



FemSTEM Coaching Circles™

National Report

National Report of Greece
University of Thessaly

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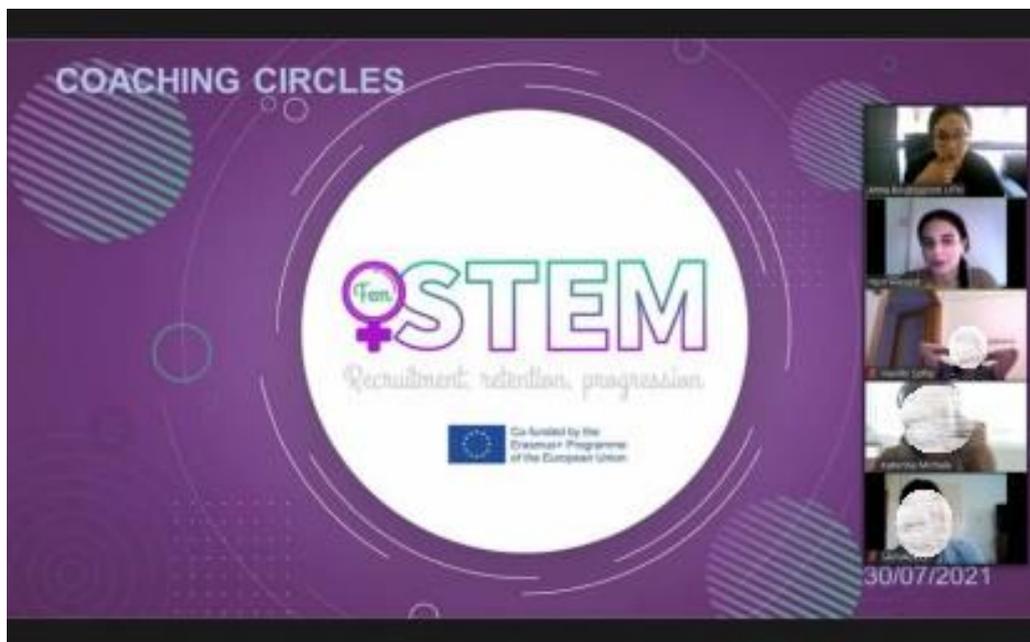
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INTRODUCTION

The consortium of the project FemSTEM has organized a series of sessions in the framework of Coaching Circles under the coordination and guidelines of the organization Inova Consultancy Ltd. Each partner was assigned to recruit women that belong to the main target group of the project and implement 3 sessions of Coaching Circles at the national level, using the framework and guidelines that were established within the Intellectual Output 3 of the project. For this reason, representatives of each organization have undergone a specific training under the guidelines of the coordinator, in order to be able to implement the Coaching Circles with their own groups of participants.

University of Thessaly, within the dissemination strategy of the project, has informed and outreached many potential participants and organized a recruitment process for this scope. We have used our network of contacts, VET organizations and other stakeholders at national level and we have released a public call through our social media network to recruit women that are active in the fields of STEM and would be interested to experience the Coaching Circles in order to receive support in their self-development.

Due to the general restrictions for gatherings and events across Europe the consortium has decided to implement the sessions of the Coaching Circles online and UTH was aligned to this decision. As a result, during the first piloting session, UTH had organized 3 online sessions with the recruitment of 10 participants in total.



The Coaching Circles of the University of Thessaly were implemented by Ira Alevra, who had attended the training provided by Inova Consultancy and Emma Humphrey. Anna Boubouzioti has assisted the procedure providing her experience in relevant training of the organization.

The following report presents the implementation of the first piloting of the Coaching Circles in Greece for the project FemSTEM, including evaluations, facilitator comments and recommendations for adaptations prior to the second piloting phase in Greece.

Recruitment

The first and very important step for the implementation of the piloting of the Coaching Circles was the outreach of suitable participants that represents the target group addressed by the project.

UTH has started the dissemination of the Coaching Circles from an early stage, through the social media of the Center for International Education of UTH. Our page usually hosts the activities we implement in the framework of EU projects and the followers are expecting to learn about new learning and training opportunities. We had many requests for information about the Coaching circles and the project in general and we are confident that many people have visited the website after talking with us.

