be beneficial for the quality of teaching and learning in the partners' home institutions as well as staff and learners of other adult education organisations to whom the results of the project will be disseminated.

Project Management work package describes all activities concerning the management of the consortium. It is about leading, administrating, coordinating and controlling the project and partners in order to reach the aims and objectives within the frames of the founding of the project. A special concern of this work package is related to communication between the partners.

All of the above will be ensured through the design of the project, especially the planning of activities throughout the duration of the project. UVT will have the responsibility for efficient communication with the EU during the project. This includes forms, certificate, reporting, etc.

As the leader of the work package it will regularly monitor and supervise the overall progress and unfolding off the project in cooperation with ShipCon as sparring partner. UVT will also assist the partners, validate and launch the activities throughout the project. It will ensure the general agreement and understanding of the partners on the work plan. UVT will be responsible for the financial management and a reasonable and rationale spending of the finances. This includes time management to fulfill the scheduled activities according to the project. For this purpose it will implement internal control and will report to the EC. UVT will cooperate with the partners who are in charge of each project meetings. UVT will be responsible for gathering all the documents necessary for completing the report and will always respects the procedure manual.

All seven partners are experienced in managing various LLP projects. The management structure proposed below will ensure a high consistency and integration among partners and activities through the whole life cycle of the project.

Every partner has one Project Manager (PM), who is responsible for the day-by-day administration, financial management of the project, communication and reporting activities to the Project Coordinator.

The Project Coordinator (PC) is responsible for the execution of the project in compliance with the Grant Agreement signed with the European Commission. The PC will take the responsibility of the co-ordination and management of all activities in the project and will be the point of contact between the European Commission and the consortium. The PC, with the support of the Project Technical Committee (PTC), chairs the Steering Committee (SC).

The Project Technical Committee (PTC) will be chaired by the Project Coordinator and will coordinate the project. It consists of the Project Coordinator and each Work Package leader. It will ensure smooth cooperation between the parties in relation to the project, for analyzing and approving the results, for proper administration of the project and for implementation of the provisions contained in the Consortium Agreement. PTC acts as the supervisory body for the project's execution. In order to keep a constant communication flow with the group and keep them constantly updated on project developments four meetings of PTC will be scheduled. In addition, sessions

will be organized via phone/video conferences in conjunction with important milestones of the projects.

The project is structured in nine Work Packages. Every Work Package has its WP Leader (WPL), who is responsible for the work done by all participants in his/her WP. WPL establishes, in coordination with the participating partners and other WP leaders, the detailed schedule of his/her WP. WPL will submit to the Project Coordinator a quarterly Control Report, summarizing advancement and status of work for the period. He/she will also present the WP progress when required by the PTC.

The Steering Committee (SC) is the main strategic decision board. The SC assumes the responsibility for decision making, supervision and control of the whole project and will be composed by one representative of each partner Consortium. It will be chaired by the Project Coordinator. Each partner of the consortium will have one vote and decisions will be taken by majority with the PC casting the decisive vote.

The main mission of the Steering Committee will be to monitor and advise on the proper coordination and management of the project throughout its life cycle. SC will ensure that the project is promoted as effectively as possible and that greatest impact of the project is achieved. SC will meet four times in conjunction with the project technical meetings, to propose adjustments in the action plan if necessary and to formally report task monitoring and technical progress to the PC and PTC.

### **Aims and objectives**

The specific aims and objectives of the project are as follow:

1. To examine the needs of adult education professionals (teachers, trainers, managers, administrative staff), in particular assess their baseline level of wellbeing and problems that they have that affect the level of their wellbeing;
2. To examine the needs of adult learners (above 18 years old, those who do not participate any longer in vocational or tertiary education; the ratio of men to woman should be close to 50%-50% and age groups should be equally represented), in particular assess their baseline level of wellbeing and problems that they have that affect the level of their wellbeing;
3. To spread the awareness that wellbeing is necessary foundation for effective teaching and learning;
4. To empower the adult education staff and learners to take responsibility for their wellbeing, in particular, to raise their understanding of attitudes and behaviours that sabotage wellbeing as well as those that contribute to wellbeing;
5. To provide the adult education staff and learners will tools that will help them to manage their stress level effectively, expand their creativity, enhance their communication skills, increase their self-awareness (of their values, needs, body, emotions, thoughts and patterns of behaviour), regulate their emotions effectively, motivate themselves more effectively;
6. To produce high quality resources (in-service seminar, guide book, internet platform) for adult education professionals;
7. Produce attractive curricula, workshops and online resources for adult learners;
8. To increase job satisfaction and work engagement of adult education professionals and prevent burn-out syndrome;
9. Trough providing tools for wellbeing, enhance learning and teaching ability in the target groups;
10. To contribute to increased participation in lifelong learning by people of all ages – we will examine how adult education is carried out in the partner countries in

relation to the specific socio-cultural backgrounds and what are the best practices;

11. To encourage the best use of results, innovative products, methods and processes;
12. To enhance the quality and European dimension of adult education;
13. To contribute to developing measurable indicators of wellbeing;
14. To encourage interdisciplinary dialog and collaboration in the field of promoting wellbeing through adult education.

The reporting activity will be strictly monitored it includes both content related aspects and the financial ones.

In accordance to the requests of EACEA an interim report has to be submitted at the middle of the project time, as the project is longer than 18 months and also a final report will be completed.

Project management includes managing people, time and budget.

