B-WISE
Skills for the future : WISEs ready!

1

Set of Qualifications Profiles for WISEs sector

Report on Occupational Profiles in WISE sector – Capacity-building in WISEs

Needs resistance to overcomes, ways of learning, actions on people, organisations, policies

2023

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

KEY INFO PAGE

Key information:

Grant agreement n° 621509-EPP-1-2020-1-BE-EPPKA2-SSA-B

Deliverable D.3.1

Release version 1.0

Deliverable type: Report

Editor: Gianfranco Marocchi (Idee in Rete)

Authors: The T3.1 report was drafted by Gianfranco Marocchi (Consorzio Nazionale Idee in Rete).

The identification of the items in the chapter "1. WISEs' needs" is the result of a comparison within the working group, in particular with Rita Festi from Scuola Centrale Formazione.

The whole report is the result of a constant comparison with the working group of Idee in Rete and SCF that involved the Author, Camilla Baldini (Idee in Rete project manager), Claudia Pinessi (Idee in Rete), Laura Minieri (SCF), Rita Festi (SCF) and Bianca Maria Molinari (SCF).

This report should be cited as follow:

Gianfranco Marocchi (2023), Set of Qualifications profiles for WISEs sector: Report on Occupational Profiles in WISEs sector – Capacity-building in WISEs. Brussels:
https://www.bwiseproject.eu/en/results

Project partners:

EASPD (coordinator), ENSIE, arbeit plus, Lichtwerk, Fundación ONCE, RES – Réseau d'entreprises sociales, NASOR – National Association of the Socially Responsible Employers, ACT Group, La fédération des entreprises d'insertion, RISE Romania, Ev Zin, ŠENT, Idee in Rete, Social Entrepreneurship Association of Latvia, De Omslag, Stowarzyszenie Współpracy Regionalnej, JKU-Johannes Kepler Universität Linz, CESUR, Excellia, Faculty of Law in Zagreb University, AFPA, ADV Fundatia Alaturi de Voi, Margarita, Cene Štupar, AIAS Bologna onlus, Samaritan Association of Latvia, ROC van Amsterdam, CERTES, SCF – Scuola Centrale Formazione, EURICSE – European Research Institute on Cooperatives and Social Enterprises.

Table of contents

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to:
- identify and analyse the capacity-building needs that emerged from WP1 and WP2
- identify, among the multiplicity of needs identified and re-aggregated into areas of expertise, the priority ones and describe them in detail.

This last description is functional in order to identify, in a subsequent elaboration (T3.2), an analytical definition of possible learning objectives for each of these areas; on this basis it will then be possible, in the continuation of the project, to define capacity-building paths.

In the first part (chapter 'The needs of the WISEs') some criteria for the identification of expertises will be preliminarily identified and a synthetic outline of the needs emerged from the previous WPs will be offered.

In the second part (chapter 'The capacity building areas'), some potential areas of expertise will be selected and then subjected to a more in-depth analysis.

As part of this analysis, connections between these areas and the ESCO classification system were also identified, both with reference to occupational profiles, where appropriate, and to the 'skills and competencies' section. For convenience, although these issues will be developed in the second section of this paper, the correspondence between area of expertise and ESCO classification is briefly reproduced on the following page.

Table of correspondence between areas of expertise and ESCO classification

Networking and community thinking	The topic of networking orientation is partially dealt with in the classification of S&K ESCOs; networking capacity is not identified as a separate S&K, but elements consistent with it can be found, for example, in skills S1 (communication, collaboration and creativity) and in particular in S1.8 (working with others), S1.1 (negotiating), S1.2 (liaising and networking) and elsewhere
The 'capacity of vision'	The capacity for vision is, especially for the realisation part, connected with T2 - Thinking skills and Competences (in particular T2.1, Processing information, ideas and concepts, which includes among other components think analytically, think critically, think holistically, and others). These are the ability to '... apply the mental processes of gathering, conceptualising, analysing, synthesising, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication.
Communicating work integration	The profile of 'communication manager' is present in the ESCO classification (https://esco.ec.europa.eu/it/classification/occupation_main), it is a matter of adapting the competences as outlined here
Supporting work 1 - tutoring / mentoring / informal training	The ESCO system does not appear to be adequately structured. Referring instead to the specific skills, there is a trace, although not systematic, of elements related to the profile in S3 'Assisting and caring', e.g. in S3.1 (counselling), S3.3 (Protecting and enforcing), S3.6 (Providing general personal care) as well as in various transversal skills (e.g. T6.3, T6.4).
Supporting work 2 - Skills Validation	It is possible to find, by analogy, knowledge similar to that identified here, e.g., in the 'validation of learning acquired through volunteering'
Supporting work 3 – Placement	The topics discussed here are present in the ESCO classification in a piecemeal manner
Organising production with WSN	The topics discussed here are present in the ESCO classification in a fragmentary manner

1. WISEs NEEDS

1.1. How we worked

1.1.1 Criteria

This section analyses some competences that do not appear to be manifestly incompatible with either of the following criteria:

1. they emerge as useful on the basis of what emerged in the previous WPs
2. they are characteristic of WISEs or at least assume quite specific characteristics for WISEs, with respect to those referring to the generality of enterprises.

Therefore, a *useful* element, but one that does not present *specificities*, is not examined here, because it is possible, at least in the majority of national contexts, to refer to what is already foreseen for each professional profile. This is, for example, the case for all skills related to technical professions carried out in WISEs: e.g. gardeners, ecological workers, carpenters, electricians, cleaners, etc. There is obviously a great need for all these profiles in WISEs, and in some cases WISEs may experience a particular lack of such skills, for instance when those who work in WISEs have approached WISEs attracted by social work aspects with WSNs and must reinvent themselves as gardeners, ecological workers, carpenters, etc. without previous skills in this area. But, regarding this need for skills reinforcement, it would not be possible to say anything different than attending the training opportunities already existing in each country concerning the different professional profiles (in addition, of course, to relying on on-the-job learning). This selective criterion explains, among other things, why most of the identified profiles concern Enablers and Supporters, since the training of workers mainly follows already defined paths, except for the issue of strengthening soft skills, which is the subject of in-depth study here.

In other cases, however, the situation appears to be different and specifically:
- there may be specific professions that characterise WISEs. In these cases, there may be different degrees of recognition of these profiles at national level, but in any case, they are professions that do not find equivalents in other types of organisations. This is the case for competences and qualifications related to the work of supporters, in its different forms. This does not exclude that these profiles may have elements of contact with others that operate (e.g., with mentoring tasks) outside WISEs (e.g. in public offices

or private employment agencies), but the specificities of WISEs require the description of these profiles as profiles in their own right;

- there may be cases where profiles and competences are common in the labour market of most countries but have relevant specificities typical of WISEs.

1.1.2. Sources

Sources for identifying potential areas for which to define capacity-building actions derive from the reading of WP2 report 'Understanding user (digital) skill needs in WISEs' and specifically the following sections:

- the results of the SWOT Analysis, referring first of all to all critical points (weaknesses), but also to the other points; where, in fact, it emerges that a certain competence is mentioned as relevant among the strengths cell or as a lever to seize potential opportunities, it may be not widespread in the WISEs, even where it is not explicitly mentioned as an area where a deficiency is present;
- the Personas analyses, identifying areas of expertise strengthening concerning each of them (in particular the paragraphs of each Personas named 'Recommendation for WP3');
- the section of WP2 dedicated to technologies, in which there is an analysis about areas of greater and lesser adequacy within the WISE system.

In the following paragraphs, these sources are indicated under headings; in the example below, the blue lines under the heading mean that the content of the paragraph 'Qualifying WSNs' is deduced and developed from what can be read in WP2 report at three different points: in the SWOT Analysis regarding the Productive WISEs (weakness cell), in the personas profiles 'Social oriented supporters' and 'Growth oriented WSNs' and in point 3 of the chapter on technologies. It is also emphasised that this primarily involves supporters.

1.5.2 Promoting the WSNs' learning

(Source: WP2 | Swot Analysis / PW / W | Personas / Social oriented supporter / Growth Oriented WSN | Technologies Point 3 | It concerns Supporters)

The areas of expertise thus identified have been divided into four macro-categories: Network Building Area, Development and Strategy Area, Organisational Strengthening Area and People Area.

1.2. Network Building Area

1.2.1. Developing network functions

(Source: WP2 | Swot Analysis / PW SW TW / S | It concerns, in different forms, both Enablers and Supporters.) [SC1]

Among the strengths characterising WISEs there is the ability to establish cooperation and partnership relations with different stakeholders, from for-profit enterprises to other social economy organisations in the area, from participation in national networks to public administrations ('partnerships in public and private sectors... good relationships with local authorities and big employers in the area allow them to offer synergistic services...'). WISEs and other social economy organisations have a very special way of doing business, embedded in collaborative relationships both on entrepreneurial aspects and in the best pursuit of the social mission. This requires, both on the management side and on the supporter and technical staff side, specific attitudes and skills. Network relations are built by developing bonds of trust with one's interlocutors on a day-to-day basis, caring relationships, experimenting with increasingly engaging forms of integration with other actors, etc. This implies that WISE shares, from the top levels down to the operators who work with operators from other organisations day by day, skills and awareness that enable it to build and develop collaborative relationships.

1.2.2. Co-operation with public administration

(Source: WP2 | Swot Analysis | PW SW TW / W | It concerns, in different forms, both Enablers and Supporters.

The relationship with the public administration is often pointed out in terms of both strengths and weaknesses. In these cases, public administration seems unable to understand the social value of WISEs' work and therefore unable to adopt adequate recognition policies and support policies; this happens even in contexts where legal instruments that would allow it are present. This circumstance highlights the need to prepare leaders of WISEs and their representative organisations, providing them with adequate tools both of a legal nature and related to the lucidity of political analysis. A different need concerns supporters, whose contact with the public administration presumably concerns the operational levels (e.g., employment services or social services operators) that collaborate with the WISE for the integration of specific WSNs; in this case, it is a question of adequately relating

to these professionals in order to develop increasingly integrated and comprehensive intervention projects in a partnership logic.

1.2.3.   Social Economy Groups

(Source: WP2 | Swot Analysis / PW / O | It concerns, in different forms, both Enablers and Supporters.

The topic of 'Social Economy Groups' emerged sharply during WP2: in many cases WISEs, besides being embedded in networks of various kinds (see 'Developing network functions'), have specific relations with other organisations belonging to the same group, with which there is a very significant degree of economic integration (e.g., staff units, investments, administrative functions, etc. are shared). These forms of integration may take on different legal bases on the regulatory systems of each country and even within the same country. In any case, the participation and management of these complex bodies requires a combination of professionalism and skills on various levels, from the legal to the economic, to the ability to manage the (sometimes problematic) relationships that characterise these aggregations.

1.3. Development and Strategies Area

1.3.1. Imagining change

(Source: WP2 | SWOT Analysis / PW S | Personas / Founders | Technologies point 9 | It concerns Enablers)

In WISEs we find people, often among the founders, who, with authority and foresight, are called to make strategic choices that determine the future of their enterprises. What can make the difference is not the possession of a specific technical or managerial competence but understanding where the WISE will or could be in 'ten years' time and how to mobilise resources (economic, organisational, motivational, etc.) to make this happen. This is a competence that is not easy to reinforce and is partly linked to innate characteristics; however, there are certainly actions that can foster the 'capacity for vision': many social entrepreneurs in WISEs reinforced their instinct for innovation by knowing other experiences, networking with other WISEs, sometimes 'copying' the innovations of others or, even better, adapting them to their own context. Dynamic, cosmopolitan enablers, connected in networks with each other and with others are a source of ideas that the world of WISEs certainly needs in order to seize opportunities emerging in the SWOT analysis with respect to new areas and sectors of development. In this context, it is also useful to consider the marginal presence of WISEs in entrepreneurial initiatives based on emerging technologies; at most, the most structured WISEs are *users* of advanced technologies, but hardly any players can be found who invest themselves in the development of original products.