Δήλωσε συμμετοχή στα Coaching Circles του FemSTEM



- ✓ Είσαι γυναίκα και σπουδάζεις ή δουλεύεις στο πεδίο των STEM;
- ✓ Θέλεις να βελτιώσεις τις δεξιότητες σου στην εργασία και να ενισχύσεις τις οριζόντιες δεξιότητες σου (soft skills);
- ✓ Θέλεις να γίνεις πιο δημιουργική και ευέλικτη στην εργασία αλλά και στην καθημερινότητά σου;
- ✓ Θέλεις να ανακαλύψεις τεχνικές για τη διαχείριση του άγχους, του φόρτου εργασίας και τη διαχείριση των συγκρούσεων στο εργασιακό περιβάλλον;
- ✎ Δήλωσε συμμετοχή εντελώς δωρεάν για να βρεθείς ένα βήμα πιο κοντά στην υλοποίηση των στόχων σου!



Recruitment, retention, progression

Also we have contacted many stakeholders and organisations from our national network in order to inform them about the piloting and we have asked them to inform their own staff and their network as well. This procedure was implemented both by written and oral communication. Also, we have communicated the event to the university community, informing teachers and students from departments that belong to the STEM spectrum.

Many people have expressed their interest for the Coaching circles and we had to make sure that they could participate and were committed to participate in the 3 sessions or the first piloting. For this reason we sent to the potential participants doodle polls with options for morning and afternoon sessions in order to fit with their own schedule. Some sessions were implemented with the division of the team to smaller groups.

We believe that the recruitment strategy we followed has served the scope to inform and engage as many people as possible to this piloting phase. Also, we have managed to inform our network once again about this project and to demonstrate regular activity and results within the project.

Overview of Participants

Participant	Background information
Participant 1	Studied environmental engineering, holds MSc in waste management and currently tries to start her PhD while working for an environmental company.
Participant 2	Studied Urban Planning and Regional Development and currently working for a company that implements large-scale energy projects.
Participant 3	Studied computer science and currently works as a researcher and technician in EU projects.
Participant 4	Studied preschool education and currently working on her MSc Special Education.
Participant 5	Graduated International and European Studies and afterwards started her studies in Medicine. Her scope is to start a new career in Medicine.
Participant 6	Studied Physics and currently works in her PhD in Radiology and Radiotherapy.
Participant 7	Studied philology and currently works in a vocational center with focus on EU projects.
Participant 8	Studied Law school and currently works in a vocational center with focus on EU projects and the aspect of STEM in Law.
Participant 9	Studied Computer science and currently works in an IT company.
Participant 10	Studied Medicine, holds a PhD in Pediatrics and currently works as General Manager of the Pediatric Department in a Public Hospital.

The Format and Process of the Coaching Circles™ in Greece

Session	Date	Number of Participants	Tools Used/Comments
1 st	12/07/2021	10	Soft skills assessment – start Supporting PPT Discussion rounds
2 nd	29/07/2021- 30/07/2021	10	Supporting PPT Discussion rounds
3 rd	20/10/2021	9	Supporting PPT Flow Theory Discussions rounds

Additional Information

As mentioned in the introduction of the report, the sessions of the 1st piloting phase of the Coaching Circles were implemented online. The arrangement of the online calls was implemented with the help of Doodle Polls as there were many participants and the scheduling of a convenient time was quite difficult. We have provided them with the option to participate in morning or afternoon sessions.

Regarding the division of the material to the 3 sessions, we have followed the instructions of the Facilitator Guide and made some adjustments to the structure and time allocation to each topic. Following, you can see the main structure and agenda of each session:

1st session:

In the first session the participants were familiarized with the project and its objectives. The trainer has presented the project roadmap and made reference to the activities and outputs that have been achieved so far.

Next the trainer has made a brief presentation of the Coaching Circles™ methodology and the steps for achieving the completion of the 1st piloting phase, introducing the participants to the next steps of this and the consequent sessions. With reference to the importance of the soft skills development, the participants have filled the soft skills evaluation form. In correlation to the project presentation, the trainer has presented the E Coaching programme and the participants had to reflect on their own needs and the usability for them, as well as to ask any question regarding the content, usability ect. Then the trainer took some time to present some general rules for the sessions and communication between the participants, focusing on how we should provide feedback to the other participants, what to avoid ect. as well as made reference to the confidentiality rules.

During the middle of the session, the participants took some time to introduce themselves to the groups and provide some reasons why they were interested to participate in the Coaching circles, their expectations ect.

