An evaluation of Talent 4… Europe LLP-TOI programme: A Group Programme to Identify Talents and Skills

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Executive Summary

Created by Rideout, Talent 4… is an innovative programme that uses play and creativity to identify the natural skills and talents of the participants. The programme is rooted in learning psychology, guidance studies, and arts practice using a range of exercises, games, role plays and videos. Originally developed within the context of the **UK criminal justice system**, the programme was transferred to partners in Bulgaria, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Romania, and Spain, involving a range of participant groups. This was made possible by a grant from the **Leonardo Transfer of Innovation fund** which is part of the **EU Lifelong Learning Programme.**

Rideout commissioned Bath Spa University to undertake an independent evaluation of the programme. The analysis included data on 234 participants across six countries. Data on psychological measurements of aspirations and competence were collected and statistically analysed to assess the impact of Talent 4… Participants also provided information what they had learned from taking part in the project.

- The statistical analysis highlighted a statistically *significant increase in participants' aspirations* over the course of the project.
- The statistical analysis highlighted an increase in participants' perceived competence over the course of the project, although this did not reach statistical significance.
- Participants gained a more developed *understanding of their strengths and weaknesses around work and employment*.
- Participants gained *increased confidence in methodological problem solving*.

The final report presents full details of the analysis and reviews the findings by country. For more information on Talent 4… visit www.talent4.org/

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Contents

1. Talent 4… Europe 5

1.1 Background 5

1.2 Partners 5

2. Context and aims 9

3. Methodology 10

3.1 Participants 10

3.2 Data collection measures 12

Part A. Aspirations Index 13

Part B. Perceived Competence 13

Part C. Bespoke questions 13

Part D. Exit questions 14

4. Findings 15

Part A. Aspiration Index 15

Part B. Perceived Competence 17

Part C. Bespoke questions 17

Part D. Exit questions 19

5. Discussion 23

Limitations 24

6. References 25

7. Appendix 26

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1. Talent 4… Europe

1.1 Background

Talent 4 is a workshop programme designed to help participants learn more about their innate or acquired talents and skills. It is designed for people who do not have a clear idea about the kind of job and/or training they would like to do. These include people in prison and the long-term unemployed. The workshop was originally developed in a UK prison context where it was trialled over a period of three years. The workshop uses a diagnostic approach that proceeds from the premise that often participants are unaware of what they do well. They imagine that skills and talents are all about qualifications or work experience. Talent 4 operates from a view that skills and talents are accrued during a process of growing up whether that individual is in work or out of work, whether that individual has spent time in education or has never been to school. Over a series of six workshop sessions, participants engage in a range of activities that include responding to arts stimuli, playing games, solving problems, and discussions about personal desires and interests. At the end of the workshop each participant receives one to one feedback on their strengths as measured on a series of spectra. These assessments are fed into software that analyses the participant's skills and identifies professional territories where such skills would be considered an asset. It does not make specific statements about the type of job, but rather suggests areas that someone might consider as options for future training and/or employment. It is through such discussion that participants begin to make plans for the future.

Following the success of delivering Talent 4 in prisons in the UK, Rideout wanted to discover whether the workshop could be delivered in other settings. In particular they were interested to see if, with suitable changes to account for language and culture, the workshop would work in a European context.

Talent 4 Europe is a Leonardo Transfer of Innovation project, funded with support from the EU Lifelong Learning Programme. It ran between October 2012 and September 2014. The process involved Rideout visiting each of the project partners to train staff in the use of the Talent 4 workshop. Each partner was given a set of workshop materials and tasked with running six pilot workshops with their chosen client group between September 2013 and May 2014. Rideout made a second visit to each partner mid-way through the piloting process to assess progress and troubleshoot problems, either in respect of the materials and/or the process. As part of the piloting process, participants were asked to complete evaluation questionnaires pre and post workshop in order to evaluate the immediate impact of the workshop. This report details the results of those questionnaires. The main activities of the project concluded in July 2014 with "Where Does Talent Come From?", a public conference event in Birmingham UK in which results of this evaluation were presented alongside input from a range of guest speakers addressing the origins of talent and contemporary approaches to nurturing talent.

