

EVA Skills:

"Evaluating the soft skills of unemployed youth"

TOOLKIT USER GUIDE



Erasmus+

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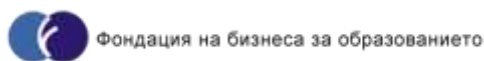
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1 TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	TABLE OF CONTENTS	3
1	INTRODUCTION	6
1.1	INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT EVASKILLS	6
1.2	THE TOOLKIT USER GUIDE	7
2	SOCIAL SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES	7
2.1	SOCIAL SKILLS AND EUROPEAN QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK (EQF).....	8
2.2	DESCRIPTORS	9
3	ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL SKILLS	12
3.1	GENERAL APPROACHES TO SOCIAL SKILLS ASSESSMENT	13
3.1.1	OBSERVATION AND CODING OF BEHAVIOR	13
3.1.2	OBSERVATION CHECKLISTS.....	13
3.1.3	SOCIOMETRIC ASSESSMENT	14
3.1.4	BEHAVIORAL RATING SCALES	15
3.2	PREPARATORY PHASE OF ASSESSMENT	16
3.2.1	CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES OF AN ASSESSMENT	16
3.2.2	WHO WILL BE ASSESSED?	16
3.2.3	WHAT WILL BE ASSESSED?	17
3.2.4	WHO WILL IMPLEMENT THE ASSESSMENT?	17
3.2.5	PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR TRAINERS	19
3.3	IMPLEMENTATION PHASE OF ASSESSMENT	23
3.3.1	COMMUNICATION	24
3.3.2	WORKING IN TEAMS	24
3.3.3	MANAGING CHANGE/PROBLEM SOLVING.....	25
3.3.4	PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR TRAINERS	25
3.4	GENERAL METHODS OF EVALUATION OF SOFT SKILLS.....	26
3.4.1	INTERVIEW	26
3.4.2	OBSERVATION ON-THE-JOB TASKS	27
3.4.3	ROLE PLAYING	27

3.4.4	CURRICULUM VITAE AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS	28
3.4.5	SURVEYS & QUESTIONNAIRES	29
3.4.6	ONLINE TESTS.....	30
3.4.7	THE ASSESSMENT APPROACHES.....	31
3.4.8	GOOD ADVICE AND COMMON MISTAKES	33
3.5	EVALUATION PHASE OF ASSESSMENT	34
3.5.1	PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR TRAINERS	35
3.5.2	BASIC CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION.....	35
3.5.3	TIMING OF EVALUATION	35
3.5.4	TOOLS FOR EVALUATION.....	36
3.5.5	GIVING CONTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK.....	38
3.5.6	GOOD ADVICE AND COMMON MISTAKES	39
4	USING THE TOOLBOX.....	40
4.1	BEHAVIOUR EVENT INTERVIEW – COMMUNICATION SKILLS	40
4.2	BEHAVIOUR EVENT INTERVIEW – MANAGING CHANGE/PROBLEM SOLVING	42
4.3	FOCUS GROUP – QUALITY OF COMMUNICATION IN A GROUP	44
5	CONCLUSION	46

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. EVAskills Developed descriptors of learning outcomes	9
Table 2. Main principles of assessment	11
Table 3. Advantages and Disadvantages of Observation & Coding of Behaviour	12
Table 4. Advantages and Disadvantages of Observation Checklist	13
Table 5. Advantages and Disadvantages of Sociometric Assessment	14
Table 6. Advantages and Disadvantages of Behavioural Rating Scales	14
Table 7. Preparatory stage of assessment - Summary for the trainer	21
Table 8. Memory and the use of various forms of teaching	22
Table 9. Example of Observation and coding of Behaviour	29
Table 10. Example of Sociometric Assessment with the use of Likert Scale	30

Table 11. Example of Behavioural rating scales	30
Table 12. Implementation Phase of Assessment-Summary for the Trainer	31
Table 13. Evaluation Phase of Assessment – Summary for the trainer	36



1 INTRODUCTION

This document is the User Guide for the "Evaluating Soft Skills Toolkit", which has been developed by EVA Skills Project.

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT EVASKILLS

Nowadays, it is increasingly difficult for young people with low or no formal qualifications to find a job. However, even without formal training or work experience, young individuals gather social and personal competencies. These competencies are of high importance, as they can be the key to enter the labour market.

Employers and those working with young people find it difficult to recognize and assess soft skills, these informal competencies. This is a major issue tackled by the project 'Evaluating the Soft Skills of Unemployed Youth' (EVA skills). EVA skills project provides a number of tools for competence assessment and enables VET professionals in successfully applying them to their work contexts. EVA skills builds on systems of competence assessment from countries where these are well-developed and transfers them to other countries.

Moreover, within the framework of implementation of the project, trainers and other vocational education and training professionals will be trained in the use of tools and methodologies for the evaluation of soft skills and thus their role will be enhanced, as they will be able to provide vocational training courses based on learning outcomes and the validation of previous non-formal and informal training.

The project objectives are the following:

- Systematization of existing approaches for the assessment of soft skills.
- Combination of different approaches into a holistic & transferable concept
- Formulation of requirements for a suitable assessment methodology.
- Transfer of innovative methodologies for the assessment of Soft skills.
- Improvement of the vocational and integration opportunities for unemployed young people.
- Improvement of the role of vocational education and training professionals, with a subsequent focus on the recognition of informal and non-formal learning.

- Raising awareness of key players in forming and implementing educational and training policies

The project addresses to Vocational education and training professionals , Unemployed youth and to Policy makers involved in vocational education and training .

EVA skills is a strategic partnership of six organisations from six European Countries Cyprus, Greece, Germany, Sweden, Bulgaria and Romania and is funded through the EU ERASMUS+ programme and implemented on behalf of the EU Commission and the National Agency in Cyprus.

1.2 THE TOOLKIT USER GUIDE

The following material provides methodological instruction on implementing competence assessment. The Toolkit User Guide introduces the Evaskills project, describes social skills and competences and explains EVA Skills developed descriptors of learning outcomes-competences, skills and knowledge at four levels following the European Qualifications Framework. It describes the general approaches to social skills assessment and explains in detail the different phases of assessment.

In general, the Toolkit User Guide is a manual that consists of practical guidelines for trainers, VET professionals and career advisors to be used on teenagers or young people that have no or low qualifications and/or are unemployed. It gives practical guidelines from the preparatory phase to the implementation phase and the evaluation phase, good advice and refers to common mistakes to be avoided by trainers and to practical examples of how to use the toolbox which has been developed by EVA Skills Project.

The following pages offer insight into the trainer's skills. This document will therefore provide tools in the form of Interviews, Observations of on the Job Tasks and Role-play. It focuses on three selected competences. These competences are the areas that interviewees participating in a survey which was administered in the context of this project rated as the most important, most in need of tools in soft skills assessment: Communication Skills, Working in teams and Handling change/problem solving.

2 SOCIAL SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

Social skills can be described as people's ability to act in such a way that both their own goals and the goals of other people will be achieved. For the individual to function in society, some degree of social competence is required. All people have some degree of social competences, but different people have social competences in different areas. A group in order to function requires different skills than the skills required between individuals.

A socially competent individual not only has attained skills, but also she/he is constantly trying to develop and improve her/his own skills. If an individual wants to improve his/her social skills, it is not the personality that needs to be changed, but the old habits and patterns. People learn social patterns during childhood that have been formed as a response to the situations they grew up. These patterns became a habit that governs the individual's life. Thus, if an individual wants to improve his/her social skills, she/he must learn to act in a different way.

