

ADVISE – AiDing Visually Impaired Seeking Employment

Manual to train young
blind and partially-sighted job seekers



Version 2
April 2020

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INTRODUCTION

Based on the experience accumulated from 2015 to 2017 through the organisation of a European Training Course (TC) on youth employability and thanks to financial support from the EU Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme, EBU is developing ADVISE, a training methodology and a coaching approach aimed at blind and partially-sighted job seekers under 30 years old.

This trainer manual provides future ADVISE trainers with the necessary guidance to support young blind and partially-sighted job seekers through specific TC and coaching approaches and provides useful information on how to select job seekers and coaches, and how to organise and lead ADVISE sessions. This manual is complemented with a train-the-trainer session. Both the manual and the TC adapt topics covered by [VISAL](#), a project selected as a success story by a panel of experts of the DG Education and Culture of the European Commission in early 2016.

The manual is structured in 5 chapters: Introduction, how to be a trainer, coaching approach, agenda for a TC, and resources. As already said, it is only intended for ADVISE trainers. A complementary document, entitled "[EBU manual for inexperienced job seekers with a visual impairment](#)", is available.

ADVISE will be tested and fine-tuned between 2019 and 2021 in 8 pilot countries.

Using ADVISE, trainers will reinforce EBU members' skills and experience in accompanying blind and partially-sighted job seekers, thus increasing their capacity to support, in the middle and long term, national and European policy and decision makers in tackling the issue of visual impairment and access to the labour market.

This manual is designed for all 41 EBU members, taking into account the different situations which can be found amongst such a diverse group, because the final objective is always the same; to improve the employment prospects of blind and partially-sighted persons.

ADVISE - Manual to train young blind and partially-sighted job seekers

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The voice of blind and partially sighted people in Europe

HOW TO BE A TRAINER

The trainer's primary mission is to train young blind and partially-sighted job seekers. In addition to this, the trainer is responsible for a variety of practical matters that need to be addressed before a TC can be arranged. This chapter will focus on such matters.

The trainer should bear in mind that the TC will take place over one working day and due to the number of issues that should be covered during the TC, it is imperative that the participants and the trainer work efficiently and avoid spending time on non-pertinent issues

The trainer may also be, at least in part, responsible for recruiting the participants for the TC. To find possible participants, the trainer may consider contacting, for example, centres for employment services where information about the TC had been disseminated in advance. Schools and/or universities could also be contacted. The organisation should also consider the possibility of creating a service out of the TC, which could later be a source of revenue for the organization.

Prior to the TC, the trainer should send an email to the participants detailing how to prepare for the TC. This email should, at least, include: information about the content of the TC in general and the workshops in particular, timing, and where it will take place. The trainer will also provide the participants a list of questions for the workshops and the [ADVISE four-leaf clover](#) and encourage them to think about the answers before the TC. This way time will be gained and more efficiently used.

The role of the trainer

The trainer is key to the success of the training course. The trainer should encourage and guide the participants of the training course. The trainer should be able to evaluate the individual strengths and weaknesses of the participants and ensure that the training course will offer each participant something that will advance their path to employment.

It is imperative that the trainer understands both the possibilities and the limitations of the training course. In other words, the trainer should understand what can and can't be achieved in the context of the training course. The trainer is in charge of making sure the

training course timetable is met and that the subject matter of the course is covered. For this purpose, the trainer should familiarise him or herself as much as possible with the subject matter and the schedule of the training course.

The trainer is not an assistant and should take care not to assume this role. The trainer can and should help and guide the individual participants but it is very important to keep in mind that the trainer's primary responsibility is managing the group and the training course curriculum. It may be necessary to hire or otherwise acquire the services of people, who can be designated with the task of assisting the participants with, for example, their computers. If the trainer takes on the responsibility of assisting all the participants, he or she may find it difficult to find the time to follow the curriculum and handle the duties of a trainer.

Mission

The trainer's primary mission is to train. The trainer must encourage the participants of the group to participate actively in the training course. This is crucial, because the training course is a group effort. The trainer is instrumental in bringing the participants of the training course together as a group. This will make it easier for the participants to ask questions, provide feedback, share personal experiences and take part in the training course workshops. Some of the participants may be shy, or for some other reason reluctant to actively participate in the training course. It is the trainer's mission to engage with these people. The trainer should also be prepared to control and, if necessary, restrict the conversation to make sure that the training course remains on schedule.

