

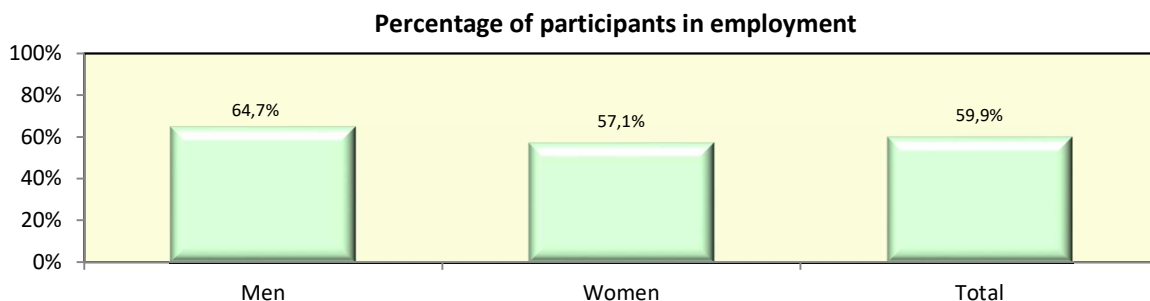
## Evaluation of the impact of the participation of the unemployed in Standard Multi-Company Training Programmes (2019-2021)

The evaluation of social interventions, including human resource training and development activities, is considered very essential by the Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus (HRDA). For the HRDA, the assessment, accountability and transparency regarding the impact of its interventions on human resources, enterprises, overall economy and society of Cyprus is a stable objective. The study which evaluates the impact of the “Standard Multi-Company Training Programmes” (onwards referred to as “the Scheme”) on the successful participants of the Scheme during the period 2019-2021, was conducted in this context. The aim of the Scheme is to provide incentives to employers to participate with their employees in training programmes organised by Vocational Training Centers (onwards referred to as "VTCs"), in accordance with conditions and criteria determined by the HRDA. In addition, incentives are provided to the unemployed to participate in training programmes, with the aim of improving their knowledge and skills and enhancing their employability. The participation of the unemployed concerns the filling of places in the training programmes in accordance with the conditions defined by the Scheme.

The main objective of the study is to evaluate the impact on the unemployed who participated in the Scheme during the period 2019-2021. The data were collected using an appropriately designed questionnaire directed to participants. Despite intensive efforts to track all 1.542 persons, the questionnaire was eventually completed by 1.129 unemployed (coverage ratio 73,2%), with a statistical error of 1,3%.

### A. Impact of the Scheme on employability

Approximately 12 months after completing their participation in the Scheme, the majority (59,9%) of participants were employed at the time of the field research, 37,5% were unemployed and 2,6% were inactive. The employment rate is higher for men (64,7%) compared to women (57,1%). It is also higher for young persons aged 18-30 (74,8%) and tertiary education graduates (71,1%).

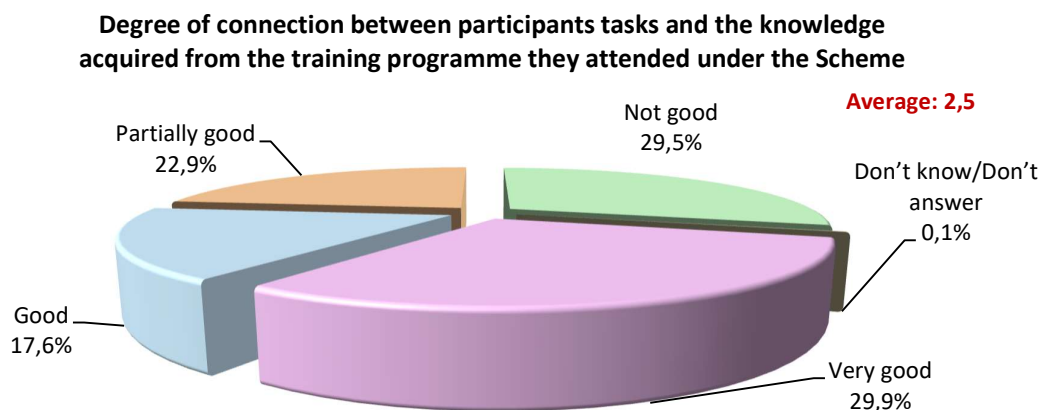


Almost 2 in 10 (19,8%) participants worked in enterprises of the Professional, scientific and technical activities sector, followed by the Trade and repair of motor vehicles sector (15,1%). Almost 3 in 10 (27,0%) participants were employed as Business and Administration professionals. Smaller percentages follow for General office clerks, secretaries and typists (9,8%), Physicists, mathematicians, engineering professionals and architects (8,7%) and Assistant business and administration professionals (8,0%).

The average gross monthly earnings of the employed participants were €1.255, with the men’s earnings (€1.416) being significantly higher than those of women (€1.152). The vast majority (78,0%) of the

participants were in full-time and permanent employment, with the percentage of men (84,1%) being higher than that of women (73,9%).