The trainer made a short introduction to the tools provided, starting with the NLP and the Questioning technique.

At the end of the session we had a short Q&A with the participants and they were asked to fill in the evaluation form.

2nd session:

In the second session, the trainer focused on the presentation of the rest of the seven tools, while after the presentation of each tool the participants were requested to contribute by taking different roles in a Circle discussion. The participants were asked to present their thoughts, or share a relevant experience with the group, and also they were asked to provide feedback to the interventions made by other group members in order to enhance interaction and communication. Also, the participants were asked to practice and thoroughly examine the tools on their own time after the session, and write their queries and thoughts to be discussed in the final session.

The second session had to be divided in two days in a row as the participants requested to have a follow up session covering all the topics of the agenda.

At the end of the session we had a short Q&A with the participants and they were asked to fill in the evaluation form.

4. Μοντέλα ηγεσίας

Autocratic Laissez-faire Democratic

Do this!

Do this or that as you see fit

What do you think we should do?

Ποιος είδος ηγεσίας σε αντιπροσωπεύει;

<https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR101/leadership-style-quiz.htm>

Surface Structure	Questions/ Deep Structure
Mind Reading (Knowing someone's internal state – but not saying how) For example, "She doesn't like me."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do you know she doesn't like you?
Lost Performance (Value judgements – where the person doing the judging is left out) For example, "It's bad to be rich."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who says it's bad? According to who? How do you know it's bad?
Cause – Effect (Where cause is wrongly put outside self) For example, "He makes me mad."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does what he's doing cause you to choose to feel mad? Or – look specifically?
Complex Equivalence Two experiences are interpreted as being synonymous. For example, "She's always yelling at me, she doesn't like me."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does her yelling mean she doesn't like you? Have you ever yelled at someone you like?
Presuppositions For example, "If my husband knew how much I suffered, he wouldn't do that."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do you choose to suffer? How is he reacting? How do you know he doesn't know?

WHO

WHY

HOW

WHAT

WHEN

WHERE

3rd session:

At the third session the trainer started by presenting further development tools and techniques, the Start, Stop, Continue, Change model, the Smart Technique ect. Also, we took the initiative to present some valuable links and resources where the participants could search for more information and practice on their own the soft skills development. The rationale beyond that was to show them that their own development is a continuous procedure that requires time, persistence, practice and repetitiveness.

During the second part, following from o the previous session, the participants were asked about the tools or techniques that they wanted to be more analyzed by the trainer in order to have a round discussion on that.

In the Q&A of the last session each participant took some time to express their own thoughts about the Coaching circles and how they experienced their participation in the sessions. Afterwards the trainer had some closing remarks and asked the participants to fill in the evaluation form for the session as well as the soft skills evaluation form after the completion of the Coaching Circles.

Επιπλέον αναπτυξιακά εργαλεία

S Specific

- What do you want to accomplish?
- How will you know when you've accomplished it?
- How long will it take to accomplish?
- How much will it cost?

M Measurable

- How will you know when you've accomplished it?
- How long will it take to accomplish?
- How much will it cost?

A Achievable

- How can you get it done?
- How long will it take to accomplish?
- How much will it cost?

R Relevant

- How will you know when you've accomplished it?
- How long will it take to accomplish?
- How much will it cost?

T Time Bound

- How will you know when you've accomplished it?
- How long will it take to accomplish?
- How much will it cost?

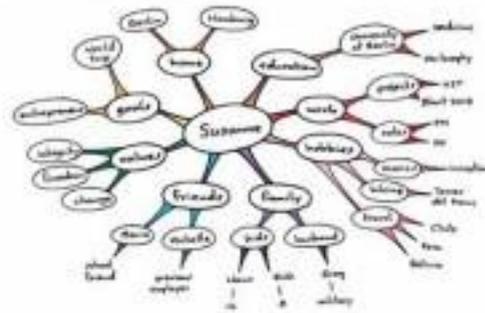
6. Χάρτης ομάδων

List of behaviours that are positive, enhancing individual worth and team productivity.

- Behaviour 1:
- Behaviour 2:
- Behaviour 3:
- Behaviour 4:
- Behaviour 5:

Points to focus on:

- Team Purpose
- Goals
- Roles
- Processes
- Decision-Making
- Expectations



Impact of the Coaching Circles

Session Evaluation Forms

A Session Evaluation Form was completed by participants at the end of each of the Circle sessions. This included asking the participants about their expectations, the methodology and what they found most useful about the session. An overview of responses can be found below:

Circle 1 – 12th July 2021

Expectations for the session?

