

Design the lifelong learning plan

The goal of the lifelong learning plan is to provide the individual with a navigational tool for future learning as well as how to transfer this learning-output into applicable praxis. This is highly relevant in the context of the refugee/newcomer that often needs extra training in order to be qualified for future employment. The refugee/newcomer needs to become aware and ask the following questions:

- Which qualifications do I need to possess in order to secure employment?
- Why do I need to acquire this specific kind of skill set in this line of work?
- How will I achieve this skill set?
- How long will it take me to acquire such skills, and how should I plan for this?

In order to design such a plan, the professional must initially encourage the direct participation of the clients themselves. The refugee or newcomer should be engaged in an exercise of personal reflection concerning his or her own experience of learning in general – stemming from educational, work-related or personal interaction in the past. At the same time, he or she should try to point out those gaps of experience/competences that may need to be addressed in order to ease perspectives of future employment.

This process involves the identification of the following:

- Already possessed knowledge, skills and competences – with regards to possibilities/wishes for specific types of employment in the future;
- Knowledge, skills and competences that need to be achieved (Goals) in order to realize the potential of employment; and
- Acknowledgement of how far he or she might be from reaching the aforementioned goals.

In order to systematize the evaluation between the professional and the refugee/newcomer concerning such questions, it might be useful to apply a schematic that includes a rating-system. This provides an overview of the refugee's/newcomer's current stance as well as future learning-requirements in order to achieve the goal. A schematic adapted to the specific situation of the individual could appear with the following structure (including an example from a refugee/newcomer that wants to work in the retail-industry but at the same time needs to improve his language skills):

I want/need to learn	Because...	Need to know level (1-5)	Where I am now (1-5)	KSC gap
To be able to speak and understand the	Many jobs requires a certain amount of	5	2	3

language of the current host country in a proficient manner	communicative as well as social skills, in which a general language proficiency is required			
To learn specific work-related terms from the retail industry	I want to work in the retail-industry and must therefore be able to understand basic terms related to this line of work	3	1	2
etc.

Source: *Lighthouse self-analysis grid*

Besides the initial goal-statement as well as the objective of this goal, the important thing to notice in this schematic is the point-based system in the third and fourth column. This way, the professional and the refugee/newcomer can register the current capabilities and needs in a manageable and sorted manner that also allows for keeping track on possible progression. The ongoing difference between the two columns should be stated in the last KSC gap column (Knowledge, Skills and Competences).

This exercise of reflection should be followed up by the lifelong learning plan itself. This can include the following information (Examples in continuation of the first schematic):

KSC objectives	Actions to be taken	Time frame	Support/resources needed	Support my employability by...
Improving general proficiency in the language of the host country – preferably reaching a level close to B2 as defined in the European CEFR scale	Complete language courses on lower levels as defined in the European CEFR scale, so as to be able to reach the preferred level of B2.	Max. 3 years – depending on current level	Establishing a social network with native speakers from the host country. Support from family in terms of acknowledgment of the time needed.	Obtaining the preferred level of language proficiency, as B2 is defined as a level at which you have become able to understand and communicate without too much trouble.
To acquire knowledge of work related linguistic terms with regards to the retail-industry	Attend language courses with a specific business-related linguistic focus. Employment in a supported position at a retail shop	250 educational hours Employment at a retail shop for as long as necessary/wanted	Contact with relevant retail-shop. The ability and willingness of the workplace to afford time to the training of language – both at the workplace itself as well as providing	Obtaining the necessary vocabulary as used in the retail-industry. The acquisition of working experience in a retail-shop

			a flexible work schedule in order to be able to attend classes.	environment.
etc...

Source: *Lighthouse LLP Plan*

The lifelong learning plan thus supports the first schematic in taking its goals to the level of practical implementation. It provides the tools to analyse what effort the refugee/newcomer must put in to minimize the gap between current level of knowledge, skills and competences and the goals of expanding these – so as to meet required qualifications. It provides an overview of the specific actions that need to be taken step by step, how long such an action will take (thus affecting overall planning), what extra help is essential for success and finally how this will support future possibilities of employment.

Besides these navigational categories for framing a lifelong learning plan, one may expand these types of schematics – providing extra categories such as:

- An expansion of objectives with regards to time and place/turn: Short term objectives, mid-term objectives, long term objectives – so as to make the whole process less unmanageable for refugees/newcomers that are already experiencing uncertainty with regards to their future;
- Personal interests and dreams alongside the categories of knowledge, skills and competences so as to provide an extra motivational factor;
- A column of the specific actors/institutions that need to be involved in the process;
- Already acquired KSC in similar fields that may act as a personal compass – encouraging the acquisition of learning by referring to techniques and experiences that already form a part of the refugee's/newcomer's arsenal.

Finally, the professional and the refugee/newcomer have to decide how much collaboration is needed during this process. Should it be a continues process in which the professional and refugee/newcomer meets regularly in order to evaluate in consultation, or is the goal to create a personal tool for implementation and assessment that the refugee/newcomer manages on his own in the long term?



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