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# Final Report on the Evaluation of the CGC-Roundabout Preparatory Course

CGC - Roundabouts for Digital Transformation (CGC–DigiTrans) - Professional  
Guidance & Counselling (CGC) in Multi-Actor-Networks

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## 1 Introduction

A central component of the DigiTrans project is the preparatory course on the “Roundabout Method” for counsellors (Workpackage 2, Activity 5). The preparatory course was jointly designed as a webinar by the four partner countries Austria, the Netherlands, Italy, and Germany to familiarize guidance practitioners with the Roundabout method as quickly, comprehensively and efficiently as possible and to enable them to use the method quickly. This was also described accordingly in the project application. "The webinar will be an efficient and effective tool to inculcate CGC professionals with key skills to aid and promote the process of digital transformation. It will also be used as a nucleus to develop the practice-oriented part of the HE curriculum. It is a cost-efficient way to deliver the content (in comparison to in-person teaching)" (Application for the CGC-DigiTrans Project, internal document, p. 37).

The Preparatory Course consists of a total of six sessions. Each session begins with a short knowledge transfer in a video (exception: Session 3 has two videos). Subsequently, worksheets and case studies build on the content of the videos and serve to apply and consolidate the new knowledge (exception: Session 1 only has an information sheet as additional working material, which was not handed out during the pilot). The videos were animated. The moderator avatar "Sophia" leads through the videos.

### 1.1 Implementation of the preparatory courses

The preparatory courses were conducted by all partners in the period from 30.01.2024 to 15.03.2024. A total of 78 people took part in the preparatory courses.

- In the Netherlands, the course took place on March 15, 2024 in presence with 12 participants.
- In Austria, one course was held online on March 5 and one on March 13, 2024, with a total of 23 participants.
- In Italy, a course with 18 participants was held as a face-to-face event on March 1, 2024, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- In Germany, one course was held on January 30 and one on February 1, 2024, from 9 am to 3 pm. The first course took place in person with 10 participants, the second course online with 15 participants (3 of whom were in person).

### 1.2 Implementation of the evaluations

The webinar was followed by an evaluation. For this purpose, counsellors from each course were recruited to participate in the evaluation (voluntary reports, random sample). In the Netherlands, Italy, and Germany, five counsellors each and in Austria two counsellors took part in the evaluation. The evaluations were carried out using the qualitative interview method (cf. Mayring, 2016, p. 65 ff.). The interviews were

conducted using a guideline that was identical for all partners. The interview guide consisted of the topics (1) structure and content of the course, (2) learning success and transfer into practice, (3) further development of the course and (4) overall evaluation. The conduct of the interviews varied slightly depending on the partner country. In the Netherlands, a one-hour focus group interview with face-to-face discussion took place (cf. Rädiker & Kuckartz, 2019, p. 217), in Italy individual interviews were conducted as Zoom meetings lasting about 30-45 minutes each, in Germany individual telephone interviews lasting 12 to 45 minutes and individual interviews were also conducted in Austria. Each partner documented the evaluation results in a short report. The following overall evaluation was compiled from the four national evaluation reports. The evaluation report on piloting the webinar - analogous to the application of the DigiTrans Project - "contain information useful to improve the webinar, which will also be the nucleus around which the practice part of the HE curriculum will be developed" (Application for the CGC-DigiTrans Project, internal document, p. 40). The results from the partners' evaluation reports are presented and summarized below using the structure of the interview guide.

## **2 Results**

### **2.1 Structure and content of the course**

#### Structure

The structuring of the course into six sessions was highly praised by all counsellors and judged to be very coherent in terms of number and sequence.

#### Contents

There were different assessments of the course content. The content was predominantly praised as very successful. In the Austrian evaluation, however, the advisors described that they would have liked more methodological support and examples for involving the various stakeholders. They also criticized the fact that too much content was conveyed in too short a time.