1.3.2. Providing sustainability for WISEs

(Source: WP2 | Swot Analysis / TW - O, T / SW - S | It concerns Enablers e Staff)

Although the case studies revealed the presence of entrepreneurially solid WISEs, they also revealed how many others are in precarious sustainability conditions; the existence of these WISEs is threatened by possible worsening of the current economic situation. All this must certainly be addressed with the ability to see medium-term development paths (see the section on 'Imagining change') and by improving commercial functions (see the section on 'Marketing and sales'); but the ability - which WISEs also often possess in an 'instinctive' way - to create patterns of economic equilibrium by integrating different sources and thus finding economic equilibrium different from those typical of for-profit enterprises must probably also be

strengthened. Besides the sale of goods and services and resources from public sources for the social work carried out (in countries where this happens), the economic balance of WISEs observed in the case studies includes a multiplicity of sources: donations, crowdfunding, economies in Social Economy Groups, volunteering, European projects, etc. This situation makes it necessary to develop skills that can ensure economic balance with strategies that are not comparable to those commonly used by for-profit enterprises.

1.3.3.   Strengthening managerial skills

(Source: WP2 | Personas / Social Enablers, Next Enablers Supporters | It concerns Enablers and supporters)

The high regard that WISEs have for the social vocation leads them to include on the board of executives people who embody the 'social' soul of the WISE: people who dedicate their lives to the work integration of WSNs; now these people make decisions on a plurality of economic, financial, legal, management, organisational, personnel, investment, etc. aspects. People who chose many years earlier to become involved in WISE driven by social motivations find themselves facing difficulties in many of these areas. The problem arises especially in small organisations where there is little division of labour, and the manager must be competent in a little bit of everything. A similar situation is experienced by the 'Next Enablers' supporters, i.e., people who, after a career in a WISE, are identified as people believed to be able to take on the role of enablers in the near future; they may be flattered by this recognition and feel the 'sense of duty' that pushes them to take on more responsibility, but they may not necessarily have the necessary skills. In any case, these are largely skills that are not specific to WISEs and for which there are established training channels.

1.3.4.   Generational turnover

(Source: WP2 | Swot Analysis / PW TW / W | Personas, the Beginners | It concerns Enablers and Supporters)

This is a particularly acute issue in some countries, where WISEs are led by long-time executives who are now close to retirement; sometimes these WISEs encounter difficulties in finding new executives and training them both from the point of view of managerial skills and adherence to the company mission (Source: WP2 / Swot Analysis / PW / W). The issue involves different levels, which cannot be reduced to the sphere of training activities addressed to young future executives: it involves understanding the reasons why a WISE is unattractive to the younger generation,

from those related to mission and meaning, to economic aspects, work-life balance, etc. In some cases, the difficulty of 'finding young people willing to fully involve themselves in the mission of the WISE' is highlighted (TW). The topic thus has aspects of specificity related to WISEs or rather, more generally, to social economy entities. At least in some countries there are training activities specifically dedicated to the training of new leaders.

1.3.5. Managing the ageing leadership team
(Source: WP2 | Personas / Almost retired | It concerns Enablers)

The presence of senior executives characterises the WISEs of some countries; beyond the issue already discussed of generational turnover, the question arises around the enhancement of their skills, which may involve a plurality of organisational actions: tasking these enablers with training and accompanying new executives, countering their perception of being indispensable and irreplaceable, providing for soft exit paths from top roles, for example by giving them tasks in the areas of culture, training, etc., in positions thus involving no longer being at the forefront of management aspects, but still useful to the WISE.

1.4. Organisational Strengthening Area

1.4.1. Communicating the mission of WISE

(Source: WP2 | Swot Analysis | SW TW / W | Technologies point 2 | It concerns Enablers and Supporters)

Although the social value of the work of WISEs seems obvious to those working in the field, in reality it is reported that, at the level of both public opinion and institutions, WISEs are often misunderstood and underestimated: their social function is not understood, they are victim to prejudices that see them as inefficient and unprofessional, etc. Among the many reasons for this situation there is the deficiency in communication skills. This is evident even at first glance (e.g., rough or absent websites, minimal social media presence, unprofessional communication materials, etc.). The theme was also developed in WP2 with reference to digital technologies, which appear to be very underutilised: to give just two examples, engagement in social neglects all communication channels most used by young people, and multimedia products are often of fairly low quality and have minimal dissemination. It sometimes seems that WISEs pay little attention to communication aspects, believing that these are energies taken away from the main purpose of WISEs or thinking that the value of their work is already evident without the need to provide specific actions to communicate it. But this is actually not the case!

1.4.2. Organising production by combining social mission and production needs

(Source: WP2 | Swot Analysis / PW - SW / W | Technologies point 8 | It concerns Enablers, Supporters, Growth Oriented WSN and staff)

Organising production by combining social mission and production needs is undoubtedly one of the areas of expertise that most characterises WISEs. Organising production is, in itself, common to all enterprises; but it is a matter of doing so while taking into account, for example, that for a certain WSN it is appropriate not to work alone and that for another it is necessary; that a certain WSN is slower than the norm and that for another a certain production function is particularly stimulating. The lack of this competence is, on closer inspection, why companies are usually unable to include WSNs: they function in a standardised way and do not adapt production to the specific needs of workers who have different needs from others. Being able, on the contrary, to organise production while achieving social outcomes and market excellence is a valuable skill for WISEs, to be developed

through appropriate training support and a lot of experience. As part of this competence, surely it is also useful to develop a reflection on the technologies that can get the best out of people, also remembering that in the case studies emerged how technologies can both be an important tool for inclusion or - when applied without considering the specificities of WSNs - increase inequality and exclusion.

1.4.3.   Marketing and Sales

(Source: WP2 | Swot Analysis / PW TW / W | Technologies point 9 | It concerns Enablers and staff)

Some WISEs highlighted as an aspect of weakness the lack of experience in the field of marketing and sales. This could in some cases derive from an underestimation, on the part of organisations with a strong vocation to the social mission, of commercial aspects; but these are in any case standard skills that can be found on the labour market; the more specific aspect could instead be the capacity to adequately valorise, in setting up marketing strategies and taking care of the image of the WISE, the social value connected to the production. Within this area, it should be noted that one of the most inadequate aspects about technologies is the presence of WISEs in e-commerce: there are very few cases of WISEs promoting their own online sales channels and their presence in the most widespread platforms.

1.4.4.   Empowering administrative and support staff

(Source: WP2 | Swot Analysis / PW - SW/ W | It concerns Staff)

This issue is reported by some countries where WISEs are unattractive with respect to technical administrative tasks and other organisational and support functions. Poorly structured teams are described, with poor communication skills, somewhat imprecise and with little sense of responsibility. Apart from possible specific problems, the middle levels of WISEs and other social economy organisations are often exposed to potential problems: they are not as involved in the organisational mission as managers and not as grateful to WISEs for having accepted them from highly compromised situations such as WSNs. These people may have little loyalty and perceive WISE simply as an 'employer that pays less than others' with the consequences identified in WP2. This situation only partly concerns the training area because it relates to the organisational aspects of WISEs.

1.4.5. Workers' technological and digital skills

(Source: WP2 | Swot Analysis / PW / W | Technologies point 3 | It concerns WSN)

Many WSNs have very low levels of education, fragmentary work experience or work experience dating back many years ago, and sometimes come from backgrounds of social exclusion; in some cases, they are also of a more mature age. All these factors mean that at least some of these workers, even when willing to engage themselves, are only able to use elementary tools and technologies. This situation is faced by some WISEs by choosing very simple jobs, while other WISEs try to foster the acquisition of skills by WSNs or at least familiarise them with the digital world, both for work purposes and for the many needs of everyday life. In today's productive context, where even the simplest jobs require some technological and digital skills, and where even blue-collar and handicraft activities are becoming increasingly digital, WSNs' lack of skills can become a problem when competing with other companies. In the case studies, WISEs were encountered that are acting specifically for basic training of workers, both to improve their work skills and as support for social integration.

1.4.6. Learn about the WISEs culture

(Source: WP2 | Personas / Tech Enabler, Professionally oriented supporter | It concerns Tech Enablers and Professionally Oriented Supporters)

WISEs sometimes include managers and workers who do not have the most common background in the social work or humanities or social sciences or education behind them, but who come from a technical training and vocational background and were fascinated by WISEs and by the idea of spending their energies to foster work integration. As emerged during the research, while these enablers and supporters constitute a valuable resource and entirely consistent with the aims of the WISE, their inclusion within the management team of a WISE is not always straightforward. The Tech Enabler and the Professionally Oriented Supporter, although fascinated by the world of WISEs, generally find its decision-making process tiring and slow and show impatience with some aspects of the WISE organisational models; the other managers and supporters risk on their side to see these figures as 'foreign bodies', as people who 'do not understand the WISE culture'. It is therefore a matter of developing an action of 'cultural mediation' between WISE and these Enablers and Supporters, and of proposing actions of training in the culture of WISEs and of contact with WISEs starting from the places where these people are trained, i.e., the schools and technical-scientific universities.

1.5. People Area

1.5.1. Supporters' work

(Source: WP2 | Swot Analysis / SW / W – | Personas Supporters | It concerns Supporters)

Organising an adequate and quality production by having WSNs among its workers requires being able to rely on quality supporters; on the contrary, some WISEs report that the staff is made up of young people with little experience and skills and with little motivational investment towards their work; this leads to poor quality productions and unsatisfactory integration work. This situation is due to several reasons: the absence of a formal recognition of the supporter, low remuneration, absence of hours dedicated to tasks other than production, etc. In some cases, it is highlighted that supporters are 'oriented towards caring tasks and are not committed to production' (TW). The issue requires further investigation based on different national situations, but the fact remains that a good quality of supporters represents one of the central points for the development of WISEs.

1.5.2. Promoting the WSNs' learning

(Source: WP2 | Swot Analysis / PW / W | Personas / Social oriented supporter / Growth Oriented WSN | Technologies Point 3 | It concerns Supporters)

Some WISEs indicated the low work ability and professional competence of WSNs as a problematic element in the SWOT Analysis. The fact that WSNs have low qualifications is not surprising and, rather than a problem, it is 'what makes a WISE a WISE'. The aspect that deserves further investigation is that, starting from this often taken for granted condition, WSNs have different forms and times of learning and it is a matter of having personnel who are able not only to organise production adequately, but also to support and organise the WSNs so that they become able to express their abilities. This is not an obvious task because learning models of WSNs may differ significantly from those used to train other workers. The supporter entrusted with this task will therefore have to be able to foster the learning of the WSN by combining the different tools that a WISE has at its disposal and that may include structured training (certified and non-certified), on-the-job learning, soft skills reinforcement, etc., and will have to equip him/herself with adequate tools to verify the actual increase of competences. In the context of this issue, it is also useful to develop a reflection on the technological tools that can support WSNs'

competence: as several WISEs indicated in the case studies, re-proposing digital technologies used for non-WSNs (e.g., based on MOOCs) may be useless or counterproductive in WISEs, whereas it is useful to study forms of digital knowledge transmission specifically designed for WSNs.

1.5.3.   Soft skills enforcement

(Source: WP2 | Personas | Technologies point 3 | It concerns WSN)

Strengthening the soft skills of WSNs is one of the aspects that most characterise WISEs. In fact, WSNs, besides specific training needs related to the job tasks, generally need support to acquire transversal skills that may concern different areas. A first type of soft skills concerns the attitudes associated with assuming a job role, from respecting working hours to the way of relating to colleagues and superiors, to the behaviour to adopt, etc.; other soft skills concern daily life and all skills (e.g. dealing with public offices and services) are needed to fulfil one's rights and participate in social life. Then there are some soft skills related to the digital sphere, connected to the spread of digitalisation in both the work and personal spheres, whereby it becomes necessary, for example, to be able to carry out bureaucratic procedures, to be able to operate via a PC or other device, to enter information in a digital form, etc. This is an area in which some WISEs have already undertaken specific capacity-building initiatives addressed to their WSNs.

1.5.4.   Placement

(Source: WP2 | Swot Analysis / PW TW / S, O | It concerns Supporters)

The issue of the placement of WSNs at the end of the pathway has been debated for years in the world of WISEs. At least some of them, especially those operating with temporary forms of disadvantage in labour market contexts able to absorb personnel, aim to place WSNs in non-WISEs enterprises after a certain period, so as to free the job position for new WSNs. The placement operation requires different (and not easy) conditions, both organisational and in terms of the professional competence of operators. Amongst the organisational conditions, the first is economic sustainability: it is not easy to deprive oneself of trained workers and start again with new unqualified workers. About professional competence, placement requires specific skills, as well as the ability to build network links based on trust with non-WISEs enterprises in the area; in other words, it is a matter of 'placing WSNs in regular companies by matching the training with the skills required in the regular labour market' (TW, Swot Analysis, O).

