

# Self-directed Learning

# Learn.Empowerment

Self-directed Learning for Low-skilled Unemployed People



Guidelines for Integration of Self-directed Learning into Vocational Education and Training of Low-skilled Unemployed Persons



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# **Guidelines**

**for Integration of Self-directed  
Learning into Vocational Education  
and Training of Low-skilled  
Unemployed Persons**

## PROJECT PARTNERSHP

The project consortium comprises 14 partners from 11 countries. The multi-actor partnership includes, as well as the expert and development partners, labour market administration organisations and social partners.

- BEST Institut für berufsbezogene Weiterbildung und Personaltraining GmbH (AT)
- Urad Prace Znojmo (CZ)
- Büro für berufliche Bildungsplanung (DE)
- Volkshochschule Cham (DE)
- Hessisches Sozialministerium (DE)
- IRFA Sud (FR)
- Győr-Moson-Sopron Munkaügyi Központ (HU)
- Città della Scienza S.c.p.a.-ONLUS (IT)
- Vytautas Magnus University (LT)
- Fundatia Romano-Germana (RO)
- Folkuniversitetet Kristianstad (SE)
- Urad Prace Dunajska Streda (SK)
- University of Glasgow Department of Adult and Continuing Education (UK)
- Bexley College (UK)

Detailed partner profiles and contact information: [www.learn.empowerment.org](http://www.learn.empowerment.org)

# INTRODUCTION

Self-directed learning (SDL) enables and supports the development of personally and socially relevant self-management competences. It strengthens self-confidence and leads thus to the ability to act in an emancipated and secure way in the social and work environment.

Especially target groups who have no affinity to and no experience with learning – and these are the target groups the project is focusing upon – connect "learning" with failure, imposition and with no perspective, because they did not previously experience learning as useful and valuable for themselves. It is at this point where self-directed learning can start, at the individual person and his/her interests and ideas: it activates current competences, helps to develop perspectives and promotes the development of professional methodological, social and personal competences as tools for self-control.

Self-directed learning imposes on the learners responsibility for their own learning process. They are integrated into the design of their learning process and thereby experience the fact that learning has something to do with them personally. If learners are supported and accompanied in their self-direction by trainers, tutors and/or by fellow learners in a learning group, learning can become a valuable and sustainable experience.

In order to disseminate this concept the partner consortium of "Learn.Empowerment Self-directed Learning for Low-skilled Unemployed People" has published the following outcomes.

- The **Toolbox** describes self-directed learning as a didactic concept as jointly elaborated by the partners in this project. The Toolbox reflects the situation and understanding of the partners and their ideas of teaching and learning on which this concept is based. It describes the organisational aspects of SDL, the role of the trainers as tutors, provides links and is illustrated by examples of good practice.
- The **Guidelines** reflect the background of self-directed learning and comprise theoretical and conceptual aspects as well as the consideration of gender mainstreaming, diversity management and target group oriented aspects.
- Chapter 1 describes several types of models for self-directed learning, focusing on the process-oriented aspects of SDL, represented by a mixture of conceptual, empirical and experientially derived views.

- The transition to a flexible and individual design of the learning/training process demands openness and flexibility from all actors involved, including the learners, the advisors and the institution itself. At the same time it requires orientation, guidance and supporting elements in order to structure the individual and collective learning processes and to clarify the necessary responsibilities and commitments - Charter 2 describes the principles of CoL, the "Concept of Learning" via SDL. These principles are points of orientation for professional action. They form the core out of which the context-specific concepts of self-directed learning can be developed.
- The target groups benefiting directly from the outcomes of the project "Learn.Empowerment" are multifaceted. There is a broad range of potential users as key actors, training organisations as well as trainers, adult educators and teachers throughout Europe, who are empowered to deliver training themselves and to disseminate the idea and the concept of self-directed learning, its principles, tools and methods.

Chapter 3 focuses on the beneficiaries, who often suffer from individual barriers to (lifelong) learning. It broaches the issues of the target group-related aspects of self-directed learning and discusses the relevant attitudes of socially disadvantaged groups such as working-class people with limited schooling, single parents, women returners, migrants, elderly people, disabled people and residents of rural areas who, due to their situation, have difficulty gaining access to adult education programmes.

- Experiencing failure in the world of work in many cases results in loss of self-confidence, which can also lead to resignation to one's situation. Chapter 4 "Working with low skilled and unemployed", underlines specific potentials, methods and techniques within the concept of self-directed learning, which contribute to the empowerment of adult learners. SDL strengthens self-confidence and thus leads people to act in an emancipated way, to extend competences contributing to employability and to become re-integrated into the labour market.
- Research shows that gendered roles still largely shape the vocational development of both sexes and unless assumptions about gender roles are challenged they risk being perpetuated. It adds to the challenges of the tutoring process the tasks of providing learners with information, advice, guidance and active support, preserving the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to vocational training and promotion, employment and working conditions. Chapter 5 provides information on the general background of the European

strategy and labour market oriented realities and measures concerning gender mainstreaming.

- Many trainers, adult educators and teachers think that "fairness" means "treating everyone the same". Chapter 6 focuses on aspects of diversity management. Acknowledging the target groups' differences and recognising these differences as valuable enhances good tutoring and counselling practices by preventing discrimination and promoting inclusiveness.
- The glossary (Chapter 7) contains some 20 terms relating to the concept of self-directed learning, which the partners of the project have highlighted as particularly important for SDL.



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**Leonardo da Vinci**

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