1.2 Partners

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EPEA Malta

The EPEA - Malta Branch is a 'not for profit' NGO that has been active in the area of prison education and rehabilitation for many years.

The aims of the EPEA Malta Branch are:

- To act as a recognised branch of the European Prison Education Association.
- To promote education in prison according to the Recommendation No. R (89) 12 of the Committee of Ministers to member States of the Council of Europe (1989).
- To support and assist the professional development of persons involved in education in prison through European co-operation.
- To work with related professional organisations.
- To support research in the field of education in prison.
- To monitor and support the development of Prison Education in Malta

Education in prison is defined as education provided for all persons who are under the supervision of the judiciary, whether sentenced or awaiting trial, and whether serving a sentence in prison or in the community. Persons involved are defined as all those working in the field of education in prison and in related disciplines.

EPEA Malta piloted Talent 4 with young and adult men in Malta's prison Corradino Correctional Facility, as well as with female victims of domestic violence, and young substance misusers in a community setting.

Association for an Active Future

"Association for an Active Future" is a non-profit organization based in Constanta, Romania who focus on activities designed for inmates and ex-offenders. The association was the result of an EU funded project on 6 Axis - "Promoting Social Inclusion: facilitating access to the labour market of vulnerable groups and to promote a society inclusive and cohesive in order to ensure the welfare of all citizens". The scope of their work is to promote the development of the individual personality and create an appropriate framework for providing specialised assistance to people who have limited access to medical or social care, in the spirit of prevention of social marginalisation.

Their areas of expertise are mainly educational activities and programmes, psychological counselling and training for inmates and ex-offenders. They have implemented educational projects, vocational training, psychology programmes, art therapy, social care partnerships, volunteering activities and training courses with all types of offender.

Active Future piloted Talent 4 with young and adult men in Poarta Alba Penitentiary.

Esmovia

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Esmovia is a Spanish company dedicated to the management of European mobility projects within the Lifelong Learning Programme. They specialise in providing work placements, educational programmes and study visits to young people and adults coming from all over Europe. They are based in Valencia.

They believe transnational mobility is one of the most important ways of getting new skills and improving the future employability as well as the personal development of participants. For this reason their main objective is to offer quality programmes so that participants get the maximum benefit from the Spanish training and personal experience.

Esmovia initially piloted Talent 4 with Italian mobility students but following the mid-point review, shifted the focus to those experiencing disadvantage in the local community including unemployed women. All workshops took place in Valencia.

Euroform RFS

Euroform RFS is an Italian organisation based in Rende, Calabria. They have been operating in the vocational guidance and training field since 1996, with the main goal of working as a channelling vehicle between the labour market's supply and demand. The Association is a Training Agency officially accredited by the Government of the Calabria Region of Italy. Its main activities focus on vocational & continuous training, adult education and youth guidance, also turning particular attention to international mobility by implementing placement programs for students, young workers and post-graduates, and exchange programmes for education experts and teachers.

Euroform RFS strives to improve the quality and attractiveness of Vocational Education and Training (VET) not only at local but also at a national level by actively participating in TOI projects and sharing the expertise and "good practice" with experienced transnational partners. With the help of transferring the innovative and non-traditional VET methods, Euroform develops more effective training programmes which concert with the demands of the labour market and the needs of its trainees.

Euroform RFS piloted Talent 4 with young people from the Rende area who were not in education, employment or training.

VsI Edukaciniai Projektai (EduPro)

EduPro was established in Siauliai, Lithuania in 2010 for the purpose of promoting, developing and implementing principles of life-long study and non-formal education. This includes social and professional skills improvement, creating programmes of non-formal education for professionals working in the areas of social integration and socialization. They organise training, prepare and implement national and EU projects in range of social welfare areas and participate actively in the process of developing a civil society based on knowledge.

EduPro piloted Talent 4 with convicted adult prisoners in Siauliai Remand Prison.