1.5.5. Recognising and certifying the skills acquired by WSNs

(Source: WP2 | Swot Analysis / TW / S | Technologies Point 4 | It concerns Supporters)

As also highlighted in the section 'Promoting the WSNs' learning', learning in WISE follows methods and logics that are not always easily framed by formal competence recognition systems. It is partly formal and partly on-the-job learning, partly related to professional aspects and partly to soft skills. At the same time, especially where the objective is external placement, it becomes important, as highlighted above all by the Training WISEs in the SWOT Analysis, to be able to document the certified competences acquired thanks to the work in the WISE. This, among other things, could be a decisive element, not only for the WSNs placed, but also for achieving the right recognition (also economic) of the social work carried out by the WISE in countries where this is not the case. It is therefore a matter of developing a specific competence that can recognise and measure the learning of WSNs in WISEs and certify it. In these operations, it may be useful to evaluate the implementation of digital systems to store and process what has taken place during the work integration process, as is the case in some experimentation.

1.5.6. A WSN-friendly workplace

(Source: WP2 | Technologies point 9 | It concerns Enablers and Supporters)

WISEs are characterised by being enterprises whose purpose is to employ WSNs, including many workers with disabilities. This would lead one to think that there are widespread skills about technologies, especially digital technologies, that can make the workplace more appropriate for disadvantaged workers. This theme includes the whole area of assistive technologies, and so everything that can make a digital technology product accessible and usable by people with disabilities. There are some cases of particularly strong WISEs that specifically include people with disabilities who have invested in this area, but overall, the competences of WISEs appear to be more limited than one might expect.

1.5.7. Dealing with work pressure

(Source: WP2 | Swot Analysis / PW / W | It concerns all WISEs members)

The work in WISEs and other social economy actors is often a source of pressure that is difficult to bear; these are work environments where values and professional elements are combined; the WISE is urged to be able to do many things with few resources and workers are led to 'never disconnect', sometimes invading personal life. In short, a WISE is very different from a 'quiet workplace' where one simply does

one's duty in a relaxed way. This situation can be exciting, but at the same time it may generate considerable stress, especially in situations where the hard work seems to lead to limited results. A different situation is that of WSNs, for whom work in the WISE often represents a radical change in outlook on life, requires the modification of established routines, and this can be on the one hand an exciting challenge, on the other hand a source of considerable stress. It is a matter of managing the effort and involvement of people in a balanced way, fully valorising the values' adherence to the mission, but without generating unsustainable situations for people.

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

2. Areas of expertise
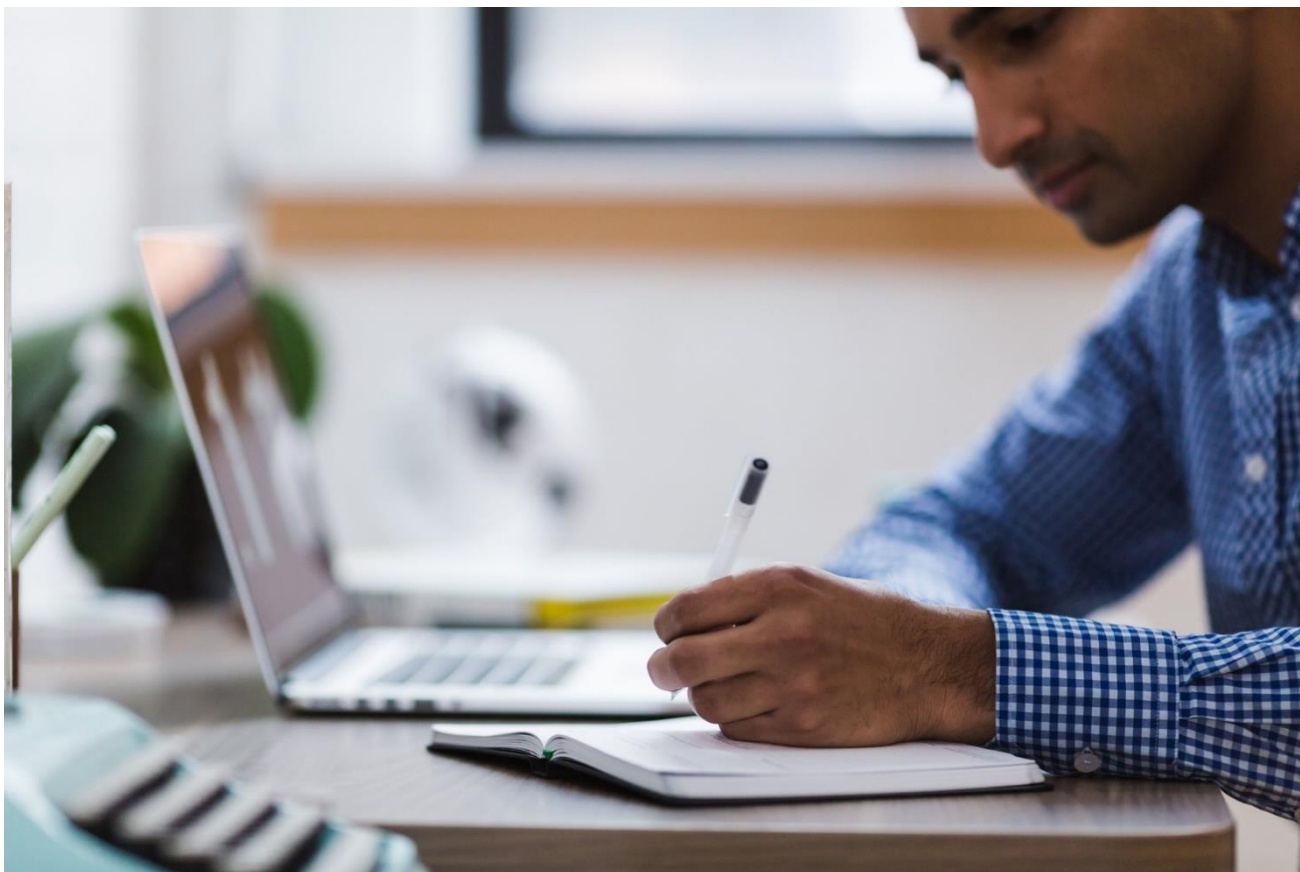
2.1. Introduction

2.1.1. Some choices

The framework outlined in the previous chapter is very articulated; it includes a high number of areas of expertise, which have some overlapping margins.
Once developed, this kind of product would give rise to an organisational complexity that would be unmanageable in the subsequent phases of the project, considering that each area of expertise corresponds to a certain number of learning outcomes and that each learning outcome in turn requires the development of a certain number of training plans or other actions as a response. It was therefore necessary 1) to aggregate together areas of expertise that present certain areas of overlap 2) to identify priorities useful for selecting a limited number of areas of expertise.
The general criteria of relevance and specificity set out in the previous chapter converge in this choice, as well as choices of substance, aware that a certain area of arbitrariness is unavoidable in this operation. Each of the chosen areas is the subject of a more in-depth analysis in this chapter.

2.1.2. How the themes are developed

Consistent with what was emphasised in WP2, it was decided to place the issue of expertise in an articulated framework, which looks not only at strengthening people's skills, but also at empowering WISEs as a whole.
A training effort addressed to individuals risks of being in vain if it is not set in a framework of organisational and policy evolution: resources are mobilised, expectations are created, people are asked to commit themselves and then everything remains without concrete outcomes, frustrating first and foremost those who have devoted energy to learning. For a more in-depth discussion of these contents, please refer to WP2 Report, reproducing however an outline contained in the phase report, from which it can be seen how limiting it would be to frame the issue of capacity-building only in the form of 'structured training'.

A map of actions

Organizational actions

Actions toward people

Policies

- Action on soft skills
- Renewal of the management team
- Support for organizational processes - Working on enabler awareness
- Contrast WISEs starvation circle → WISEs un-stressing
- Network between WISEs
- Structured training
- Networks with universities and research centers
- Integration with informal training, on the job training
- More technical-scientific professions in the management team
- Valuing supporter's role

Consistent with the above, each of the paragraphs relating to a specific theme / profile / areas of expertise will be structured as follows:

- a specific theme / profile / areas of expertise is described, highlighting the reasons why it is considered useful to address it in the WISEs;
- personas profiles are identified - sometimes in a specific way, sometimes referring to the basic enabler / supporter / WSN tripartition used in the previous WPs - which are most affected by this theme;
- the elements of resistance are analysed: cultural, organisational, economic aspects that stand as obstacles in the strategies for a capacity-building on the subject dealt with. It is necessary to be aware of these obstacles, planning suitable actions to overcome them;
- the elements of the SWOT Analysis of WP2 concerning the theme in question are recalled, where existing, both where strengths are highlighted and where hindering elements appear;
- where possible, elements related to the theme are traced in the ESCO classification, generally using the Skills and Competences section;
- any aspects relating to the ways and forms in which the learners are led to strengthen their skills are highlighted: not everyone learns in the same way,

but each one learns according to certain variables, both personal and related to the theme dealt with, which are developed here;

- the connections between the subject matter and technologies, as examined in the two previous WPs, are reconstructed;
- In the following three subsections, indications are developed for capacity-building actions respectively 1) at the level of people, 2) at the level of organisations, 3) at the level of policies.

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

2.2. Networking and community thinking

This chapter develops what has been elaborated in section 'Network Building Area' and in particular in the section 'Developing network functions' in the previous chapter.

2.2.1.   What it is about

The history of WISEs is made of relationships and community ties. Most WISEs are unthinkable unless placed within a complex and articulated system of connections with a multiplicity of actors. The examples are many and very different; without claiming to be exhaustive:

- as the analyses of WP2 Report have shown, many WISEs, especially in countries where the level of public support is less consistent, develop into 'Social Economy Groups', aggregations of subjects that may have different legal forms (or none at all, basing their ties on personal relations and common origin), but that see labour integration as one of the pillars of their mission; thus, several social economy actors (e.g. welfare organisations, training organisations, cultural organisations and WISEs) come together and create a symbiotic relationship, in which each one is functional to the others and none could consider its own action complete if separated from that of the other actors of the group (please refer to the final report of WP2 for more details);
- in addition to links with social economy organisations, the case studies revealed many situations where WISEs have deep ties with the community fabric where they were born and where they operate; this translates into various forms of support they receive from community members, who see the WISE as a point of reference;
- there are also historical links with public administrations, which on the one hand, at least in some national contexts, support WISEs, and on the other hand rely on them to address challenges to the inclusion of WSNs, establishing collaborative relationships;
- links with the local production activities; although cases of competition-oriented relationships are not excluded, collaborative ones are equally developed (e.g. in WISEs oriented towards the temporary placement of WSNs, with a view to their future placement, or for collaborations on the entrepreneurial level; and so on…)

In short, WISEs are naturally immersed in a world of relationships. But along with the existing links, WP2 research highlighted the need to invest on new fronts. In

particular, WP2 report pointed out that certain strengthening goals in the technological and digital spheres cannot be tackled without the creation of links with science-oriented universities and research centres, from at least two perspectives:

- development of applied research for developments of interest to WISEs;
- introduction of new elements with a technology and digitally oriented mindset into the management team, such as young engineers or computer scientists with a social vocation who start working with WISEs at the end of their studies.

All this contributes to forming a specific mindset in those who work in WISEs, who should have a particular capacity and orientation to operate in synergetic and collaborative terms with other people. From enablers to supporters, the collaborative propensity is one of the most characteristic elements of those working in WISEs.

2.2.2. To whom it applies

The theme discussed here applies, in different forms, to most of the enabler and supporter profiles. Specifically, with respect to the enablers, The Founder and The Social Enabler are typically protagonists in the definition of the network strategies of the WISEs in which they operate. The Almost Retired, who have also been indicated among the enablers with respect to whom it is not reasonable to concentrate training efforts, could see in the construction of network relations - untied from daily management tasks - an area in which they could make use of their experience in a phase of disengagement from operational tasks. Tech Enablers, as aforementioned, are directly called upon as profiles to be more widely disseminated to enable WISEs to become more familiar with development orientations in a technological and digital sense. The theme also applies to supporters qualified as 'Next enablers', who are asked to take on typical enabler competences for the continuation of their professional career and thus, among other things, to strengthen their networking skills.