- Getting to know about the project FemSTEM
- Meeting other people with similar interests and concerns
- Learning about soft skills
- Soft skills
- Learning how to manage conflicts at work
- Work-life balance
- Networking
- Meet new people
- Learning about the Coaching Circles
- Learning about FemSTEM project

3 main things to take away from the session:

- NLP Questioning technique, meeting new people, importance of soft skills
- FemSTEM project, the group, the need to develop my soft skills
- Meeting new people, the discussions, the trainers' friendliness
- Group of people with similar interests, interaction, and the project
- The questioning technique, how to advise others, E Coaching programme
- I kept some practices that were shared and I will try to apply them in my routine
- The "rules" on how to advise others and provide support and the part about the need to support women in STEM were very interesting
- I look forward to the next sessions and to see more tools and techniques in the group framework
- The FemSTEM project in general. I haven't participated in a similar group in the past.
- I would like to learn more about the other members of the group as I really enjoyed all the discussions

Circle 2 – 29th and 30th July 2021

Expectations for the session?

- To have more discussions with the other participants
- Meeting other people with similar interests and concerns
- Development of the soft skills
- Soft skills and more specifically leadership
- Learning how to manage conflicts at work without friction and leadership skills
- More tools for the development of the soft skills

- Networking and communication with other people that have similar experiences
- Continue discussions about others experiences at their working environment
- Learning more about the Coaching Circles and how they can be adopted in my working environment with the members of my team
- To see more information about FemSTEM project

3 main things to take away from the session:

- I have collected much useful information about how to manage everyday tasks and interactions with co workers
- The story that Katerina has shared, the advice given and the leadership test
- The stories shared by the other women
- The discussions for the different roles of women at work and family life
- The trainer has organized some group activities and I am thinking how I could do the same with my team
- All women have shared some personal information and I will keep that many people have the same concerns as me
- It was beautiful to discuss with other people your concerns and to see what they are thinking and how they would deal with them
- The different perspectives as presented in the OLD LADY/YOUNG LADY and how each participant could see a different aspect. I enjoyed it!
- I will try to practice more self-reflection and to set small goals every day.
- The picture that was discussed with the old lady/young lady and the leadership styles

Circle 3 – 20th October 2021

Expectations for the session?

- To discuss more tools that can be adopted in everyday life
- Meeting other people with similar interests and concerns
- To see the E Coaching platform and modules and to understand more about the programme
- Soft skills
- To share some thoughts about the Coaching Circles
- More tools for the development of the soft skills
- Networking and communication with other people that have similar experiences
- To exchange opinions and best practices
- To interact more with the group

3 main things to take away from the session:

- Wonderful discussions again. I feel that the time I have devoted was well spent and the experience I have gained will help me in the future. Fully recommend it.
- Everything was interesting
- I have collected many useful information which I am still processing. I will check the modules that were presented in order to help me process everything.
- I met new people and I really enjoyed interaction.
- I will keep this methodology for the future. I believe it is useful for companies as well.
- SMART Model and how to map your group
- Group activities, FemSTEM website and educational program
- Interaction, advices and experiences
- It is wonderful to see women supporting each other and that is what I would like to keep

from this experience

Conclusions

The participants were in their majority very satisfied with the methodology of the Coaching circles and the implementation of the sessions. Each one of them has emphasized on something different according to their initial expectations and their own profile and background. The Questioning technique, the leadership styles as well as other group activities were mentioned by many of them. The most important aspect that was highlighted by many of the participants was the interaction within the group, the discussions and the support between women.

In the overall, the sessions have given to the participants very important stimuli that will help them to create their own pathway for self-development.

Final Evaluation Form

A Final Evaluation Form was completed by participants at the end of the final Circle session. This included asking the participants the usefulness of the session and how the sessions have helped them in thinking about the next steps to developing in the STEM sector.

Please insert the collated results from the final evaluation forms in the table below:

				
Were the Coaching Circles™ useful for your soft skills development and goal setting?				9
Do you have a clear idea on your next steps after these sessions?			2	7
How useful was the peer support, and small group environment, to help you with self exploration?				9
Would you recommend the FemSTEM Coaching Circles™ to a friend?				9

How have the Coaching Circles™ helped you to think about moving forward with your career in STEM and/or your soft skills development and you next steps to achieve this?