2.1 SOCIAL SKILLS AND EUROPEAN QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK (EQF)

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) acts as a translation device to make national qualifications more readable across Europe, promoting workers' and learners' mobility between countries and facilitating their lifelong learning. The EQF aims to relate different countries' national qualifications systems to a common European reference framework. Individuals and employers will be able to use the EQF to better understand and compare the qualification levels of different countries and different education and training systems. Agreed upon by the European institutions in 2008, the EQF is being put in practice across Europe. It encourages European countries to relate their national qualifications systems to the EQF so that all new qualifications issued carry a reference to an appropriate EQF level. An EQF national coordination point has been designated for this purpose in each country.

The core of the EQF are the eight reference levels describing what a learner knows, understands and is able to do – 'learning outcomes'. The EQF applies to all types of education, training and qualifications, from school education to academic, professional and vocational. This approach shifts the focus from the traditional system which emphasises 'learning inputs', such as the length of a learning experience, or type of institution. It also encourages lifelong learning by promoting the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

A qualifications framework is an instrument for the development and classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for levels of learning achieved. All qualification frameworks, however, establish a basis for improving the quality, accessibility, linkages and public or labour market recognition of qualifications within a country and internationally.

2.2 DESCRIPTORS

Following the European Qualification Framework (EQF) which as described above is a common European reference system that aims at linking different countries' national qualifications systems and frameworks to foster transparency among them, the EVAskills project developed descriptors of learning outcomes – competences, skills and knowledge that can be applied in diverse ways in teaching and learning - at four levels, from basic (level 1) to intermediate (level 4) covering all types of education, training and qualifications (i.e. from school education to professional and vocational) as shown in *Table 1 EVAskills Developed descriptors of learning outcomes*.

Table 1: EVAskills Developed descriptors of learning outcomes

		Communication	Working in teams	Managing change /problem solving
Level 1	The learning outcomes relevant to Level 1 are	<p>Awareness of various types of verbal interaction (conversations, interviews, debates, etc.).</p> <p>Understanding the main features of written language (formal, informal, scientific, journalistic, colloquial, etc.).</p>	<p>Knowledge of available opportunities in order to identify those suited to one's own personal, professional and/or business activities.?</p> <p>Basic skills required to carry out simple tasks.</p>	<p>Basic skills required to carry out simple tasks.</p> <p>Can identify a problem.</p>
Level 2	The learning outcomes relevant to Level 2 are	<p>Awareness of the variability of language and communication forms over time and in different geographical, social and Communications environments.</p> <p>Ability to communicate, in written or oral form, and understand, or make others understand, various messages in a variety of situations and for different purposes. Communication includes the ability to listen to and understand various spoken messages in a variety of communicative situations and to speak concisely and clearly.</p>	<p>Ability to work co-operatively and flexibly as part of a team.</p> <p>Being able to identify one's personal strengths and weaknesses.</p>	<p>Basic cognitive and practical skills required to use relevant information in order to carry out tasks and to solve routine problems using simple rules and tools.</p> <p>Ability to act proactively and respond positively to changes.</p> <p>Ability to structure the Problem.</p>

Level 3	The learning outcomes relevant to Level 3 are	<p>Ability to read and understand different texts, adopting strategies appropriate to various reading purposes.</p> <p>Ability to write different types of texts for various purposes, monitor the writing process (from drafting to proof-reading).</p> <p>Ability to search, collect and process written information, data and concepts in order to use them in study and to organise knowledge in a systematic way.</p> <p>Ability to formulate one's arguments, in speaking or writing, in a convincing manner and take full account of other viewpoints, whether expressed in written or oral form.</p>	<p>Positive attitude to change and innovation.</p> <p>Knowledge processes and general concepts, in a field of work or study.</p> <p>Take responsibility for completion of tasks in work or study.</p> <p>Adapt own behaviour to circumstances when working in teams.</p>	<p>Ability of looking for Possible Solutions.</p> <p>Adapt own behaviour to circumstances in solving problems.</p> <p>A range of cognitive and practical skills required to accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information.</p> <p>To look at each potential solution and carefully analyse it.</p> <p>Ability of making decisions.</p>
Level 4	The learning outcomes relevant to Level 4 are	<p>Disposition to approach the opinions and arguments of others with an open mind and engage in constructive and critical dialogue.</p> <p>Confidence when speaking in public.</p> <p>Willingness to strive for aesthetic quality in expression beyond the technical correctness of a word/phrase.</p> <p>Development of a positive attitude to intercultural communication.</p>	<p>Exercise self-management within the guidelines of work or study contexts that are usually predictable, but are subject to change.</p> <p>Supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities.</p>	<p>A range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study.</p> <p>Ability to do the Implementation.</p> <p>Ability to checking that the process was successful. This can be achieved by monitoring and gaining feedback from people affected by any changes that occurred.</p>

3 ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL SKILLS

There is no widely held consensus about how to measure and assess social skills. The assessment of social skills may include a variety of methods, ranging from self ratings or self reports of behaviour, values, and motivations; direct behavioural observations (in natural situations or under experimental conditions); behavioural rating scales (to be completed by parents, teacher, employer, subordinates, or self); use of vignettes; interviewing; make observation on the job tasks and role play; hypothetical scenarios; interpretation of video clips; social network analysis and sociometric approaches; as well as computer simulations.

Ideally the measurement of social competencies should involve different assessment methods combining self- reports, rating scales completed by others, as well as observational data to obtain reliable and valid measures. Instead of direct assessments, multiple measures could be used as indicators of latent constructs, which would also facilitate comparative approaches of assessment and research.

The complexity in the conceptualisation of social competence set out above raises a number of difficulties for assessment. Table 2 shows the main principles of assessment.

Table 2. Main principles of assessment

Validity	The extent to which the interpretation and use of an assessment outcome can be supported by evidence. An assessment is valid if the assessment methods and materials reflect the elements, performance criteria and critical aspects of evidence, and if the assessment outcome is supported by the evidence gathered.
Reliability	The degree of consistency and accuracy of the assessment outcomes; that is, the extent to which the assessment provides similar outcomes for students with equal competence at different times or places, regardless of the assessor conducting the assessment.
Fairness	Assessment does not advantage or disadvantage particular students or groups of students. This may mean that assessment methods are adjusted for particular students (such as people with disabilities or cultural differences) to ensure that the methods do not disadvantage them because of their situation.

This manual will use tools in the form of Interviews, Observations on the Job Tasks and Role-play. The manual focuses as previously mentioned on the three selected competences Communication, Working in teams and Managing change/problem solving.

3.1 GENERAL APPROACHES TO SOCIAL SKILLS ASSESSMENT

3.1.1 OBSERVATION AND CODING OF BEHAVIOR

Social interactions of the person of interest are defined in terms of a series of observational codes. The occurrence of these coded behaviour is then observed and recorded to yield data on the frequency and/or duration of their occurrence. There are some advantages and disadvantages of this method as presented in table 3 below.

Table 3. Advantages and Disadvantages of Observation and coding of Behaviour

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) when used in natural contexts it reflects the behaviours a person would typically exhibit, (b) it can be reliable if efforts are made to train the observers and to carry out adequate inter-observer reliability checks, (c) it can be used repeatedly in natural environments to evaluate change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) general measures of the frequency or duration of social interaction do not have social validity or long-term predictive validity so specific behaviours to be observed within interactions should be defined and coded separately, adding to practical complexity, (b) the quality of behaviours is difficult to distinguish and therefore rarely coded, (c) normative cut-off levels with regard to performance of social skills have not been determined for identifying individuals who need training, (d) the method is time-consuming and difficult, (e) opportunities for the use of social skills of interest cannot be guaranteed during scheduled observation sessions

3.1.2 OBSERVATION CHECKLISTS

Behaviours of interest which could occur in a specific kind of interaction are listed. After watching an interaction, which could be in a role-playing situation, naturally occurring situation, or a contrived situation within the natural milieu, the rater indicates how well each behaviour was performed. Role-play is quick and easy to do, but may not accurately

reflect behaviours that occur in natural situations. Observation in natural situations is optimal but behaviours might not occur or might be inhibited by the observer’s presence. Contrived situations programmed to occur without the advance knowledge of the target person can be a good compromise. The advantages and disadvantages of observation checklist are shown in table 4.