But the other supporters are also called in to play to develop the theme of relations. In managing the WSNs' insertion pathways, they are exposed to entertain a multiplicity of relations: with public bodies and social economy organisations that are in charge of the WSNs for welfare measures that complement those aimed at labour integration, with the citizens of the territories in which they operate, to involve them in the WISEs' mission and overcome any mistrust, and with local enterprises that may offer WSNs possible opportunities for future employment (in the case of WISEs operating in a transition-oriented model).

In other words, the ability to create links and work in networks appears to be one of the qualifying and characterising elements for WISEs.

2.2.3. The elements of resistance

The elements of resistance can be traced back to two factors, one related to the preservation of the heritage of relationships historically possessed by WISEs, the other related to the new challenges facing WISEs.

The first factor relates to the risk of losing the specificities described above because they are erroneously considered as characteristics of a 'romantic' past of WISEs, to be overcome with a view to a more decisive entrepreneurial evolution. In other words, an orientation to make WISEs more inclined to compete rather than to collaborate, to develop the corporate aspect rather than community rootedness and so on. This line of thought has the great limitation of not understanding the specificities of WISEs and of identifying the enterprise with the stereotype of a for-profit enterprise, thinking that cultural homologation to mainstreaming models is the only way forward. On the contrary, virtuous experiences teach us that there can be companies that are excellent *and* collaborative, efficient *and linked to the* territory; or rather, to put it better: excellent *because they are* collaborative, efficient *because they are* linked to the territory. But this is an awareness that cannot be taken for granted, that must overcome considerable cultural resistance, and that must therefore be the subject of capacity-building programmes.

The second factor relates to new challenges. As WP2 research points out, with some commendable exceptions, WISEs have weak links to the places of technological development; their leadership is made up of people with social and humanistic backgrounds; the entry of elements with technological backgrounds into the leadership is often difficult on both sides. This occurs although there is, especially among the younger generations, a tension to develop ideas that deploy technologies within projects of social change. As pointed out in WP2, even if there is no prejudicially negative attitude, many WISEs appear in fact reluctant to evolve in this direction.

2.2.4. The theme in the SWOT Analysis

The theme of relationships is widely cited in the SWOT analysis; for example, with respect to PWs, the 'Good recognition by local governments and stakeholders' and the 'Strong cooperation and alliance with various stakeholders and reliability of partners for the reintegration of WSNs' are cited among the strengths, and among the opportunities the possibility of defining 'New collaboration and maintenance of

existing partnerships in public and private sectors ... Good relationships with local authorities and big employers in the area allow them to offer synergistic services and take advantage of the quota system.' For SWs and TWs, in addition to recalling the 'strong partnership with stakeholders', the 'Close partnership with the parent organisation, which economically and organisationally supports the WISEs and ensures closeness to the target group' is mentioned as one of the strengths. Specifically, for TWs it is mentioned that 'They are in a close partnership with the parent organisation, which ensures closeness to the target group by provision of digital expertise, networking frameworks and regional anchoring but also financial and administrative support'; these WISEs operate in 'Close cooperation with stakeholders such as municipalities and conventional companies'.

2.2.5.   The theme in the ESCO Skills & Competences classification

The topic of networking orientation is partially dealt with in the classification of S&C ESCOs; networking capacity is not identified as a separate S&C, but elements consistent with it can be found, for example, in skills S1 (communication, collaboration and creativity) and in particular in S1.8 (working with others), S1.1 (negotiating), S1.2 (liaising and networking) and elsewhere.

However, it seems clear that, beyond the approximate nature of many ESCO definitions, the elements discussed here are underestimated in the current classification system. This is no coincidence, since conceiving as a specific aptitude and competence the fact of creating, developing, and maintaining relationships - not understood as the task of a communications office, but as a widespread practice that shapes the strategies and actions of an organisation - is one of the elements that characterise social enterprises compared to the rest of the economic system.

2.2.6.   How to learn

First, the general indications are valid: enablers learn mainly through the knowledge of virtuous experiences, supporters can be recipients of specific structured training initiatives. In any case, it should be considered that with respect to the propensity to network there are undoubtedly many structured experiences that can provide a basis of good practices on which to build training courses.

2.2.7.   The role of technologies

The second of the strands highlighted here, i.e., the need to develop networking (currently present in only a few excellent experiences) with universities and research

centres and to build a solid link with young people attending science faculties, directly concerns technologies. In particular, with reference to what has been developed in WP2, such a development could favour an improvement on the front of production-oriented technologies (Annex 2, para.2.8), as well as those oriented towards the development of emerging technologies (Annex 2, paragraph 7.2.11) and probably also on other topics, such as assistive technologies (Annex 2, paragraph 7.2.10). But, beyond the specific objects, this second strand represents one of the cornerstones for strengthening the technological capacity of WISEs.

2.2.8.   Skills enhancement actions directed at people

A possible ordering criterion is the development of collaboration by stakeholder: how to collaborate with the public authority, with other social economy actors, with enterprises, with citizens and communities, with research actors, etc.; each of these areas can be deepened according to a 'matrix' scheme with reference to different areas: good practices, development of collaborative propensities, advantages of collaboration, legal and institutional solutions for collaboration, etc.

Collaboration	Good practices	Developing collaborative propensities	Legal and institutional solutions	...
With citizens and communities				
With other social economy actors				
With public bodies				
With companies				
With universities and research institutions				
...				

Obviously, then, in the preparation of working methodologies, it will be necessary to consider the forms of learning best suited to each type of person, as outlined in the section '*How we learn*'.

2.2.9.   Skills enhancement actions: organisational changes

Collaborative orientation is first and foremost an organisational choice. The propensity to collaborate and the training of individuals only becomes effective when organisational choices are consistent. A collaborative organisation

consciously chooses to allocate resources to network functions: e.g., with operators whose tasks include creating and deepening relationships; selecting managers with such an orientation; granting supporters work time other than both production and direct work with the WSN, in which to relate to welfare services or local businesses. This choice is otherwise perceived as wasteful, it requires specific strategies of approach to the market, less oriented in a 'muscular' sense than the standard for-profit enterprise.

Also relevant in this respect is the work of the second-level organisations to which WISEs belong and which can significantly facilitate and support organisations in their collaboration-oriented choices.

2.2.10.   Skills Enhancement Actions: Policy Directions

Policies are invited to support individual propensities and organisational orientations in various forms:

- from a regulatory and institutional point of view, making appropriate forms of framing collaboration feasible: co-programming and co-design with regard to relations with public administrations, forms of integration and clustering between enterprises, etc;
- from a public policy point of view, recognising, e.g., in the choice of interlocutors, the value of their ability to collaborate with extended networks among themselves and with the various actors in the social fabric of the territory;
- from an economic point of view, supporting the various second level forms in which WISEs participate.

2.2.11.   Resulting profile

From this analysis, we can define the profile of **Network Operator**. This profile is central to support one of the main peculiarities of WISEs, i.e. their propensity to establish collaborative relationships with other actors of the social economy, with the productive network of the territory and with public institutions. This profile can be declined in two different directions, respectively for enablers, who guide network strategies, and supporters, who collaborate on a day-to-day basis with territorial stakeholders.

2.3. The 'capacity of vision'

This chapter develops what has been elaborated in the section 'Imagining change' in the previous chapter.

2.3.1.   What it is about

It is a complex competence, having to do with both attitudes and knowledge. It is the ability to imagine an organisation and its activities not with reference to the current scenario, but to a possible future.

It deals with attitudes, orientations, inclinations, because it requires 'the spirit of the explorer', the propensity, therefore, not to adapt to the current situation, to face the inevitable hardships linked to transitions, in the conviction that these, while appearing superfluous today, are instead an indispensable condition to accompany the organisation's growth in the medium term. It is the spirit that leads social entrepreneurs to explore new solutions, to travel to their own countries and to other European countries to see what other social entrepreneurs are doing, allowing themselves to be stimulated by what they see. That pushes, where curiosity is felt, to talk to the protagonists of other experiences, to deepen what they have done, to understand their vision, each time recombining their own baggage with that of others. It is, in other words, Steve Jobs' Stay Hungry, Stay Foolish; it is the 'imaginative' part of entrepreneurial work; Martin Luther King's I have a dream; the distinctive trait that makes Schumpeterian entrepreneurs into leaders capable of pulling their organisations towards innovative paths. It is the ability to see one's own organisation 'from the outside', to contaminate it with unprecedented glances, knowing how to rise above contingent dynamics and daily management concerns, to place it in the broader flows of change of the context in which it operates. It is, again, the ability to see the possible economic and organisational sustainability of a path of change: it is, therefore, the spark that makes one move, for example, from the utopia of a world in which resources are shared, to a sustainable entrepreneurial development in the sphere of the sharing economy; from the wish for greater attention to the environment to a new enterprise in the sphere of separate waste collection or re-use.

These examples make us realise that, in addition to the moment of imagination, the capacity for vision has to do with expertise, with being/becoming an expert on a certain topic, documenting, investigating, studying.

2.3.2.   To whom it applies

Although the 'vision capacity' to some extent applies to many figures, it is mainly specific to the enablers and in particular to the figures who play a leading role in their organisation. In particular, the personas 'The Founder' (WP2, paragraph 3.1.1) is the one more than others called upon to guide WISEs towards innovative terrains ('they are naturally curious and attentive to stimulate that may lead to new development opportunities. They are ambitious, driven to undertake new things and to acquire the necessary skills for this' and, according to the analysis of WP2, where such innovation implies the use of technologies, 'The Tech enabler' (3.1.4) becomes its natural partner; The Founder, in fact, is generally not the individual called upon to possess the technical skills, but to understand their potential ('What is important with respect to these personas is not so much to increase their technical competences on specific topics, but to ensure that they can grasp the possibilities of development') and thus their visionary capacity in some cases must be combined with the intuition of a leader with a specifically technological orientation.

2.3.3.   The elements of resistance

In general terms, social entrepreneurs may be inclined to devote all resources and energy to managing organisational contingencies, to feel that there are neither the economic conditions nor the space to look to the future in the terms described here. They feel that they are too busy surviving in the immediate future to look further ahead. Moreover, as pointed out in WP2 (5.1.4, Additional Observations section...), social entrepreneurs are not 'tolerant of failure': whereas in other fields it is normal to try a new path, to commit capital knowing well that the chances of it dissolving into thin air are high, for social entrepreneurs this would mean jeopardising the jobs of disadvantaged people and this advises them to stay on safer and more beaten ground. This orientation is often both personal (of the leaders) and of the organisation itself, which is often structured with distributed forms of power and democratic foundations, which is why even leaders with such orientations easily encounter considerable organisational resistance without having the power of direction typical of other organisations.

2.3.4.   The theme in the SWOT Analysis

The theme of 'vision capacity' is identifiable in the analyses of the personas section, but it does not appear in the SWOT Analysis in any of the four quadrants, except in an indirect way (e.g., as the capacity to 'diversify the sectors of activity', a strong point of productive WISEs). This absence should lead to some reflections, as the

theme, besides being inherent to the history of WISEs, is part of the profiles of some historical managers, but has not entered the organisational analysis.

2.3.5.   The theme in the ESCO Skills & Competences classification

The capacity for vision is, especially for the realisation part, connected with T2 - Thinking skills and Competences (in particular T2.1, Processing information, ideas and concepts, which includes among other components think analytically, think critically, think holistically, and others). These are the abilities to '... apply the mental processes of gathering, conceptualising, analysing, synthesising, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication'. They include the ability to evaluate and use information of different kinds to plan activities, achieve goals, solve problems, deal with issues, and perform complex tasks in routine and novel ways.
However, 'vision capability' is also (and even before that) ideation, even a radical change of viewpoints; it should be pointed out in this regard that the ESCO classification develops the analysis of Skills & Competences referring to the creative process of ideation with reference to the artistic and technological sphere, while an analysis in the sense indicated here appears rather neglected.

2.3.6.   How to learn

In part, the 'visionary capacity' is an innate personal aptitude, which organisations can either seek out and enhance or oppose for the reasons mentioned above; but in part it can be cultivated and stimulated. As is often the case with managerial skills, innovative ideas are fostered by deprovincialisation, comparison and knowledge of other experiences. The enabler can therefore be stimulated in this regard primarily by visiting innovative experiences, keeping in touch with other social entrepreneurs in his or her own country and elsewhere, as well as by reading and documenting.

