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CASE STUDY AUSTRIA



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FOSTERING INCLUSIVE APPRENTICESHIPS through EFFECTIVE TRAINING OF MENTORS IN WBL

CASE STUDY

AUSTRIA

Introduction

National Context

Austria has a strong tradition of apprenticeship and work-based learning, and there are already meaningful efforts to foster inclusion through mentoring programs, supportive agencies, and European-level initiatives aiming to train mentors for inclusive VET. However, to fully realise the potential of inclusive apprenticeships, more systemic adoption of inclusive mentoring practices is needed especially within companies offering training. This involves training more mentors, ensuring support for diverse needs (social background, migration, disability), dedicating resources and commitment, and embedding inclusive mentorship into national and company-level VET practice.

The foundations and programmes for inclusive apprenticeship via effective mentor training exist but their broader implementation and sustainability will determine whether Austria can truly offer equal opportunities in vocational training to all.

VET and especially dual work-based learning (WBL) is repeatedly described by Austrian authorities as a cornerstone of the country's skilled workforce provision and economic competitiveness, the backbone of Austrian VET is the dual system: after compulsory schooling (9 years), many young people enter an apprenticeship ("Lehre") in a company, combined with part-time attendance at a vocational (part-time) school (Berufsschule). Roughly 80% of the training time takes place in the company, 20% in school¹.

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In addition to apprenticeships, there are school-based VET programmes (e.g. vocational colleges, technical-vocational schools) and even these include mandatory work placements or internships in companies, or practice-oriented learning in workshops, labs, training firms etc. The dual vocational education and training (VET) apprenticeship system in Austria is widespread: about 40 % of young people complete a practical vocational training (apprenticeship or vocational secondary school). Around 120,000 apprentices are trained in ~ 40,000 companies².

On the "inclusive & intercultural education and career orientation" front, there exist nationwide offers to support people with special needs, learning difficulties, or migration background to participate in regular training or working life including measures to make vocational training more accessible and supportive.

In May 2024, a new law establishing higher vocational education and training (HBB, Höhere Berufliche Bildung) came into force. This makes it possible to create new higher-level vocational qualifications and modules aligned with labour-market needs. New apprenticeship professions have been introduced (e.g. in fields like fibre-composite

¹ **OECD (2025)** Vocational Education and Training Systems in Austria Report

² **AustrianFederal Economic Chamber (2018)** Fresh View on Education Education in Austria

technology, district-heating technology, climate gardener), reflecting evolving labour market needs including “green skills” and sustainability-related fields³.

Historically, an unequal access for migrants and disadvantaged youth exist, ethnic minorities have had lower chances to access good apprenticeships or stable WBL placements partly because companies lack intercultural competence or because mentoring/support systems were not designed for diversity.

Several mentoring support-programs exist for migrants, disadvantaged youths or people with difficult educational or social starting points. For example, the programme run by Wirtschaftskammer Österreich (WKÖ) called “Mentoring für Migrant:innen” offers mentoring by experienced professionals to people with migration backgrounds to help them navigate the Austrian labour market including support with applications, contacts, orientation, and integration.

There is a type of vocational training in Austria called “Integrative Vocational Training” (in German “IBA-Lehre/integrative Berufsausbildung”) designed for people with disabilities, people with special educational needs, or persons who might otherwise have difficulties accessing or completing standard apprenticeships.

For migrants or people with a different cultural/educational background company mentors can help them navigate unfamiliar labour-market norms, work culture, technical language, job expectations. This reduces the risk of dropout or mismatch⁴.

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For young people from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds or underperforming schools personalized mentoring will help with motivation, confidence, guidance for training choice, support in applications, exam prep, social integration raising their chances to complete an apprenticeship or continue education. Mentors trained to understand diversity, disability, cultural and social difference, or additional support needs can adapt their approach offering flexible, empathetic, and tailored support (e.g. for youth with disabilities, learning difficulties, or other challenges). This makes the apprenticeship system more accessible and equitable.

A well-structured, trained mentorship helps not only with technical skills, but also with soft skills, social integration, sense of belonging often crucial for long-term success.

Overall, there is increasing awareness in Austria and at European level that mentoring in VET/WBL should be professionalized and made inclusive: the design of multilingual, open-access mentor training is a concrete sign of this shift. Given demographic change and increasing skill shortages (especially in technical trades, “green” fields, and advanced vocational qualifications), the flexibility and responsiveness of the VET system (including newer forms like the Dual Academy and HBB-based training) becomes ever more important to match labour-market needs. The VET system also supports social mobility

³ Publications Office of the European Commission (2024) Country Report Austria .

⁴ Wirtschaftskammer Österreich WKÖ (2024) Mentoring für Migrant:innen . 11. Durchgang des Programm Mentoring für Migrant:innen

and inclusion by offering viable pathways to good employment without necessarily requiring university or academic education.

However, ensuring quality and relevance of training in a rapidly changing labour market, addressing basic skills deficits, encouraging more companies to offer apprenticeships, and maintaining equal access for all socio-economic groups will remain key challenges.

The INCLUSIVE APPRENTICESHIPS Approach

The Inclusive Apprenticeships for Sustainable Jobs project, funded by the European Union through the Erasmus+ project 2023-1-RO01-KA220-VET-000158142, focuses on promoting social inclusion in the field of VET, raising VET's attractiveness and boosting innovation, by enhancing the outreach of and the support provided by the business involved in work-based learning (WBL) to apprentices with fewer opportunities and from disadvantaged backgrounds.

By equipping company mentors with the skills and knowledge to effectively support apprentices from disadvantaged backgrounds, the project aims to increase employability, promote social inclusion, and address skills mismatches in the labour market.

The specific objectives of the INCLUSIVE APPRENTICESHIPS project are:

- to develop and apply in practice an innovative multilingual free of charge and open access training program for VET company mentors across Europe on how to work with apprentices with fewer opportunities and from disadvantaged backgrounds, thus fostering social inclusion and improving the outreach of VET to people with disabilities, from ethnic minority, migrant or refugee background, those living in rural areas, facing socioeconomic difficulties or at risk of discrimination by changing the way work-based learning (WBL) is practiced and making it more relevant to the current and future needs of the society.
- to directly support the professional development of 120 VET company mentors from Romania, Austria and Bulgaria by equipping them with the knowledge and skills to effectively support apprentices with fewer opportunities and from disadvantaged backgrounds, which will have imminent impact on at least 240 such apprentices.
- to create evidential basis for the effectiveness of the INCLUSIVE APPRENTICESHIPS overall approach to raising the attractiveness of VET by making it more relevant to the needs of the whole society.
- to disseminate information about the project's progress and achievements and promote the importance and benefits from delivering apprenticeships in an inclusive and relevant manner.

