

ENTERING THE GIG ECONOMY

In Ireland, Meath County Council has, joined by regional partner WIN Consultants and European partners from The Netherlands (Friesland College and Learning Hub Friesland), Spain (the Municipality of Vedra and ngo AGACA) and Italy (the Municipality of Capannori and training agency Formetica) the ambition to prepare youth and the society for the new realities of the GIG Economy.

When diving deeper into the Gig economy, the question arises:

Is the Gig economy a liberating new form of self-employment or a new form of exploitation?



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The trend toward a gig economy has begun

At first, the term 'gig' was commonly used to refer to musicians who would play wherever they could, going from place to place to get paid for their performance.

A gig economy nowadays represents an environment in which temporary positions are common and organisations contract with independent workers for short-term engagements.

The whole idea behind the gig economy for its supporters is that individuals – who work as freelancers and do not sign any stable contract of employment – can sell their work on a task to task base. Depending on where one is looking at, the gig economy represents either a promising economic model which would enable individuals to unleash their full potential and to be more creative as freelancers; or it is a temporary and unsuitable ideal which needs to be regulated by competent policymakers before it is too late.

Labour market dynamics are shifting rapidly driven by technological progress and globalization. At the same time, less people are keen to engage as a full-time employee. On top of that, more and more organizations do not issue fixed contracts anymore. The gig economy also includes (and is sometimes called) the "on-demand, peer, or platform economy". Embodied by companies like Uber, TaskRabbit, Airbnb, Handy and Deliveroo, this economy operates by offering marketplaces based on ratings and payment systems routed through apps.

Meanwhile, surprisingly little is known about the realities of 'gig work'. Is it a liberating new form of self-employment or a new form of exploitation? There is a growing need to reflect on how society deals with these changes in a manner that protects and educates young people.

In addition, education and training (towards work) is mainly set up as either a preparatory route towards becoming a professional (employee). And during the last decade, schools and training centres have set up more and more entrepreneurship training courses as well. These are mainly build on turning an idea into a viable businesses. In between these two there is a gap.

t h e G I G p r o j e c t

Little attention in education and training is geared towards the upcoming form of self-employment found in the gig economy. That is exactly where our initiative has its focus.

Preparing individuals and communities for the opportunities and threats of the gig economy, also those challenged by adversity.

GIG facilitates knowledge development about the emerging GIG economy to share, discuss and develop effective methods to address the risks and opportunities of the GIG economy. We will:

- Develop and implement a dedicated **learning campaign for awareness raising** amongst stakeholders.
- Develop and run a **vocational training programme** for youth and those affected most by the gig economy labour market. By participating in the GIG project, learners will not only learn about the gig economy and the opportunities and threats it encompasses, when finalising their participation in the project they will be better equipped to enter the labour market and will be armed against the possible exploitation in the gig economy.
- Unite all stakeholders that are affected by the changes the gig economy will bring by setting up **regional alliances** and develop regional strategies resulting in action plans. By joining forces and setting up regional alliances, also stakeholders that are affected by and have to deal with the consequences of the gig economy will have better understanding of the concept and will be better equipped to prepare for this changing environment.

t a r g e t g r o u p

- **Job Seekers with adversity and starts on the labour market.** GIG is primarily aimed at starters on the labour market and those side-lined on the labour market, especially those faced with adversity. All levels and sectors of education can be involved, thus creating a cross-sector / cross-level approach.
- **Stakeholders from the world of work (practise and policy)** that are affected by the gig. E.g. educational institutes (VET, HE and universities), local and regional authorities, elected policy makers (local political parties), (social) enterprises, youth organisation, co-working spaces, incubators, chambers of commerce, employers' organisations, branch organisations, organisations of freelancers, self-employed, etc.

duration

The GIG activities have kicked off in October 2019 and will continue until February 2022. Upon completion of the project all developed materials will remain available for interested parties as Open Educational Resources.

partners

The GIG consortium consists of 8 complementary partners from IE, NL, ES and ITA which operate in the field of vocational education & training or in education & regional employment policy making and execution, which all possess a regional and international cooperative orientation.

Project partners are:

- Meath County Council – IE
- WIN Consultants Ltd – IE
- VET college Friesland College – NL
- Learning Hub Friesland Foundation – NL
- Concello de Vedra – ES
- Union de Cooperativas Asociacion Galega de Cooperativas Agrarias – ES
- Comune di Capannori – IT
- Formetica – IT



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meath county council



"Helping to transform places, people and organisations"



Comune di Capannori

Learning
Hub
Friesland