In order to have this done a very careful planning and rigorous follow-up should include monthly time sheets and personnel cost for each of the involved persons in the project, a complete staff template including: name, category and period of assignment, a staff cost declaration form for all the personnel from one partner to be completed just at the beginning of the project.

A work plan has been produced with the duration of work of each work-package (time of start - deadlines) with deadlines for each deliverable from each work-package. A quality plan was made at the beginning of the project. It includes all means of project evaluation. Our aim is to have in our project excellent procedures for quality assurance and a clear understanding of each partner's contribution to the quality of the entire project. Quality is defined through the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, long term sustainability and impact of the project.

Quality assessment in this project addresses:

- The processes of the project (activities, meetings, communication).
- The ongoing project plans especially for dissemination, exploitation and sustainability.
- The output or products (materials, website, DVDs, platform, conferences).
- The management and the day to day operation of the project.
- the transnational element.

Quality assurance and continuous evaluation starts right at the beginning of the project. At the first meeting of the project it is established a logical schedule of quality assessment. The tools to be used are: Reflective Diary, Monitor Report, Self-evaluation sheet, Event Evaluation Form, Impact Evaluation Sheet

The quality plan addresses each work package, each meeting and the project as a whole. Internal project reports from partners are to be made every half a year. We will use an evaluation sheet at each meeting and each event. The information from those evaluation sheets will be included in the report from the partners. Quality assurance comprises regular online communication. The electronic platform will serve as the place for discussion, exchange of experiences. It will also help to prepare the meetings and the reports. The platform will be the way to communicate internally and externally for dissemination during the project and afterwards. Each partner should involve the participation of local representatives, this being a measure of success. For the project a website will be developed to show the project work and its main results. Two representatives of the project will participate in regular meetings in Brussels. Summative evaluation will be part of the final report.

Monitoring and evaluation will be an integral part of the project to ensure that objectives are met in the most effective and efficient way and they address the needs of

all project partners and target groups. Evaluation Board will be established and it will consist of leaders of all WPs. The scope of this work package is broad and will include quality assurance of research methods, seminars and workshops, training tools, communication within and between work packages, documentation, appropriate use of resources and internal monitoring and evaluation of each work package.

External evaluator who will be participating in project meetings and giving feedback will be important part of this WP.

It is worth mentioning that evaluation will not only examine whether or not outcomes are have been met, but also about how well and why they have been met, what went well and what could go better and why.

The dissemination phase is planned for the whole 24 months of project duration since we are convinced that enough time and resources are needed to achieve a sustainable project impact and that appropriate dissemination activities in all partner countries and even beyond is a precondition for the sustainable use of project results.

For the partnership the early identification of key stakeholder and multipliers for the project is considered to be of crucial importance. Therefore the dissemination work package will comprise the following activities:

- Development of the website as a very important tool of dissemination. Promimpresa will be in charge of the website creation. The website ,among other things, contain all the material concernig the project progresses and results.
- Development of a detailed dissemination strategy and dissemination plan for each partner country as well as on European level (including target group references, channels identified for dissemination and the strategic perspective of dissemination in each partner country to avoid unnecessary and time consuming non-strategic spreading of information which is considered to be a main challenge in strategic dissemination planning).
- Development of a stakeholder and multiplier analysis as a basis for dissemination and especially also exploitation and sustainable use of project outputs.
- Development of dissemination materials in accordance with the dissemination strategy (the most suitable dissemination materials will be selected and produced for highest possible efficiency).
- Implementation of dissemination activities in all partner countries and on European level according to the defined strategy (project website, press releases, inviting stakeholders for public discussion sessions around transnational project meetings, organisation of small workshops and information seminars in all partner countries (at least 1 seminar per country) etc.
- Production and spreading of 4 project newsletters (e-newsletters for the stakeholder community).
- On-going dissemination activity monitoring of the work package leader.
- A YouTube channel linked to the project's website will be created. It will contain "tutorial" videos that will help the channel's users to understand and use the project's outcomes.
- Preparation of a dissemination report to document all performed activities together with their potential impact.
- Final conference.

The cultural background of project team diversity is to keep in mind as involves personal characteristics and personal history of each individual, the organisational environment in which they work, the cultural environment in which they live, etc.

Language, terminology and non-verbal behaviour, stereotypes and prejudices are all challenges at intercultural encounters. In order to have an effective intercultural communication in the project team we should keep in mind that the communication should be effective, meaningful, maximize understanding.

To fulfil this goal of effective communication we propose a communication plan as it follows:

1. Project meetings: the most effective manner of communication as representatives of all the partners are present and they are developing a face to face communication. In each meeting minutes will be taken by the sparring partner of each work package. Those minutes will be uploaded on DropBox.
2. DropBox is a tool that partners use to disseminate among them the materials, minutes, pictures, information. The DropBox tool is available since march 2013 and is used as an internal platform for partners.
3. Communication through e-mails. This type of communication can be used by partners to ask question, to remind deadlines, to inform about the status of work, to inform about decisions etc. Every e-mail will be saved and kept save to inform and demonstrate the communication between partners, as recommended by EACEA.
4. Online meetings will be organised whenever considered necessary by the partners. This meetings will be organised by our Italian partner – Promimpresa using the WebEx tool. Minutes will be taken on every meeting and posted on DropBox.

### **Conclusions**

By the respecting and implementing all the above mentioned tasks the consortium is confident that it will be able to achieve all the expected results and to deliver qualitative materials which will improve the wellbeing of both adult educators and learners.

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