To achieve the objective regarding the validation of the suitability of the INCLUSIVE APPRENTICESHIP approach, a comprehensive piloting process was carried out and

documented through the development of a detailed piloting report. In order to capture and highlight the qualitative aspects of the piloting process, partners also developed case studies aimed at convincing other company mentors and businesses to benefit from the course developed by the project and made openly accessible. This activity further strengthened the potential for sustainability and future exploitation.

Training Programme and Platform

One of the key results of the INCLUSIVE APPRENTICESHIP project are a tailored innovative training programme for company mentors involved in WBL and VET on how to address the specific needs of apprentices at risk of exclusion, as well as by training 120 company mentors in Romania, Bulgaria and Austria through an online open access platform.

The development and digitalisation of the INCLUSIVE APPRENTICESHIPS Training Programme for company mentors contributes to creating the basis for enhancing company mentors' competences and promoting inclusion of apprentices with fewer opportunities and from disadvantaged backgrounds. This approach is based on the notion that across the world, employers face the challenge of developing and retaining staff, while at the same time, more and more employers are recognising the benefits of employing persons from disadvantaged background. Workplaces that are inclusive give employers access to a wider pool of talent, leads to improvement in accessibility and workplaces for all staff, and creates a positive image of the organisation among staff and clients.

Overview of the Training Programme

The target groups of the INCLUSIVE APPRENTICESHIPS training are company mentors in dual VET context involved in delivering the practical work experience at the workplace (referred to as "company mentors") and/or learners with fewer opportunities or from disadvantaged background enrolled onto apprenticeship schemes through dual VET schemes in initial VET (referred to as "apprentices"). To ensure focus and align our approach to our specific needs and experience, the fewer opportunities and disadvantages that were targeted included:

- ethnic minority background – important for several minor regions in Austria
- refugee and/or migrant background
- physical or mental disability
- living in remote rural areas
- low socioeconomic status
- at risk of discrimination

The Training Programme is organised in modules to cover specific themes, which are presented below.

Module #	Module title	Module topics	Learning objectives	Learning outcomes
Module 1	General principles of social inclusion and what the various forms of disadvantage and fewer opportunities are	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is social exclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To explain social exclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe social exclusion Provide examples of social exclusion
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are forms of disadvantage Who is a person with fewer opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To explore various forms of disadvantage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognise disadvantage Name forms of disadvantage
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General principles to ensure social inclusion when conducting apprenticeships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To explain the scope of fewer opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define all forms of “fewer opportunities” Describe a person who could be qualified as “having fewer opportunities”
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To introduce trainees to the general principles of social inclusion when conducting apprenticeships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss approaches to ensure inclusive apprenticeships Recognise inclusive methods
Module 2	Benefits and challenges of supporting apprentices with fewer opportunities or from disadvantaged background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the benefits of supporting apprentices with fewer opportunities or from disadvantaged background 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To explain the benefits of creating a broader talent pool To explain how inclusive apprenticeships could lead to increased retention rates and employee loyalty To highlight the importance of applying an inclusive approach for maintaining a good company reputation and CSR To show the effect of maintaining inclusive environment on the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine how supporting apprentices with fewer opportunities or from disadvantaged backgrounds can bring benefits to the company and the society Provide examples of the benefits that supporting apprentices with fewer opportunities or from disadvantaged backgrounds could bring

Module #	Module title	Module topics	Learning objectives	Learning outcomes
			employees' engagement and motivation	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the challenges of supporting apprentices with fewer opportunities or from disadvantaged background 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To explain how limited access to and availability of training opportunities could impact people with fewer opportunities and from disadvantaged backgrounds • To discuss how communication barriers could affect workplace learning • To highlight how the lack of networks and mentorship could challenge the apprenticeship • To cover the topic of stereotypes and bias in the workplace • To discuss how limited access to job opportunities and career progression could demotivate apprentices with fewer opportunities and from disadvantaged backgrounds • To discuss the implications of financial constraints and inadequate resources • To discuss the negative effect of insufficient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the challenges associated with supporting apprentices with fewer opportunities or from disadvantaged backgrounds • Provide examples of challenges and limitations associated with supporting apprentices with fewer opportunities or from disadvantaged backgrounds

Module #	Module title	Module topics	Learning objectives	Learning outcomes
			<p>awareness and understanding of inclusive apprenticeships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To describe what limited access to the workplace means for people with fewer opportunities and from disadvantaged backgrounds • To discuss legal and regulatory barriers 	
Module 3	Methods and techniques to establish that an apprentice is with fewer opportunities or experiencing some form of disadvantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the methods and techniques for establishing if an apprentice is with fewer opportunities or from disadvantaged background 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To present criteria that could be applied to establish if someone is with fewer opportunities or from disadvantaged background, e.g., age, gender, background, family status, ethnic background, physical/mental status, etc. • To present an interview guide for face-to-face interviews/focus groups with potential apprentices • To present the method of grouping apprentices and employees for creating feedback loops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify methods and techniques for establishing if an apprentice is with fewer opportunity
Module 4	How to develop and deliver induction programme that	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to create a positive work environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To explain what positive work environment looks like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe positive work environment • Compare positive and negative working

Module #	Module title	Module topics	Learning objectives	Learning outcomes
	is tailored to apprentices with fewer opportunities or experiencing some form of disadvantage			environments • Define key aspects to be taken into consideration when planning an inclusive apprenticeship
			• To introduce trainees to various methods and techniques to create positive work environment for their apprentices	• Define approaches for creating positive work environment • Plan tasks to be completed to ensure positive work environment • Analyse aspects that might negatively affect the apprentices' experience while in the company
		• What is the role of management staff and in-company mentors during the induction phase	• To clarify the different roles and responsibilities within a company hosting apprentices with regards apprentices' orientation	• Define the roles and responsibilities of the relevant staff members during the orientation stage of the apprenticeship • Explain the tasks of each staff member with regards the implementation of an apprenticeship
		• How to develop an apprentice induction and information pack	• To provide trainees with guidance on how to develop effective information and induction programs	• Describe the components of an information programme • Describe the components of an induction plan • Conceptualise effective information and induction

Module #	Module title	Module topics	Learning objectives	Learning outcomes
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide trainees with useful templates and examples for developing information and induction packs 	<p>programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an example information and induction programme for apprentices with fewer opportunities or from disadvantaged backgrounds
Module 5	How to plan the necessary resources to support apprentices with fewer opportunities or experiencing some form of disadvantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the roles and responsibilities of different staff members during the apprenticeship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To introduce trainees to the roles and responsibilities of the company management, company mentor and the apprentice during the apprenticeship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the roles and responsibilities of the company, company mentor and the apprentice during the apprenticeship
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to define and secure the required additional support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide guidance on how to define and secure additional support required for supporting apprentices with fewer opportunities or experiencing some form of disadvantage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define additional support required for supporting apprentices with fewer opportunities or experiencing some form of disadvantage Explain effective mechanisms for securing additional support required for supporting apprentices with fewer opportunities or experiencing some form of disadvantage
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to develop an effective company training plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide trainees with guidance on how to develop an effective company training plan required for supporting apprentices with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the key elements of an effective training plan required for supporting apprentices with fewer opportunities or

