

FAB

Fast-track Action Boost

Co-funded by



Covid-19 pandemic in Europe

Special edition

Since Coronavirus disease (Covid-19) outbreak started to affect China in early 2020, the perspective in Europe slightly changed day by day. At the end of January it was declared the public health emergency of international concern. Coronaviruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases. This one has demonstrated to be easily widespread.

In mid February some European countries started to identify some documented cases of infection in the population: during three months Europe has seen a health crisis like never happened in the last century.

All countries has been affected by it, with a more critical situation in Italy, Spain, France. Half part of European countries passed through long quarantine to prevent the wider diffusion of this virus. In this moment there is the opportunity for a slow recovery of activities, especially related to production of goods.

FAB project was also affected by this situation, particularly in those countries in which pilot activities were ongoing: all VET and guidance activities were temporary stopped. Day by day the project partners worked for the definition of "plan B" for the remaining O.2, O.3 activities.

Based on currently available information, the World Health Organization does not recommend any restriction of travel or trade. Standard recommendations to prevent infection

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spread for travelers in or from affected areas include regular hand washing, covering mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing, and avoiding close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness.

However different countries has adopted different measures (in terms of restrictions to meet people, to travel or to manage workplaces and training activities), and these are changing twice a month, following the evolution of new cases diagnosed.

This edition of FAB's newsletter gives the opportunity to have a look at the situation in the 5 partners countries and how each institution involved in the project has found solution for the prosecution of the project's activities.

MONITORING THE FAB'S DEVELOPMENT

The activities through Covid-19 emergency

The Municipality of Milan – as lead partner of FAB project – has realized three quick assessments (in March, April and June 2020) in the early, central days and at the end of the pandemic disease in Europe.

In the assessment done in March the lead partner was trying to identify the health and safety measures issued by each local and national authorities and their impact on the A.3 activities.

More details were collected in April and in June it became possible to make a kind of “evaluation”.

So here we have some main facts for the partner city - country involved in pilot activities (ToT and activities for refugees and asylum seekers).





Assessment March 2020 (impact of safety measures)

What FAB activities are affected by health and safety measures in your countries and to what extent?

The Pilot implementation is fully suspended until new National and Regional government instructions.

The beneficiaries recruitment is fully suspended and the local partner engagement severely affected.

Assessment April 2020 (impact on the ongoing activities)

A.3.1 Deliver training, coaching and mentoring of staff, counsellors, practitioners, refugees.

Just one training session has been realized in January. AFOLMET plans the opportunity to identify several training session to be realized online between May to July 2020 (maybe 2 hours training once a week).

The remaining hours will be realized between September and December 2020 in presence or online, depending by the restrictions decided by National and Regional Government.

A.3.2 Deliver pilot services to and with refugees

A first group of 25 persons has been involved in training activities (professional training - cooking - mashed with professional language training): activity started at the end of January and has been interrupted for safety measures (16 hours of training missed).

For this group all the individual activities has started at the end of March (competencies self assessment, soft skills self assessment, Skills Profile Tool - for 5, Europass CV), managed by several professionals with online tool and Skype.

Due to the few remaining hours of training this group will for sure end its path within December.

A second group of 40 persons was planned for training (same content and structure of the first one) between March and May.

Actually AFOLMET has two options related to the possible evolution of health and safety measures:

A) start in September and end in December (but we need to verify the availability of the cooking laboratories - if students will come back to school or not)

B) in the same period (option A) realization of another training path with different professional contents from the previous one (eg. cleaning sector with specific attention to new procedures and products for sanitation), always reinforced with language training.

Individual activities for self assessment tools can be realized in early 2021.

Assessment June 2020 (evaluation at the end of the emergency)

How strongly were the pilot services in your city affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and its consequent restrictions?

Pilot services severely affected.

How much of your training programmes/activities have been/will be digitalized in order to tackle the restrictions due to Covid-19 pandemic?

Only few of them.

BERLIN - Germany

Special edition



Assessment March 2020 (impact of safety measures)

What FAB activities are affected by health and safety measures in your countries and to what extent?

Personal exchange with clients is forbidden, as well as group counseling and thus not implemented anymore. Professionals try to compensate by using video-counseling, phone-calls, messenger chats, e-mail development of mini video tutorials and other materials prioritizing the development of individual strategic plans both for labor market authorities and clients. The target group is less active due to public and personal insecurity, recommendation to stay at home, child care, homeschooling. Employers focus on risk assessment and trouble-shooting rather than hiring processes. Potential economic regression is likely to influence labor market integration of refugees. SOESTRA case study in Milan (scheduled for March) is suspended. We will carry out the case study in Berlin via phone interviews as far as possible in April.

