

WORK PACKAGE no. 4 - Action 4B

# PLAN FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF BASIC SKILLS IN ADULTS IN NAVARRA



This project is led by the **Navarre Employment Service (Servicio Navarro de Empleo)** in a public-private collaboration:



SERVICIO PÚBLICO  
DE EMPLEO ESTATAL

**SEPE**

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## 1. Introduction

The aim of the European experimental project FORLAN was to test new learning strategies within existing basic skills learning provision, tailored and adapted to the needs and context of low-skilled/low-qualified adults and with a focus on developing literacy, numeracy and digital skills. This project has been led by the Navarre Employment Service in partnership with the Department of Education, the Department of Social Rights, the Navarre Government Social Reality Observatory, the State Employment Public Service, the ANEL business associations, and the Construction Work Foundation.

The training was directed mainly at three profile groups:

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-term unemployment</li> <li>• Minimum income recipients</li> <li>• In a labor or active inclusion itinerary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Female workers from companies with a certain degree of digital transformation in the construction, services, and industrial sectors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workers with temporary and precarious jobs, entering and leaving the labor market in short periods of time and frequently complementing their salary with the Minimum Guaranteed Income</li> </ul>

FORLAN incorporated changes in the different phases of basic skills training for adults to make it more accessible and efficient for people in vulnerable situations. In practice this has meant that:

- ↗ It is **adapted to the person**: it identifies the dispositional, situational, and institutional barriers a person may have to receiving training and applies specific resources to overcome them (transportation, work-life balance, etc.).
- ↗ It is **flexible**: this is a hybrid model that may be in-person or virtual and offers a flexible timetable.
- ↗ It includes **personalized accompaniment and follow-up**: through a reference person who is always available for the student.
- ↗ It includes **emotional care**.
- ↗ The training is divided in **modules**, to be able to add value to the previously acquired lessons and streamline with the learning process.
- ↗ **The companies are involved** in various phases of the process, both in the identification of needs and the generation of knowledge.
- ↗ The **contents** are **practical** and are **adapted to the needs of the local market**.

In total, the project reached 228 people who were identified and recruited in the first phase, of whom 111 registered for the training and finally 96 people started the training in the Tudela and Pamplona areas. Regarding **nationality**, it is important to indicate that 58% of people come from countries outside of the European Union community, from more than 19 countries located mainly in North Africa, South America, Central America, and East Africa. Regarding sex, we see **greater participation from women** in almost all groups, representing 66% of the total, with 54% foreign women from non-EU community countries. Moreover, 38%

of the total number of people who start the training receive or are carrying out the process to receive Minimum Guaranteed Income.

The FORLAN project, due to its innovative nature, awards special relevance to the evaluation process as this process aims to generate evidence on the success of the experiment focused on the development of learning strategies for basic skills for employment. Likewise, this evaluation is framed in the Government of Navarre's commitment to the evaluation of public policies as a transparency and accountability exercise and that materializes in its public evaluation system<sup>1</sup>.

Based on the evidence collected through the evaluation and its conclusions, this document takes stock of the components that have had an especially positive affect on access, continuation, and overcoming training for participants. From a prospective point of view, it reflects on the transferability of the learning generated to the current training in basic skills for adults and proposes a series of actions aimed at facilitating this integration and ensuring that the current training provided in Navarre is adapted to the needs of people with complex social situations.

## **2. Proposals for improvement of basic skills training for adults**

### **2.1. To increase the number of low-qualified adults who undergo basic and digital skills training**

#### **Description of the problem**

Adults who have not received basic training, or who started it a long time ago, may have a certain rejection of the educational system and this explains why the vast majority of people targeted by the FORLAN project have not been recruited by the training centers in basic skills for adults in Navarre, since their participant selection system is based mainly on the referral made between the departments of employment and social services and those who decided to enroll in the training on their own initiative. Thus, those who did not begin basic training or were unable to continue it are left out of these channels and do not receive information on the training options available and their benefits, nor do they obtain guidance on how to begin the training process.

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<sup>1</sup> Government of Navarre. Public Evaluation System in Navarre. <http://www.navarra.es/NR/rdonlyres/3244F835-70BF-4A8A-B6BE-C561DD1FDD0F/205994/ElsistemapublicodeevaluacionenNavarra.pdf>

## Success strategy used in FORLAN

For this reason, the FORLAN project opted for a recruitment based on a motivational event aimed at people potentially interested in participating in the training, which has led to the conclusion that this type of event:

- ✓ Increase **coverage in the dissemination** of the training.
- ✓ Help to identify **barriers inherent to the territories**.
- ✓ **Make visible the value training has** in people's lives and the opportunities that it can bring.
- ✓ **Avoid duplicities** in addressing certain profiles.