Module #	Module title	Module topics	Learning objectives	Learning outcomes
			fewer opportunities or experiencing some form of disadvantage	experiencing some form of disadvantage
Module 6	How to establish the strengths and nurture the talents of apprentices with fewer opportunities and disadvantaged apprentices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why is it important to nurture the talents of disadvantaged apprentices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To explain the importance of nurturing the talents of disadvantaged apprentices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reason the importance to nurture talents
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to identify the strengths and talents of apprentices from disadvantaged backgrounds or with fewer opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To define the steps to identify strengths and talents: understand diverse backgrounds and experience(s); assess individual potential and skills; recognize non-traditional/non-formal talent(s); create supportive environments; self-discovery and personal growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify potential strengths and talents of an apprentice with fewer opportunities or from disadvantaged background
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to provide personalised support and guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To present personalized support and guidance methods: individual learning styles and adapted training methods; how to offer mentorship and coaching; how to encourage collaboration and peer support; how to provide feedback and recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distinguish methods for providing personalized support and guidance
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to develop and enhance specific skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To explain how to foster self-awareness, encourage risk-taking and learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Propose approaches to enhance self-awareness, encourage risk-taking,

Module #	Module title	Module topics	Learning objectives	Learning outcomes
			from failure, develop coping strategies, identify and create opportunities	develop coping strategies, identify and create opportunities
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to create networks and partnerships for inclusive apprenticeships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide guidance on how to connect apprentices with HR responsible/employers, facilitate access to job opportunities and career progression, engage with local communities and support organizations, promote diversity and inclusion initiatives within company surroundings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how to create networks and partnerships for inclusive apprenticeships
Module 7	How to assess fewer opportunities and disadvantaged apprentices progress and results (learning outcomes) in a relevant to their background manner (taking into account the applicable standards for all but also through the perspective of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to measure progress and results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To define assessment criteria and process for measuring progress and results of apprentices with fewer opportunities or experiencing some form of disadvantage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conceptualise effective assessment criteria and process for measuring progress and results of apprentices with fewer opportunities or experiencing some form of disadvantage
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to conduct personalised assessment that is aligned to apprentices' specific needs and background 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To explain personalised assessment that is aligned to apprentices' specific needs and background 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe effective methods for conducting personalised assessment that is aligned to apprentices' specific needs and background
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to provide feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide trainees with guidance on how to provide feedback to apprentices with fewer opportunities or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe effective ways for providing feedback

Module #	Module title	Module topics	Learning objectives	Learning outcomes
	their specific needs and capacity implied by their background)		experiencing some form of disadvantage	
Module 8	On-the job support depending on the forms of disadvantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to develop specific on-the-job support plans depending on the type of disadvantage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide guidance on how to develop customized on-the-job support plans (to consider the key forms of disadvantage, e.g., ethnic minority, low economic status, physical disability, language barriers, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define the key elements of an effective on-the-job support plan
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to implement an on-the-job support plan depending on the type of disadvantage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide guidance on how to implement (incl. monitoring and follow-up) customized on-the-job support plans (to consider the key forms of disadvantage, e.g., ethnic minority, low economic status, physical disability, language barriers, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conceptualise a on-the-job support plan
Module 9	Additional support to develop work-appropriate behaviour and life skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to create and monitor a Wellness Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To explain the importance of nurturing wellbeing and life skills among apprentices with fewer opportunities or from disadvantaged backgrounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define approaches to boost apprentices' wellbeing and life skills
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to foster work-appropriate behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide trainees with guidelines on how to define 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give examples of work-appropriate behaviour and

Module #	Module title	Module topics	Learning objectives	Learning outcomes
			what work-appropriate behaviour is and ensure that apprentices comply with the set norms	define methods to achieve compliance
Module 10	Measures and support to directly boost fewer opportunities and disadvantaged apprentices' employability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to develop apprentices' soft skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To present methods for boosting apprentices' communication and interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence and empathy, leadership and decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggest practices that will enhance apprentices' soft skills
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to develop apprentices' workplace skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To present methods for boosting apprentices' professionalism and work ethic, time management and organization, teamwork and collaboration, problem-solving and critical thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggest practices that will enhance apprentices' workplace skills
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to support apprentices in career planning and orientation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide trainees with guidelines on how to support apprentices with fewer opportunities or experiencing some form of disadvantage in their continuous professional development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give examples of career guidance practices that could be applied during the apprenticeship
Module 11	Social enrichment activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are social enrichment activities and why are these important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To explain the different types of social enrichment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the importance of conducting social enrichment activities at the workplace

Module #	Module title	Module topics	Learning objectives	Learning outcomes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to create social enrichment activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To introduce trainees to social enrichment activities that can be performed during the apprenticeship, i.e., Cultural and Diversity Awareness (cultural events, diversity training and workshop, cultural exchange and dialogue); Community Engagement (volunteering opportunities in local organizations, community groups on social projects, community events and celebrations); Personal Development and Wellness (access to mental health resources and support, mindfulness and relaxation activities, personal growth workshops and seminars); Networking and Social Events (professional networking events, social gatherings, industry conferences and workshops) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give examples of social enrichment activities that can be performed within the workplace
Module 12	Advocacy (promoting success stories,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to create case studies and success stories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide guidelines on how to create case studies and success stories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Illustrate a good practice example

Module #	Module title	Module topics	Learning objectives	Learning outcomes
	sharing experience with peers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to carry out peer learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To explain peer learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpret peer learning
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to promote and disseminate good practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To outline effective promotion and dissemination strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify effective promotion and dissemination activities, methods and channels
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to target the right audiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide guidelines on how to identify and target the right audiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify relevant audiences

Overview of the Online Platform

The INCLUSIVE APPRENTICESHIPS project developed a training programme for company mentors involved in Work Based Learning (WBL) on how to work with apprentices with fewer opportunities and from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The programme was developed to be undertaken as a distance learning self-paced course, openly accessible through a dedicated online platform <https://inclusive-apprenticeships.eu/inclusive-courses/>.

The course has a total duration of 24 hours with a completion time window of maximum 2 months.

The Inclusive Apprenticeships e-learning platform is multilingual and provides open access to the training programme. It allows for providing the course in an interactive manner.

The platform has functionalities for:

- registration
- progress monitoring
- redirection to tests
- activities
- additional reading list

The platform offers 12 modules covering social inclusion, learner support, and mentor skills development. The learning process involves watching videos, reading guides and downloading training materials as trainees progress.

Users can check their knowledge before they begin the course in order to see whether and where they have competence gaps, as well as evaluate their progress and reflect on what they have learned.

Upon completion, the platform generates a certificate to support users' professional development portfolio.