Assessment April 2020 (impact on the ongoing activities)

A.3.1 Deliver training, coaching and mentoring of staff, counsellors, practitioners, refugees.

Follows the scheduled program.

A.3.2 Deliver pilot services to and with refugees.

Of course, the Coronavirus lock down affects the job market and the project JobBoost: job coaches currently support the participants with video and telephone coaching. All of the participants need help to deal with the difficult situation: most of the participants have questions about the effects of Corona on their work, classes or applications. Two additional participants started a job on 1.4. (all in all 15 job placements including 3 vocational training), others have internships, want to start them or classes but these are being postponed. Some participants also have to look after their children who are not going to school or kindergarten currently. They have to reduce their efforts to enter the labor market, but some ask for online possibilities to improve their language skills or professional knowledge.

Assessment June 2020 (evaluation at the end of the emergency)

How strongly were the pilot services in your city affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and its consequent restrictions?

Pilot services severely affected.

How much of your training programmes/activities have been/will be digitalized in order to tackle the restrictions due to Covid-19 pandemic?

Most of them.

WIEN: Austria



Assessment March 2020 (impact of safety measures)

What FAB activities are affected by health and safety measures in your countries and to what extent?

Full Suspension of:

O3; A.3.1: Deliver of training, coaching and mentoring of staff, for the service delivery

O3; A.3.2: Deliver of pilot services to and with refugees

O4; A.4.2: Organize and deliver PP working group meetings

A planned restart of O3; A.3.1: Mid of May.

Assessment April 2020 (impact on the ongoing activities)

A.3.1 Deliver training, coaching and mentoring of staff, counsellors, practitioners, refugees.

Due to the public movement restrictions on Covid-19 the course system of A.3.1 had to be stopped after the first week. In re-starting A.3.1, Wien is following the government's guidelines for opening schools (the courses are structurally similar to school lessons).

A gradual reopening for schools will apply at the earliest from mid-May.

The first possible start date is therefore the beginning of June.

The realistic estimate for a new start is after the summer holidays, in September 2020.

A.3.2 Deliver pilot services to and with refugees

The pilot service of A.3.2 was not started because of the public movement restrictions on Covid-19.

In re-implementing A.3.2, Vienna is following the government's guidelines on holding events. These may not take place at least until the end of June; the situation will be re-evaluated for the summer.

According to this, a realistic estimate of the starting possibility is from September 2020

Assessment June 2020 (evaluation at the end of the emergency)

How strongly were the pilot services in your city affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and its consequent restrictions?

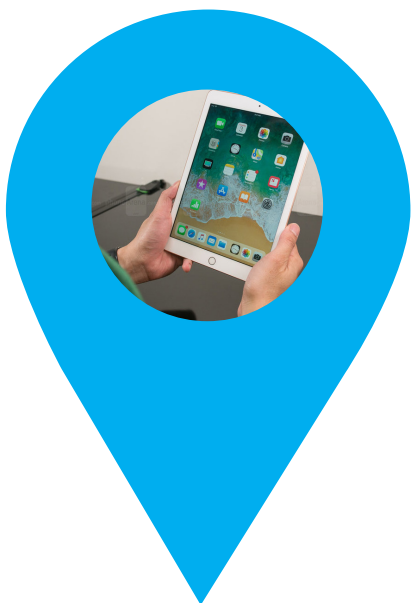
Pilot services severely affected.

How much of your training programmes/activities have been/will be digitalized in order to tackle the restrictions due to Covid-19 pandemic?

A significant of them.

STOCKHOLM: Sweden

Special edition



Assessment March 2020 (impact of safety measures)

What FAB activities are affected by health and safety measures in your countries and to what extent?

Regarding "mentoring visits":

Planned study visit to Madrid will be postponed until the autumn.

The mentoring exchange with Milan will be in writing as an initial step.

As for the method development regarding Neighborhood mothers:

The training for newly employed Neighborhood mothers will be delayed for at least a month. Hopefully, it will be carried out in full before the summer.

Cancelled network meetings with Neighborhood mothers and councilors.

The work regarding method development, implementation, archiving, reporting, planning a film, etc. are not affected and can be done online.