Table 4. Advantages and Disadvantages of Observation Checklist

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>(a) the approach can be easy to use - little time is required to train individuals to use checklists reliably or to record all behaviours in an interaction,</p> <p>(b) it can allow the recording of overt verbal and non-verbal behaviours, the circumstances surrounding the interaction, and the consequences of the behaviour,</p> <p>(c) sequences and timing of behaviours can be recorded, enabling pinpointing of specific behaviours to be taught,</p> <p>(d) it is more possible to specify and record quality levels within responses,</p> <p>(e) it can be non-reactive and used repeatedly</p>	<p>(a) normative cut-off points have not been identified for identifying social skill training needs,</p> <p>(b) behaviours not represented on the checklist are not recorded</p>

3.1.3 SOCIOMETRIC ASSESSMENT

This refers to the practice of determining how well-liked or socially accepted individuals are. A measure might be a devise comprising a series of items representing a range of social relationship attributes each to be assessed via a Likert-type or visual analogue scale. In a work setting, for example, the workforce in a particular area might be asked to rate colleagues. The ratings are averaged to obtain a measure of social acceptance.

The visual analogue scale (VAS) is a psychometric response scale which can be used in questionnaires. It is a measurement instrument for subjective characteristics or attitudes that cannot be directly measured. When responding to a VAS item, respondents

specify their level of agreement to a statement by indicating a position along a continuous line between two end-points.

A **Likert scale** is a psychometric scale commonly involved in research that employs questionnaires. The format of a typical five-level Likert item, for example, could be:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

The advantages and disadvantages of sociometric assessment are presented in table 6 below.

Table 5. Advantages and Disadvantages of Sociometric Assessment

Advantages	Disadvantages
(a) the measure addresses the ultimate outcome precisely, that is, the feelings of the specific peer group in a particular setting about an individual's social competence (a form of social validity), (b) the approach has been shown to have good predictive validity and to be sensitive to changes in social behaviour, (c) it has acceptable test-retest reliability, (d) it has been found to demonstrate concurrent validity with behavioural measures, (e) normative data can be obtained, (f) administration is quick and easy	(a) may be insensitive to change in situations where friendships, likes and dislikes have become more stable, (b) results provide no diagnostic information about which social skills to teach, (c) measures cannot be used too often because they are reactive, (d) arguably, any use of 'negative nomination' (i.e., to identify individuals who are socially less acceptable or liked) might encourage the rejection of people with disabilities or other differences

3.1.4 BEHAVIORAL RATING SCALES

The Behavioral Rating Scales list several behaviours or descriptive items and the respondent (person themselves or significant other) indicates whether the skill is present in the person's repertoire or how well the behaviour is 'emitted'. The advantages and disadvantages of behavioural rating scales are presented in table 6.

Table 6. Advantages and Disadvantages of Behavioural Rating Scales

Advantages	Disadvantages
(a) Quick and easy,	(a) Responses to items tend to be global

(b) May indicate deficits from which targets can be chosen for intervention,	indicators of a person's abilities; correlations with behavioural observations are not necessarily high (i.e., may be an inaccurate representation of actual behaviour in a specific setting); performance deficits as opposed to skill deficits may be obscured.
(c) Normative data can be collected and criterion cut-off points identified	

3.2 PREPARATORY PHASE OF ASSESSMENT

The following text is focused on the preparatory phase of assessment - on the planning and design stage of assessment.

3.2.1 CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES OF AN ASSESSMENT

The proposal aims towards the development of an assessment system for teachers/trainers, VET professionals, career advisors working with unemployed people and with the aim to evaluate and accredit non-formal and informal education and training (knowledge, skills and competencies they have acquired through their experience).

3.2.2 WHO WILL BE ASSESSED?

The target group of the assessment are primarily young unemployed people who belong to vulnerable groups in the labour market (low-qualified, long-term unemployed, people with low education background, single mothers, migrants, etc.). The tools can also be used for participants who hold precarious jobs in the labour market, jobs which can be characterized by volatility, lower educational demands from workers, and dependent on external conditions, without the possibility of career growth and education progression, without significant financial remuneration.

Assessment tools are designed to be used either individually (interview) or in group work (observational check list, etc.). The participants will be tested on their knowledge, skills and competencies which they have acquired informally through their work and through other activities.

Identifying and contacting prospective participants can be achieved through networking between appropriate institutions operating in the labour market. These networks may consist of organizations such as the Public Employment Service, other adult educators, guidance centres and NGOs.

The assessment of social skills is mainly an opportunity to achieve a better position in the labour market but also to obtain and maintain a job. Participants assess their own skills and competencies and recognize what is important and what they need to improve.

Assessment can be also the opportunity for further individual work plan with participants and may form part of a comprehensive counselling programme. So it will be possible to increase the motivation of the participant and to prepare a systematic plan for development.

3.2.3 WHAT WILL BE ASSESSED?

This manual provides tools for assessment and aims to help participants to identify and improve in the following social skills:

- Communication
- Working in teams
- Managing change/problem solving

3.2.4 WHO WILL IMPLEMENT THE ASSESSMENT?

Every professional trainer is an expert in a specific area. Besides the individual approach, it is necessary to pay attention to some of the trainer competencies that need to be part of the common structure and system. In this context we need to emphasize certain issues which can be further explored. The trainer is responsible for the preparation, organization, management, evaluation and results of the assessment meetings.

The trainer must be able to build an assessment on the basis of the didactic principles and rules as follows:

- The formulation of realistic objectives.
- Determining the appropriate form / tool of assessment.
- The ability to give and receive feedback.

- Visualisation of the whole process and being able to use educational methods and teaching aids.
- Skills to monitor and evaluate the achievement of the goals of assessment.

The assessment can be greatly affected by the personal qualities of the trainer. Some characteristics are hereditary predisposition, others can be learnt and reinforced from experience. Generally the trainer must be a mature individual with a balanced personality. She/he should act in a friendly manner, treat participants with respect and with collaborative spirit. It is important to establish clear rules, objectivity and decisiveness. The right trainer supports, encourages, appreciates and further explains ambiguities. He/she needs to have a sense of humour and a creative approach to the assessment process.

For the preparation and implementation of the assessment is important to have at least basic knowledge of the psychology of learning as outlined below:

- Knowledge of the learning curve.
- Memory and memory processes (forgetting, repetition).
- Motivation.
- Attention and perception.
- Intelligence.

It is necessary to systematically foster the development of training skills - in the areas of soft skills as well as in the area of specialization.

Knowledge of ICT

Using information and communication technologies can be an essential part of the training and evaluation process. However, it is necessary to use all these tools effectively.

Time and financial framework

The total duration of the assessment depends on the methods used. Following ?methods has recommended duration from 3 to 5 hours.

Another influencing factor is the individual or group and its level of cooperation in achieving its goals. For the assessment it is always necessary for all parties involved to be familiar with the schedule of meetings.

Financial expenses depend on many factors. Among the most basic issues linked to the evaluator are the following:

- Financial reward - the trainer.
- Providing space for the implementation of the assessment.
- Information campaign.
- Print materials and other administrative costs.

3.2.5 PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR TRAINERS

The purpose of this material is to help trainers to build the activity of the assessment from the beginning to the end. For this reason the trainer has to focus on the methodological issues involved in this process.

3.2.5.1 WHO ARE THE PARTICIPANTS AND WHAT ARE THEIR GOALS?

The Trainer needs to know the individual or the structure of the groups of participants before the assessment process, to know their specific needs, motivation and wants. The Trainer can use different tools in order to get to know the participants before the assessment – Participants in the assessment can be asked to send their CV and motivation letter before the assessment. Tools that can be also used include the interview mapping motivation and experience, communication with the institute where participants work for, volunteer for or attend other training.