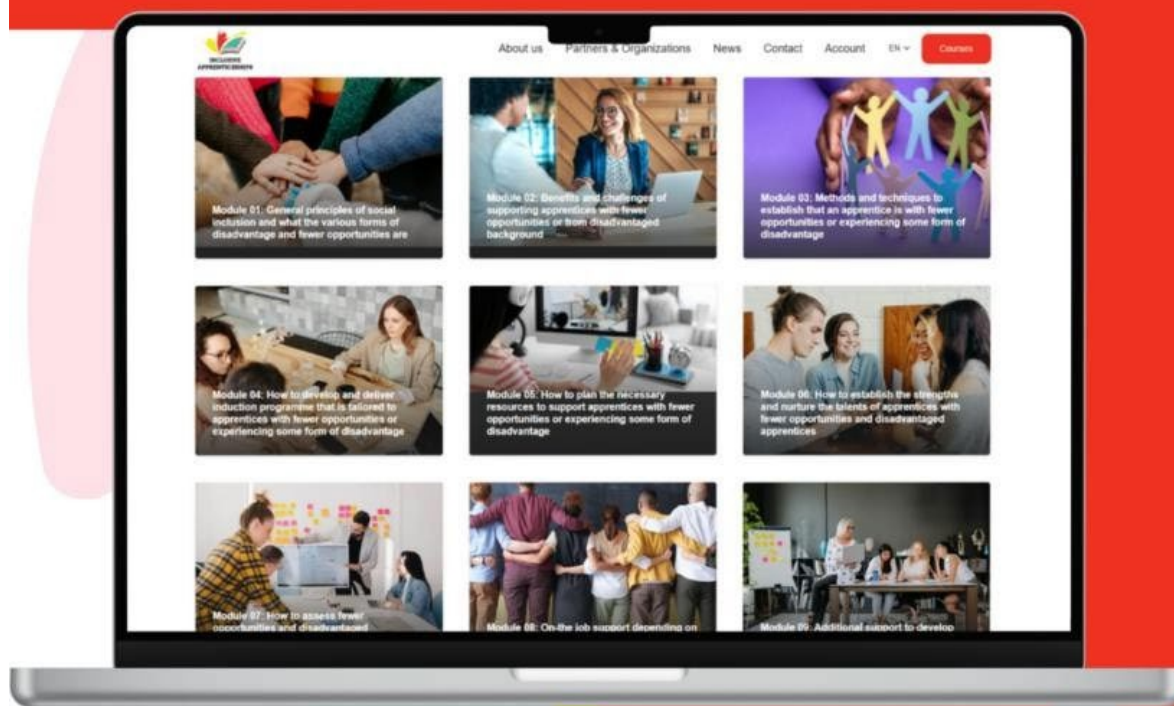
The platform also allows for trainees to revisit or refresh their knowledge any time after completion of the course.

**Start today with the platform Inclusive
Apprenticeships: Your step by step guide**





Discover the free courses of the European project Inclusive Apprenticeships



Overview of the Piloting Process

The current case study is developed based on the pilot sessions conducted in Austria and highlights success stories from those who undertook the course. It presents the effectiveness of our overall approach to raising the attractiveness of VET by making it more relevant to the needs of the whole society.

Moreover, it summarizes the piloting process in Austria, emphasizes key milestones during the training process and highlights the before and after competence levels of the mentors who undertook the course, by presenting the statistics from the self-evaluation questionnaires.

The piloting in Austria was conducted in the period August and September 2025. The target was at least 30 trainees to register and undertake the Austrian version of the training course.

Validated Pilot Participation:

To obtain a precise measure of participation, engagement was cross-checked using the pre- and post-training self-assessment questionnaires completed by the officially invited Austrian participants.

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More analytically:

- 30 participants completed the pre-training self-assessment questionnaire, most of them confirming active enrollment and engagement with the course.
- 30 participants completed the post-training questionnaire, indicating that roughly half of the original group successfully completed all modules and assessed their learning outcomes upon completion.

The piloting process was conducted online and in blended learning mode, in group settings at BEST, through written communication and asynchronous participation. Each participant:

1. Received an invitation & introduction to the project and the platform. CREFOP also created a short guide to use/register on the platform that was sent to participants.
2. Was requested to complete the pre-training self-assessment questionnaire, prior to enrolling in the courses, to establish a baseline of their competences and perceptions regarding inclusion in apprenticeships.
3. Undertook the online training and blended learning courses in German, in a fully self-paced format.
4. Was asked to complete the post-training self-assessment questionnaire upon

completion of the courses.

The collected data aimed to measure the progression of participants' self-assessed knowledge and competence levels before and after training, as well as to document their qualitative reflections on the content and platform.

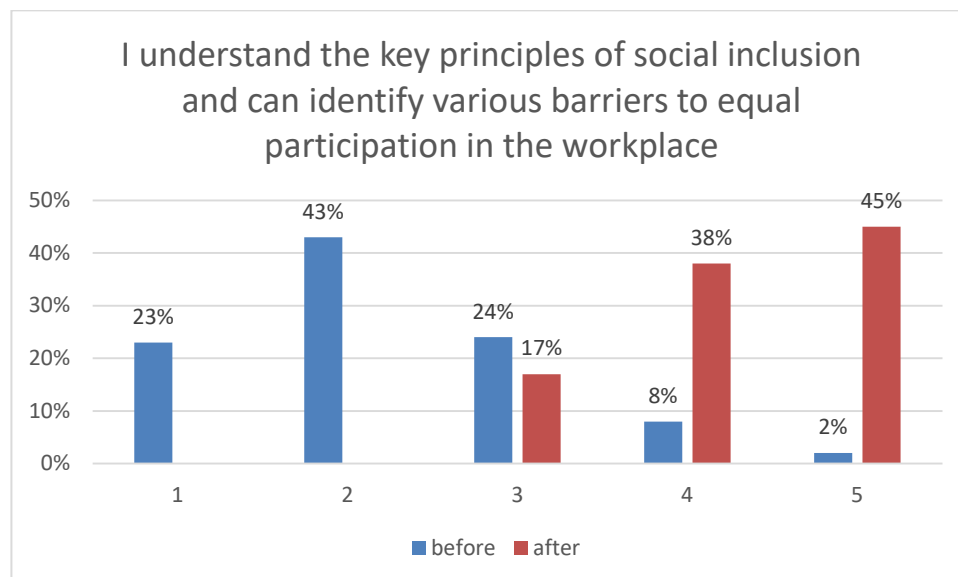
Key Success Indicators & Impact:

During the piloting of the training program, trainees were asked to complete a questionnaire to assess their knowledge and skills to effectively support apprentices with fewer opportunities and from disadvantaged backgrounds prior and after undertaking the training course.