2.3.7.   The role of technologies

It should be noted that the 'visionary capacity' in social enterprises has often been expressed through actions that do not directly involve technologies: briefly, it was not a matter of 'technology-driven' innovation, but rather, in the case of WISEs, of innovations in the social sphere that have relied, in some cases, on a good use of technologies; but this does not prevent us from thinking about different scenarios in the future. The technological fields most called for, with reference to WP2, are

'Emerging technologies' (Annex 2 - 7.2.11) and 'Technologies for products/services and production processes' (Annex 2 - 7.2.8)

2.3.8.   Skills enhancement actions directed at people

Some possible capacity-building actions are exemplified below:

- Identification of innovative practices in different countries, primarily by collecting them through 'scientific video-interviews'; by this term is meant a form of video-interview that does not merely capture effective aspects from a communicative point of view as is done in the trade media, but delves into the issues in depth, thinking about what might be useful to let another social entrepreneur know. Video interviews should be translated, because the enabler is not required to know other languages. Serious editorial work is important (they are not made to please the speaker, but to help the listener!), because experiences (even a few) should be selected that show a real capacity for vision, so that the enabler does not feel that he or she has 'wasted time' going into insignificant experiences.
- Creation of wiki spaces for social entrepreneurs to compare their experiences; these spaces should be appropriately animated. It would be advisable to identify a limited number of WISEs who are engaging in change actions and who, also thanks to an animation action, share certain aspects of their experiences, interacting with others.
- Organisation of guided tours and exchanges between WISEs, which can take the form of either short visit to get to know each other for the first time or longer, more structured tours in which WISEs host people from other countries for a certain period. This requires overcoming the difficulties of language barriers.
- Cultural and communication actions to disseminate innovative practices through publications, conferences, etc.

2.3.9.   Skills enhancement actions: organisational changes

The 'capacity of vision' requires organisations where there is a 'space for change', an organisational readiness to evolve by leaving behind familiar paths. This requires organisations that are firmly rooted in their social context and permeable to external triggers and novel points of view. Where innovations have to do with technological aspects, there is also a need for a management team that includes tech enablers and thus the organisational solutions highlighted in WP2: relationships with universities and research centres in the technical and IT spheres, which encourage the influx of young people with advanced skills and aspirations to apply them in the social sphere.

2.3.10. Skills Enhancement Actions: Policy Directions

As repeatedly emphasised in WP2, organisations should not be placed in a condition of organisational distress. In general, WISEs should be avoided in the conditions of the 'vicious starvation cycle' or in any case in situations where all energies are devoted to a stunted survival. This poses a general problem concerning the funding policies of WISEs both in direct terms and through an adequate development of reserved contracting by public administrations.

It is also useful to think about policies specifically dedicated to the development of innovative actions, knowing that the low propensity to risk failure is a specific and ineradicable characteristic of WISEs and that it should not counteracted by proposing business models typical of other sectors and corporate cultures. It should be balanced with specific funds that cover the riskiest actions, knowing well that the reasons for the low propensity to risk are in themselves appreciable, given the purpose of WISEs. However, this requires much more rigorous and serious policies for identifying innovative actions than the often-haphazard ones of many state administrations.

Finally, it should be noted that, although the propensity to innovation is an organisational orientation, the level of relations with public administrations may facilitate or depress this tendency; relations with funding bodies that demand standardised performance, rigid and hetero-defined prescriptions and minimise the input of creativity do not constitute a favourable environment for the development of such inclinations.

2.3.11. Resulting profile

From this analysis, we can define the profile of **Social Entrepreneur**: he/she guides the WISE, in particular with the function of defining lines of development in the medium term: he/she is the figure capable of grasping needs, even unexpressed ones, and of imagining possible entrepreneurial responses, then shaping the organisation of the WISE to make it capable of facing new challenges.

2.4. Communicating work integration

This chapter develops what has been elaborated in the previous chapter in the section 'Communicating the mission of WISE' in the previous chapter.

2.4.1.   What it is about

Many of the issues identified in the previous WPs directly or indirectly call into question the ability of WISEs to adequately communicate the value of their work. WISEs appear to be solid in a 'short-range' form of communication: the best of them are known and esteemed in their territories, they have built trusting relationships with their citizens and consolidated long-standing collaboration with local institutions, and these are undoubtedly positive facts. At the same time, as will be better discussed in the following paragraphs, significant criticalities emerge: WISEs often feel the difficulty in influencing public opinion and policies, which seem not to understand the value of what WISEs do. Technology-related analyses also confirm this critical area: how often does a WISE succeed in setting up a communication campaign that goes beyond the boundaries of those who are already sensitised, in producing a *claim* that everyone has in mind, in producing a social product that is seen and shared by hundreds of thousands of people? When it comes to moving from direct reports on a circumscribed area to acts capable of impacting public opinion, the difficulties seem insurmountable.

One example for all: we are in an era in which, in addition to trivial material, videos by physicists, historians, political analysts, philosophers, etc., which have hundreds of thousands of views, are circulating on the Internet, demonstrating that even products with profound and challenging content can be of interest to the general public; in which, moreover, there are cases in which productions on 'social' topics (e.g. on the subject of anti-discrimination) are equally successful; in which, therefore, it is no longer possible to identify the communication on the Internet with only music content or adolescent amusements. Well, excluded from this panorama are contents produced and proposed by WISEs or, more generally, by social enterprises, whose products, even when they appear to be, on first analysis of a certain quality, obtain views in the order of tens (not 'of thousands': really tens!). Briefly, WISEs are known as those who are sensitive to the theme of social commitment in defined territories, evanescent in public communication on broader targets: hence, the difficulty in penetrating a different sensitivity in the social body and policies.

It could be argued that the answer to this problem is to have an adequate communications office, but clearly the problem is more complex: in fact, many WISEs already have a communications office, and the larger ones sometimes even have non-marginal resources at their disposal, although without achieving the desired results. This means that it is not simply a matter of equipping social enterprises with something that already exists and is codified, but of devising different strategies and equipping themselves with consistent professionalism. It is probably not just a matter of publicising a product or a brand, but of disseminating a social sensibility, highlighting how WISEs are interpreters of it; this in turn could help to strengthen the capacity to commercially promote their products, as well as to spread a cultural and political climate favourable to WISEs.

2.4.2.   To whom it applies

A breakthrough in communication capacity requires the coordinated engagement of the enablers - and in particular of the figures with greater leadership capacity such as the personas 'The Founder' and 'The Social Enabler' - and of specific staff figures (which were overshadowed in the analysis of the personas, as explained in WP2). In all likelihood, structured actions in this sense are also intended to involve, in different forms, all actors working in the WISEs, thus including supporters and other workers, with and without support needs.

2.4.3.   The elements of resistance

At least two possible resistances should be mentioned.

The first relates to the underestimation of these issues: a mentality that leads to seeing all investments in communication and other fields other than direct engagement in the field as a 'waste of time', as 'resources taken away from WSNs'. It is a vision that contrasts 'doing' and 'communicating', attributing to the former a meaning of adherence to values and authenticity and degrading the latter to a 'leisure' occupation. And this is often what happens in the WISEs: there is an absence of communication policies, except for the occasional and extemporaneous commitment of some managers (e.g., a conference to celebrate the twentieth/thirtieth anniversary). This is a focus on communication in embryonic form, which hardly manages to penetrate outside very restricted and already loyal circuits.

The second is the already mentioned simplification, whereby it is only a matter of having a communications office operating in the forms typical of for-profit

companies; but, as can be seen, the results tell us that this strategy, the result of cultural subservience to other models, is not rewarding.

2.4.4.   The theme in the SWOT Analysis

This theme is very much present in the SWOT Analysis. There are PWs that identify among the critical issues the fact that the 'social economy is not seen as a solution by the authorities' and identify among the possible threats the 'Insufficient and incomplete knowledge on social economy and WISEs', pointing out that 'it prevents purchase from social enterprises'. Some Social WISEs highlight the 'insufficient communication and public awareness regarding the social missions'.
All this does not exclude those elements related to 'short-range communication' ('good recognition by local governments and stakeholders' and 'high customer and worker satisfaction') are mentioned as positive factors, but this only confirms the main theme addressed here: WISEs, those who know them appreciate them; those who do not know them - all those who escape a direct relationship with WISEs - continue to miss them.
The positive aspect of these analyses is that, in any case, it is clearly perceived that something more and different needs to be done than mere self-promotional messages: it is a matter of making stakeholders perceive the topic of work integration and WISEs themselves differently.

2.4.5.   The theme in the ESCO Skills & Competences classification

The profile of 'communication manager' is present in the ESCO classification[1], it is a matter of adapting the competences as outlined here.

2.4.6.   How to learn

The issue of how to support the emergence of a new generation of communicators is certainly complex (otherwise the problem would not be so obvious!). Certainly part of this cultural background includes standard training activities, and staff figures can certainly be inclined to engage in such courses. What also emerges, however, is the need to work on the more precise identification of those who perform communication work with the mission and culture of the company.

---

[1]https://esco.ec.europa.eu/it/classification/occupation_main

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

2.4.7.   The role of technologies

As pointed out in WP2 (see in particular Annex 2 - paragraph 7.2.2), technologies related to external communication are used by WISEs in an elementary way: almost all WISEs have a website, even if in many cases these are poorly maintained and not updated products; a good number of WISEs have a basic presence on social networks (e.g. a Facebook page), but 1) contents are not very widespread on the web and 2) WISEs are almost absent from the most popular communication channels in the youth world. Regarding multimedia products, as mentioned above, the presence is minimal: it consists of videos - most of them of low quality, only a few of acceptable quality - which in any case achieve insignificant circulation.

2.4.8.   Skills enhancement actions directed at people

Training for a communicator profile is not in itself new and can in any case be a basis for the topic discussed here; when looking at the weaknesses of WISEs, special attention should be paid to digital technologies and in particular to social channels most in use among the younger generations. In addition, however, it is necessary to develop a specific reflection on the characterising elements of the communication of WISEs and more generally of social enterprises. On one hand by enhancing their strengths (the 'short-range' communication), and on the other hand by reasoning on how to adequately communicate the social value of the action of the WISE, embedded in the products it sells.

2.4.9.   Skills enhancement actions: organisational changes

With respect to the WISEs' difficulties in communicating with the younger generations, it should be considered that an effective communication plan can hardly be set up where those who train communicators and the communicators themselves are 20 or 30 years older than the people to whom the communication is addressed. Similar to the issue of production technologies, for which a contact with engineering and computer science universities was suggested, in this case it is appropriate to initiate a relationship with young people who successfully produce communication, always bearing in mind that it is not a matter of 'hiring consultants', but of making people loyal to the mission and corporate culture of the WISEs. Then, the main organisational resistance has to be addressed, which consists in believing that after all 'communicating is not important', that this is energy taken away from the operational work with WSNs, for which there is therefore never enough time; the WISEs must therefore first of all incorporate the communication function permanently into their organisational set-up.

2.4.10. Skills Enhancement Actions: Policy Directions

The general indication repeatedly proposed applies: WISEs with precarious sustainability, due to the fact that social functions are financed solely from the margins of production activities, find it structurally difficult to invest resources in areas outside production.

In more specific terms, one indication could be to include, in agreement with the representative organisations of WISEs and social enterprises, the action of WISEs in institutional social communication programmes or to support the access of WISEs to the channels of the large generalist media, both in the form of advertising space and, even more so, in the form of storytelling in different formats.

On a different and complementary level, there are also measures that foster the development of content and knowledge on the topic of WISEs: agreements with universities and study centres for joint research projects, support for the trade press and scientific publications on the topic of WISEs, etc.

2.4.11. Resulting profile

From this analysis, we can define the profile of **Social Economy communicator**. He/she has a basic profile as a communication expert in its different forms (web, social, creation of multimedia products, awareness-raising campaigns, etc.). He/she also develops a specific capacity in enhancing WISE products by making customers and stakeholders perceive their social value.

2.5. Supporting work - In general

The work of supporters is a central aspect of the work of WISEs.

