



Youth Employability Competences



# A Youth Advisory Board Member – Self Promotion In The Time Of Social Media

## Background

William is a member of the advisory youth board organised and facilitated by Ciofs who are based in Imola. William lives in Imola but is originally from Eastern Europe. His family of origin abandoned him and he grew up in an orphanage until he was 4 years old when he was adopted by an Italian family. William felt that his adopted family doubted his abilities. When choosing high school he expressed a desire to attend hairdressing school, which is his great passion, however his parents forbid this and enrolled him in a professional institute. When he rebelled, his family gave him the option of doing as they said or else leaving. After being rejected, social services found William a place to live, and supported him by organising various internships to gain work experience. However, problems soon emerged with William failing to complete any of the internships, often abandoning them after a few days, citing a different reason each time. The service then decided to suspend the internships and place William on a training course on transversal skills. As part of this programme, with 7 other young people of different ages and completely different life experiences, but who all have difficulty finding and keeping a job, William is a member of Ciofs Youth Advisory Board.

## Overview

At the beginning of being a part of this group William is very shy and reserved, although attentive and curious. One of the first activities that they are asked to do involves standing up and walking round the room and shaking hands with each participant to introduce themselves. Before this starts William shares that he doesn't want to be touched and the group accept this request without judgement and respect it. William shares afterwards how accepted he felt by their response and that it gave him strength. He says that he would normally try to escape when asked to do something that he doesn't want to, and he is happy that he asked for what he wanted and so could stay in the group.

Over time William opens up more including eventually managing to have physical contact with the other participants. He shares his passion for hairdressing and from this, and with support, manages to complete an internship in a shop selling products for hairdressers. He also enrolls at a professional hairdressing school in his city where he works hard. Sometimes he falls back into his old escape strategy by having prolonged absences but he is supported and offered a course on soft skills.

Within the group there is discussion about what stops the students from being successful. They discuss their lack of patience, inability to manage their working time and establish priorities and their poor relational skills. William finds the sharing amongst the group very interesting and recognizes himself in the experiences recounted by others.

The group also talks about how they can make their resume attractive in the world of work. William takes the lead in reflecting on how they can make their newly won soft skills show through on a CV and from this discussion they realise they are more comfortable sharing themselves on social media. William shows the



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group Facebook pages of hairdressing salons, with videos and short presentations by the employees. From here the boys' enthusiasm grew – they decided to create a Facebook page with a link to Instagram with a profile of each of them, that could be a continuously updating CV, including adding videos, photos, video feedback about them from their teachers and employers (eg the salon where William did his internship)

## Impact Results

Through the activity of making a Facebook / Instagram CV with support from the Advisory Group William was able to both enhance and show-off various soft skills, from the use of various digital products and technological skills, to communication skills, professionalism and creativity. It shows initiative and an ability to conceive of and then see through to the end of a project. William expressed that he felt he was 'playing at home' on territory known to him (using social media) and consequently he felt more confident and able when preparing his CV.

## Themes

The above case study highlights the need of many young people for additional support to develop key life and soft skills that they have not been lucky enough to learn in their early lives. Through a longer-term peer and facilitator support, allowing for set-backs and challenges on the way, William was able to experience feeling good enough to belong as he was, connect with his abilities and aptitudes and to move towards what he wanted. His initiative and leadership when putting together the Facebook page supported his developing confidence and belief in his having something to offer.

## Conclusions

A youth work approach has been highly effective for William. Bringing acceptance and understanding, inclusiveness and encouragement of participation have allowed him to slowly engage and bring himself in. Creating a space for dialogue between young people and employers where there is equity and a sense of learning exchange has built confidence and self-belief.

