

Summary in English

The European third sector is a major economic sector with around 13 million full-time equivalent workers. The European economy and much of our social and civic support relies heavily on a healthy sector that can attract and retain high quality talent.

The Foundations 4 Sector 3 project (F4S3 or Foundations for the Third Sector), funded by the Erasmus+ programme, provides an entry-level induction training programme for new professionals entering the third sector. It is an introduction to the sector with an emphasis on personal development and core sector-specific skills. The skills gained by participants can be validated with digital Open Badges.

The training programme was piloted twice in all four partner countries by the local partner and in the local language in Finland and Germany, and in English in Ireland and Wales/Great Britain (materials available in Welsh as well). 105 participants completed the training. Their skills needs were collected before the course began, and feedback was sought afterwards. Views from trainers and project partners were also collected. Additionally, small groups of participants and two supervisors were interviewed more generally on induction and the impacts of the training.

Most important findings:

- 1) Transferring the course material and adapting it to national and local conditions can be done. Repeating it close to the original version and utilising it more creatively is recommended for many types of organisations: educational institutions, umbrella organisations and well-resourced networks along with third sector organisations. Some sections of the training need to be revised according to the national context, such as national legislation and available funding sources, but most elements of the material can be used as such or with moderate changes. It is advisable to look through the sections covering professional and personal skills, too, because they have different weight in different working cultures.
- 2) A joint induction course for participants from different third sector organisations was a success. The vast majority of participants reported growth of confidence in their skills. Online learning made it possible to join the course independent of where the participant was located, opening up the network of learners reached across the programme. Peer learning multiplied the views offered in the training material. The possibility to build connections and network with other new professionals was praised.
- 3) Skills validation in general was greeted with satisfaction. The Open Badges were welcomed by participants who appreciated a digital method to follow their learning and receive documents, and/or who were active in social media. A more traditional



certificate on paper has a demand, too. Especially those who were soon to apply for another job considered any method of skills validation useful.

4) The training model was considered quite long and heavy, and this needs to be addressed in future iterations. Organising a pruned version of the training (i.e., removing some sections) or offering a possibility to pick modules based on participants' interest and previous skills will help.

All materials can be downloaded from the project website, www.f4s3.eu.



Project information

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