3.2.5.2 CHOICE OF THE APPROPRIATE TOOL

The practical transfer of the context of the assessment into the everyday life of participants to help them gain better prospects of employment is the most important consideration. The Trainer needs to choose the best tool for assessment according to the specific needs of the group – to identify the social skills and improve them.

The criteria to be used for the selection of the most effective method to assess soft skills differ and depend: on time and financial resources the skills to be assessed, the requirements of the job position, the objectives of the study, and include considerations of efficiency, objectivity and reliability.

The goal of the assessment is to help identify the social skills of participants and to help them acquire practical experience so as to be better prepared for job interviews with potential employers, to identify and discuss approaches of solving specific (hypothetical)

problems related to communication and to identify and assess the level of team working competency and to explore ways of improving their team working skills.

For example if the trainer is aware that a participant is preparing for a real job interview and she/he is not self-confident in communication skills, the EVA-skills Toolbox offers a variety of tools to assess communication skills in a number of methods i.e. Behaviour event interview – communication skills etc.

The Trainer needs to be confident with the chosen tool for assessment, and needs to have perfect knowledge of it and be able and free to apply his/her own experience, skills and knowledge by using and adapting a tool according to a specific situation.

For choosing a suitable tool, the trainer should answer the following questions:

- What exactly is the objective of the assessment?
- What in my prior knowledge will assist me in the assessment?
- What do I want to achieve?
- What should I do first?

Self-assessment is also a valuable tool when working with learning in one form or another. The concept is built on the assumption that every individual has the ability, or can acquire the ability, to assess their skills in different areas, will it be work, education, or like in this case social competence.

This is a way for individuals to assess their abilities against some fixed scale, with questions or statements. The individual must be introduced to this concept and needs to be able to have an honest approach while answering.

3.2.5.3 VARIABLES TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT

The Trainer needs to have prepared all the materials and the equipment according to the chosen tool and the number of the participants. All the materials should be authentic.

- A **place** for carrying out an interview with the participant, a meeting room, a place for group work, a place for discussion, a place for group work and for presentations

When choosing the place for assessment, the trainer should take into account local availability and associated costs that will be incurred. Finally, it is necessary to ensure barrier-free spaces for handicapped persons. The location itself must always be dignified. The participants must be well informed that spaces are intended for assessment and these spaces shall be clearly marked. The arrangement of space depends on the methods/tools used to work with participants, ie . space " without barriers" with chairs in a circular formation" barrier with tables " in a circle , desks in rows , etc. The arrangement of the assessment space should also respect the specific disabilities and dynamics of the group with which it is working.

- **Equipment** for presentation (flipchart / notebook with SW for presentation (MS Power Point), data projector).
- A copy of the test and forms for each participant.
- Case-studies related to communication, etc.

3.2.5.4 TIMING

The Schedule has to be clear to all participants. The schedule also depends on the number of the participants and their specific needs. Every tool needs to have a recommended duration including the phase of preparation of cases/model situations, phase of discussion/group work/presentation/ and phase of assessment and feedback. This schedule has to be defined at the beginning and to be adhered to and controlled by the trainer.

The Trainer should be thought provoking, raising awareness for the relevance of the topic. It is necessary to plan enough time for the period of reflection at the end of every method.

3.2.6 GOOD ADVICE AND COMMON MISTAKES

3.2.6.1 PARTICIPANTS

Sometimes the trainer can underestimate the characteristics of an individual participant or the structure of the group of participants and their specific needs, low motivation, various kinds of disadvantages/ limitations in participation etc. (mental, health, psychic disabilities, migrants may need an interpreter, family members and parents with small children can be another group of participants with special needs for someone to take care of their children, being in touch with them etc.

The Trainer has to be familiar with the specific needs of participants before starting the assessment. The Trainer can prepare a questionnaire designed to identify the specific requirements of the participants and adjust the implementation of assessment as much as possible according to their requirements, i.e. choosing the right location for disabled people, seating arrangements, ensuring child care during the activity, etc.

3.2.6.2 TRAINER BIAS

Inherent in conducting observational tools is the risk of trainer bias influencing assessments results. The main trainer biases to be wary of are expectancy effects. When the trainer has an expectation as to what they will observe, they are more likely to report that they saw what they expected. One of the best ways to deal with observer biases is to acknowledge their existence and actively combat their effects.

3.2.6.3 MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

The Trainer should prepare adequate material and equipment according to the chosen tool and needs to be sure that she/ he has adequate equipment/materials according to the number of participants. All the materials need to be clear and understandable to all participants.

The use of the equipment should be easy to control. If the trainer prepares a presentation or any work on the PC or needs to use other audio-visual technology, it is necessary to verify the functionality of the device before starting the assessment. Good knowledge of the use of PC and other audiovisual equipment is required.

3.2.6.4 PLACE FOR ASSESSMENT

The Trainer should be comfortable with the place of the assessment. In the preparatory phase, the Trainer should visit the room for the assessment before the assessment and should try to visualize all the process from the beginning to the end.

Table 7. Preparatory stage of assessment - Summary for the trainer

At the preparatory phase of assessment the Trainer should:

- Know the structure of the group of the participants.
- Understand/ able to respond to all the specific needs and requirements of the participants.
- Choose the appropriate tools.
- Choose the appropriate place and visit it before the assessment.
- Prepare all the materials and equipment. Control the function of ICT components.
- Make a clear and realistic schedule including breaks. Place the schedule on a visible place throughout the process.
- Mark the place for refreshments and toilets.
- Provide enough refreshments according to the number of participants and the duration of the assessment.

3.3 IMPLEMENTATION PHASE OF ASSESSMENT

Schumaker & Hazel (1984) conclude that none of the measurement types is ideal. The use of a combination of measurement approaches is, therefore, recommended. For example, one type of instrument might be used as a global screening device to identify social status and another to pinpoint particular performance problems requiring intervention. Preferably, assessments should be based on relevant situations in the natural environment (i.e., in this case, settings in the workplace where the person of interest needs to behave in a socially acceptable or sufficiently positive way).

Assessment has to be strategic, appropriately targeted, beneficial, and set goals easily controllable. In organising himself the trainer has to have in mind practical applicability, focusing on the essentials and appropriateness of training. Successful implementation of the assessment has three elements:

- A clear intention / goal
- Logical arrangement
- Clarity

Studies show that a person remembers only the minimum information by simply reading the information. Most information is transferred through discussions on the topic, personal experience or passing information to another person. Table 8 shows the percentage of information which is memorized by the use of various forms of teaching.

Table 8. Memory and the use of various forms of teaching

Reading	10%
Hearing	20%
Sight	30%
Sight And Hearing	50%
Discussion With Others	70%
Personal Experience	80%
Passing Information/Teaching To Another	95%

Bearing on mind that a trainer assesses social skills such as communication, working in teams and managing change/problem solving we can define learning objectives as follows:

3.3.1 COMMUNICATION

The goal of assessment is to identify and evaluate good (and bad) communication skills, quality of communication in a particular group (study group, working team) and help to identify ways for improvement of their communication skills so as to be better prepared for job interviews with potential employers.

3.3.2 WORKING IN TEAMS

The goal is to identify and evaluate the quality of communication in a particular group (study group, working team) and help to identify ways for improvement of their

communication skills and assess the level of team working competency during observation of a common job task or role-plays and provide structured feedback.

3.3.3 MANAGING CHANGE/PROBLEM SOLVING

The goal of assessment is to identify and discuss approaches of solving specific (hypothetical) problems related to communication and managing change during work process.

3.3.4 PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR TRAINERS

The Trainer is the organizer of the assessment and he/she acts as a communicator mediator, observer, coach, evaluator and sometimes psychologist too.

