

EMPOWERMENT SCENARIO : INTERVIEW SKILLS

Southside Partnership

Overview

A workshop was held for migrant women participating in the WEMIN Programme on Interview Skills on 6th June 2019. This workshop was a follow on for those who had already participated in the four job-seeking skills workshops in March and April (WP4). They expressed an interest in learning specifically about interview skills.

The interview skills workshop was facilitated by the Local Employment Services, which provides supports to people who seeking to get back into employment. This includes services such as CV preparation, job application skills, professional employment guidance, jobs clubs, vacancy listings, training and development and career events. The women who participated in this workshop are now seeking employment, with some who have recently had a change in their immigration status which now allows them to work.¹

A total of nine women originally registered to attend the workshop and seven participated (two cancelled due to personal circumstances).

Workshop Content

At the beginning of the workshop, the facilitator asked the women about the area of work they were interested how and where they hoped to find employment. He adapted the workshop to the particular interests expressed by the women. The areas of work included:

- Civil engineering
- Information Technology
- Geology
- Administration
- Marketing

Participants were asked to view an interview as a 'meeting with a prospective employer' and to see it as something they could enjoy rather than dread. It was also an opportunity to find out more about the employer and to ask questions.

The control of the interview still rests with the employer, however, the interviewee is expected to do much more of the speaking. The employer will look for competencies in the particular area, but will also be an opportunity to see if they will fit in with the company, the team, the stakeholders etc.

The different types of interviews were discussed. These included:

¹ Under changes that came into effect on 6th March 2019, spouses of Critical Skills Employment Permit Holders now automatically are allocated Stamp 1G, which allows them to take up employment without an employment permit. Previously such spouses were not allowed to work without their own employment permit.

D 4.3 Empowerment Session

- One to one interviews (less common now except in very small companies)
- Panel interviews (the most common method – usually 2 to 5 people)
- Group interviews (used by some larger companies, with an emphasis on how individuals interact in a group setting)
- Telephone (or Skype or Web)
- Activity based.

Tips were given for each of these different types of interview, including body language, dress code, greetings etc.

A section of the workshop was then dedicated to competency style interviewing, which is becoming more common. The suggested way of responding to such questions was using the STAR model in which the interviewee demonstrated the situation they were in, the task or challenge they faced, the action they undertook and the final result. Any links to the current job could also be made here.

Participants were given several opportunities to ask questions and to talk about situations they had faced or may face in their new country. Some intercultural differences were also discussed including shaking hands, eye contact etc. Questions were also asked on topics such as:

- How to explain gaps in a CV and absence from the labour market. This could also be viewed as making positive contributions to the family, the community, voluntary work etc. and job seekers should emphasise the skills they gained and used during this time.
- Some profession specific questions on IT, engineering etc.
- Participants expressed a desire to have a second workshop to practise their skills as the time was not sufficient in one morning.

Evaluation and learning

Participants completed a questionnaire at the end of the session, which assessed their satisfaction with the workshop, its relevance, opportunities to participate etc. The participants were very happy with the workshop, with all giving the highest score to all 11 questions. Other observations included participants asking for a further workshop as the time was limited. Further one to one or small group mentoring sessions on interview skills may be organised to meet this need.