#### Videos

In general, all interviewees described the videos as very successful. But there were also some comments. The Austrian advisors added that the videos were more suitable for a website than for a face-to-face event and that they might be more suitable for young users than for experienced advisors. Some interviewees from Germany found the simultaneity of German and English challenging. Written German as a spoken language was also perceived as less lively and the language of the avatars as monotonous. A more fluid and lively and therefore more real language would have been more suitable from their point of view. The

videos could also be played more slowly. The interviewee from the Netherlands mentioned that the use of subtitled translations was disturbing and distracting. Others described the video clips as "instructive, but slightly childish".

### Case studies

The case studies in the short story format were described as very successful by all counsellors without exception.

### Group work

The group work (with the work tasks) was predominantly highly praised (counsellors in Italy, the Netherlands and Germany). However, the Dutch, Austrian and German counsellors wished for more time to work on the tasks. The Dutch advisors also wanted alternating small groups to create more opportunities for exchange. The German counsellors praised the exchange in alternating small groups.

### Reflection

The reflection phase was rated by almost all advisors as very important for the exchange of experiences. The German advisors added that even more time would be necessary for the reflection phase and wished for additional classifications and summaries. While the Austrian advisors criticized the lack of time for reflection, the Dutch advisors sometimes criticized the excessive time for reflection.

## **2.2 Transfer into practice**

### Application in the local setting

The two Austrian advisors were rather critical of the possibility of practical transfer. The course was not considered helpful for their own work context because clients wanted short advice sessions, mostly concerning further training offers and funding support. They also described that it was hard to get other actors into the process because employers usually don't have the time to participate in some kind of meeting or exchange because they can't see a clear benefit for themselves.

In the Italian evaluation report only two of the interviewees reported that it was possible to implement the Roundabout method in their working context in its entirety. The remaining interviewees reported that they could implement in their working contexts only some of the actions proposed in the Roundabout method for bureaucratic administrative reasons. Two interviewees reported that they used to activate networks and digital training packages in the career guidance activities. Others reported that in their work context it was difficult and there were many obstacles to select personalized digital training offers according to the users'

needs. These difficulties seemed to be associated with the way users are taken in, the time made available by the guidance providers and the different training that can be assessed by convention.

All the German advisors expressed a strong desire to implement the Roundabout method in their own practice. One participant reported that she will develop new courses in face-to-face and online mode in her institution starting in the fall and will implement the Roundabout method. Some participants were already using the method in their own local setting (e.g. participants visited company internships so that employers and participants could get to know each other). Two advisors complained that there was a lack of time and money to implement the Roundabout method in their own work context. One of these advisors said that there was unfortunately no possibility of using the Roundabout method in her own area of work. One reason for this was the complexity of the model. Another critical objection was that the Roundabout method would be more suited to the concept of long-term coaching including evaluation. A third counsellor described the problem of data protection.

All respondents in the Netherlands emphasized the importance of the multi-actor-approach. The DigiTrans way of looking at the role of CGC was seen as innovative and valuable. Especially they liked the attention for the engagement stage and the importance to take into account that a trajectory in this field can start at several positions from the view of the Roundabout metaphor. The approach could not be used in all contexts. The ones that worked as a jobcoach (coach-on-the-job) worked with the methodology of Supported Employment, that has a considerable overlap with the Roundabout method. In fact, the emphasis of the Roundabout method on employers and educators is seen as a bit too simplistic, because often they see that the multi-actor approach shows the involvement of a lot more stakeholders, like for instance caretakers, social workers and financial advisors. The stages in the Roundabout method were appreciated very much, especially because it can support a case management approach in the goal setting and action planning of and the exchange of information in a structured way. Some of the respondents commented on that by warning for a too strict use of phases in the process. Reality can be complex and sometimes chaotic. But in term of learning-by-doing it can be a good asset.

#### Increasing knowledge of digital competences and networking skills

All Italian advisors described that their own knowledge of digital skills and networking is very relevant and useful in many advisory contexts.

