

Dimensions of Counseling Older Adults for Employability

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Social exclusion and older adults

In a constantly and rapidly changing world, everyone has to learn. We no longer have a privilege to learn when we have spare time, or when we feel learning is a useful way to spend our leisure time. Learning is a way to cope with tension caused by changes in one's professional life, social life, and even personal life.

Nowadays age becomes another factor which influences the discrimination of older adults

Social exclusion and older adults

It is very important to attract the seniors to education, to raise their self-esteem, to equip them with the skills that they need in order to cope with change and inspire them to be the active members of today's ever changing society

OBJECT:

of the study is subjective perceptions of older adults towards the needs of older people (and other vulnerable groups) to secure employment or to join the labor force

Methods

of critical analysis of references and qualitative research (focus groups (Learners Commissions) discussions) were employed for the completion of a study.



Objective and subjective changes and lifelong learning society

- It is agreed that under the conditions of changing environment, the obvious changes caused by science and technology (*we use email, book trips on the internet, deposit money to interest accounts or transfer money to family members abroad*), the changing economic, social and political conditions, we need to change, too, that is to learn.
- We are changing our world faster than we ever did; therefore, we need to change faster than we had ever done (Zuzevičiūtė, Teresevičienė, 2009).



Objective and subjective changes and lifelong learning society

- Changes are also related to a longer life span of a human being;
- We experience constant stress, as we are learning how to do banking, to fulfill the expectations of the employer and the colleagues and to participate in the life of the community and the country;
- Lifelong learning is a responsible, continuous, expensive, stressful work; it can produce ordinary outcomes as well as outcomes that can impact our lives, the lives of our families and even those of our organizations and our communities. It is namely this paradoxical (the fact that we sometimes are hostages of changes) situation that makes us constantly learn.

Counselling of older adults

Counselling of older adults, who are either at face of the need to change careers because of:

- 1) health reasons,
- 2) at the threshold of retirement they feel the need to try out new pathways in their activities
- 3) in worse cases, some older adults are made redundant just before retirement and struggle to still afford living.

Counselling of those older adults comprises today a ***major part of the role of career counsellor.***

Career counsellor's role

- If traditionally career counsellor was perceived as mainly working for the benefit of young people, today the role changes dramatically, and the new functions are being attributed to the role: counselling of migrants, counselling of spouses, counselling of unemployed and counseling of older people.
- Therefore counselling of older people is rather a **team work** of social worker, psychologist, educationalist and a career counsellor, than a solo act of career counsellor (Kidd, 2006).

Needs of older adults

As studies reveal (Berg, Hallberg, Blomquist, 2006) , older adults have needs that are specific in comparison with a mature or young adult. Specifically:

- Older adults feel the need to serve their communities.
- Older adults need to be considered a part of their communities, including the organization they work.
- Older adults need intellectual challenges.
- Older adults need specific attention to their health.
- Older adults feel specific need to be needed and active in social life: to have interests, to maintain relationships (Rimavičiūtė, 2006).