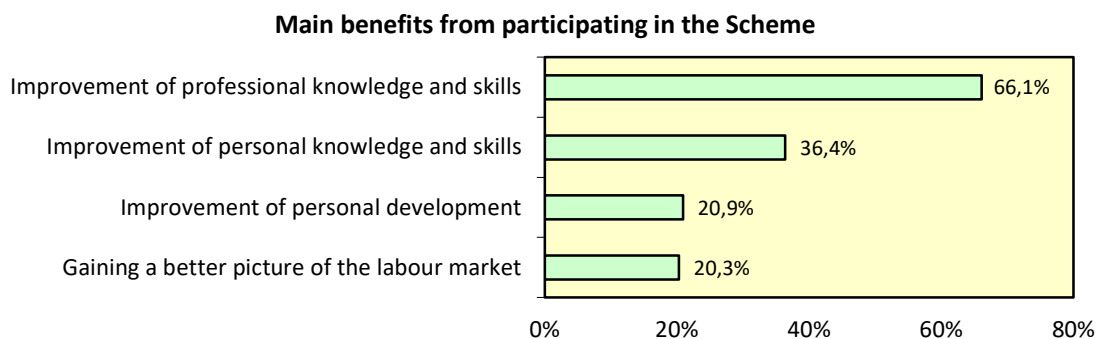
Even though the majority (52,4%) of the employed participants consider that the connection between their current tasks and the knowledge acquired during their participation in the training programme was average or not good, there is a remarkable percentage (47,5%) of those who stated that it was very good or good.



Only 19,8% of the participants who were either unemployed or inactive at the time of the field research, found employment for some time after the completion of their participation in the Scheme (6,1 months on average). The main reasons for being unemployed were “lack of jobs” (35,2%) and “lack of jobs that meet the ambitions of the participants” (25,7%). For the small number of participants who were inactive (39 persons), the main reason for withdrawing from the labour market was “personal reasons” (51,1%).

## B. Benefits gained by the participants from their participation in the Scheme

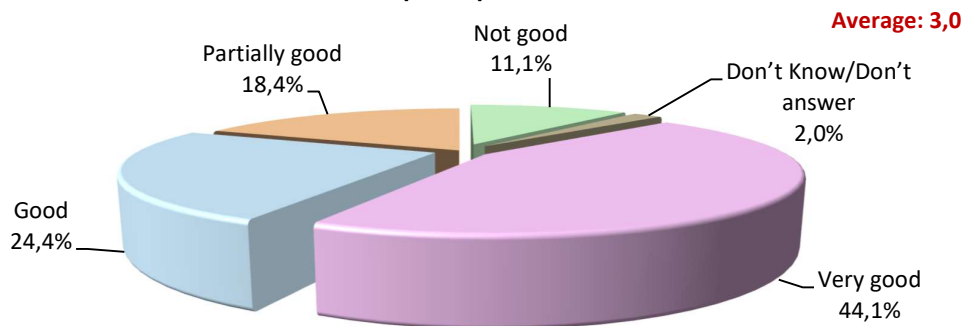
The participants reported very important benefits from their participation in the Scheme. More than 6 out of 10 (66,1%) participants stated that the main benefit was “improving their professional knowledge and skills”, while smaller percentages were recorded for “improving their personal knowledge and skills” (36,4%), “improving their personal development” (20,9%) and “gaining a better picture of the labour market” (20,3%).



The participants reported that the degree of usefulness of the knowledge and skills acquired by participating in the Scheme (3,5) was very good or good<sup>1</sup>, while the degree of utilisation of the knowledge and skills acquired by participating in the Scheme (3,0) and the degree of improving their employment prospects (3,0) were good. The vast majority (67,9%) of participants reported an increased desire to participate in similar training programmes in the future.

<sup>1</sup> The scale used was: 1: Not good 2: Average 3: Good and 4: Very good.

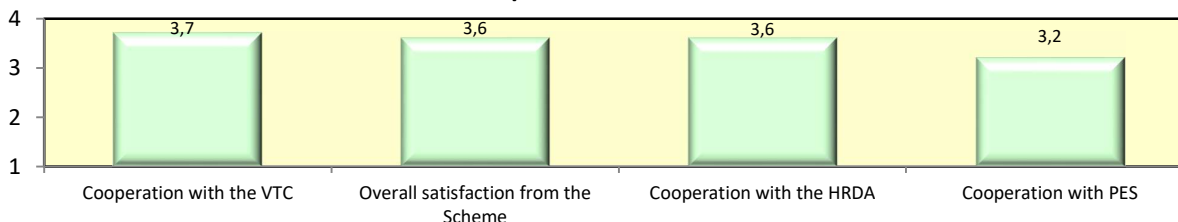
**Degree of utilisation of knowledge and skills acquired by the participants from their participation in the Scheme**