A Trainer sometimes talks a lot when he/she presents, explains, demonstrates , gives instructions, asks questions or leads a discussion group. Each communication has to be:

- Structured
- Understandable
- Credible

The trainer is always responsible for the time structure of the meeting. Participants always have to be informed from the beginning about the schedule. Then it is advisable to place the schedule in a visible place. The Trainer needs to have a clear beginning and end and follow the time schedule – at least in the short run.

The assessment process is built on the interactions between the trainer and participant. This creates numerous social interactions and the trainer is mainly involved in the creation of a good atmosphere. The Trainer also needs to be ready to encourage all the participants to express their views on different issues. She/he has to provide equal opportunity to all participants in the group work and be prepared that in a group usually there will be some dominant persons that will impose their own ideas on the other participants in the group.

During the assessment process it is important to strike a balance between assertiveness and empathy i.e. encourage such conduct that a person behaves in a way that he/she

can pursue his/her interests with sufficient confidence, yet with respect for the wishes of others - without any apparent aggression. This involves the ability to empathize with the feelings of the other person, read nonverbal communication, understand what the others seek and what they want to avoid.

3.4 GENERAL METHODS OF EVALUATION OF SOFT SKILLS

It is necessary to help the participant to identify his/her own level of soft skills. The Trainer can choose different tools to identify the social skills of participants.

In this manual we focus on the three selected social competences - communication, working in teams and managing change/problem solving. The general methods of Evaluation of soft skills are in brief interviews, observation on the job tasks, role playing, portfolio preparation, surveys and questionnaires and on line tests.

3.4.1 INTERVIEW

A structured interview with the candidate is considered as a form of recognition of non-formal and informal learning. The interview can be conducted in the form of a job interview, which will enable the assessor to evaluate the skills and competences that the candidate has acquired and his/her attitude towards different situations. Interviews often confirm the presence of evidence of experiential learning on the part of the candidate when conducted by an accredited assessor with experience in the particular field of interest. An interview is considered to be valuable as it allows for further exploration of different issues.

Individual interview (verbal expression) can complement the questionnaire as it allows a more detailed exploration of the areas of evaluation. At the same time the coach gives more emphasis on responsibilities and requirements in relation to individual work with course participants, and that is why this part is very important for overall evaluation.

Behavioural event interviewing is interviewing based on discovering how the interviewee will act in specific situations (mostly employment situations- and/or life-

related situations). The reasoning behind this approach is that how you behaved in the past will predict how you will behave in the future i.e. past performance predicts future performance.

Discussion Forum is a very useful tool for the exchange of views, sharing experiences and for benchmarking. The prerequisite for the functioning of the discussion forum is the existence of dynamic and communicating group and of a creative coach/ facilitator who will be moderating the discussion. The main points of the discussion are written on a board and can constitute the content of the final summary of the action.

3.4.2 OBSERVATION ON-THE-JOB TASKS

Direct observation and assessment of the competences of individuals while on-the-job is another form of evaluation. This, however, presupposes that the specific candidate is already employed and can therefore participate in this type of assessment. If the candidate is unemployed a work environment needs to be developed to resemble a real-life situation where the candidate can perform his/her tasks to an audience where the assessor will be able to evaluate the competences of the candidate. This form of assessment and evaluation is quite difficult in that the assessor needs to visit the candidate at his/her job and in the event that the candidate is unemployed would create further difficulty in that the work environment would need to be developed, creating a greater need for resources and thus making this form of evaluation more expensive to carry out. However, the observation of on-the-job tasks does allow for the careful observation and evaluation of the candidate's skills and competences and more practical experience in a particular field as he/she would need to show that he/she can efficiently and effectively perform the tasks at hand in a real life environment.

Observation and self-observation is in fact a part of all the previously mentioned assessment tools. However, this tool aims to evaluate the behaviour of the participants in relation to others in the implementation, i.e. from initial mistrust and unwillingness to expressing some degree of confidence in an environment of social groups.

3.4.3 ROLE PLAYING

Role-play is a simulation in which each participant is given a role to play. The individuals that are participating are given some information that is related to the description of the

role, concerns, responsibilities, emotions and other such information. The participant is then given a general description of the situation and the problem. Once the participants have read and understood their role they begin to act out their roles by interacting with the other participants.

In general, role play helps in the following:

- Developing interpersonal skills and communication skills
- Conflict resolution
- Group decision making
- Developing insight into one's own behaviour and its impact on others

Role play as a method of assessment of one's soft skills and/or social competences is not used to its full potential and when it is used it is often preferred by the participants as it is thought of as a fun way of learning and training or assessing one's soft skills. It is a valuable evaluation and assessment tool that delivers immense amount of imprinted learning. While it is evolving as a very effective, interactive tool, many feel unprepared and uncomfortable about participating or using role-play.

3.4.4 CURRICULUM VITAE AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Each candidate could submit his/her Curriculum Vitae, Letter of application, degrees/diplomas/certificates, letters of reference etc. These documents will be a base for the evaluation through an interview with the candidate, which would allow the assessor to assess the validity of the contents of these documents. This is a more extensive form of evaluation as it includes a number of different documents. It also allows the assessor to draw on prior experiential learning through conducting an interview.

This kind of evaluation shows sophistication in the performance of candidates and illustrates longitudinal trends, while they also highlights the strengths of the particular candidate and can identify weaknesses for remediation. This kind of assessment of multiple components of a particular field is more likely to reflect the ability of the candidate that can be tested.

The potential disadvantages include the following:

- it is time consuming and challenging to evaluate
- content may vary widely among candidates
- time intensive to convert into meaningful data
- costly in terms of evaluator's time and effort
- management of the collection and evaluation process, including the establishment of reliable and valid grading criteria, is likely to be challenging
- inter-rater reliability must be addressed

3.4.5 SURVEYS & QUESTIONNAIRES

Surveys and questionnaires can be administered to all target groups and with a number of different means as mentioned earlier (telephone, email, direct mail, interviews).

The potential advantages of administering surveys and questionnaires include:

- easy to administer
- can cover a variety of topics in a short amount of time
- help to establish relationships with stakeholders and target groups
- easier to communicate the results to stakeholders and target groups
- can be used to gather information from individuals who would be difficult to include in other assessment methods
- demonstrate concern about gathering feedback/information

The potential disadvantages include the following:

- information is considered to be indirect data
- good surveys and questionnaires are difficult to develop
- voluntary participation of candidates may result in biased results
- forced-response choices may not allow individuals to respond as they would prefer
- low response rate

In order to avoid potential setbacks and downfalls surveys and questionnaires should be used as a supplement to direct methods of assessment. In addition, they should include open-ended questions with forced-choice response so as to obtain the most objective and reliable information.

- Behavioural rating scale - one of the methods is to individually record assessment of themselves on a scale of 1-10 (maximum – minimum).

- Sociometric assessment - Likert scale (the format of a typical five-level Likert item - strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree).
- Completed by participant only or by participant and by trusted person (family member, friend, employer, trainer, etc.)

The Trainer prepares the questionnaire in advance and appropriately focuses on all areas that can be further streamlined during the evaluation process. It is important to bear in mind that the questionnaire is a part of the assessment and it is a very important tool through which a participant may still prove or disprove the belief that he/she gains in the assessment. The questionnaire must be organized in such a way so as to be clear, easily understood and easy to be filled. The items of the questionnaire need to be adapted on required social skills.

3.4.6 ONLINE TESTS

The conduct of an online test would primarily evaluate a candidate's knowledge in a particular field. The online test would be composed of a series of questions that the candidate would answer in a predetermined amount of time. Thus, the individual would be displaying his/her particular knowledge in a field and not his/her practical experience.

Standardized tests are considered convenient. These can be adopted and implemented quickly and reduce or eliminate time demands in instrument development and grading. In addition, they can be scored objectively, provide for external validity and make longitudinal comparisons. However, such tests are known to measure superficial knowledge or learning and are unlikely to match the specific goals and objectives set. In general, they are considered to be more summative than formative.