## Recommendations for scalability and transferability in Navarre

It is essential that the Department of Education of the Government of Navarre, the department responsible for these policies, incorporates new proactive ways to attract participants for training in basic and digital skills aimed at adults with low qualifications.

**Recruitment through motivational events that are organized in coordination with community actors in the people's environment are a key element to be incorporated.**

To this end, the following recommendations are included:

- ✓ **Study in detail the training actions target groups, preferably taking into account the socio-demographic characteristics from the municipality or area where the training will take place.** It is useful to know this information in advance as it will facilitate customizing the recruitment actions, as well as the resources and materials to be used during the training. Factors such as age, culture or gender are aspects that can be taken into account when adapting materials and preventing/preventing the most frequent barriers that may appear throughout the training.
- ✓ **Work in partnership with business sectors that need to improve the training and recruitment of talent in their workforces.** It is key to understand the needs of the sector and the existing shortcomings so that public administrations can design adapted strategies. In some sectors, such as construction, the existing barriers were more complex than in the rest of the sector. When working with companies, it is important to define a strategy that is particularly motivating. In the case of FORLAN, the business associations were partners in the project and therefore had a financial allocation to carry out the actions, but not the companies that finally participated. There are calls for subsidies that companies can apply for and this can be an incentive. However, the motivation should not be exclusively financial. It is possible, for example, to reward companies that are committed to this type of training through official recognition, public events, etc., or to appeal to the company's social responsibility.
- ✓ **Work closely with community leaders and local-based organizations** (social entities, social services or someone from the community itself) in the recruitment and initial

adhesion phase. This is an important strategy to break down the barriers that hold people back from embarking on training pathways.

- ✓ **Improve interdepartmental coordination (especially with social services and employment) and inter-administrative coordination (with local entities) and with social entities** to broaden the scope for mobilizing people potentially interested in training in basic skills for adults, which requires the interoperability of existing public data bases that are used in the different departments and organizations involved.
- ✓ **Intensify the participation of community actors to ensure that a larger number of people are invited:** local entities, third sector entities, community and/or religious leaders, people who are in successful training processes and who are leaders in the community, and companies in the surrounding area that are potentially looking for talent.
- ✓ **Provide a specific number of vacancies for people with the profiles selected in the project,** in addition to the existing vacancies, so as to ensure that a minimum percentage of these profiles are trained each year.

## 2.2. To offer training that is more adapted to people's needs

### Description of the problem

It is difficult to convince people with the profile targeted by the project to start a training pathway, especially when it comes to basic skills, and, when they manage to do so, it is very common for these people to encounter numerous barriers and difficulties throughout the process to successfully complete the training; the drop-out rate among these profiles is very high.

### Success strategy used in FORLAN

The FORLAN project invested a great deal of effort in identifying precisely those barriers that could hinder both access to training and permanence (dispositional, situational or institutional barriers). To mitigate the effect of many of these barriers, the training tested under the FORLAN project focused on making many aspects of the training more flexible, mainly through the modularization of content, flexible schedules, and the virtual modality.

To summarize, we highlight those elements that have been most effective:

- ✓ Modularization **adds value to skills and knowledge** that have already been acquired by the student and reinforces their motivation.
- ✓ The flexibilization of timetables **facilitates conciliation between the training and work.**
- ✓ The hybrid modality favors **family reconciliation** for participants.
- ✓ A virtual classroom allows for the creation of spaces for the exchange of information that contribute to **continuous learning.**
- ✓ The flexibilization of the training places **greater confidence on the student and their autonomy** to organize their time and performance.

- ✓ The flexibilization of the **training favors the autonomy of the participants** and the possibility of combining the training with other aspects of their lives.

### Recommendations for scalability and transferability in Navarre

It is essential that all departments of the Government of Navarre and other institutions and organizations working in the field of adult training, especially in basic and digital skills training, incorporate elements that make training more flexible.

To this end, the following recommendations are included:

- ✓ **Establish mechanisms to facilitate students' attendance to classes taught outside their regular schedule** so that they can reconcile their personal, work, and professional lives with greater autonomy.
- ✓ **Incorporate modularization and micro-accreditation of training content within the established regulatory frameworks** to reduce the number of hours of training that students must take because they already have these skills. This is a critical aspect not only in motivating students, but also in improving their self-esteem and self-efficacy.
- ✓ **Promote the creation and use of virtual spaces** that make updated didactic materials and contents available to students that favor learning at the pace of each person.