Methodology

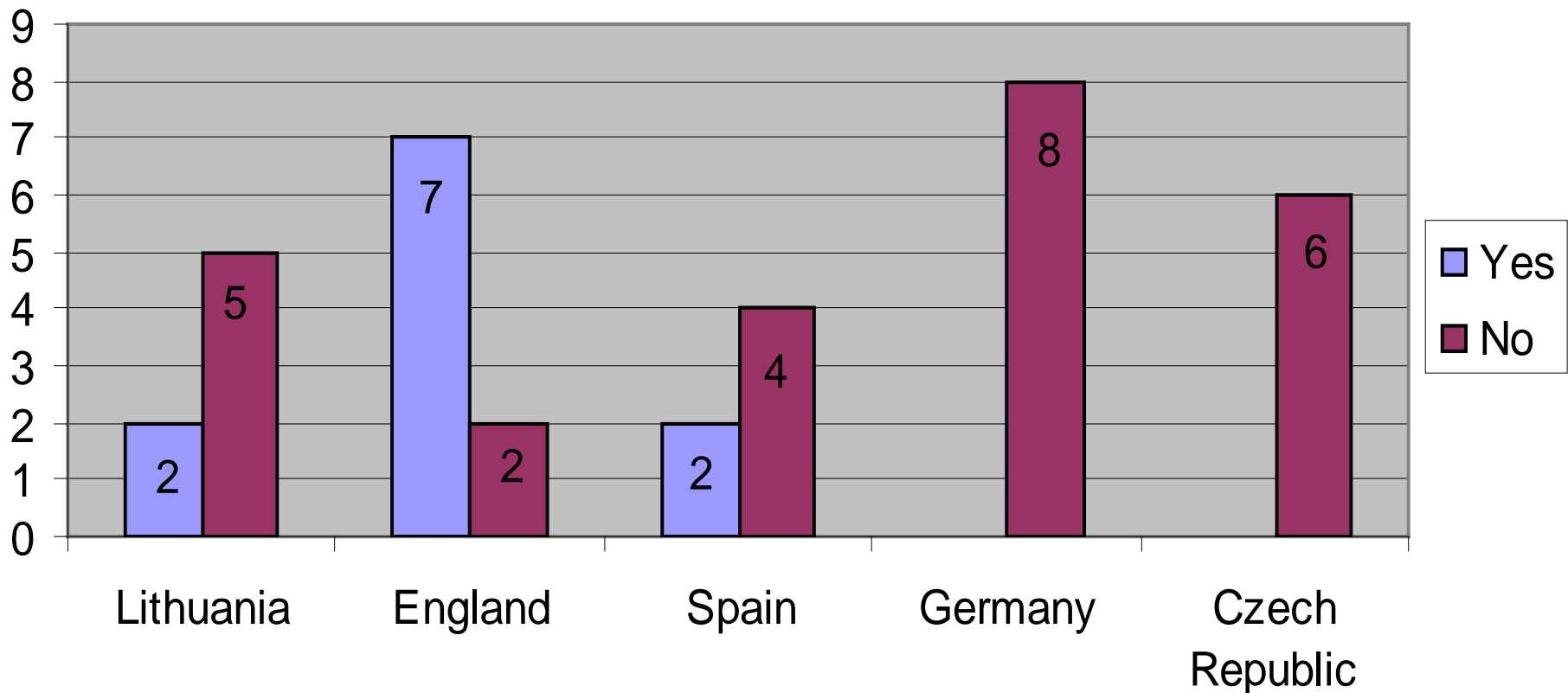
- The study was completed under the framework of the Socrates Grundtvig 1 project LIGHT („Innovative Methods and Practices to facilitate Social Inclusion“; No. 503575-LLP-1-2009-1-LT-GRUNDTVIG-GMP, coordinated by Social Innovation Fund (Kaunas, Lithuania)).
- Significant part of activities is dedicated to studies on whether migrants, unemployed women and older adults are provided with opportunities to participate in societies to their full potential.

Methodology

- There were created Learning commissions, which are described as a group of 5 -7 adult learners from selected target groups (unemployed, migrants, older adults) in each country (Lithuania, Germany, Spain, Great Britain, Czech Republic), which is involved in the project's implementation and evaluation processes.
- First round table discussion with Learners' commissions was implemented in spring, 2010 in 5 participating countries (Lithuania, Great Britain, Check Republic, Spain, and Germany). These expert groups were groups of 6 to 9 older adults, who were asked to share their ideas.