The trainer must also be able to adopt the role of a teacher. It means is that the trainer should be able to lecture fluently and convey information to the participants. The trainer's mission is to engage with the participants and encourage an egalitarian atmosphere of open discussion, but the training course agenda also includes introductory segments and lectures, during which the participants are required to pay attention and listen to the trainer. During these segments, it is up to the trainer to deliver the lecture in such a way that those who are listening (i.e. the participants of the training course) remain focused and attentive.

The trainer should also bear in mind that the 1-day TC is just the beginning of the journey towards employment for the participants. The trainer's mission does not end with the training course. He or she must be prepared to keep working with the participants after the training course, as a coach for instance. If the participants face problems as they seek employment, the trainer may very well be the person the contact. It is also up to the trainer to coordinate how the participants will interact with each other after the training course.

Practical matters

Before the TC can begin the trainer should be as prepared for the day as possible to ensure that the training will run smoothly. Practical problems will be inevitable, but a lot can be done to lessen their effects on the course.

A venue for the training course must be chosen. When choosing a venue, accessibility should be a concern. For instance, can participants using wheelchairs access the room where the training course will be held? Participants should be able to travel to the TC using public transport, so the venue should be located in the vicinity of a public transport hub. The needs of those who use guide dogs should also be addressed.

Care should be taken to ensure that the room where the training will be held will be large enough to accommodate everyone. It should have sufficient ventilation, comfortable chairs and provide a pleasant working environment. It is critically important to ensure the room is adequately lit. If possible, the lighting should be adjustable to accommodate everyone, and additional lamps should be available for those who need them. Large windows, especially if they are facing south and aren't equipped with blinds, may be very problematic. If possible, it would be beneficial to scout the possible sites before the actual event and evaluate their suitability keeping in mind that the participants will be visually impaired.

The participants will have to eat during the day, which means the trainer will either have to have lunch brought on site, or be prepared to inform the participants of nearby restaurants. If food is not served and the participants will leave the venue to eat, it is important that the venue is situated in an area where there are restaurants. If lunch is served, the trainer must establish beforehand what the dietary restrictions of the participants are. The above also applies to serving

coffee etc. It is important to establish in advance the ICT-resources available to the trainer and the participants. Will the venue have Wifi? Will the participants be bringing their own computers? If the trainer plans to show, for example, a video from Youtube, it would be necessary to check whether the venue has a projector and a sound system. If the participants will be bringing their own laptops for the course, the trainer should find out whether the space used for the course has a sufficient quantity of power outlets and, if necessary, extension cords.

To achieve an effective working environment, it may be necessary to begin the training by going through certain basic rules and guidelines during the session. These should be considered bearing in mind the size and composition of the group. For example, it may be necessary to remind the students that they shouldn't use their mobile phones during training. If the trainer considers it necessary, the participants should also be advised to speak one at a time and avoid interrupting the other participants. It is also important to make sure the participants stay alert and focused. To achieve this, the trainer may include short energizers or extra breaks in the schedule. The energizer could, for example, be a very short (few minutes at most) work out or a wordplay in which participants are asked to describe themselves using an adjective that begins with the first letter of their name. The trainer can be innovative when it comes to energizers, but special care should be taken to ensure that all participants can participate.

The people attending the TC will have different needs and those should, if feasible, be met. Planning in advance for a variety of eventualities will help the trainer deal with the problems that arise during the training. The trainer should try to spend as much of the available time training the participants as opposed to spending it away from the participants running around, solving problems.

During the TC, the trainer may find out that the participants need training or help in other areas, such as, for example, mobility, braille or ICT-skills. When the trainer comes across these problems, he or she should redirect that particular participant to other training courses in the areas that he or she needs help in.

Gathering feedback provides the trainer information about how the participants viewed and felt during the TC and it is instrumental for future TCs regarding what works and what doesn't. The trainer may

gather feedback through an open discussion at the end of the TC or by e-mail after the TC. When gathering feedback, it is crucial that the questionnaire is accessible. The participants may offer more honest feedback, if they are given the possibility to do it anonymously for instance through [SmartSurvey](#). The list below show some questions that may be used to gather feedback:

- What were your expectations for the Training Course?
- Did the Training Course meet your expectations? Why yes or no
- Did you find the Training Course useful? How or why not?
- What was the best part of the Training Course? Why?
- What was the worst part of the Training Course? Why?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, what is your assessment of the Training Course?
- Do you have any suggestions for improvement?