To summarise, in this section there was a brief overview of general methods of Evaluation of soft skills such as interviews, observation on the job tasks, role playing, portfolio preparation, surveys and questionnaires and on line tests. The Trainer can choose different methods to identify the social skills of participants. Ideally the measurement of social competencies should involve different assessment methods In the next section

some of these methods are placed in the context of the assessment stage with reference to practical examples.

3.4.7 THE ASSESSMENT APPROACHES

3.4.7.1 OBSERVATION AND CODING OF BEHAVIOR

Social interactions of the person of interest are defined in terms of a series of observational codes. The occurrence of these coded behaviours is then observed and recorded to yield data on the frequency and/or duration of their occurrence.

Coding of behaviour concerns the systematic assignment of codes to the overt behaviour of trainer and participant. For behaviour coding as a proper diagnostic tool, it is important that all relevant behaviours are included in the coding schemes. It may not always be possible to determine in advance what those relevant behaviours are.

Table 9 .Example of Observation and coding of Behaviour

The Trainer in charge of the assessment defines the key competencies that must be selected for achieving goals according to EQF Level 3 Communication:

Trainer question codes

- L** Low ability
- I** Intermediate
- H** High ability

Participant behavior codes

- 1** Formulate arguments
- 2** Read and understand different texts
- 3** Ability to write different types of text
- 4** Search and collect written information

3.4.7.2 OBSERVATIONAL CHECKLISTS

In Observational Checklists behaviours of interest which could occur in a specific kind of interaction are listed. After watching an interaction, which could be in a role-playing situation, naturally occurring situation, or a contrived situation within the natural milieu, the rater indicates how well each behaviour was performed. Role-play is quick and easy to do, but may not accurately reflect behaviours that occur in natural situations. Observation in natural situations is optimal but behaviours might not occur or might be inhibited by the observer's presence. Contrived situations programmed to occur without the advance knowledge of the target person can be a good compromise.

3.4.7.3 SOCIOMETRIC ASSESSMENT

Sociometric Assessment refers to the practice of determining how well-liked or socially accepted individuals are. A measure might be devised comprising a series of items representing a range of social relationship attributes each to be assessed via a Likert-type or visual analogue scale. In a work setting, for example, the workforce in a particular area might be asked to rate colleagues. The ratings are averaged to obtain a measure of social acceptance.

The visual analogue scale (VAS) is a psychometric response scale which can be used in questionnaires. It is a measurement instrument for subjective characteristics or attitudes that cannot be directly measured. When responding to a VAS item, respondents specify their level of agreement to a statement by indicating a position along a continuous line between two end-points.

A Likert scale is a psychometric scale commonly involved in research that employs questionnaires. The format of a typical five-level Likert item, for example, could be:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

Table 10 . Example of Sociometric Assessment with the use of Likert Scale

Example:

The Trainer in relation to the assessment defines the key competencies that must be selected for achieving specific goals according to EQF Level 3 Work in team and use the Likert scale to define the level of the participant's skills:

- Positive attitude to change and innovation. 3
- Knowledge processes and general concepts, in a field of work or study. 2
- Take responsibility for completion of tasks in work or study 4
- Adapt own behaviour to circumstances when working in teams 4

3.4.7.4 BEHAVIORAL RATING SCALES

The Behavioural Rating Scales list several behaviours or descriptive items and the respondent (the individual participant or a significant other) indicates whether the skill is present in the person's repertoire or how well the behaviour is 'emitted'.

Table 11 . Example of Behavioural rating scales

Example:

The Trainer in charge of the assessment defines the key competencies that must be selected for achieving specific goals according to EQF Level 4 Handling problems. Then rate them on a scale from 1 to 10 (where 10 is the best/perfect):

- A range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study
- Ability to do the Implementation.
- Ability to checking that the process was successful.

3.4.8 GOOD ADVICE AND COMMON MISTAKES

Participants should receive adequate written information about the activity before assessment. At the same time participants would have the opportunity to ask for any clarification or further questions. Written material also carries information about the equipment that they have to bring with them (writing materials, paper, pattern CV, etc.).

At the beginning of each assessment it is always necessary to clearly define to the rules which should be transparent and intelligible not only to the trainers, but also to the participants.

The Participants are encouraged to get to know each other and may be invited to form a team to use the chosen tool. Depending on the choice of tool it is recommended to use some of the warm-up activities, ice-breakers at the beginning. This part can be also very important to clarify expectations and wishes at the beginning of the assessment.

Positive emotions help participants to remember new items better. The Trainer should remember that these tools are aimed at developing communicative skills and solving problems/ managing change, thus it is necessary to encourage participants in a positive way.

The Trainer has to clearly refer to the closing activity at the beginning of the assessment. Participants sometimes can see the end of the assessment and start to prepare to leave and to be in a hurry.

It is necessary to have a clear schedule and stick to the time allocated to each part of each activity. The Trainer needs to make sure that she/ he has enough time to close the activity at the end.

When choosing a trainer it is important to take into account not only the knowledge profile of the individual, but it is also necessary to focus on his/her social and personal competence. It is also important to be able to understand the dynamics of the group and its variability.

Table 12. Implementation Phase of Assessment-Summary for the Trainer

At the implementation phase of assessment the trainer should:

- Greet the participants at the beginning.
- Introduce yourself and the organizer of an assessment, if relevant.
- Let the participants introduce themselves.
- Introduce the programme of assessment and be on time with a clear schedule
- Explain to them what is going to happen, let it happen and do not forget to recap what happened in the end).
- Define rules for the whole process and make sure that all the participants understand and agree with them.
- Make sure that participants feel comfortable and free to ask you any questions. The well – being of the participants is a supporting element of assessment.
- Speak loudly and clearly
- Be aware of group dynamics, be flexible and ready to adapt to the dynamics connect with participants maintain eye contact.
- Change members of the team in group work if it is necessary.
- Monitor the situation during the work, encourage participants and be a mediator in difficult situations.

3.5 EVALUATION PHASE OF ASSESSMENT

Evaluation is the structured interpretation and the giving of meaning to predicted or actual impact of proposals or results. Taking into consideration the original objectives, it examines what was either predicted or what was accomplished and how it was accomplished. The aim of the evaluation is to assess the level of personal development, to assess the progress of each participant in the personal development path and to set further goals in their personal development.

3.5.1 PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR TRAINERS

The practical guidelines for trainers are summarized below as the basic criteria for evaluation, timing of evaluation, the tools for evaluation and good advice and common mistakes.

3.5.2 BASIC CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

The coach must always seek the evaluation of courses, the trainer must create conditions (technical and organizational) where the evaluation itself could be implemented (final, interim). It is necessary to always monitor the impact of the acquired knowledge and skills at all levels of the individual (personal, social, knowledge and skill). The coach always has to work with two-way feedback - from the participants of the meeting to the coach and vice versa.

3.5.3 TIMING OF EVALUATION

This can be done as follows:

- Immediately after the assessment event - mapping personal reactions (feelings regarding the training), measuring acquired knowledge and skills (before and after the activity)
- After longer period of time - mapping the applicability of the acquired knowledge and skills in practice and their evaluation, assessment of the benefits of implementation of the action with a longer time lag is due to social interactions.

By reflecting and discussing the transfer of what participants have experienced to their everyday life one can focus on the exchange of concerns, thoughts, feelings and ideas. The term self-reflection has several possible interpretations; the most common are self-knowledge, self-esteem, and self-image. Self-reflection is a prerequisite for the development of individual potential.

The Trainer should prepare the final report for the presentation of the results. This is a good form of feedback for the institute organising the event, which can complete the assessment process.