-The Coaching circles have made me think about helping myself with stress management. It is an important aspect for my personal and professional life and focusing on that will of course lead to a better performance at work.

-I will try to deal more effectively with the conflicts in my working environment

-I have mostly focused on the interpersonal skills and how to create a better relationship with co workers

-Practicing empathy is a major aspect which I have kept and I think will help me with managing my own team at work.

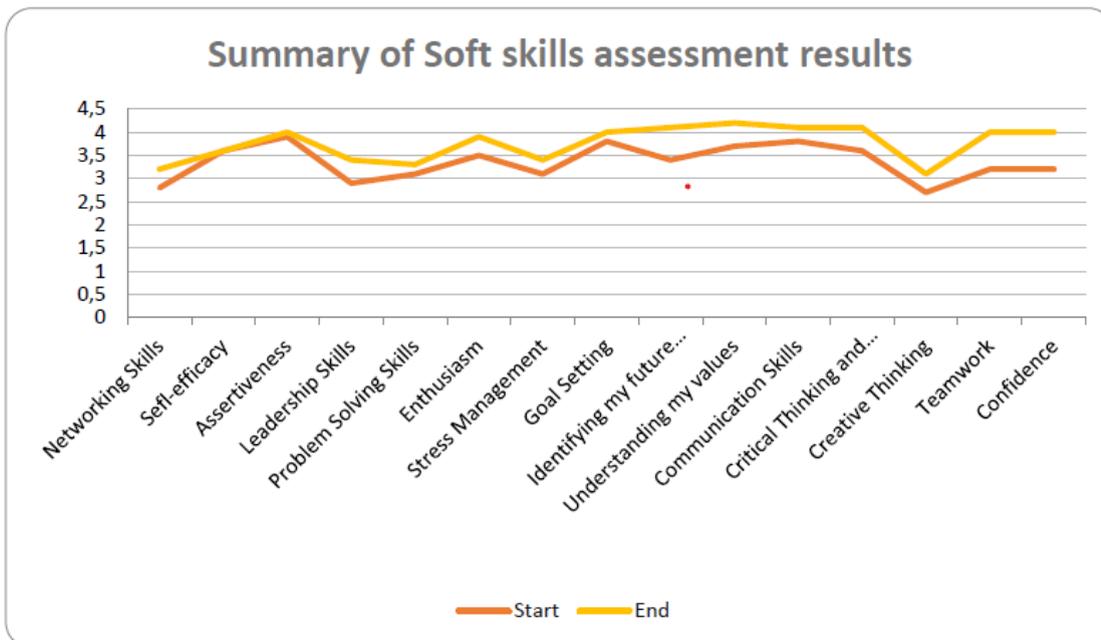
- Yes, I feel more motivated and confident right now.
- I realized that personal and professional life is interconnected. The tools for developing the soft skills can serve both.
- I feel more confident to deal with the problems at work and to focus also on how I can develop more my competences
- I have not clarified the steps that I will need to achieve a better career but for sure I have understood my strengths and weaknesses.
- I will try in the future to deal with everyday interaction using the questioning technique in all the parts that trigger me or when I do not understand the message. I think I will become more cooperative that way and I will have a better performance at work.
- I will focus on interpersonal skills

Any further comments or notes regarding the Circles?

- I hope that more women will have the opportunity to participate as it helps for setting priorities and new goals.
- Interaction with other women and the sharing of experiences felt very good.
- No other comment (5)
- I totally recommend it for any woman to participate in Coaching circles.
- I would like this methodology to be adopted by companies in order to help their employees develop their own skills more and to enhance interaction within their teams.
- I would like to apply this training methodology to my own team.

Before and after the sessions of Coaching Circles the participants were asked to fill in a self evaluation about the soft skills. The aim was to discover which aspects were needed to be addressed by the training and also to see whether we have achieved to develop any of the soft skills or their general confidence after the 3 sessions.

The results from the participants of the first piloting in Greece are depicted in the following graph:



From the graph it is obvious that the participants have evaluated the majority of their soft

skills higher after the completion of the 3 sessions of Coaching circles. This is also related to the improvement of their confidence, which is a major aspect for evaluating themselves higher regarding the other skills.