THE COACHING PHASE

After the TC, a six-month follow-up phase will start where a coach will accompany each job seeker. Depending on the number of young job seekers to be accompanied, a pool of coaches may have to be set up. Pay attention to keep the same coach to each job seeker so as to create and maintain trust and collaboration relationships with them.

This coaching phase relies on individual virtual and physical meetings and can be complemented with a group follow-up.

Individual coaching: the four-leaf clover

Individual virtual follow-up meetings should be held, ideally once a week, through online platforms like Skype or Zoom (computers, tablets or smartphones). Considering their frequency, they should not last more than 15 minutes. Using different communication systems will be very convenient since they might be especially useful for future job opportunities.

Each virtual meeting should start with a brief summary of actions that the job seeker has carried out during the last week to increase his/her employability and job searches. Problems might be solved and new goals established.

The first meeting will be dedicated to the **four-leaf clover** analysis. It should help the youths living with visual impairment to become aware of what is meant by self-knowledge, self-esteem and identification of personal and professional skills. This from a general perspective but also applied to the different areas the job seeker might work in.

Thus, it identifies the key points in the search for employment and for the young to acquire the appropriate habits when facing the job market and their development within it.

This activity proposes, based on the picture of a four-leaf clover, to answer 4 questions to make the person reflect on the most important aspects when identifying their strengths and weaknesses in the professional area, thus being able to select which kind of job offers and tasks within those offers are going to be most suitable.

The aim is to identify our abilities and be able to convey them to others, thus showing them what can we offer, and obtaining a more objective view of the job market.

Thus, their motivation in the search for employment will increase.

This activity allows, through concrete examples, the person to use the image of the four-leaf clover to answer each of the questions so that each clover leaf contains information from the participant.

Answers will be related to professional tasks, making visible the importance of work itself, the influence of aspects related to the work environment, teamwork, and sociological aspects or external factors that may influence work such as, for example, luck, the emotional situation, motivation etc.



What do I like to do? (Top clover leaf)

This question allows us to better understand ourselves and identify elements related to personality, skills or competences that define us, so that we can define our professional interests in a more appropriate way.

This enables us to rely on the strong points of our personality as well as to identify those we can improve or reinforce. Furthermore, by relying on our abilities, on what we are best at, we can identify in which activities we will be strongest.

Identifying what do we like to do helps us define the skills we can use in different jobs to make performing the tasks involved easier, as well as acquiring or reinforcing those skills to address tasks which are unknown to us or which we find initially more complex, thus enabling us to broaden our options within the job market.

What do others say I do well? (Right clover leaf)

This question refers to the relationship between the perception of what an individual considers he or she does correctly and the opinion of people around us, enabling us to adjust that self-knowledge to reality, and face tasks with a more objective vision.

What tasks are they going to pay me for? (Bottom clover leaf)

This addresses knowledge of the labour market and the activities to be performed within each job. Identifying the objective of our job enables us to efficiently and effectively optimise and prioritise tasks in order to increase productivity.

It enables us to identify the differences between a task performed in the personal and daily sphere and a task performed in the professional sphere.

What kind of tasks are needed around me? (Left clover leaf)

This question aims at knowing, through guesswork, whether the person is able to identify situations where teamwork is needed as well as collaborating in the tasks not directly related to the person's job, adapting to new situations where the use of the acquired professional skills is required, in short, problem solving...

Physical meetings should also be held, ideally once a month. If the main coach is visually impaired, it is highly recommended that a second coach joins this meeting with a view to providing feedback on the job seeker's body language as well as on other visual aspects impacting the job-seeking process.

Such physical meetings may also be the opportunity to perform a four-leaf analysis again as answers to the questions raised will change throughout the job-seeking process. The coach should therefore ask the job seeker to prepare her/his answers prior to any physical meeting. In particular, it is essential that jobs seekers write new goals to reinforce their commitment to achieving them.

Individual coaching scenarios

As a coach you should be aware of the three following possible scenarios (minimum) depending on the work and implication of the job seeker. To save your and her/his time, you may want to set the following rule with her/him: if you (job seeker) do not demonstrate commitment, the collaboration will end.

Scenario A: The job seeker has not done anything or does not know how to put in practice what she or he has learnt during the TC.