To date, a comparative picture of the level of recognition of this profession is not available; in logical terms, there can be four successive degrees in classifying the work of supporters:

- The case of lesser recognition occurs when no specific qualification is required to be a supporter in a WISE and where the actual identification of this figure in the WISE is evanescent. The 'supporter' is in reality no more than one of the workers engaged in production as WSNs, who is informally recognised as having a vocation to listen and to pay attention to their fellow workers who express situations of fragility;

- A subsequent degree of recognition occurs when, again in the absence of requirements, there are, however, in the WISE employees who, for a part of their working time, are entrusted not to carry out productive roles, but to favour the work integration of WSNs. This assignment may concern a part of the working time (the other being dedicated to direct production or to the coordination of production) or sometimes represent an exclusive assignment and may coincide with a role of responsibility in the governance of the production process or be disjointed from it;

- A greater recognition is when the supporter, who is recognised to work part of the time for the function of facilitating the integration of the WSNs, must have a specific qualification, for example one of the qualifications that are generally used in the country for social professions or in the field of active labour policies. This is not a specific title of 'supporter', let alone 'supporter in a WISE', but a set of accepted titles to perform this task. Note that this could be prescribed by law or by choice of the WISE, which could select for the role of supporter, only persons with specific educational background;

- The next degree of formal recognition of supporters is when a specific qualification related to supporting work in the field of work integration (with or without reference to whether this is carried out within a WISE) is required to be entrusted with this role.

Obviously, reality can present elements of complexity that complicate this scheme; but it highlights the need, when considering the strengthening of the professional profiles of those working in WISEs, to have a clearer picture of the situation in partner countries.

Most likely, a positive correlation will emerge between the degree of recognition of the work of supporters, the degree of recognition of the capacity assumed by WSNs

and the level of public support, since the fact of having support staff with a specific recognition could be, in the common operating logics in the institutions, a qualifying element, but this too will have to be further investigated with specific surveys.

That said, in the following pages, will be elaborated some aspects of supporter's work or related roles:

1. **the support work of the WSNs, which is at the** heart of supporter's work and which consists in fostering, through a complex of different actions, both the personal growth and the strengthening of WSNs' professional skills, in order to facilitate their full integration into the labour market;

2. **the work of recognising skills**: thanks to the processes mentioned in the previous point, the WSN strengthens soft skills and professional skills; but this takes place in a channel that does not generally provide for these reinforcements to be identified and recognised, it is therefore a matter of developing skills and conditions for this to happen;

3. **placement work**, which is particularly necessary in WISE models that aim at transitional placement with a view to placement in the ordinary labour market;

4. **the organisation of production** in such a way that the mission of labour integration and WISE's need to be competitive in the market are compatible.

It is not excluded that there may be points of contact between such tasks in the WISE and similar tasks performed in other types of organisations, public or private; but there are reasons to believe that there are specificities that justify the in-depth examination here of the profiles that will be discussed below.

2.6. Supporting work 1 - tutoring / mentoring / informal training

This chapter develops what has been elaborated in the chapter 'People Areas' in the sections 'Supporters' work' and 'Promoting the WSNs' learning' in the previous chapter.

2.6.1.   What it is about

Work integration takes on a range of different meanings for WISEs: on the one hand, it consists in providing employment and thus income opportunities for WSNs, so as to promote their autonomy; on the other hand, it is a complex process that aspires to foster an improvement in the conditions of the disadvantaged person in several fields, ranging from soft skills to professional competences. In some cases, these processes are reinforced by the inclusion of these pathways within welfare pathways, in the case of Social Wises (e.g. WISE or related organisations provide housing accommodation), or formal training, in the case of Training Wises; in other cases, however, this occurs exclusively thanks to the relationships established at work, where WSNs work together with supporters. These operators, depending on the WISE model and on the different national situations, may play different roles: at one extreme, there are cases in which they are in fact 'workmates'' but with a particular sensitivity and willingness to listen and in general to take charge of the WSN colleague; at the other extreme, there are cases in which the supporter interprets his or her role as taking charge in professional terms, with a substantial (sometimes total) working time detached from production needs and dedicated instead to the various aspects necessary for the WSN's human and professional growth. There is no European standard - and in many countries not even a national standard - on this profile. Furthermore, it should be considered that in some European states this figure is the subject of transfers by the public administration, which supports the WISEs for the costs related to these figures, in other countries this is not the case, and this is probably related to the degree of recognition of this figure.

In any case, there is a common aspiration among WISEs that the work of WSNs is not only a source of income for them, but also a means to foster paths of improvement and autonomy; and this makes the role of the supporter called upon to work to foster this outcome central.

2.6.2. To whom it applies

The theme discussed here applies to all supporter profiles, although the different Personas profiles may show a vocation to emphasise different aspects: those related to the general growth of the person, on the part of Social Oriented Supporters, those related to the strengthening of the professional skills of WSNs the Professionally Oriented supporters. In any case, all supporters are involved in these reflections and so are the WSNs identified as Growth Oriented, i.e., those who, having entered the WISE as WSNs, have grown within the enterprise and are preparing to take on the role of supporters towards WSNs who are now beginning their path of insertion.

2.6.3. The elements of resistance

The main element of resistance is of an organisational nature and derives from the choice, either voluntary or forced by circumstances, not to attribute any defined function to the supporter, who is essentially a 'non-WSN' (or 'no longer WSN') worker, who at most exercises a willingness to listen and human solidarity towards the WSN, but without any structured actions to encourage, support and verify the latter's pathway to integration. In such cases, the themes developed here risk appearing alien to the mentality and practice of WISE. This may be due to the ideological choice of WISE, starting from a corporate culture that emphasises the aspect of equality between all workers, WSNs and non-WSNs, as an element in itself capable of sanctioning the empowerment of the WSN. Or, more likely, on the basis of objective conditions that prevent the supporter from being recognised in its function of supporting the Worker with Support Needs and the associated working hours, it is expected that the supporter for reasons of economic sustainability is fully engaged in the production inside the WISE. This is especially the case in countries where public support for WISEs is low or non-existent. An indirect solution to this problem is implemented, especially in SWs and TWs embedded in social economy groups, through the presence of supporters who derive their income from parallel agreements with the public administration for the management of social or educational actions on the same people that the WISE hires as WSNs.

2.6.4. The theme in the SWOT Analysis

The data of the SWOT analysis highlight different situations; in some cases the working team represents a strength; for example, in some PWs the presence of a 'very productive, skilled, flexible, experienced, collaborative, organised supporters team with a strong leadership and inclusive attitude' emerges; some SWs talk about

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

'educated, experienced, productive and connected to the local community' and some TWs highlight the presence of a 'stable, well-prepared, strong, motivated, experienced and with strong training capacity' team.

In other cases, instead, the 'lack of a well-trained team' and the 'difficulties in finding personnel and particularly young people and qualified resources due to low economic levels' and the 'labour market scarcity' are emphasised; this leads, as highlighted by some SWs, to situations in which 'The staff consists of unskilled young people whose productivity and competence are low.... permanent supervision of the staff providing mentoring/training is required' and where, therefore, there is a 'need to have competent persons in mentoring roles' to fill the existing inadequacies, encountering, however, difficulties in 'investing in human resources' and in 'recruiting qualified and motivated employees'.

These differences should not be surprising: it is normal that there are WISEs with different levels of quality and organisation, and obviously, capacity-building actions are the ones more urgent as WISEs perceive the issue of supporter work as problematic.

2.6.5. The theme in the ESCO Skills & Competences classification

Again, the ESCO system does not appear to be adequately structured. It should first be pointed out that, although what is described here may to all intents and purposes represent a job profile, no mention of it can be found in the ESCO. Referring instead to the specific skills, there is an exception, although not systematic, of elements related to the profile in S3 'Assisting and caring', e.g., in S3.1 (counselling), S3.3 (Protecting and enforcing), S3.6 (Providing general personal care) as well as in various transversal skills (e.g., T6.3, T6.4).

What clearly emerges, however, is the need to structure the figure outlined here and the respective competences much better within the ESCO, starting with what can be derived from a comparison between partners on the different national and local practices and regulations.

2.6.6. How to learn

It is reasonable to think that a supporter might be interested and available for structured and formally recognised training programmes that would then constitute a spendable qualification both within WISEs and in other related professions in other social enterprises or in public administration. It is therefore possible to think of structuring a training offer, combining MOOCs and face-to-face training. As they are generally familiar with the communicative codes of social work, supporters are

generally inclined towards active training styles, which enhance their experience (e.g., communities of practice).

2.6.7.   The role of technologies

As a preliminary remark, it is useful to refer to the specific work of supporting WSNs and not to the countless professions that the supporter performs within the production cycle, for which one can only refer to the relevant professional contents. Among the training contents, one aspect that could deserve some attention concerns, as pointed out in WP2 (Annex 2, paragraph 7.5.4) the tools for digital management of working integration. For example, 'digital cards of WSNs' would allow supporters to manage, with the necessary guarantees of privacy, information relating to WSNs and the path taken (for example periodic checks on the progress of the work integration, on the learning carried out on the job or through training courses or on the results of verification sessions carried out jointly with public services that have the person is in charge of). This kind of support is not absent from the world of WISEs, but in most cases, it is considered a bureaucratic burden to the supporters' work or perhaps even a formula that takes away warmth and immediacy from the relationship with the people involved. In fact, such support appears to be used by a small minority of WISEs.

With regard instead to the organisation of the training proposal, it is necessary to assess to what extent the contents should be entrusted to MOOCs; in fact, supporters have very different professional and social backgrounds: some have a high level of schooling and come from a social professions background (e.g. educators, social workers, like a substantial part of Social Oriented Supporters), others come from a variety of professional backgrounds (Professionally Oriented Supporters) that have combined with a marked social sensitivity. In this second case, the possibility of using content in MOOC mode is very variable and might be residual for supporters of a higher age and with a professional background related to manual jobs.

Another aspect highlighted by WP2 concerns the possibility of supporters being an active part in the design of digital solutions aimed at the production or training of WSNs, being able to give valuable indications to adapt them to their needs and capabilities.

Finally, supporters can be valuable figures in the development of assistive technologies, providing technicians with the skills they have acquired in their work practice.

2.6.8.   Skills enhancement actions directed at people

Although there have been many work placement experiences on the European continent for decades, there is still a lack of a shared focus on the role of the supporter; in some cases, the supporter must have had a specific previous education, in others not; in some cases it is a professionally defined role, in others not. As emerged from WP2, some supporters come from a career centred on caring for people (and therefore acquire in the WISE elements related to the specific productive activity in which they are inserted), others from a career in a productive sector (they are gardeners, carpenters, launderers, printers, etc.) and acquire only afterwards (or directly in the field, in the WISE) elements related to the WSNs' support work. After an initial reconnaissance, it is therefore possible to think of extracting the elements characterising this profession and making them available as training support.

2.6.9.   Skills enhancement actions: organisational changes

Beyond the legal recognition of the profession, the issue of organisational recognition must be addressed. As discussed in the previous paragraphs, there may be elements of the corporate culture that stand in the way of considering the role of the supporter. On the other hand, WISEs consider it desirable, the integration process should be structured in some way and, in the management of the different phases - the choice of the WSN to be included, his or her allocation to one or other sector, his or her reception, the actions carried out to strengthen his or her competences and to verify the progress of the integration, the possible placement in a non-WISE company at the end of the process - it should be clear in the WISE workflow which role, which autonomy and which responsibilities are entrusted to the supporter (and which to other decision-making levels). Briefly, it is a question of putting the WISE organisation in order. Compatible with economic availability, a clarification of what the supporter is expected to do, brings with it the allocation of part of the working time to these functions and thus their economic recognition.

2.6.10. Skills Enhancement Actions: Policy Directions

The first issue concerns the status of supporters and, faced with a situation in which there is a very different degree of formal recognition of the supporter's role, one could consider, after a survey on this aspect, identifying a range of solutions to propose to partner countries, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of each and formulating policy recommendations on this basis.

Connected to the recognition of status is the economic recognition by public policies, another issue on which there are different solutions in the partner countries; it emerged from WP2 that the absence or weakness of support policies determines an objective difficulty in adequately taking care of WSNs.

2.6.11. Resulting profile

From this analysis, we can define the profile of **tutor/mentor/informal trainer of WISEs**. This is the key figure of WISEs, the operator entrusted with the success of integration pathways. He/she works with a plurality of tools and in different contexts - formal and informal, sometimes as a specialised figure, sometimes as a "workmate" - to foster the acquisition of soft skills and specific competences by WSNs.

2.7. Supporting work 2 - Skills Validation

This chapter develops what has been elaborated in the section 'Recognising and certifying the skills acquired by WSNs' in the previous chapter.

2.7.1.   What it is about

The context of WISEs offers opportunities for personal and professional growth to WSNs; while this is a fact of experience that is hardly debatable, to date in most cases there is a lack of instruments to attest such progress. The reason is simple: generally, competence recognition systems are based on formal pathways: having attended a certain number of hours of a course with qualified teachers/accredited organisations, having passed a certain exam, etc.