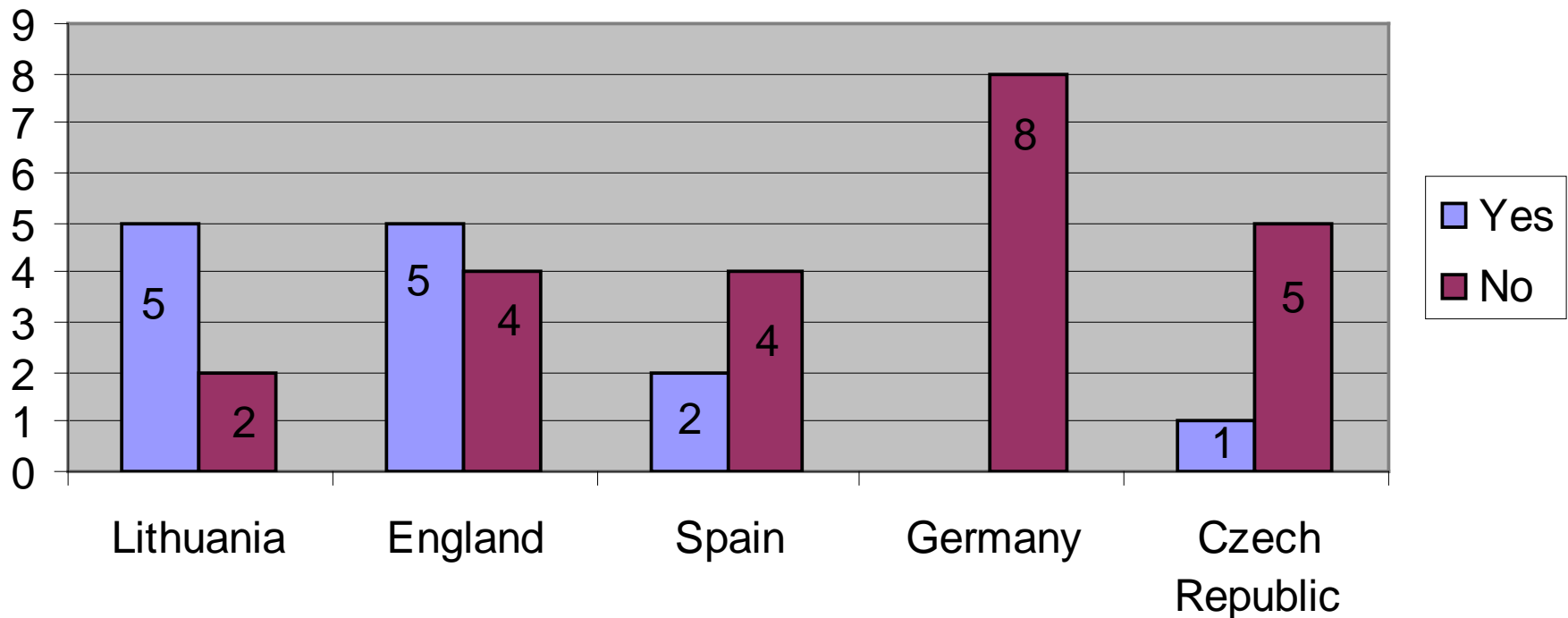
Experience in trainings

Have You ever participated in trainings,
concerning prevention of discrimination for
socially disadvantaged people?



Knowledge about mentoring

Do You know about mentoring as a tool for overcoming social inclusion?



Benefits of *Role model*:

- Provides the inspiration to improve their lives.
- Provides a good “realistic” example, which is very similar to their own.
- Provides the ideas for realistic ways for solution of problems.
- Increases the motivation to invest efforts to change something.

Benefits of the *Mentoring*

- Possibility to discuss their own problems with an experienced person and other people with the same problems.
- Possibility to get support from mentor and other mentees (in learning language, laws an etc.).
- Possibility to feel that they are not alone and have the guide, who inspires them.
- Possibility to get an advice.

Benefits from *Trainings*

- Knowledge about the laws and their rights.
- Knowledge about the opportunities to re/-enter to the labour market.
- Better integration into society.
- Personal development (trust, self-confidence, language skills and etc.).
- New contacts and friends in similar situations foster relationships.

Conclusions

- Analysis of data reveals that older adults (such as other vulnerable groups) do feel threatened in labour market, and socially. They repeatedly report that even if they do not know about mentoring, or trainings for such target groups, they agree that it is important and it would help them to integrate to the society.
- They univocally agree that the support, mentoring and counseling have both therapeutic impact (strengthens self-confidence, helps to see ‘big picture’, is crucial for fighting against helplessness).

Conclusions

- Therefore, it seems, the subjective dimension of counseling is perceived as a more important for older adults themselves. Nevertheless, an importance of objective dimension was also evident.
- An impact of increased employability in the form of acquiring information about the diverse opportunities, which otherwise might escape the focus of attention of older adults, was emphasized by respondents in almost all groups.



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Thank You for attention!