3.5.4 TOOLS FOR EVALUATION

The tools for evaluation (all evaluation tools can be used in various forms at different stages of the evaluation process)

- **Trainer assessment/feedback on competencies, performance and further development**
- **Multiple assessment (360-degree feedback)**
- **Multiple assessments (coach, participants)**
- **Self-assessment**

3.5.4.1 TRAINER ASSESSMENT

The evaluation process goes through the entire meeting. The specific activity is then the final evaluation, the task of the coach is the following:

- To provide feedback about which goals they have achieved compared to the tasks in the beginning of the meeting and evaluate the implementation.
- To help identify at what level of the EQF each participant is right now.
- To present information on development opportunities to individual participants, warn them of vulnerabilities, but use positive feedback.

For a better use of the tool, you can create an individual evaluation form containing basic competences in terms of the trainer (e.g communication, teamwork, authority, etc.) with a point scale.

Example: The scale from the best 1 to worst 5)

Tom - communication skills - 3, teamwork – 2, Authority - 4)

3.5.4.2 MULTIPLE ASSESSMENT (360-DEGREE FEEDBACK)

The Multiple Assessment (360 Degree Feedback) is an anonymous evaluation method, in which feedback is provided through a larger number of respondents in a structured form. The name of the assessment method is derived from the imaginary circle, the participant is assessed as being in the centre of the circle, and she/he receives feedback from all who surround her/him. Feedback is provided only by those people who came into contact with the participant (other participants, lecturers). Also the participants assess themselves. This method of feedback does not say what the participant does, but how he/she

behaves and how the others perceive the behaviour. The results can then be used to plan their further development, training, etc.

The structured form may include the following areas:

- Communication
- Managing tasks, handling changes
- Problem solving
- Work in team
- Adaptability
- Interpersonal relationships etc.

3.5.4.3 MULTIPLE ASSESSMENTS (COACH, PARTICIPANTS)

This is the primary method of evaluation for obtaining feedback. Unlike the 360-degree feedback this method is not anonymous. Each participant expresses himself in a public "debate" moderated by a trainer. The trainer not only moderates / facilitates, but also responds to suggestions from participants. Important observations are written on the board and the trainer outlines the key issues in a way which brings to a close the whole assessment process and gives the required information to participants for further development.

3.5.4.4 SELF-ASSESSMENT

In self-assessment, participants should independently evaluate their assessment process and draw conclusions for further development. The basis of this tool is knowledge of one's competence, experience of success or failure and experience with assessment from the other people. Through self-assessment the participant becomes aware of his/her own strengths and weaknesses, sets goals to improve and develop soft skills.

Self-assessment helps:

- to reflect on past activities and gained experience
- To remind oneself of what happened in the past
- To design what the participant learned, mastered what he/she has achieved
- To understand what was not achieved and why.

Participants can use the following key questions for self-assessment (written and oral form):

- What have I learned?

- What will I manage?
- What can I do even better?
- What do I want to focus on primarily and what do I want to improve?
- What do I want to learn?
- What makes me worry?
- What to do for better results?

The tool for self-assessment:

Self-assessment sheets

The participant replies to a list of questions that may be relevant to understanding and evaluation of group and individual activities.

Test

This tool allows participants to measure the initial "capital" of acquired knowledge and skills. Forms of "pre-test" and "post-test" results give each participant feedback on what he has learned and clearly informs him about the newly acquired knowledge. At the same time, this tool acts as a convenient way of summarizing and repeating substantially all that was said. The trainer can use a wide range of test methods - written, practical exercises, analysis of the situation, etc.

3.5.5 GIVING CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

Essential part of the Evaluation process is providing Feedback. The Trainers / Evaluator objective in giving feedback is to provide guidance by supplying information in a useful manner, either to support effective behaviour or to guide someone towards successful performance.

Feedback needs to be constructive. It should **focus on description rather than judgement**. Describing behaviour is a way of reporting what has occurred, while judging behaviour is an evaluation of what has occurred in terms of 'right' or 'wrong' or 'good'; or 'bad'. By avoiding evaluative language, the need for the individual to respond defensively is reduced. It should **focus on observation rather than inference**. Observations refer to what you can see or hear about an individual's behaviour, while inferences refer to the assumptions and interpretations you make from what you see or hear. The trainer should also **provide a balance of positive and negative feedback**. If consistently give only

positive and negative feedback, people will distrust the feedback and it will become useless. The Trainer should also **be aware of feedback overload**. She/ he needs to select few important points and offers feedback on these points. If she/ he overload the individual with feedback, the individual may become confused about what needs to be improved or changed.

3.5.6 GOOD ADVICE AND COMMON MISTAKES

At the end of assessment the trainer should not to forget to close the activity by devoting time for discussing, feedback and sharing feeling and experiences between participants. She or he needs to make sure that she/he offers interesting tools with practical transferability to their everyday life.

Even in the case of a bad assessment the trainer learns something – at least she/he can reflect on what she/he has done wrong, she/he can formulate goals for further work, identify weaknesses and find out what to improve next time.

Table 13. Evaluation Phase of Assessment – Summary for the trainer

At the evaluation phase of assessment the trainer should:

- Be on time and have enough time for evaluation
- Prepare the appropriate tool according to the participants
- Evaluation must be systematic, must be focused on supporting the development of competence and self-reflection.
- The evaluation must take place throughout the meeting and the final evaluation is primarily a space for mutual discussion, participant motivation and offers space to close issues.
- The basis of any evaluation is positive feedback from the coach!
- Evaluation has to be clear and understandable.
- Each participant has the right to disagree with the assessment and should have the space to tell it.
- Each evaluation must be specific, objective related and practical.
- The role of the coach is to familiarize participants with the fact that they will be evaluated and they will also evaluate others and to create the right conditions for that (organizational, technical).

The evaluation of the assessment by the trainer can be also based on the following:

- Suitability of the place for assessment, suitability of equipment and materials.
- Choice of tools appropriate for the group of participants.

- Atmosphere in group, communication and cooperation.
- Expectations of the trainer and participants.
- Interest of the participants in further education.
- Schedule.
- What could be done differently?
- How well did it go?

4 USING THE TOOLBOX

This chapter is focused on selected assessment tools from EVA-SKILLS project which can be of practical help to the trainer so that she/he can gain an understanding of the whole process of assessment based on the manual described above.

4.1 BEHAVIOUR EVENT INTERVIEW – COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Learning Objectives	The goal of this tool is to help identify the competency of learners and help them acquire practical experience through life-like examples of employment situations so as to be better prepared for job interviews with potential employers.
Keywords (e.g. type of tool, social skills category, methodology)	Behaviour interview, job interview, employability, social interaction, communication.
Abstract (short narrative text)	<p>Behavioural event interview is interviewing based on discovering how the interviewee acted in specific situations (mostly employment- and/or life-related).</p> <p>The logic behind this is that how you behaved in the past will predict how you will behave in the future i.e. past performance predicts future performance. In a behavioural interview generally, an employer has decided what skills are needed in the person they hire and will ask questions to find out if the candidate has those skills. Instead of asking how you would behave, they will ask how you did behave. The interviewer will want to know how you handled a situation, instead of what you might do in the future.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Before the interview, the trainer prepares behavioural interview questions. Questions will be more pointed, more probing and more specific than traditional interview questions. 2. Ask participants to refresh their memory and consider some special situations they have dealt with or projects they have worked on; and prepare stories that illustrate occasions when they have successfully solved problems or performed memorably. The stories will be useful to help participants respond meaningfully in a behavioural interview. 3. During the interview, the trainer will ask behavioural interview questions according to a prepared scenario to get concrete examples of the participant's behaviour in the past. 4. The trainer records evidence derived from the behaviour