The Centre for Promoting Lifelong Learning (CPIP)

CPIP is a NGO and nonprofit institution, active in the educational and social field based in Timisoara, Romania. They aim to promote the culture of lifelong learning throughout the active involvement of

all community members in developing a coherent strategy for implementing the concept and practice of "learning throughout life". This strategy represents the success factor for the transition of the Romanian society towards a Knowledge Era. In this context, lifelong learning is no longer a mere aspect in the education and training system, but it's a cornerstone – the basic ground for future pathways. Consequential to this philosophy, they intend to channel their entire activity towards creating a viable alternative in developing the lifelong learning community.

CPIP is committed to mainstreaming the principle of equal opportunities for women and men into the public policies and associated practices, as an integral part of democratisation and the creation of an open society, in order to re-define the status and improve the condition of women in Romania. They support initiatives and run programmes and projects that aim at raising awareness within the Romanian society in regards to women's present condition and the role they can and must play in the social development of our country.

CPIP piloted Talent 4 with juvenile offenders incarcerated at Buzias Re-education Centre, near Timisoara.

Bulgaria Gateway

Bulgaria Gateway is a Bulgarian company based in Sofia. They are part of European Training Network Group (as are Esmovia) which is concerned with the planning and management of international mobility and training projects for young students, teaching staff, young workers and organisations within the Lifelong Learning Programme, especially Leonardo da Vinci and Erasmus.

As an intermediary organisation, they receive participants from all over Europe and organise work placements in different vocational areas. Bulgaria Gateway also organises language courses, professional visits, seminars and socio-cultural programmes.

Their mission is to provide educational experiences and quality programmes in territories that, given their economical, historical and social characteristics, make it possible to increase the beneficiaries' career prospects and personal prosperity.

Bulgaria Gateway piloted Talent 4 with unemployed adults from Sofia.

Rideout

Rideout (Creative Arts for Rehabilitation) is a small NGO based in Stoke-on-Trent, UK. Since 1999 the company has established a strong reputation for developing innovative arts-based approaches that tackle issues related to crime and social justice.

The company's work is split between projects that focus on work with prisoners where the aim is to challenge and assist participants in moving away from criminal lifestyles, and programmes that engage the wider public in discussion and debate about the form and function of criminal justice.

Rideout is the originator of the Talent 4 programme and the lead promoter on the Talent 4 Europe TOI project.

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2. Context and aims

As noted above in section 1, Talent 4… was originally run in English prisons. Caulfield and Wilkinson (2012) conducted an evaluation of the programme involving 18 participants across three prisons. The work by Caulfield and Wilkinson demonstrated that Talent 4...:

- significantly increases confidence in the ability to tackle the challenges of finding work in the future.
- directly challenges negative cycles, increasing aspirations and confidence about work and employment.
- significantly increases individual's knowledge and understanding about their strengths and weaknesses in relation to work and employment.
- helps produce the right conditions for offenders to go on and achieve what is important for them.
- increases the value placed on achievement of future career prospects.
- provokes participants into in-depth consideration of their own skills and abilities.

The current evaluation detailed in this report builds upon the methodology successfully designed and trialled in the previous evaluation, and sought to investigate whether the findings of the previous evaluation are replicated on a much larger scale, across six different countries and different participant groups.

The aims of this evaluation were to investigate:

1. whether taking part in a Talent 4… programme affects participants' aspirations;
2. whether taking part in a Talent 4… programme affects participants' perceived competence;
3. whether taking part in a Talent 4… programme affects participants' understanding of their strengths and weaknesses around work and employment;
4. what participants' taking part in a Talent 4… programme reported learning and what they did or did not enjoy about the programme.