**C. Satisfaction of participants from their participation in the Scheme**

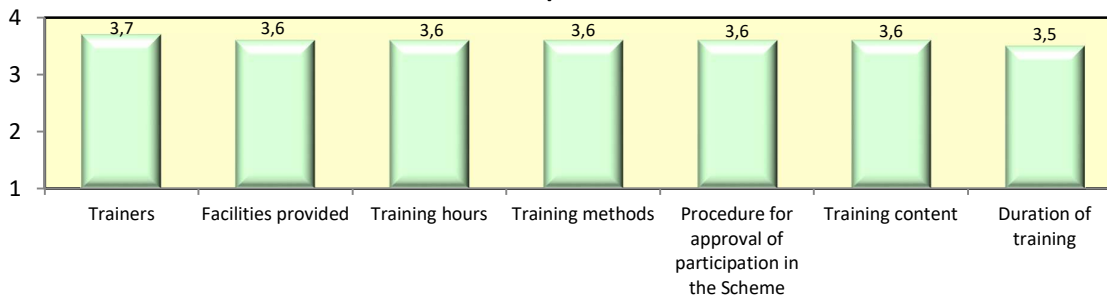
The average degree of overall satisfaction<sup>2</sup> of participants in relation to their participation in the Scheme was 3,6, indicating that they were very satisfied or satisfied from their participation in the Scheme, while the average degree of satisfaction of participants in relation to their cooperation with the HRDA was also quite satisfactory (3,6). Additionally, the participants were either very satisfied or satisfied from their cooperation with the VTCs (3,7) and the Public Employment Service (onwards referred to as "PES"), despite the lower average degree of satisfaction (3,2). 97,2% of the participants would encourage others to participate in the Scheme.

**Average degree of overall satisfaction of participants from their participation in the Scheme and their cooperation with the HRDA, the PES and the VTC**



Regarding the degree of satisfaction of participants with various aspects of the Scheme, they were satisfied with all of them.

**Average degree of satisfaction of participants with various aspects of the Scheme**



<sup>2</sup> The scale used was: 1: Not satisfied 2: Partially satisfied 3: Satisfied and 4: Very satisfied.

The large majority (79,3%) of the unemployed attended a training programme using an e-learning method. It is noteworthy that the large majority (70,4%) of the participants would participate in the programme even if it could only be attended in person. Almost 7 out of 10 (67,5%) participants stated that the online programme they attended was not inferior in quality compared to attending the programme in person.

#### **D. Concluding remarks**

The participation of the unemployed in the Scheme aims at enriching their knowledge and skills and enhancing the perspectives for their reintegration into employment, which is seemingly achieved to a significant extent. The significance of the Scheme is also evident from the high degree of satisfaction expressed by the participants.

The encouraging results of the Scheme, as expressed by the participants, will be considered in formulating the new policies and activities of the organisation, in view of the expiration of the Scheme by the end of 2023. The enrichment and continuous improvement of the Scheme remains the main aim, with the ultimate goal being that of enhancing the employability of the unemployed and contributing to address the skills mismatch in sectors of the economy and in occupations.

With the aim of the greatest possible participation of the unemployed in the Scheme, it is considered necessary to utilise the Scheme during the personalised guidance of the unemployed by the PES officers. The increase in the participation of the unemployed may also occur through an increase in the subsidy paid to the VTCs that implement the training programmes and the provision of traveling allowance to the unemployed. In order to further improve the various aspects of the Scheme, it is considered appropriate to consult with the VTCs as well as with the PES, who have an important role in informing and encouraging the unemployed to participate in the Scheme.

The further utilisation of e-learning methods by VTCs, the effective operation of the digital portal “Hermes”, the promotion of micro-credentials- through which short learning experiences of individuals will lead to skills certification- as well as the provision of credits to the unemployed for attending training programmes through individual learning accounts, are all expected to enhance efforts to increase the participation of persons in training programmes.

#### **E. Demographic data of participants**

The demographic data of participants refer to the 1.542 unemployed who successfully completed their participation in the Scheme.

- Gender: Men (36,1%), Women (63,9%)
- Age: 18-24 years old (5,0%), 25-29 years old (16,4%), 30-34 years old (14,9%), 35-39 years old (16,6%), 40-44 years old (14,0%), 45-49 years old (13,3%), 50-54 years old (8,9%), 55-59 years old (7,8%), 60 years old and over (3,1%)
- Education: Up to primary (0,3%), Lower secondary (Gymnasium) (1,3%), Upper secondary (Lyceum) (15,5%), Technical schools (4,0%), Apprenticeship System (0,1%), Post-secondary (15,9%), Bachelor’s degree (42,3%), Master’s degree (19,3%), Doctoral degree (1,3%)
- District: Nicosia (44,8%), Limassol (28,6%), Larnaca (16,0%), Famagusta (4,2%), Paphos (6,4%)