	<p>interview regarding the participant's competences.</p> <p>5. The trainer provides feedback to the participant.</p> <p>Examples of behaviour interview questions for communication competency:</p> <p>2 Are you a good listener? Give an example of when you were a good listener or when you were not really listening to the other person.</p> <p>3 Have you handled a difficult situation with your boss/a person in authority? How?</p> <p>4 Have you handled a difficult situation with a colleague/another person? How?</p> <p>5 What do you do if you disagree with your boss/ a person in authority ...?</p> <p>6 What do you do if you disagree with your colleague/another person ...?</p>
<p>Learning outcomes: Knowledge/Skills/Competences</p>	<p>Knowledge:</p> <p>7 Knows practical characteristics and examples of the competency.</p> <p>8 Realizes his/her practical examples of behaviour/events related to the competency.</p> <p>Skills:</p> <p>9 Is able to describe practical examples of his/her behaviour/situation.</p> <p>10 Improve presentation skills.</p> <p>11 Is able to better handle job interview.</p> <p>Competence:</p> <p>12 Handle behaviour interview.</p>
EQF level	<p>1 to 4</p> <p>Level 1</p> <p>13 Participants are aware of importance of communication, communication skills and interviews.</p> <p>Level 2</p> <p>14 Participants are aware of variability of communication forms and realize examples of their communication skills.</p> <p>Level 3</p> <p>15 Participants are able to formulate practical examples of their behaviour/situations.</p> <p>Level 4</p> <p>16 Participants are able to handle behaviour interview and are more confident in communication/interview.</p>
Variables to take into account (e.g. materials, equipment)	A suitable place for carrying out an interview with participant. No other special requirements.
Recommended duration	<p>3 hours in total</p> <p>17 1 hour preparation for interview</p>

	18 1 hour interview 19 1 hour assessment and feedback
Assessment/ Evaluation	Possibilities to review this activity are: 20 Coach assessment/feedback on competencies, performance and further development
References and other useful sources	http://jobsearch.about.com/od/behavioralinterviews/a/behavioral-interview-questions.htm http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newCS_85.htm

4.2 BEHAVIOUR EVENT INTERVIEW – MANAGING CHANGE/PROBLEM SOLVING

Learning Objectives	The goal of this tool is to help identify the competency of learners and help them acquire practical experience through life-like examples of employment situations so as to be better prepared for job interviews with potential employers.
Keywords (e.g. type of tool, social skills category, methodology)	Behaviour interview, job interview, employability, social interaction, handling changes /problem solving.
Abstract (short narrative text)	<p>Behavioural event interview is interviewing based on discovering how the interviewee acted in specific situation (mostly employment- and/or live-related). Same comments as above</p> <p>The logic is that how you behaved in the past will predict how you will behave in the future i.e. past performance predicts future performance. In a behavioural interview generally, an employer has decided what skills are needed in the person they hire and will ask questions to find out if the candidate has those skills. Instead of asking how you would behave, they will ask how you did behave. The interviewer will want to know how you handled a situation, instead of what you might do in the future.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Before interview, the trainer prepares behavioural interview questions. Questions will be more pointed, more probing and more specific than traditional interview questions. Same as above 2. Ask participants to refresh their memory and consider some special situations they have dealt with or projects they have worked on; and prepare stories that illustrate times when they have successfully solved problems or performed memorably. The stories will be useful to help participants respond meaningfully in a behavioural interview. Same 3. During interview, the trainer will ask behavioural interview questions according prepared scenario to get concrete examples of participant 's behaviour in the past. same 4. The trainer makes an evidence of behaviour interview and participant 's competences. same 5. The trainer provides feedback to the participants. <p>Examples of behaviour interview questions for managing change/ problem solving competency:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Give an example of a goal you reached and tell me how you achieved it. ➤ Give an example of a goal you didn't meet and how you handled it. ➤ How do you handle a challenge? ➤ Give an example of an occasion when you used logic to solve a problem. ➤ Have you ever made a mistake? How did you handle it? ➤ How did you handle meeting a tight deadline? ➤ Give an example of how you set goals and achieve them. ➤ Did you ever not meet your goals? Why? ➤ What do you do when your schedule is interrupted? Give an example of how you handle it. ➤ Tell me about how you worked effectively under pressure.
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<p>Learning outcomes: Knowledge/Skills/Competences</p>	<p>Knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Knows practical characteristics and examples of the competency. ➤ Realizes his/her practical examples of behaviour/events related to the competency. <p>Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Is able to describe practical examples of his/her behaviour/situation. ➤ Improve presentation skills. ➤ Is able to better handle job interview. <p>Competence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Handle behaviour interview.
<p>EQF level</p>	<p>1 to 4</p> <p>Level 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Participants are aware of basic personal skills required to carry out simple tasks and handle changes and problems. <p>Level 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Participants are aware of personal skills to solve routine problems and structure problems. <p>Level 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Participants are aware of personal skills to identify and analyse possible solutions and to make a decision. <p>Level 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Participants are aware of personal skills to generate and implement a solution to specific problems in the field of work, study, life etc. and to check that the process/solution was

	successful.
Variables to take into account (e.g. materials, equipment)	A suitable place for carrying out an interview with participant. No other special requirements.
Recommended duration	3 hours in total ➤ 1 hour preparation for interview ➤ 1 hour interview ➤ 1 hour assessment and feedback
Assessment/ Evaluation	Possibilities to review this activity are: ➤ Coach assessment/feedback on competencies, performance and further development ➤ Self-assessment
References and other useful sources	http://jobsearch.about.com/

4.3 FOCUS GROUP – QUALITY OF COMMUNICATION IN A GROUP

Learning Objectives	The goal of this tool is to identify and evaluate the quality of communication in a particular group (study group, working team) and help to identify recommendations for improvement of their communication.
Keywords (e.g. type of tool, social skills category, methodology)	Social interaction, soft skills, communication, listening, conflicts, evaluation, SWOT analysis.
Abstract (short narrative text)	A group of people who study or work together will discuss the quality of communication within the group. They will analyse and assess strengths and weaknesses and specific problems in their communication and will formulate recommendations for improvement. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The coach will introduce the objectives and principles of the discussion. 2. Each participant will shortly describe (in writing) his/her opinion on strengths and weaknesses in communication in the group and also evaluate the communication skills of each member of the group. 3. Then each participant will present his/her opinion to the group. 4. The coach will open a discussion on the key issues/problems in communication within the group and give suggestions for improvement. The coach will support and facilitate the discussion. 5. At the end the coach will sum up the discussion and main recommendations.
Learning outcomes: Knowledge/Skills/Competences	Knowledge: ➤ Acquires better knowledge of his/her own communication skills.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Acquires better knowledge of the skills of members of the group. ➤ Acquires knowledge on how to evaluate skills. <p>Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Is able to identify strengths and weaknesses in communication <p>Competence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Evaluate the quality of own communication. ➤ Evaluate the quality of communication of others/group.
EQF level	<p>1 to 4</p> <p>Level 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Participants are aware of different types of verbal interaction (group discussion). <p>Level 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Participants are aware of various types of language and communication forms and skills in a group. <p>Level 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Participants are able to listen to and understand others and identify and analyse (SWOT) communication skills. <p>Level 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Participants are able to approach the opinions and arguments of others with an open mind and engage in constructive and critical dialogue.
Variables to take into account (e.g. materials, equipment)	Place for discussion
Recommended duration	<p>2 hours in total</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 30 min preparation of description of communication in the group ➤ 1,5 hour presentation and discussion on of communication in the group ➤ 30 min recap – main findings and recommendations
Assessment/ Evaluation	<p>Possibilities to review this activity are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Multiple assessment (coach, participants) ➤ Self-assessment
References and other useful sources	<p>http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC_05_1.htm</p> <p>http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newCS_85.htm</p>

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5 CONCLUSION

To conclude, the Toolkit User Guide described above is a manual that consists of practical guidelines for trainers, VET professionals and career advisors to be used on teenagers or young people that have no or low qualifications and/or are unemployed. It gives practical guidelines from the preparatory phase to the implementation phase and the evaluation phase, good advice and refers to common mistakes to be avoided by trainers as well as to practical examples of how to use the toolbox which has been developed by EVA Skills Project.