In many national contexts, these things do not happen in a WISE. WSNs increase their skills and competences thanks to a mix of elements: the fact of being in a welcoming, listening and person-oriented context, the fact of being trusted, the fact of being able to experiment directly in the field, the indications received during work practice, etc. This does not exclude the fact that in national contexts with more formalised work placement models, WSNs may be included in programmes that are more easily framed in the logic of competence recognition, but this situation cannot be generalised to the whole continent.

This, on the other hand, does not mean that it is not possible to develop strategies to recognise the empowerment that takes place in a WISE.

Instead, it is a matter of envisaging a change at the level of political strategies, organisation and professional profiles to make such recognition possible. This appears to be of great importance because without this, WSNs do not see the fruit of their efforts recognised, except within the WISE itself that hosts them; externally, they have no way of proving the skills they have acquired.

This recognition may include digital skills among the various competences acquired. In essence, a competence validator is called upon to act on several fronts:

- Analysing the pathways of work integration in WISEs, understanding the dynamics by which competences are strengthened;
- Identify any shortcomings of these pathways, suggesting forms of integration with other actions (e.g., with short formal learning moments);
- Identify any needs for strengthening the action of supporters and recommend effective forms of action to develop skills;

- Analysing the organisational arrangements of the WISEs and suggesting useful evolutions to facilitate capacity-building actions;
- Developing tools for the evaluation and validation of the skills acquired by WSNs;
- Evaluate and validate the skills acquired by WSNs.

The rationale behind this process is to adapt competence recognition systems to the reality of WISEs (possibly supporting them where necessary), not to ask WISEs to denaturalise themselves in order to adhere to models that are alien to their vocation. The WISE should not become a training organisation but should maintain its fundamental character as an enterprise that draws the bulk of its resources from the market and that strengthens the competences of WSNs essentially through their insertion in the production process, with the support of a supporter. The competence evaluator must identify recognition models consistent with this substantial aspect that characterises WISEs.

2.7.2. To whom it applies

The profile hypothesised here (which does not exist today, at least in most national contexts) appears to be an evolution of the role of the supporter; to be more precise, it appears to be a profile that can be assumed by a supporter with solid experience, who adds to this professional background a good knowledge of the mechanisms of formal certification of competences and who acquires a specific role, no longer linked to the support of individual WSNs, but to the certification function described here.

2.7.3. The elements of resistance

Some of the elements of resistance relate to policies: in addition to the general theme of a lack of resources to remunerate the non-productive work of WISEs, a form of scepticism on the part of the institutions that manage the recognition of professional qualifications for abnormal capacity-building pathways such as those characterising WISEs may arise.

Moreover, a cultural problem could arise from the world of WISEs themselves, who could be insensitive to the issue, considering the type of work carried out already useful without understanding that a recognition of the acquired skills, besides being an advantage for the disadvantaged person included, would represent an objective attestation of the usefulness of the work carried out by the WISE. Such resistance could for example develop from mistrust for any formalisation, fearing that it would take away freshness and spontaneity from the WISE action.

2.7.4.   The theme in the SWOT Analysis

In general, there are several reports about the lack of qualification both of operators (see previous chapter) and of disadvantaged people, as well as cases in which the public administration appears to be unconvinced of the actual usefulness of WISEs ('social economy is not seen as a solution by the authorities and legislation is not clear and adapted'; 'Insufficient ... public awareness regarding the social missions of WISEs...'); obviously the impossibility, in many national contexts, of framing the outcomes of the work carried out in terms of increased capacity of WSNs as a result of work integration, contributes to the lack of recognition of the work carried out by WISEs.

2.7.5.   The theme in the ESCO Skills & Competences classification

Assuming that ESCO's shortcomings in terms of conceptual clarity and systematically make the system fragmented and confused, it is possible to find, by analogy, knowledge similar to that identified here, e.g. in the 'validation of learning acquired through volunteering'; this would be a profile capable together of assessing the acquisition of professional and 'personal skills and development' such as those mentioned by ESCO and probably other similar elements.

2.7.6.   How to learn

As in the previous theme, there are probably very different situations in Europe, somewhere systems for recognising skills acquired through WISE integration already exist, at least to some degree, and many others where the initial preconditions for this to happen are lacking. Undoubtedly, an examination of those cases where this function is already developed could help those countries lacking it to develop it to the best of their ability, also avoiding the possible errors that generate the above-mentioned resistance on this aspect. Thus, part of the learning can be based on the study and dissemination of good practices.

In addition to this, it seems necessary for the 'competence validator' to have a formal training course - in presence or at a distance - with an evaluation system that attests the acquisition of skills.

2.7.7.   The role of technologies

Technologies can be both an object and tool for the validation of skills. Object, in that WSNs may learn, during their stay in WISEs, digital skills of various kinds, whether related to office work, or to the management of production processes, or to actual production. Moreover, technologies may be a valid support for the work of the

validator. First of all with a computerised management of the WSNs' personal files, which may constitute the basic support to reconstruct the activities carried out, verifications and other elements useful to outline the framework of a capacity-building.

2.7.8. Skills enhancement actions directed at people

The validator of skills acquired in a WISE must be able to combine two types of knowledge: 1) knowledge of WISEs, how they work and the mechanisms through which WSNs can enhance their soft skills, professional capacity and other assessable elements; 2) knowledge of the formal systems of classification and recognition of skills in force in their country. This requires a combination of 'practical' competence, which can be acquired through years of experience in WISEs (in all likelihood, this professional has worked for some years as a supporter) and the study of the systems of professional competence recognition. This profile, who can operate either as a member of a WISE or as an external professional, is in fact the protagonist of the link between the WISE, the vocational training area and any other areas (e.g., social services) involved in the work integration project. It should be prepared so that this profile has the capacity to help the WISE to find the best solutions, as well as to certify the skills acquired by her workers.

2.7.9. Skills enhancement actions: organisational changes

As already pointed out, there is first of all a change in organisational awareness and culture, since in many European countries at the moment it might be difficult for WISEs to conceive of their role as capacity-building.
Yet, even after having overcome this first hurdle, the WISE organisation must be willing to deeply question itself. It is true, as pointed out, that the WISE model must be recognised for its value, but this does not exclude that the WISE is called upon to introduce, at the suggestion of the competence validator, some specific actions; for instance, it might have to organise its work by allowing 2-3 hours per week for the WSN to be engaged in training activities and this requires a corresponding adaptation of the production cycles.
But, even more, all this requires specific attention to stimulating and enhancing skills as they are acquired, because if the work organisation does not evolve and adapt, WSNs undoubtedly have little incentive to invest in their learning.

2.7.10. Skills Enhancement Actions: Policy Directions

WISEs are not recognised in all countries as being able to strengthen the skills of integrated WSNs; at most, they are seen as sensitive and welcoming organisations, where people are willing to sacrifice themselves by working harder and cheaper to enable even hard-to-place people to have an income. This perception has to be changed and it has to be recognised that integrated people have the opportunity to strengthen their personal skills and professional competences. This obviously has to be attested to through profiles such as the one proposed here, but this should not lead to the disavowal of the WISEs model and therefore recognition has to come through the ability to appreciate what WISEs are (as well as, where useful, strengthening some aspects of them). This in turn requires adequate flexibility in training policies, which are likely to face widespread scepticism about the WISEs learning model.

As pointed out regarding other topics, the recognition of competence reinforcement through the action of WISEs and thus of the profile proposed here has an economic implication, since both the competence certification activity and any reinforcement activities required of WISEs can hardly be remunerated with the margins derived from production activities alone.

2.7.11. Resulting profile

From this analysis, we can define the profile of **skills validator**. Although it is undoubtedly true that WSNs strengthen their competences through their stay in WISEs, it is generally difficult for this to be recognised by formal competence validation systems, given the partly informal and unstructured character of the empowerment processes. This figure fills this gap by developing methods to validate the skills achieved in WISE.

2.8. Supporting work 3 – Placement

This chapter develops what has been elaborated in the section 'Placement' in the previous chapter.

2.8.1. What it is about

The third insight related to the supporting work concerns the placement work towards enterprises other than the WISE in which a WSN was integrated. As a preliminary remark, it should be mentioned that WP1 and WP2 highlighted the presence of different models both between and within countries. There are WISEs that explicitly aim at the inclusion of the WSN in an ordinary enterprise after a certain period of stay in the WISE (in some cases, not foreseeing however the continuation of the employment relationship with the WSN after a certain period), there are WISEs where instead one generally stays permanently (subject to individual choices and circumstances), and there are WISEs where both of the above outcomes are possible and the choice is made on a case-by-case basis, both with respect to the characteristics of the WSN and with respect to the actual possibilities of external placement.

In cases where the WISE provides for temporary placement, one of the functions that assume a certain prominence is that of *placement*, whether it is assigned to a specific operator, or carried out widely by supporters or other staff members.

In itself, it would seem to be an established profession, routinely carried out within public and entrepreneurial structures that aim to find employment for the people there.

However, it is considered that this profile has specific characteristics when grafted into a WISE. The specific features can be summarised as follows:

- WISE is a 'company among companies', it does not collect and sell CVs, but includes people previously unable to participate in the ordinary labour market in its own company structure, where it offers a more or less formalised growth path, but in any case, one that strengthens the skills of the people included. It speaks to other companies not as an employment agency would, but as an employer in the same territory that has known and grown a person. There are different languages, different ways of presenting oneself, different relationships;
- WISE is, first and foremost, a subject living in a territory, in the section 'Thinking in a network, thinking in a community' this theme was explored in more depth and here again the difference between recruitment and employment offices

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

emerges: the network of trust and informal ties are important as well as the ability to direct people to the most suitable employment opportunity;

- Carrying out this delicate task in a WISE, place the operator in an apparently contradictory situation: on the one hand, he/she has the task of placing persons coming from particularly difficult conditions, those that colleagues working for *profit* employment enterprises would exclude a priori because they require considerable efforts with always uncertain results. On the other hand, he/she is aware that the enterprises in the area to which he/she will propose a WSN do not 'buy problems but workers', according to the effective expression of a social entrepreneur: they may be attentive and understanding, but in the end, they must not conclude that a problem has been 'dumped' on them. This, besides being negative for the placement of the specific person, would damage the trust relationship that is the most important asset for WISE. On the contrary, the entrepreneur who hires the WSN leaving a WISE must see that his or her willingness not to be influenced by prejudices (which must be acknowledged) was compensated by a positive outcome for the company.

What emerges from the above is that the placement of a WSN exiting a WISE must be a careful operation, which sometimes requires support for the company that received the WSN even after recruitment.

For all these reasons, whoever oversees placement in a WISE has specific characteristics that it is useful to develop here.

2.8.2.   To whom it applies

This professionalism represents a specification and an evolution of the role of the supporter, who adds to the skills related to working with WSNs, the ability to analyse the skills achieved, the needs of enterprises and a specific focus on networking.

2.8.3.   The elements of resistance

Even if WP1 and WP2 did not bring definitive data on this, what has been said about placement, is in a situation where many WISEs have, for various reasons, in fact given up actively and systematically pursuing this outcome. It may be the feeling that outside the WISE it would be impossible for people placed in it to find (and especially to keep) a job; an assessment of the low receptiveness of the labour market, which has been put under pressure by the sequence of crises that since 2008 have severely tested at least part of the continent's economies, making the labour market extremely selective. Or, even the objective cost of a staffing strategy

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

based on temporary placement and outplacement, which is much higher than that one based on permanent and definitive integration in the WISE.

2.8.4.   The theme in the SWOT Analysis

The starting point is to be found in the links with the area of reference, well expressed in the SWOT Analysis among the strengths of PWs: 'Strong cooperation and alliance with various stakeholders and reliability of partners for the reintegration of WSNs'; and this also leads to placement opportunities for WSNs: 'Good relationships with local authorities and big employers in the area allow them to offer synergistic services and take advantage of the quota system'. Among the TWs, one of the opportunities to be seized is the 'Will to place WSNs in regular companies by matching the training with the skills required in the regular labour market'.

2.8.5.   The theme in the ESCO Skills & Competences classification

The topics discussed here are present in the ESCO classification in a piecemeal manner.

2.8.6.   How to learn

The profile outlined here requires a mix of content transmission, field experience, and knowledge of good practices that can support the development of these very different skills. It is certainly a challenging path, dedicated to people who are willing to make a significant training investment.