### 2.3. To offer a more personalized attention and keep students motivated

#### Description of the problem

The training process during adulthood requires strong motivation and conviction about the personal benefits of continuing and passing the exams. In general, it is expected that maintaining this motivation is the responsibility of the students and goes beyond the functions of the education or training centers. As a result, those who experience greater difficulties throughout their training often fail to find sufficient motivation to continue their training and end up dropping-out because they do not see the value in it or feel that they will not succeed no matter what they do.

#### Success strategy used in FORLAN

The FORLAN project was committed to analyzing the effect and impact of people's emotional state at the beginning of the training and to deepen the impact that emotions can have on the success of the training and thus understand its causes and consequences. Thus, a lot of effort was invested in generating a safe and trusting space among the participants to accompany each other and maintain close follow-up with the individuals to identify risks and work together with the individual to mitigate them.

To this end, different support mechanisms were put in place:

- The organization of a pre-workshop on cross-cutting skills as a preliminary step to the training.
- Complementary cross-cutting skills sessions throughout the training.
- Personalized follow-up.
- Personalized coaching sessions (ad hoc).

These mechanisms were very effective in addressing emotional conditioning:

- ✓ The pre-workshop on cross-cutting skills facilitated **the construction of a group identity**.
- ✓ The pre-workshop made it possible **to identify** psychological and physical barriers and improve students' self-knowledge.
- ✓ The pre-workshop made it possible to discover and **adjust expectations** of the training.
- ✓ The personalized follow-up made it possible to establish **a closer link** between the professional teams and the participants.
- ✓ The emotional care **favored the increase in responsibility and improvement of attitudes towards the continuous training**.
- ✓ The personalized follow-up **increased the self-esteem** of the participants as they felt accompanied and listened to.
- ✓ The personalized follow-up **increased people's involvement** in the training as a personal link was created.
- ✓ Emotional care made it possible to go deeper into and **resolve the identified psychological barriers**.
- ✓ Emotional care made it possible to **resolve conflicts** in the group and reach agreements.
- ✓ The personalized follow-up created a **greater link between the participants and the public services**, facilitating access to services of their interest that they were not aware of.

### Recommendations for scalability and transferability in Navarre

It is essential that all departments of the Government of Navarre and other institutions and organizations working in the field of adult training, especially those working with low-qualified adults or those belonging to vulnerable groups whose motivation and emotional situation may be very deteriorated, establish emotional support mechanisms to prevent and address emotional incidents or barriers that emerge throughout the training itinerary.

These complementary emotional support mechanisms can be very beneficial in favoring the continuity and success of training itineraries, especially among those people who find it more difficult to adhere to training that requires a great deal of time and personal effort.

In order to incorporate these lessons, we suggest studying the feasibility of promoting the following lines of action:

- ☑ **In all courses in which low-qualified or vulnerable adults participate, promote identification by the tutor of whether the students have a social services reference person with whom they can coordinate to attend or manage the needs or emotional**



**barriers that arise throughout the project; if not, identify a person who could perform this function (a person from social services or a social entity could do this).** To this end, it is essential to establish coordination mechanisms between the departments of Education, Social Rights, Employment and the social services or inclusion teams of local entities or social entities. This should facilitate fluid communication and exchange of users' situations and thus offer a coordinated and joint solution to the individual, taking advantage of existing resources (preferably from people's environment). In this way, it is possible to reinforce the person-centered care method in which the person has a referent who coordinates with the rest of the services and has the capacity to offer an adapted solution among the existing options, avoiding duplicities.

- Have mechanisms in place to solve the difficulties and barriers that arise during the training** and that are often the reason for dropping out of the training or not achieving the corresponding accreditation. The project provided for a contingency fund, but due to program requirements it could not be channeled through cash aid to individuals. This prevented the use of this fund in all the cases detected. Mechanisms must be agile and flexible, which in many cases involves the payment of a small amount to the individual to resolve a specific and exceptional situation that the Public Administration cannot resolve through the ordinary systems of payment and procurement of services.
- Recruit and/or train social services teams to be referents in the support of the training paths so that they can prevent or manage emotional needs or barriers that prevent the person from dropping-out from the training process.** It is fundamental that the existing or recruited teams have skills and abilities related to empathy, active listening, and social support, among others.
- Reserve class hours for tutors to organize group and individual dynamics that allow for the identification of personal barriers and to bring the group together.** This is crucial in the basic and digital skills training courses for low-qualified or vulnerable adults. We recommend that these spaces are integrated into the training as part of the course and that they are organized from the start of the training.



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