TESTIMONIALS

During the final session evaluation, participants were asked to leave testimonials, anonymous or accredited, about the sessions they had taken part in. Their answers are depicted below:

Name: Anonymous

Took part in:

Piloting of the Coaching circles in Greece.

How did you find the sessions?

It was a very interesting and useful experience!

What did you enjoy most from these sessions?

The interaction with other women that we share common thoughts and concerns! **What will you take away and implement after these sessions?**

The stories that I heard from other women and the advice given during the discussions.

Any further comments?

It is important to enhance the communication and support between women. The Coaching Circles methodology, with the group activities are valuable tools.

Name: Anonymous

Took part in:

Piloting of the Coaching circles in Greece.

How did you find the sessions?

The second session had many information and I needed some time afterwards to process all the information.

What did you enjoy most from these sessions?

I had the chance to reflect on myself and to give me enough time and navigation to clear my thoughts. Everyday life can be very fast and overwhelming and this was a very good reminder that we need help sometimes to deal with every situation.

What will you take away and implement after these sessions?

The tools and techniques that were presented.

Any further comments?

It would be nice if you could do that for more women! I felt that my time was well spent and I had the opportunity to reset my goals.

Facilitator's Comments and Recommendations for improvement

Overall, the 1st piloting of the Coaching Circles was a very valuable experience for the participants and also for the trainers of the UTH. The participants were very interested to learn about the project and the Coaching Circles methodology and although the majority of them had a much pressured schedule, they managed to participate in all sessions very actively. Additionally, although the sessions themselves took a lot of their time and needed their exclusive attention, they have examined all the material and additional resources in their own time after sessions, and provided feedback as requested. What was mentioned by the majority of them was that the Coaching Circles were an opportunity for them to have some personal well spent time and to reorganize or set new priorities.

The topic that was very interesting to the participants was NLP Questioning Technique and also the leadership styles and mapping of the team. The participants tried a lot to avoid giving direct advice and to practice questioning within the group. The majority of them shared that advice giving is a habit for them, which they have not thought about changing and for sure it needs a lot of practice and effort to withdraw from. Also, they were very impressed with the several paradigms of the questioning technique and most of them had reflected on several incidents that have happened in their everyday life that could have a very different result if they had handled it otherwise.

For us as trainers, the material provided by the Facilitator Guide was very helpful and explanatory and could easily be applied by trainers with less experience. The templates provided made our work easier and the only process within the Coaching Circles that required individualization and creation of a strategy was the recruitment process. For the next round of piloting we would suggest to focus more time in the presentation of paradigms and the group practice of the NLP Questioning technique.

Conclusions

The first piloting of the Coaching Circles in Greece was very interesting for the participants and the trainers too. The recruitment process has really boosted the dissemination strategy of the project in the case of Greece and we have managed to involve and engage an adequate number of participants to the procedure.

Regarding the context and the material provided for implementing the sessions, the Facilitators Guide is very navigating and could help also an unexperienced trainer to lead the process. The tools, practices and group activities were presented and applied easily to the groups, but the most interesting and useful for them according to the acquired feedback was the NLP Questioning technique. The participants asked many questions and needed more paradigms in order to fully understand the extent and different applications of this technique. Also, when they have revised the material on their own time they have declared that this technique was the one that they needed to discuss again within the group on the last session.

In the overall, the participants have evaluated very positively the whole methodology of the Coaching Circles and the implementation of the sessions. Regarding the enhancement of the soft skills of the participants we cannot claim that they have developed them within the 3 sessions. But the interaction within the group, the processing of new and useful information with full applicability in their personal and professional life has had a valuable impact on them and they have uplifted their confidence. As a result, the participants have assessed better their own skills at the end of the 3 sessions.

Annexes

List of evidence needed from each partner to be sent with the national report

- Signed attendance list from each Circle session – or declaration of attendance signed by the legal representative.
- Signed Programme Agreement from each participant – or completed via google form.
- Soft Skills Evaluation (at the start of their journey) - or completed via google form.
- Soft Skills Evaluation (at the end of their journey) - or completed via google form.
- Session Evaluation Forms (from each session) - or completed via google form.
- Final Evaluation Form (from the final session) - or completed via google form.
- Photos from each Circle sessions – or screenshots.
- Evidence of recruitment activities (e.g. screenshots on online advertising, social media, press releases etc)

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