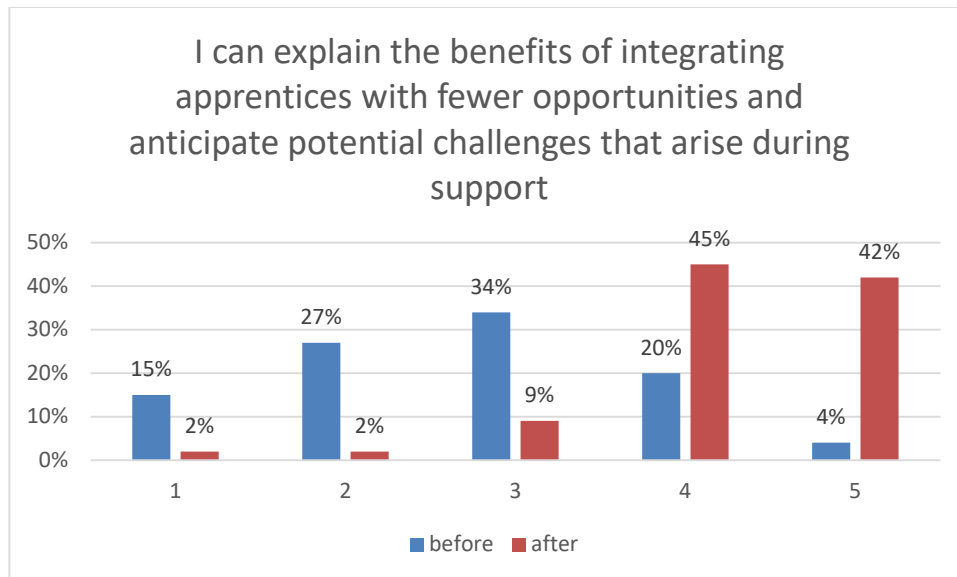
Each question was evaluated on the scale 1 to 5, where 1 = *Not confident at all*; 2 = *Somehow confident*; 3 = *Confident*; 4 = *More confident*; and 5 = *Fully confident*.

The results from the questionnaires are summarized below.

Regarding the first question that regards understanding the key principles of social inclusion and identification of various barriers to equal participation in the workplace, as shown in the graph below, prior to undertaking the training, 66% of the trainees stated that they are not at all confident or somehow confident. However, after undertaking the training, their confidence grew, as 45% of respondents stated that they are fully confident and 38% stated that they are more confident.

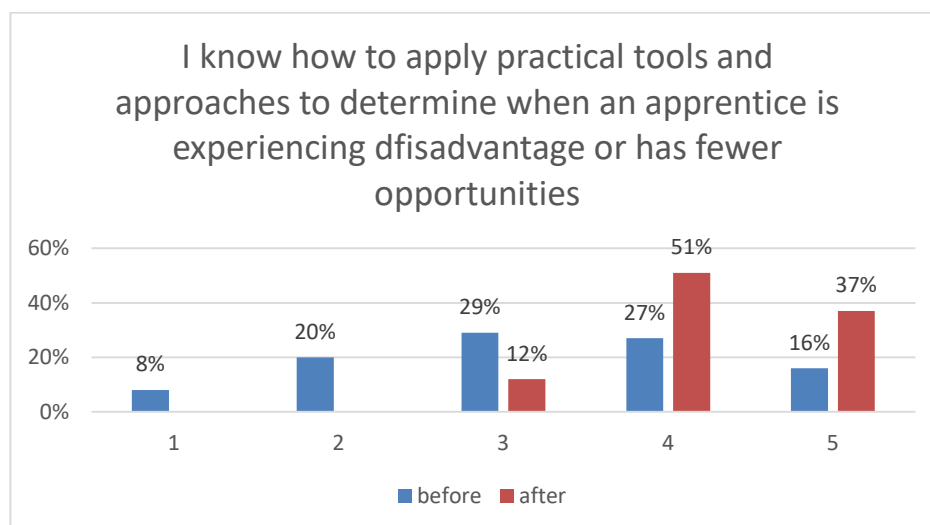


On the second question regarding explaining the benefits of integrating apprentices with fewer opportunities and anticipating potential challenges that may arise during their support, as shown in the graph below, only 4% were fully confident prior to the training and majority of the trainees (56%) were somehow confident and confident. After undertaking the training, 87% were more and fully confident in explaining the benefits of integrating apprentices with fewer opportunities and anticipate potential challenges that may arise during their support.