The Austrian advisors stated that they already felt familiar with the digital skills model, but that the course had provided a good refresher for their skills. For them, digital skills were more of a topic among many others. The course also provided a good opportunity to critically reflect on their own networking activities.

The interviewees from the Netherlands felt that the emphasis on digital skills and competences was useful and relevant. Usually, they paid a lot of attention to other basic skills like literacy and numeracy, but all respondents confirmed that the risk of missing out on the digital transformation was a relevant problem for their target group.

The German advisors rated getting to know the digital skills and their classifications as very helpful. They wished to expand their knowledge of digital skills. Also, the handbook was highly praised for later in-depth study. But two interviewed advisors described that they had only acquired limited new knowledge because they already had a lot of knowledge and intensive practical experience of digital skills.

### **2.3 Transfer into practice**

The Italian interview partners made some suggestions to make the training more effective, such as providing more digital skills during the course, thinking of a training spread over several days with specific days to be devoted to case discussion, and providing additional study materials.

The interview partners in Austria suggested allocating more time to the individual topics, providing examples of the practical application and organization of the method and describing concrete examples in which the Roundabout method is already being implemented. Furthermore, a set of instructions could be provided that could be used in different situations. The working materials could be used very well in their current form, while the video sequences should not be used for a face-to-face event. For an online format, it would be essential to create sufficient opportunities for exchange and reflection.

The German interview partners made various suggestions for improving the offer. Firstly, the concept of peer groups could be applied in the digital sphere. The case studies could be extended to the group of people with a migration background and language problems and linked to the issue of skills recognition. The possibility of converting the course into an online format was rated as very good. In future, the courses could have an even clearer structure, smaller units and sufficiently extensive breakout sessions. It would also be conceivable to have the courses take place at more frequent intervals (e.g. every six months) and to integrate exchange forums, breakout sessions and best practice examples in the periods in between.

The interviewees in the Netherlands thought that in general for now the course as it seemed very useful as a solid foundation for further development in the future. Further development could be useful after testing and applying the course in several contexts and for different target groups. For further development the following suggestion were given:

a. For implementation in existing networks it would be a suggestion to develop a flanking offer in the form of training for managers and policy makers. Implementing a multi-actor approach with participants from different organizations asks for a facilitating approach in terms of time and tools.



- b. Another suggestion was to offer the course as in-company training for practitioners, managers and policymakers, perhaps together with their networking partners.
- c. The structure of the course could in some cases be adapted. The length of six sessions could be adapted and shortened.
- d. The present structure of the course made it less useful as a stand-alone learning track. The didactical outline asks for a moderator-approach. A didactical skilled moderator/trainer is needed to fully benefit from the richness of the materials and content. In that view an online version could be an option, but it would ask for further elaboration to adapt it to an online learning approach.

## **2.4 Overall assessment: Tops and tips**

All Italian interview partners appreciated the course and considered the training as effective. Most of them underlined the importance of meeting together in person for a whole day, having also some moments for informal talk. Some of the counsellors realized that they already had some possible sources of networking and that they themselves could be a network of professionals.

The German counsellors rated the overall concept of the course and the roundabout method with flexible entry and exit of partners as required as very successful. The flexible entry and exit of partners should be emphasized even more in the future. The counsellors also had points of criticism. They noticed that the term "CGC" should be explained in the material and that the webinar should start with a round of introductions.

The Austrian interviewees rated the fact that many topics and aspects of the new approach were reflected on together as very successful. As a suggestion, they suggested that the use of individual tools from the handbook could already be tested during the preparatory course.