- The trainer should direct the job seeker to help in those areas tackled and provide him or her the opportunity of attending the course again at a later date.
- If the job seeker has no idea how to put in practice what he or she has learnt during the TC, the trainer needs to find out why.
- The trainer should interview the participant and find out if there are personal problems, maybe related to health, money or ICT.
- Perhaps this person needs more personal coaching and support. In this case he or she should be directed and/or guided to seek assistance from other professionals if the coach is unable to provide it. This option should only be considered if the job seeker demonstrates real commitment.

Scenario B: The job seeker has done something but not enough.

- The trainer might identify why this person has not done enough and encourage him or her to do more:
 - If it is an ICT problem related to equipment, the trainer should direct the participant to find solutions to fix it.
 - If there are personal, health and/or monetary problems which the trainer cannot fix, the participant should be guided to seek help from other professionals.
- The trainer should remember that there are people who may need more time to achieve the goal. But, at the same time, there are also people who work harder than others, so greater opportunities should be provided to those who demonstrate more interest and are more committed.

Scenario C: The job seeker is very active and has done a lot of things but does not know how to proceed. Then, the trainer should complement the participant and provide him or her with more ideas on how to move forward.

Group follow-up

Participants should be encouraged to share training opportunities, opened positions, available tools and networking activities. Instant messaging apps such as WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger or Viber groups are particular fit for this purpose. Empowering job seekers is really important to enable them to successfully reach the labour market.

It's important to keep in mind that:

- **Groups provide support.** Hearing from others with similar issues helps to see that you're not alone in facing your own challenges.
- **Groups provide a sounding board.** You get a wider range of perspectives on your situation, and that can help you to deal with your problems better.
- **Groups can propel you forward.** Job seekers often push themselves harder when they see what others are doing,

- **Groups promote social skills.** Groups not only help to ease that sense of isolation, but also give the opportunity to practice re-engaging with people.

Online group meetings could be held twice a month, every 15 days, to reinforce their sense of belonging to a group sharing the same objective: to find a job. If one same coach follows each job seeker, she or he can moderate the group meeting. If there are several coaches:

- either they all participate in the session but only one of them takes the lead regarding moderation.
- or the TC trainer moderates the session as she/he knows all the job seekers.

AGENDA FOR A 1-DAY TRAINING COURSE

The training course should be held during a single 7-hour working day, which means it will be important to be prepared as any delays in the schedule will inevitably mean less time spent on covering the actual curriculum.

The ideal is that a minimum of 9 and maximum of 15 job seekers participate. Of course it will depend on the country and needs but these numbers make it more efficient. The trainer can change the agenda if he or she considers it necessary. For example, an extra break outside in the fresh air or an energizer such as a short work out can be very useful to help the participants stay focused. The length of each part may be shortened or lengthened as required and breaks for lunch and coffee should be considered interchangeable.

The trainer should consider whether inviting a blind or partially sighted person in employment as a guest might provide useful information to the participants. The same applies to inviting an employer, who could be, for example, a representative of a company interested in providing job opportunities. It is up to the trainer to evaluate the pros and cons of the suggestions above and act accordingly.

It will be a long day for the participants, during which they will receive a lot of information and be expected to participate in group workshops. Breaks are important as they will provide an opportunity for the participants to stretch their legs, eat, get some fresh air etc.

Timetable	Content
8.30-9.00	Getting to know each other It is important for the participants to get acquainted with each other. During this segment, the participants, and the trainer, will introduce themselves.
9.00-10.30	Lecture: The Basics of Finding Work Curriculum vitae, job application letter, social media tools etc. This lecture will be based on the EBU Manual for Inexperienced Job Seekers with a Visual Impairment.
10.30-10.45	Coffee break