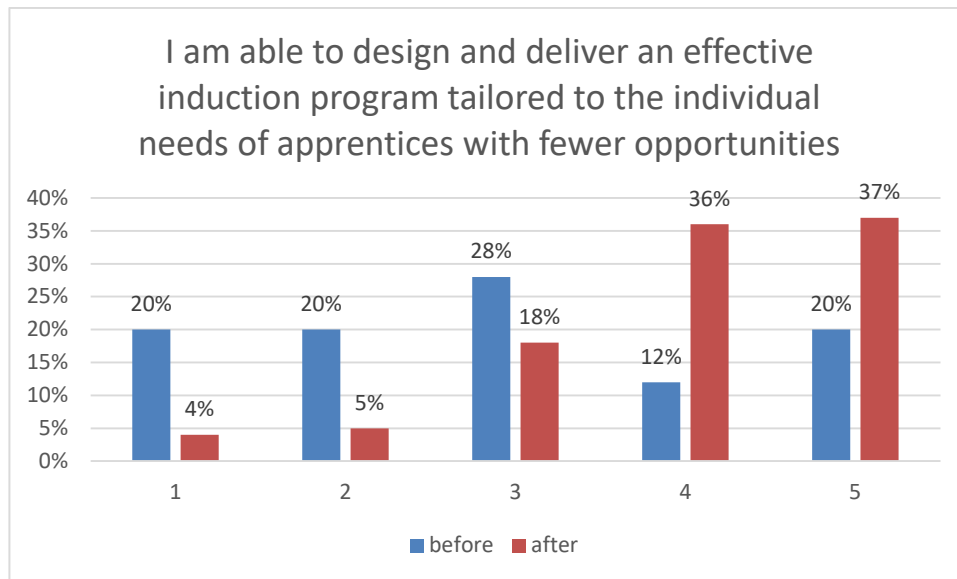


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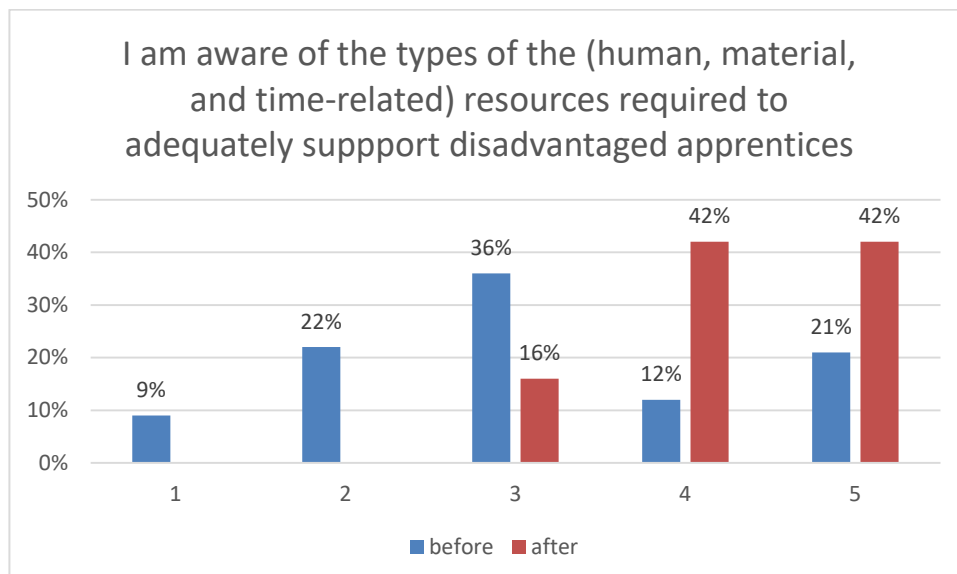
Prior to the training, 28% of the trainees were not confident/somewhat confident in applying practical tools and approaches to determine when an apprentice is experiencing disadvantage or has fewer opportunities. However, after the training, 51% were more confident and 37% fully confident.



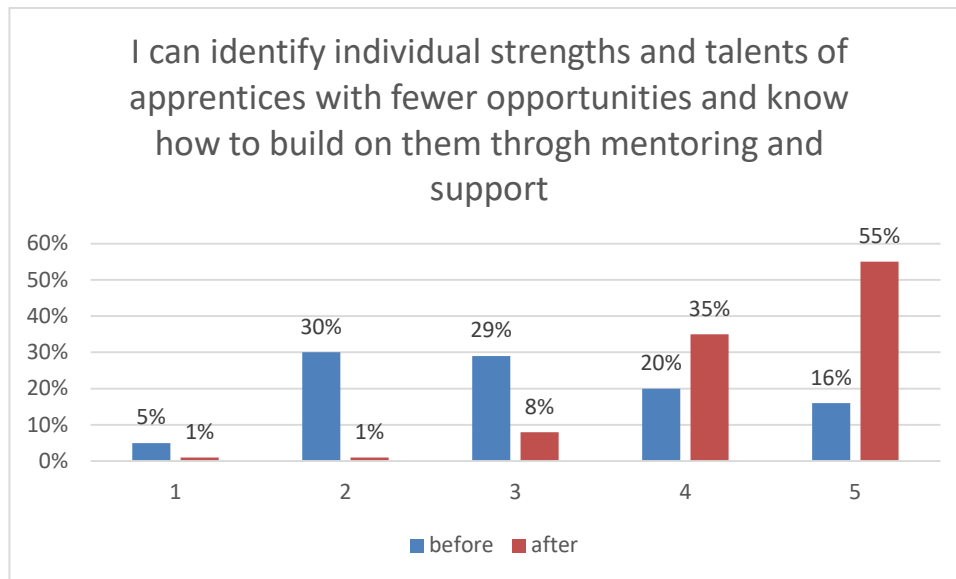
A clear difference can be noticed when it comes to the issue of designing and delivering effective induction programs tailored to the individual needs of apprentices with fewer opportunities. In comparison to the situation before the training when 20% of the trainees were fully confident in managing induction programs, 37% of the trainees feel fully confident in being able to design and deliver an effective induction program.



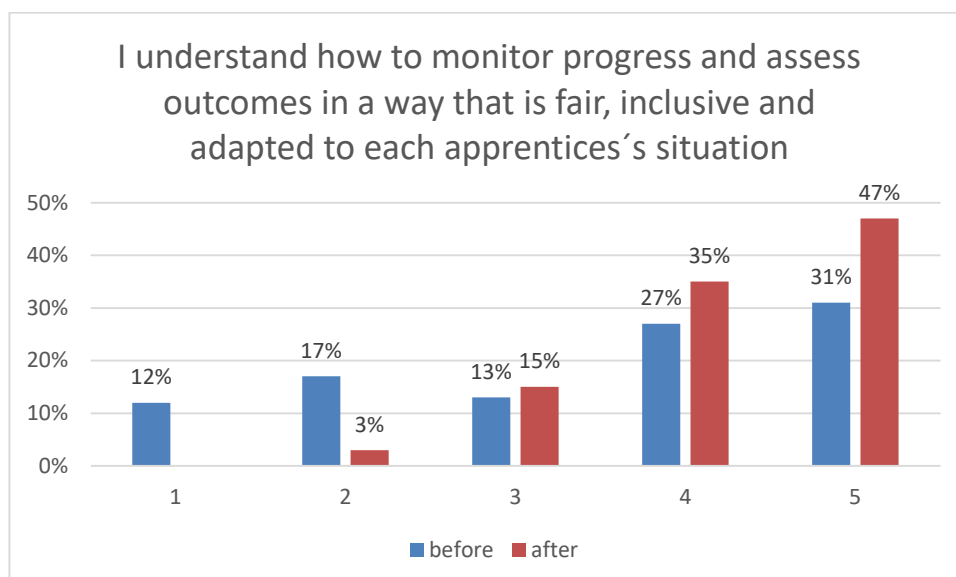
A significant change is also observed regarding the respondents' awareness of the types of the (human, material, and time-related) resources required to adequately support disadvantaged apprentices. As shown in the graph below, their confidence grew from 67% not being confident at all or somehow confident/confident to 84% becoming more confident or fully confident in the types of the human, material, and time-related resources required to adequately support disadvantaged apprentices.



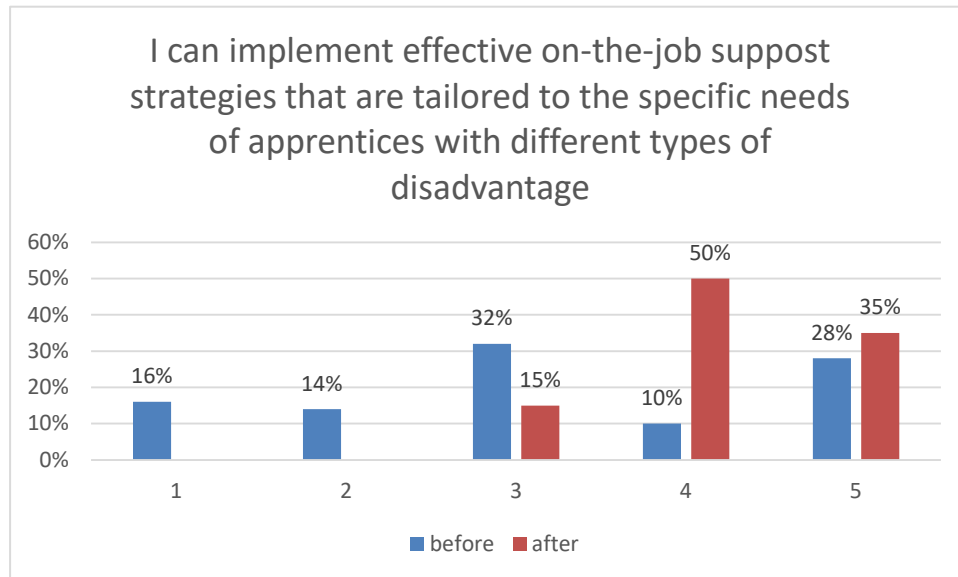
After undertaking the training, 90% of the trainees feel more confident or fully confident that they can identify individual strengths and talents of apprentices with fewer opportunities and know how to build on them through mentoring and support, which is a striking and significant improvement compared to their confidence prior to undertaking the training (5% not confident and 30% somehow confident).



