



Scaling new heights in VET

Adapting the Rickter® Scale Process to improve and monitor the journey of marginalized groups towards employability

“Interesting what I have already achieved!”

'It's interesting to see how much I have already managed to achieve in a relatively short time' says Natasha Westholt. Mrs. Westholt is one of the German women returning to work under the aegis of the 'Scaling New Heights' Project who is being coached with the aid of the Rickter Scale® Process. It supports the coaching process by showing on a graphic scale where a participant stands and where he/she would like to go.

The Rickter Scale® Process involves using a small board and looks similar to an abacus. The board offers the possibility to evaluate one's own point of view on a scale from one to

ten as yet, because she is looking for a training opportunity. On the so called 'Lifeboard' her professional situation, living conditions, financial situation, health and relationships with others and their influences on her are all being explored. Besides this, participants can ask themselves whether they feel under strain due to stress, alcohol or drugs. Rounding off the 'Lifeboard' is the question: 'how happy are you at this time in your life?'

The next step in the coaching process is to work on the way forward, should the desired result not have been achieved yet. The participants themselves contemplate possibilities and steps, which could take them from a six to a nine, for example. In doing this they are at liberty to request help from the coach. Priority is always given to the client's wishes- if the client is satisfied, the coaching is on the right track. The principle of 'ownership' is one of the essential characteristics of working with the Rickter Scale® which differentiates the process from comparable methods of competence measurement. The clients themselves are responsible and it is they who decide whether they want to change things in their lives, what they specifically want to change and what would be the best way for them to achieve that.

ten. There is room for ten questions on the board which can then be discussed during the coaching process. Firstly, one needs to gauge how one feels about one's present situation and where one would like to be. Mrs. Westholt, for example, is not entirely satisfied with her professional situa-



Evaluation



Funded by



Personal responsibility and one's own initiative are paramount; the coaches only guide the conversation without criticizing or telling their clients what to do.

'It's helpful to see the big picture', explains Keith Stead of the Rickter Company. Natascha Westholt agrees. She would like to achieve

'better' results in some areas. But she is surprised that making only a few changes can really move things along. She has already experienced that she only has to make a few dreams and achieve her aims:

After only a few key changes she has obtained better results con-

cerning several aspects of her life, and in regard to one question she has already surpassed the goal she was aiming for.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

The Project

The objective of 'Scaling New Heights' is to be able to transfer work with the Rickter Scale® to different countries and different beneficiary target groups, to test its suitability and to adjust the questions to the target groups concerned. With this in mind, the organizations will trial the Rickter Scale® Process for two years, adjusting it to their own requirements. The entire project will be methodically monitored: an evaluation of the coaching process is intended to show whether or not the methodology can be successfully transferred.

The Partners

Vocational organisations from four countries are working together on the project: Germany, the UK, Greece and Italy. All partners work with different target groups: the Rickter Company originally developed the 'board' working with juvenile delinquents and now wants to add families in disadvantaged areas to its circle of users.

The Greek organization, Kendro Merimnas Oikoyennias kai PEDIU, from Athens, cares for people with long-term mental health issues. Anziani e Non Solo societa cooperativa, from Capri in Northern Italy, trains and assists female immigrants, who live in families as carers of the elderly. Coaching with the Rickter Scale® is intended to support the immigrants in their professional situation. Germany employs the methodology in the coaching of female job returnees.

The Training

A training course for the coaches took place in Newcastle, England before the employment of the Rickter Scale® in the partner organisations. During an initial one week training in December 2011 the so called 'practitioners', the coaches from the different countries, were trained in the use of the Rickter Scale® Process. After some initial coaching sessions with the intended target group, the 'practitioners' were able to discuss their experiences and learn about the next stage of the coaching process in a week long





follow-up seminar in February 2012, again held in the UK. A further step in the second training week was the adaptation of the questions. Every one of the four organizations works with different target groups. For that reason not all of the original set of questions were equally relevant for all the organisations. Other questions not already included on the 'Lifeboard' may be more relevant to the needs of the different target groups. Of the ten questions on the Rickter Board, every organisation chose five new ones which better reflected the specific needs of the target client group, as well as the organizations' aims and objectives.

Eight Years of Successfully Reintegrating Women into the Job market

The German partner is the Centre for Integration and Training (Zentrum für Integration und Bildung). ZIB was founded in 2004 in Solingen, with branches in Solingen, Wuppertal, Leverkusen and Remscheid. As well as the consultation and coaching of unemployed people, ZIB offers different types of German language courses for immigrants.

The emphasis however, lies in the reintegration of women into the job market. ZIB has trained and advised women in a variety of courses, in order to guide them on their way back to work. The aim here usually is a return to work, but ZIB also supports young mothers, who, due to their family responsibilities, are unable to complete a full-time training and are therefore interested in a part-time training.

Women returning to the job market often share the same anxieties: due to the time off work raising a family, they have big gaps in their working lives and therefore their professional knowledge is no longer up-to-date. Furthermore, they are no longer confident about their professional experiences and their personal strengths and abilities.

Thus the courses ZIB offers are in many cases characterized by a combination of general and subject-specific qualifications, as well as being accompanied by coaching. It is important that the women returning to the job market are aware of their qualifications and their professional possibilities and that they are able to prepare for these successfully.

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The Rickter Company

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Background

As part of the Programme for Lifelong Learning Leonardo da Vinci offers organisations the possibility to work together with their European partners, to exchange tried and tested procedures and to broaden the competence of their personnel. The programme increases the attraction of professional training for young people and thus altogether strengthens the competitiveness of the European job market by supporting people in acquiring new skills, knowledge and qualifications.

boost their competence and support clients on their own abilities and knowledge.

The exchange of these experiences, their eventual adaptation to the various circumstances and challenges of the countries and target groups, and the transfer of new understanding and consulting competence are the goal of the partnerships shared efforts.

The 'Scaling New Heights' project essentially comprises of the following points: the partners are given two years to try out the Rickter Scale® process in a variety of countries with differing target groups. At the same time, experience gathered by the organisations with the use of the Rickter Scale® is exchanged; in this manner the tool/device helps the members of the organisations

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