10.45-11.00	<p>Participants' feedback about the job seekers manual This is the time to engage the participants and ask them how they feel about the manual. In order to keep improving the manual, input from the users is invaluable.</p>	
11.00-11.45	<p>Introduction to the workshops After this segment, the participants will break for lunch and after lunch, they will begin their workshops. During the introduction, the trainer will brief the participants on the workshops that will begin immediately after lunch.</p>	
11.45-12.45	Lunch	
12.45-14.00	<p>Workshops The participants will be split into three groups. The trainer will explain the activity to the participants. This will take about 15 minutes. Each group will then spend 20 minutes discussing each of the topics. Included below are some questions to help the workshops get started. However, the participants are free, and should be encouraged, to discuss the topics from other viewpoints as well.</p>	
	Group I	<p>Difficulties in job interviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a visually impaired person, have you experienced difficulties during job interviews? • Describe them • What could be done to improve the situation?
	Group II	<p>Social media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the social media platforms available? • How have you used them? • Are they accessible? • How could these platforms be used to find work?
	Group III	<p>Where to find work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you find your last job? • What are the available channels, platforms or places to find work from?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the best ways to find work?
14.00-15.15	<p>Results of the workshops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each topic should be covered in 25 minutes. • Each group gives a short presentation of what they discussed. • After each presentation the trainer will complement each group's ideas. • The trainer may consider inviting an employed person who is either partially sighted or blind to attend this part. He or she may provide first-hand experience about working life to the participants. Inviting an employer should also be considered. 	
15.15-15.30	Coffee break	
15.30-16.00	<p>Conclusions and next steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the EBU manual. • Identify your own strengths and weaknesses. • Work on your Curriculum vitae, job application letter, social media presence and the other topics covered in the EBU manual. Be active. • The Group will stay in touch with each other via an instant messaging app (e.g. WhatsApp). The trainer will create a WhatsApp group and invite the participants. • Feedback will be asked from the participants in 6 months. 	

The trainer will have to make sure that the content of the three workshops is well covered. To do so, here are some guidelines.

Group I - Difficulties in job interviews

The trainer should make a list of the difficulties the participants have experienced to see which ones are the most common. The trainer should then separate the difficulties that could have perhaps been avoided by planning ahead from those that could be described as unavoidable or very difficult to foresee. During this segment, the trainer should use and refer to the Manual for Inexperienced Job Seekers with a Visual Impairment, pages 46-49.

Having first identified the difficulties the participants have experienced during job interviews, and more particularly, those difficulties that could have been avoided, the trainer should then aim to provide solutions. The trainer should use the Manual for

Inexperienced Job Seekers, specifically pages 46-49, and provide the participants with ways of avoiding these problems in the future.

Group II - Social Media

The trainer should make a list of social media tools and employment platforms. It could be interesting to briefly introduce the differences between them. Trainers will provide participants with examples of companies' employment accounts on social media. It might be interesting to include Twitter and Instagram in addition to LinkedIn and Facebook. The trainer should use and refer to the Manual for Inexperienced Job Seekers with a Visual Impairment (section "Social and labour networks") and mention *Por talento*.

Por Talento is a fully accessible training and employment platform that helps people with disabilities to find work. This Spanish platform, developed by *Inserta Empleo* the HR entity of ONCE Foundation, co-financed by the EU, makes it possible to manage job alerts and offers guidance for both job seekers and employers. It also provides information on legislation and government grants, and encourages interest among employers through various initiatives. It has become Spain's largest job search tool for persons with disabilities, with more than 129.000 job seekers with disabilities, over 7.300 corporate users and 5.119 job positions open within the last 18 months.

Most participants may have used at least one or two of them; it could be good to share their main ideas to identify best practices and "not so good practices". Special effort should be made in explaining the different way of using social media, personal vs. professional. Trainers will find a brief explanation of the relevance of the personal branding in the section "New ways of job searching in the digital age" of the Manual for Inexperienced Job Seekers with a Visual Impairment. This whole section should be, in one way or the other, described by the trainer.

Trainers should highlight to participants the relevance of learning how to seek for a job position online.

Group III - Where to find work

The trainer should compile three lists:

- The first one should list the ways the participants have found their most recent jobs.
- The second one should list the available channels, platforms and places the participants have come up with.
- The third one should list the best ways to find work according to the participants.

The trainer should then compare these lists to the ways of finding work detailed in the “New ways of job searching in the digital age” chapter of the Manual for Inexperienced Job Seekers with a Visual Impairment.

The trainer should focus on the 8 recommendations detailed in the “New ways of job searching in the digital age” section of the Manual for Inexperienced Job Seekers with a Visual Impairment, and encourage participants to use them to improve their job searching.

RESOURCES

- [EBU Manual for Inexperienced Job Seekers with a Visual Impairment](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Facebook Jobs](#)
- [Job Today](#)
- [Por Talento](#)
- [Jobandtalent](#)
- [Indeed](#)
- [VISAL](#)



This manual was co-funded by the “Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme” Programme of the European Union.

END OF DOCUMENT