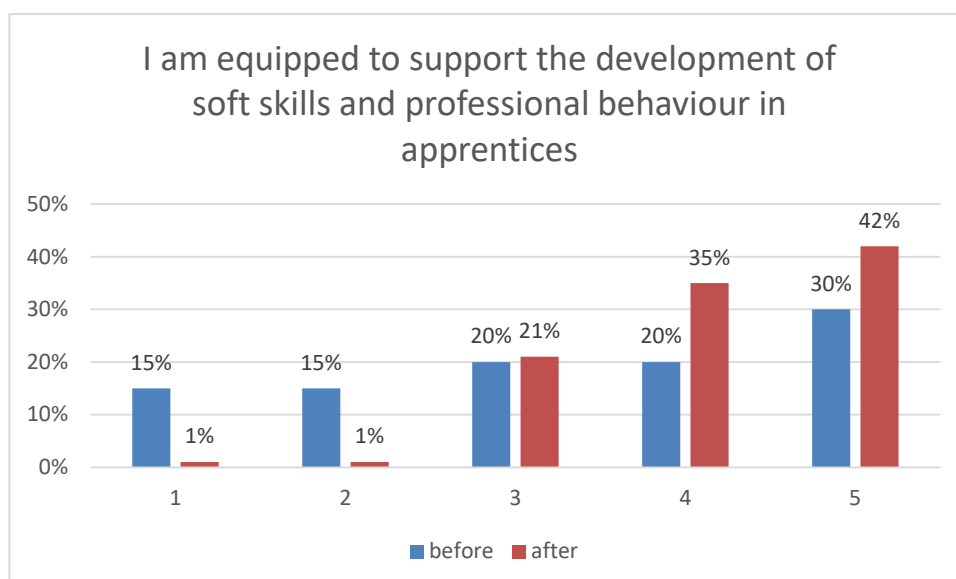
Achievement is also shown regarding participants' understanding how to monitor progress and assess outcomes in a way that is fair, inclusive, and adapted to each apprentice's situation. 42% of the respondents stated that they were either not confident or somehow confident/confident to monitor progress and assess outcomes in a way that is fair, inclusive, and adapted to each apprentice's situation. After the training they build stronger confidence, as 35% and 47% were more confident and fully confident.



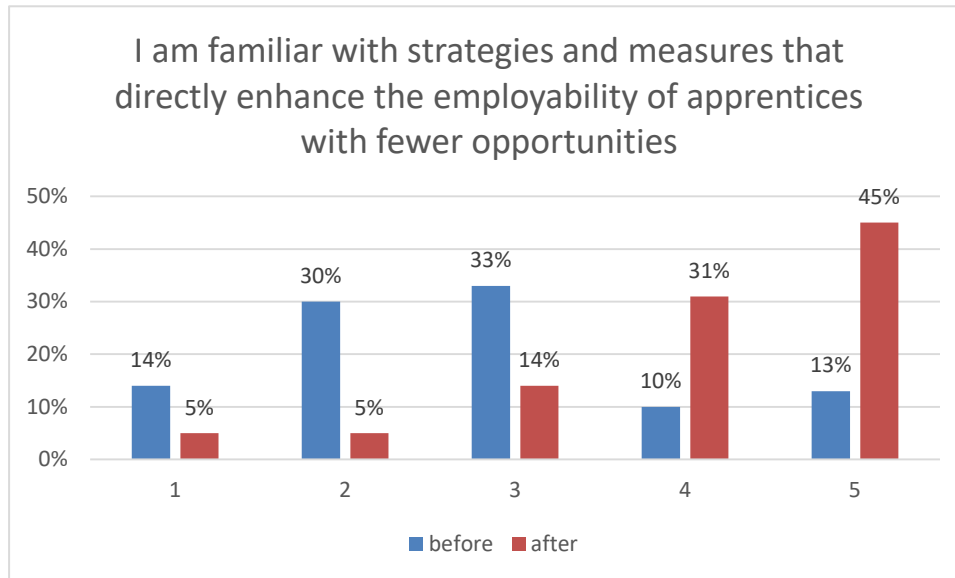
After the training 85% feel confident and fully confident that they can implement effective on-the-job support strategies that are tailored to the specific needs of apprentices with different types of disadvantage due to the training received in comparison with 38% before the training (see graph below).



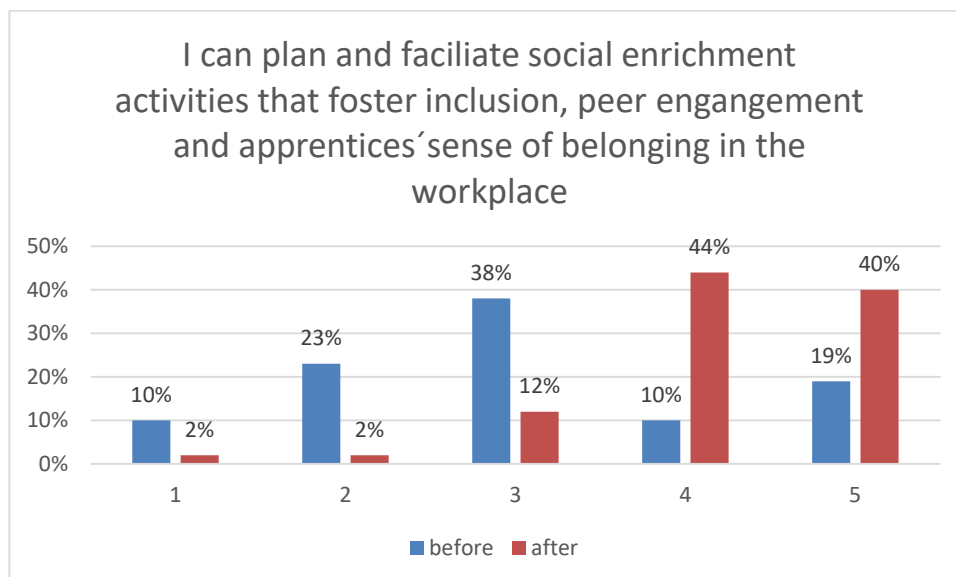
Prior to the training, trainees felt that they are not very well equipped to support the development of soft skills and professional behavior in apprentices (15% not confident at all, 15% somehow confident and 20% confident). However, the online training gave them the required knowledge and skills to feel well equipped to support the development of soft skills and professional behavior in apprentices in a high percentage of 77% (see graph below).