2.8.7.   The role of technologies

The role of technologies is similar to that already highlighted for previous supporters and concerns the digitisation aspects of the job placement pathway, as well as the identification of acquired digital skills. Some countries may also require specific digital interconnections with public employment services.

2.8.8.   Skills enhancement actions directed at people

The profile described here must combine a broad set of skills:
* at the base, there is an understanding of WSNs, their strengths and criticalities both when working in WISE and when dealing with an unprotected market. This is a competence that in part can be built through appropriate studies, and in part requires an accumulation of significant experience in the field;

- It is necessary to handle with ease the legal framework of one's own country, both with reference to the obligations to which companies are bound (e.g. concerning the hiring of people with disabilities, as provided for by several European states), and the system of incentives for hiring WSNs, as well as the tools (e.g. traineeships) that can facilitate the insertion into the world of work and the bureaucratic aspects related to this. This expertise requires dedicated studies and constant updating channels, since these provisions may change over time (and in some of the partner countries they are frequently modified);
- it is then necessary to have the typical skills of a job seeker: how to assess skills, how to match demand and supply of labour;
- In addition, this figure must be able to work in a style consistent with that of WISE on the creation of territorial networks and cultivate bonds of trust;
- Finally, since the placement does not end with the signing of a contract, one must be able to support the company hiring the WSN and the WSN itself, managing this delicate moment of transition.

All this, as pointed out at the beginning, with a language and a way of operating that on the one hand adheres to WISE's communication codes, and on the other hand qualifies WISE as fellow entrepreneurs and not as an employment office-like entity.

2.8.9. Skills enhancement actions: organisational changes

It should be premised, as highlighted in the following section, that a transition-oriented organisation is generally developed within policies that recognise and support it; this does not detract from the fact that there are relevant elements of organisational culture: investment in the territorial network, collaborative relations with the local entrepreneurial system, a certain degree of structuring of insertion paths.

2.8.10. Skills Enhancement Actions: Policy Directions

The choice of permanently integrating the WSN or moving towards temporary insertion with a view to a future placement in for-profit enterprises depends on a plurality of variables: the context, the characteristics of the person and the enterprise culture. What is certain is that strategies based on temporary insertion and subsequent placement of WSNs are:
- of great interest, for at least two reasons:

- They testify in fact, with participation in the open labour market, if the skills of the WSN have been strengthened;
- 'They 'free up a place' in the WISE, which can insert an additional person needing its intervention;
- much more expensive, for three reasons:
  - placement is in itself costly, especially in the sense used here, which includes continuing support after placement in the non-WISE enterprise;
  - certification of the skills achieved, which may be required, is also expensive;
  - above all, because WISE deprives itself of workers who are now trained and capable of doing their job well and in their place integrate into the production cycle a person with much lesser capabilities. Briefly, WISEs do in a deliberate and planned manner what other companies want to avoid (they try to retain the best workers and get rid of the less productive ones).

It is clear that, with these assumptions, temporary placement with subsequent outplacement becomes very difficult without an adequate support policy. This does not mean that this cannot also take place in countries with low support, in specific excellent experiences, but that it can hardly become a systematic practice without adequate support, as pointed out in WP2. It goes without saying that everything written here about placement makes sense insofar as there is a system that favours external placement.

Appropriate reward policies should also be envisaged for companies that hire people out of WISEs.

2.8.11. Resulting profile

From this analysis, we can define the profile of **WISE placement operator**. The placement operator is a well-known profile, but in WISEs it takes on at least two special characteristics. The first is that he/she must be able to place workers with specific aspects of vulnerability and therefore must develop special skills to identify and valorise residual capacities; the second is that he/she does not act as an expression of a service, but as an "entrepreneur who speaks to other entrepreneurs", with whom he/she establishes bonds of trust that facilitate the placement of WSNs.

2.9. Supporting work 4 - Organising production with WSN

This chapter develops what was elaborated in the section 'Organizing production by combining social mission and production needs' and 'A WSN-friendly workplace' in the previous chapter.

2.9.1. What it is about

The organisation of production into forms suitable for the employment of WSNs is a very broad issue and calls into question different levels of responsibility in a WISE.

In the course of WP1 and WP2, several elements were gathered worthy of further analysis and investigation.

The choices that a WISE has to undertake in order to make compatible its dual nature as a commercial enterprise and as a place of integration of WSNs, are many and all of them deserve an extensive discussion:

- In which sector of activity to operate so as to have appropriate job positions for WSNs, both in the sense of not discriminating against WSNs with lower capacities, and at the same time to offer these workers adequate opportunities for personal and professional growth;
- Which WSNs should be selected? Is it appropriate to specialise in a specific category of disadvantage (e.g., people with intellectual disabilities) so as to develop advanced skills on the forms of integration that concern a specific category? Or on the contrary, is it appropriate to integrate WSNs with different frailties, in order to trigger dynamics of mutual aid between people?
- Are there elements of production organisation that should be organised with specific attention to the needs of WSNs? For example, is it necessary to provide for some of them to always work alongside a supporter and therefore work organisations that envisage working alone should be avoided? Or, on the contrary, are there WSNs who, as a result of their conditions, must work in as quiet an environment as possible, free of noise, with minimal opportunities for relationships?
- Are there WSNs who, due to their condition, are likely to be absent from work very frequently, and is it therefore necessary to organise production with this factor in mind?
- Are there WSNs who, due to their conditions, are likely to experience moments of personal crisis during their work experience in the WISE? In which

they will therefore engage in behaviour that is not compatible with work, expressing situations of distress that are difficult to manage? And, in these cases, how does WISE act to protect the dual need to safeguard the production process and to support WSN?

- Are there WSNs that, due to their conditions, require their work to be subjected to different and higher levels of verification than those routinely provided for in production processes? How can such verifications be organised?

Each of these issues would merit a lengthy discussion and would probably require introducing distinctions relating to a plurality of factors (e.g., the type of disadvantage, whether the integration process is in the initial or final phase, etc.). Organising a production process with WSNs requires specific skills, so much so that the vast majority of non-WISEs, not possessing them, find it very difficult to integrate WSNs.

The profile that we therefore attempt to outline concerns the figures within the WISEs who make possible, with different levels of responsibility, the choices that enable the integration of WSNs in the production cycle. This must be achieved by guaranteeing, on the one hand, economic sustainability and, on the other hand, the fact that the integration experience favours the personal and professional growth of WSNs. The profile is thus characterised by skills useful to reorganise production in forms that differ from those with which it is carried out in the generality of non-WISEs enterprises, that favour the realisation of the mission of WISEs to integrate WSNs at work.

2.9.2.   To whom it applies

The competences described here apply, with different levels of responsibility, to both enablers and supporters, each called upon consistently with his or her role. We may imagine, to give a few examples, that senior figures such as The Founder are called upon to make strategic choices (e.g. to undertake or not to undertake a certain business activity), starting from the awareness of the aspects considered here; that The Tech Enabler must orient certain choices concerning the adoption of technologies taking into account how they may facilitate the integration of WSNs; but also that The Professionally Oriented Supporter is the profile called upon in daily life to manage the productive aspects in forms compatible with work integration. In general, the capacity related to this aspect are to a certain extent part of the shared heritage of a WISE, which is then led in a specific way by each of the profiles working in it.

2.9.3.   The elements of resistance

There are certainly WISEs who 'do not take the issue seriously': for many years things have somehow gone on anyway, with a little common sense, some failure now and then, some providential windfall in times of difficulty. In short, a WISE can perceive that it has somehow managed anyway and therefore does not need to structure specific thoughts on this point. Unfortunately, in reality, very often these approaches are accompanied by the development of very fragile WISEs, which may indeed be able to cope with difficulties by resorting to the self-sacrifice of the workers or the support of the community in which they operate, but which 1) generally operate on a 'survival' level, without being able to get out of the perennial situation of organisational stress described in WP2 (section 5.2.3), and 2) expose themselves to the concrete risk of failure as soon as, for whatever reason, the resources on which the WISE relied fail.

2.9.4.   The theme in the SWOT Analysis

The tension caused by the difficulty of managing integration *mission* and production is felt in several parts. Some PWs highlight as critical the difficulty in identifying 'new management both in terms of skills and adherence to the mission' and this occurs among other things in a situation of 'high work pressure'. It is, even more specifically, a 'difficulty in making structural and organisational changes in accordance with the changes in the labour and production market by combining social work and support to business and entrepreneurship': exactly the theme proposed here. But, on closer inspection, even when the WISEs point out as an element of difficulty the 'Lack of qualified WSNs', in the apparent contradiction of these words (of course WSNs are poorly qualified, otherwise they would not be WSNs!) are denouncing the difficulties precisely of organising production with less productive workers than the non-WISE companies with which they have to compete (a theme that also returns in the SWs when they highlight the 'Pressure of competition with non-WISE companies' from which it follows that, especially in crisis phases, 'customers can select conventional enterprises as they can manage production faster and more cheaply'. Again, some WISEs highlight the 'necessity to have competent persons in mentoring roles to support WSNs in carrying out the company's economic tasks. This creates a lower level of productivity'.

2.9.5.   The theme in the ESCO Skills & Competences classification

The topics discussed here are presented in the ESCO classification in a fragmentary manner. Of course, there is no shortage of references to the organisation of

production cycles, but here we are dealing with a specific problem relating precisely to defining optimal organisations where WSNs are employed.

2.9.6.   How to learn

A specificity with respect to this topic is that, alongside widespread criticalities, there are also countless cases of good practice, where the issue of reconciling integration mission and production needs, has been convincingly addressed. Although the issue has not been studied and codified, there is undoubtedly a repertoire of solutions successfully adopted by WISEs across Europe.
In structuring a training course, it is therefore a matter of not just passing on theoretical content, but of making the most of what has been achieved by WISEs, which is the best kind of teaching for those who want to strengthen their skills in this area.

2.9.7.   The role of technologies

The issue has important connections with the role of technologies. For instance, several WISEs state that they have chosen to operate in very simple production sectors, where elementary technologies are the standard, because this allows them to insert workers that would be discriminated by more complex production cycles; at the same time, there are (see WP2, Annex B, section 7.2.8) WISEs that introduce complex technologies also in sectors, such as cleaning, that are generally associated with very low levels of mechanisation and digitisation. Still on the topic of technologies, there are both WISEs that state that they enable people to work who would otherwise not be able to be included in production and WISEs that consider technologies to be a discriminating factor. The issue of the relationship between the organisation of production and technologies is central and inescapable.
The topic of 'Assistive technologies' (WP2, Annex B, section 7.2.10) should also be developed, which the WP2 highlighted as being specific to a limited number of partner countries to date where there are more structured models of work integration.

2.9.8.   Skills enhancement actions directed at people

The scarcity of scientific material on the subject, the dissemination for promotional purposes, of descriptions that are appealing from a communicative point of view, but lacking in analytical content, represents a considerable problem. A rigorous study of good practices and the drawing up of consequent guidelines could represent a starting point to be proposed, starting with modules based on the

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

testimonies of the protagonists, to supporters and enablers who wish to strengthen their skills on the subject. A first step could be to start conceptually ordering the plurality of themes evoked here: technological aspects, production organisation, personnel selection, and management, etc., trying for each theme to list the relevant issues; this seems to be a preliminary operation useful to understand what to look for in good practices.

2.9.9.   Skills enhancement actions: organisational changes

WISEs need to embed the reflections on these aspects - and hopefully, in the future, the evidence from research work - within their organisational design, so as to make non-random choices, devoting due attention to elements of considerable complexity and which risk being dismissed with the mere request to supporters to 'do (even) more' by leveraging their adherence to the WISE mission.

2.9.10.   Skills Enhancement Actions: Policy Directions

There is a widespread perception that WISEs succeed where others fail, that they possess some sort of 'magic formula' by which they manage to compete with personnel that other companies avoid, but there is a lack of structured studies - by which we mean studies conducted in an analytical form and not mere narratives of good practices written for communication purposes - on how this happens. Funding and carrying out studies of this kind, also in cooperation with representative organisations and research centres working on the subject, could be an important starting point for having useful data for capacity-building purposes.

2.9.11.   Resulting profile

From this analysis, we can define the profile of **Expert on organising production with WSNs**. Organising production with WSNs has specificities that are the subject of specific expertise. It is not a question of "organising production", but of doing so 1) with staff who present aspects of fragility and 2) by optimising not only the end result, but also by ensuring that this process is an element of growth for the persons placed.