

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE: PROBLEM SOLVING FOR EMPLOYABILITY

COURSE INFORMATION

Programme	Empowering Community Engagement: Soft Skills Micro-Courses for Students and Staff
University	University of Mostar
Department	Psychology
Course name	Problem solving for employability
Course code	ECE1.2
Credits/hours	Non-credit micro-course: 4 hours total
Language of instruction	English
Course dates	On demand, flexible access
Course mode	Asynchronous online
Course coordinator	Birgit Strotmann (eupeace@comillas.edu)
Course instructor	Ivona Čarapina Zovko
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SHORT DESCRIPTION

This course develops participants' problem-solving competences for community engagement, with a strong focus on responding effectively to real-life challenges in civic, social, and institutional contexts.



Participants enhance their capacity to analyse complex situations, identify available resources, and design feasible solutions in collaboration with diverse community stakeholders. The course supports the development of transferable employability skills as they apply to engagement settings, including professional self-presentation, articulating competences and motivations, and recognising social and psychological resources relevant for collaborative work. Practical activities draw on tools commonly used in career development and adapt them to community engagement contexts, such as competence mapping inspired by CV frameworks, interview techniques for stakeholder dialogue, and communication strategies for presenting initiatives, negotiating roles, and building partnerships. Particular emphasis is placed on resilience, adaptability, and reflective practice, enabling participants to respond constructively to uncertainty, disagreement, and evolving community needs throughout collaborative and participatory processes.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. **Analyse** common challenges in community engagement contexts (e.g., competing interests, limited resources, uncertainty) and **identify** key demands for effective and inclusive collaboration.
 2. **Evaluate** their own competences, roles, and self-perception in relation to community-based work and participatory initiatives.
 3. **Apply** problem-solving strategies to plan, adapt, and make informed decisions within community engagement processes and stakeholder interactions.
 4. **Develop and present** clear professional profiles and engagement proposals by using structured self-presentation tools (e.g., competence mapping, short project pitches, interview-style preparation for stakeholder conversations).
 5. **Identify and mobilise** relevant social and psychological resources (e.g., networks, support structures, motivation, coping strategies) to sustain constructive and ethical community engagement.
 6. **Develop** resilience and adaptive coping strategies when responding to uncertainty, disagreement, or setbacks in collaborative community work.
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COURSE CONTENTS

1. Community engagement contexts and common challenges (diverse interests, limited resources, uncertainty)
2. Self-perception, roles, and transferable competences in community-based work
3. Communicating competences and initiatives (structured self-presentation for engagement)
4. Social resources, networks, and support systems in community engagement
5. Psychological resources: resilience, adaptability, and coping in collaborative processes

Module	Topic	Activity	Duration
1	Community engagement and diversity	Short video input with concrete community examples (+ optional reading)	30 min
2	Self-perception, roles, and transferable competences in community-based work	Short applied task (50–100 words) with model example and self-evaluation	30 min
3	Communicating competences and initiatives (structured self-presentation for engagement)	Infographic (+ other optional resources). Gamified quiz with images to identify empathetic and welcoming communication.	40 min
4	Social resources, networks, and support systems in community engagement	Applied task with resource mapping and self-reflection	30 min
5	Psychological resources: resilience, adaptability, and coping in collaborative processes	Short structured text + checklist-based self-assessment	50 min

TEACHING METHODOLOGY



The course is delivered online in a self-paced format and combines:

- Short video lectures and structured reading materials
- Applied test with resource mapping and self-reflection
- Short structured text and checklist-based self-assessment
- Automated feedback and reflective prompts

STUDENT WORKING HOURS

- Content input (videos, readings): ~1.5 hours
- Practical and reflective tasks: ~1.5–2 hours
- Self-assessment and feedback activities: ~0.5 hours

Total workload: **~4 hours**

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Assessment type	Assessment criteria	Overall weight
Reflective self-assessment task	Automated feedback based on completion and alignment with guiding questions + model example for self-evaluation	40%
Applied problem-solving task	Automated completion check + comparison with model response and self-evaluation rubric	40%
Self-assessment quiz	Automatically graded quiz with immediate feedback	20%

Assessment combines formative and summative elements. Feedback is provided automatically and through model examples. Responsible use of AI tools is allowed for drafting and idea generation, but final submissions must demonstrate students' own reflection and problem-solving processes. EU-Peace academic integrity and plagiarism policies apply.

STUDENT WORKLOAD (in hours)

Contact hours	Autonomous work	Overall



0	4	4
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READING LIST / RELEVANT REFERENCES

- Fugate, M., Kinicki, A. J., & Ashforth, B. E. (2004). Employability: A psycho-social construct, its dimensions, and applications. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 65(1), 14–38. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/222580864_Employability_A_Psycho-Social_Construct_Its_Dimensions_and_Applications
- McArdle, S., Waters, L., Briscoe, J. P., & Hall, D. T. (2007). Employability during unemployment: Adaptability, career identity and human and social capital. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 71(2), 247–264. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/222326044_Employability_during_unemployment_Adaptability_career_identity_and_human_and_social_capital
- OECD. (2021). *Career readiness and employability skills*. OECD Publishing. <https://www.oecd.org/en/about/projects/career-readiness.html>
- Savickas, M. L. (2013). Career construction theory and practice. In S. D. Brown & R. W. Lent (Eds.), *Career development and counseling* (2nd ed.) (pp. 42-70). Wiley. https://www.mark-savickas.com/files/1_Savickas_bio/Interviews/Savickas%20Publications/Book%20Chapters/Theory_and_Practice_of_Career_Construction.pdf