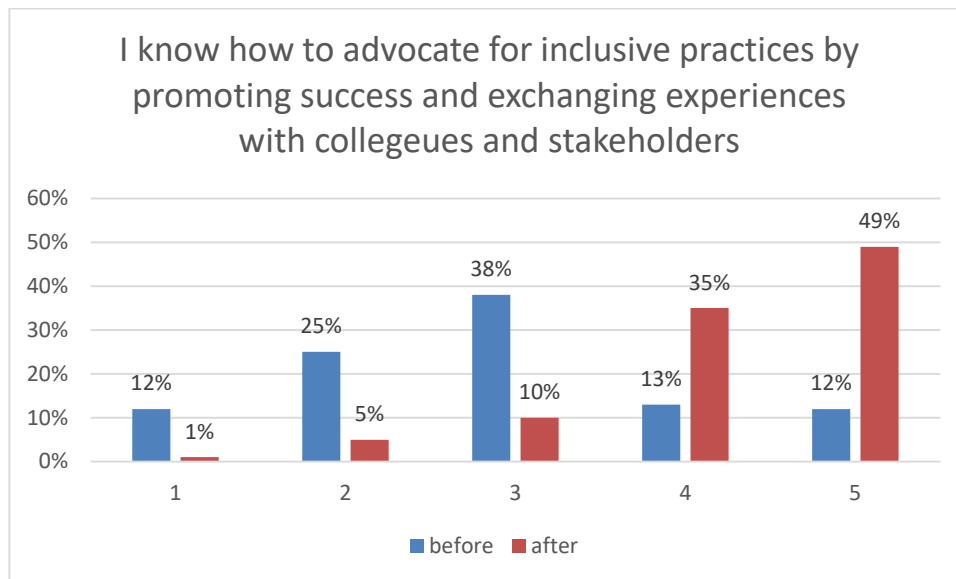
Trainees claimed that they become familiar with strategies and measures that directly enhance the employability of apprentices with fewer opportunities, as a result of the training. Prior to undertaking the training, no participant claimed to have full confidence in the matter. However, after the training, 45% become fully confident and 31% more confident (see graph below).



As illustrated in the graph below, 40% of the respondents feel fully confident that they can plan and facilitate social enrichment activities that foster inclusion, peer engagement, and apprentices' sense of belonging in the workplace, as a result of undertaking the training, whereas only 19 % claimed this before the training.



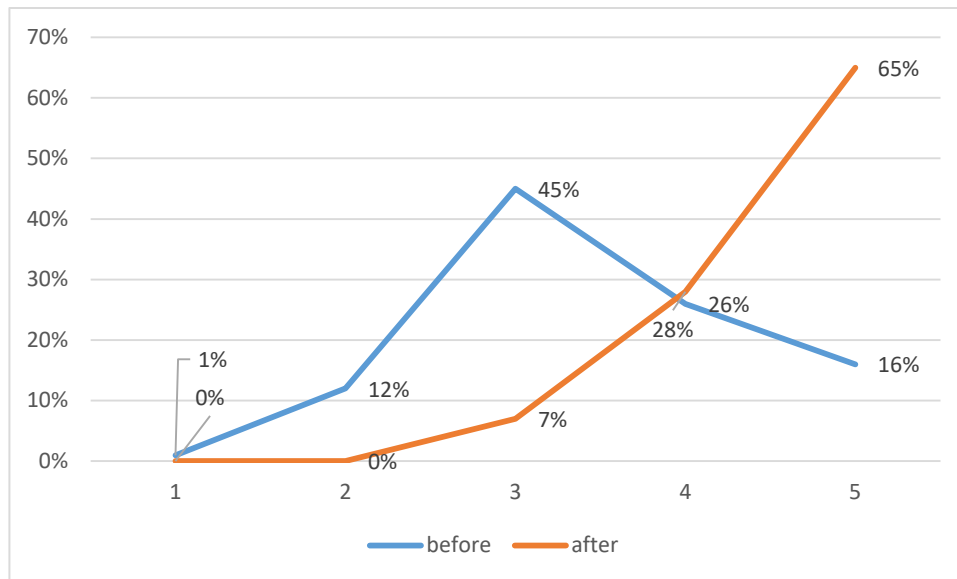
Following the online course, 84% of the respondents feel that they know how to advocate for inclusive practices by promoting success stories and exchanging experiences with colleagues and stakeholders, which is significant improvement to the 75% feeling not confident or somehow confident, prior to undertaking the course (see graph below).



Lessons Learned & Final Reflections

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As shown in the graph below, overall, before the training, 16% of the trainees stated that they are fully confident and 26% stated that they are more confident about knowledge and skills to effectively support apprentices with fewer opportunities and from disadvantaged backgrounds. However, after the training their confidence grew significantly, as 93% of the trainees stated that they are either more confident or fully confident in effectively supporting apprentices with fewer opportunities, which is extremely encouraging and positive looking on the impact of our project.



To summarise, as a result of undertaking the training, trainees have the knowledge and skills to:

- Understand the key principles of social inclusion and can identify various barriers to equal participation in the workplace.
- Explain the benefits of integrating apprentices with fewer opportunities and anticipate potential challenges that may arise during their support.
- Be aware of the types of the (human, material, and time-related) resources required to adequately support disadvantaged apprentices
- Identify individual strengths and talents of apprentices with fewer opportunities and know how to build on them through mentoring and support.
- Understand how to monitor progress and assess outcomes in a way that is fair, inclusive, and adapted to each apprentice's situation.
- Implement effective on-the-job support strategies that are tailored to the specific needs of apprentices with different types of disadvantage.
- Know how to apply practical tools and approaches to determine when an apprentice is experiencing disadvantage or has fewer opportunities.
- Be able to design and deliver an effective induction program tailored to the individual needs of apprentices with fewer opportunities.
- Support the development of soft skills and professional behaviour in apprentices.
- Be familiar with strategies and measures that directly enhance the employability of apprentices with fewer opportunities.
- Plan and facilitate social enrichment activities that foster inclusion, peer engagement, and apprentices' sense of belonging in the workplace.
- Know how to advocate for inclusive practices by promoting success stories and exchanging experiences with colleagues and stakeholders.

The piloting of the Inclusive Apprenticeships training course has demonstrated that it increases employability, promotes social inclusion, and addresses skills mismatches in the labour market, as it equipped company mentors with the skills and knowledge to effectively support apprentices from disadvantaged backgrounds, by promoting social inclusion in the field of VET, raising VET's attractiveness and boosting innovation through enhancing the outreach of and the support provided by the business involved in work-based learning (WBL) to apprentices with fewer opportunities and from disadvantaged backgrounds.



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INCLUSIVE APPRENTICESHIPS