Assessment April 2020 (impact on the ongoing activities)

A.3.1 Deliver training, coaching and mentoring of staff, counsellors, practitioners, refugees.

Implemented online due to the inability to travel and meet in person. Network meetings with Neighborhood mothers and councilors are cancelled until May, communication is carried out through phone, emails and Skype-meetings.

A.3.2 Deliver pilot services to and with refugees

Training for new Neighborhood mothers will be rescheduled (from planned start in March). The aim is to carry out the training before the summer, but in the worst case it will take place after the holidays. One risk is that the city districts will choose not to employ as many women as planned for the role of Neighbourhood mothers. If the training needs to be postponed further, this will affect the project team's workload. The current Neighborhood mothers are still working and reach out to women although they are fewer, as women do not leave their home as much. The Neighborhood mothers now give information and support to a larger extent by phone.

Assessment June 2020 (evaluation at the end of the emergency)

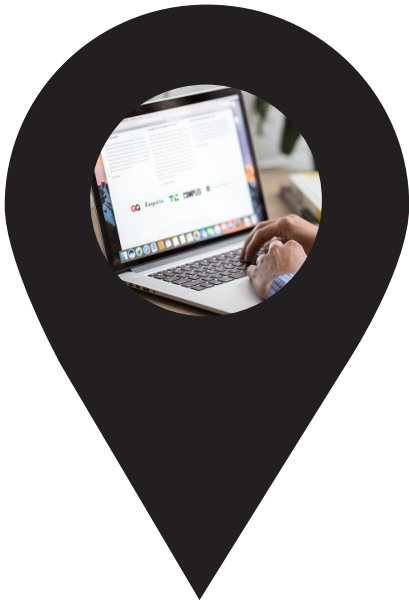
How strongly were the pilot services in your city affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and its consequent restrictions?

Pilot services a little affected

How much of your training programmes/activities have been/will be digitalized in order to tackle the restrictions due to Covid-19 pandemic?

Only few of them

BELGRADE: Serbia



Assessment March 2020 (impact of safety measures)

What FAB activities are affected by health and safety measures in your countries and to what extent?

The Pilot implementation is fully suspended until new government instructions.

Assessment April 2020 (impact on the ongoing activities)

A.3.1 Deliver training, coaching and mentoring of staff, counsellors, practitioners, refugees

Rescheduled due to Covid-19 restrictions and inability to organize larger gatherings and traveling between the countries. Online implementation is not feasible.

A.3.2 Deliver pilot services to and with refugees

Rescheduled due to Covid-19 restrictions and inability to organize larger gatherings and traveling throughout the country. Activities were planned to start in April and last until September. However, this needs to be postponed and moved to June (maybe earlier we manage to start but currently it is unknown). We are trying to do as much as possible all preparatory work in this restriction period.

Assessment June 2020 (evaluation at the end of the emergency)

How strongly were the pilot services in your city affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and its consequent restrictions?

Pilot services severely affected

How much of your training programmes/activities have been/will be digitalized in order to tackle the restrictions due to Covid-19 pandemic?

Only some of them



LESSONS LEARNED

How Covid-19 changed FAB projec

What emerged during the assessments carried out clearly shows that the measures adopted by the individual governments had an impact in the development of the project: from the activities implemented, to the project meetings, up to the suspension of all the face to face activities.

Nevertheless, all partners had the opportunity to look over the critical situation and to provide new solutions to achieve the aims of the project.

Covid-19 changed the work habits of a lot of professionals, empowered smart/home working, cancelled all the face to face events (meetings, mentoring visits, training, communication/ dissemination events) and, on the other hand, it accelerated the “digital transition” of the project activities.

This wasn't easy for all partners, because some activities could not be done through e-learning tools: this means that some partners had to re-design the schedule of the pilot implementation and to identify suitable alternatives.

If it is possible to talk about “lessons learned” there are few things that we can mention:

- ▶ empowerment of e-learning solutions;
- ▶ large investment in individual support actions for people involved (especially for some fragile subjects that needed a kind of “blended” support – psychological, social, vocational and personal);



- ▶ very good project management implementation with consistent virtual meetings with all partners (also quick opportunity to schedule often short meetings with some professionals for specific project tasks);
- ▶ identification of innovative solutions to disseminate the FAB contents, focusing particularly on the Final Event that will become totally digital.

**“Stay safe, stay healthy!
Stay tune for more FAB's update”**

The FAB project is led by



In partnership with