The Netherlands counsellors highly valued the main aim and the starting point of the method and of the course. They also appreciated the importance of specific attention to the risk of digital illiteracy and the effort that was made to help the target group in the digital transition. This also worked for the multi-actor and networking approach. This in combination with the stages in the Roundabout method made the approach a valuable contribution for the guidance practice. Involving other stakeholders in the process was assessed not only very important, but indispensable. A tip could be to screen the materials in the participating countries and rewrite some of the materials, using more local terminology and contextual relevant language. Also, in the handbook the several chapters contain quite a lot of repetitions in the introductions and explanations. It would enrich the materials if it was somehow more compressed and to-the-point. To summarize, the respondents praised the amount of effort that was put into the development of the course and all the learning materials. The counsellors welcomed the attention to the subject and the

specific targets and target group of the course. Further development in several contexts would help the course to grow and to adapt to the needs of those contexts.

### **3 Final evaluation**

Finally, the results of the evaluation questionnaire are summarized regarding the possibilities of improving the course and its application in a university curriculum.

#### **3.1 Structure and content of the course**

In the first part of the evaluation questionnaire, the counsellors described the structure, the content, the videos, the case studies, the group work and the reflection as very successful for the most part. However, the counsellors also provided critical comments on some topics, from which suggestions for improving the course can be derived.

The teaching of content could be adapted more flexibly to the needs of the learners in terms of timing. The roundabout method could also provide precise assistance and descriptions for the involvement of actors with examples.

The videos should be presented in a uniform language. It may be necessary to use lively everyday language instead of written language. The suitability of the videos for face-to-face training could be questioned.

For the group work, more time should be given to working on the tasks and the possibility of switching between the small groups in order to create more opportunities for exchange.

The time allowed for reflection should be adapted more flexibly to the different needs of the participants.

#### **3.2 Transfer into practice**

Increasing knowledge of digital competences and networking skills

The advisors provided different information about their level of knowledge of digital skills. For the majority of advisors, however, the competence model and the roundabout method offered a good opportunity for reflection and for expanding and deepening existing knowledge on digital skills. In future courses, the different levels of knowledge of the learners should continue to be taken into account when imparting knowledge on digital skills. The links between digital skills and other basic skills that are relevant in practice could also be demonstrated.

Application in the local setting

The evaluation reports also asked about the implementation of the Roundabout method in their own local context. It was found that the implementation of the method varied greatly. Two Italian counsellors and one counsellor in Germany described a complete implementation of the Roundabout method. Several counsellors from Italy, the Netherlands and Germany were able to report that they were able to partially implement the Roundabout method. Four counsellors (two each in Austria and Germany) described that the Roundabout method could not be used in their own context. The reasons given for limited, or no implementation of the Roundabout method included time and financial aspects, the lack of suitability of training offers or unsuitable framework conditions.

The Dutch advisors reported that the Roundabout method has many points of contact with existing guidance methods. The Supported Employment method was seen as far more elaborate, while the Case Management method can be improved by the Roundabout method. The Dutch advisors also emphasized the importance of using the Roundabout method flexibly according to practical requirements.

The results showed that it was fundamentally possible to use the Roundabout method in practice. However, the existing work contexts were designed very differently, so that it was possible that the Roundabout method was used completely or as a supplement or extensive extension of methods already practiced. However, it was also possible that implementation in practice was only possible in some areas and with limitations or had to be ruled out. In order to improve the practical transfer of the Roundabout Method, the diverse framework conditions for the practical advisory use of the Roundabout Method should be further elaborated.

### **3.3 Further development**

The counsellors from the partner countries provided a wide range of suggestions for improving individual topics and sequences, including far-reaching proposals for modifying the timing and content of the course with the implementation of a moderator function. These suggestions should be taken up for the further improvement of the roundabout method in a context- and addressee-oriented manner, taken into account in the development of a university curriculum and, if necessary, further developed during its implementation.

### **3.4 Overall assessment: Tops and tips**

In the general evaluation of the course, the counsellors provided additional suggestions for improving the course, including country-specific adaptations of the materials, greater inclusion of the methods manual and the development of a set of instructions for using the Roundabout method. Furthermore, the counsellors from all four countries praised the course as very good and successful in terms of its topics and structure, its opportunities for exchange and networking, its differentiation in its elaboration, its materials and its possibilities for further development.

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