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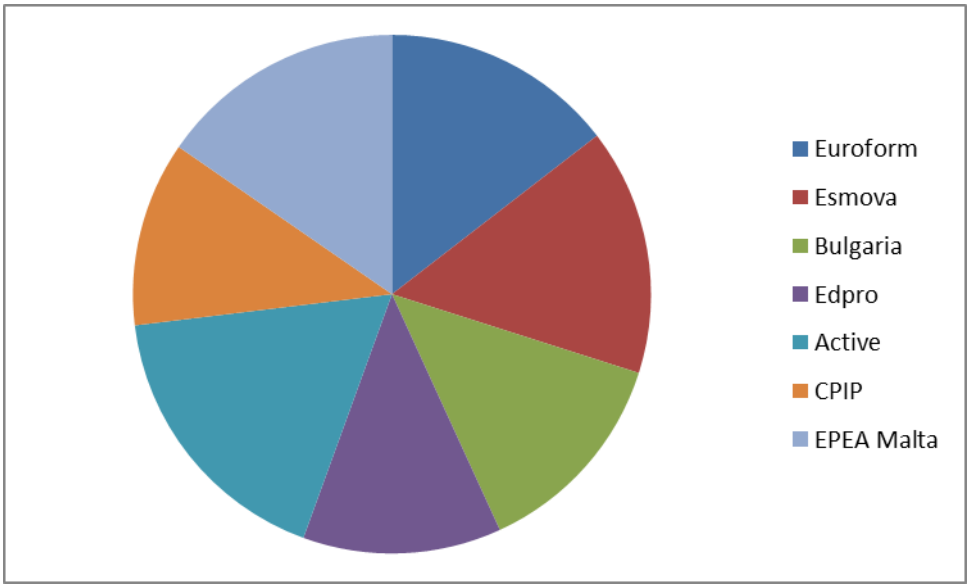
3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

Of the 234 individuals who participated in this study, 34 (14.5%) were recruited from partners at Euroform, 36 (15.4%) were recruited from Esmovia, 31 (13.2%) were recruited from Bulgaria, 29 (12.4%) were recruited from Edupro, 41 (17.5%) were recruited from Active, 27 (11.5%) were recruited from CPIP, and 36 (15.4%) were recruited from Malta. The frequency distribution of partner participation is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Frequency distribution of partner participation.



Number of participants = 234

In total, participants from six countries participated in this study including 34 (14.5%) from Italy, 36 (15.4%) from Spain, 31 (13.2%) from Bulgaria, 29 (12.4%) from Lithuania, 68 (29.1%) from Romania, and 36 (15.4%) from Malta. The frequency distribution of participant country of origin is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Frequency distribution of participation by country.

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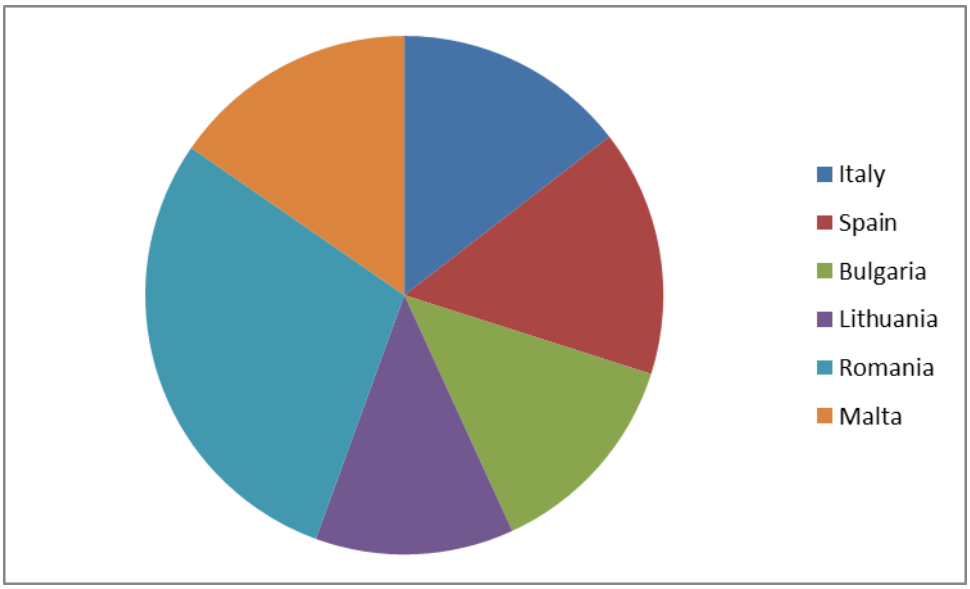
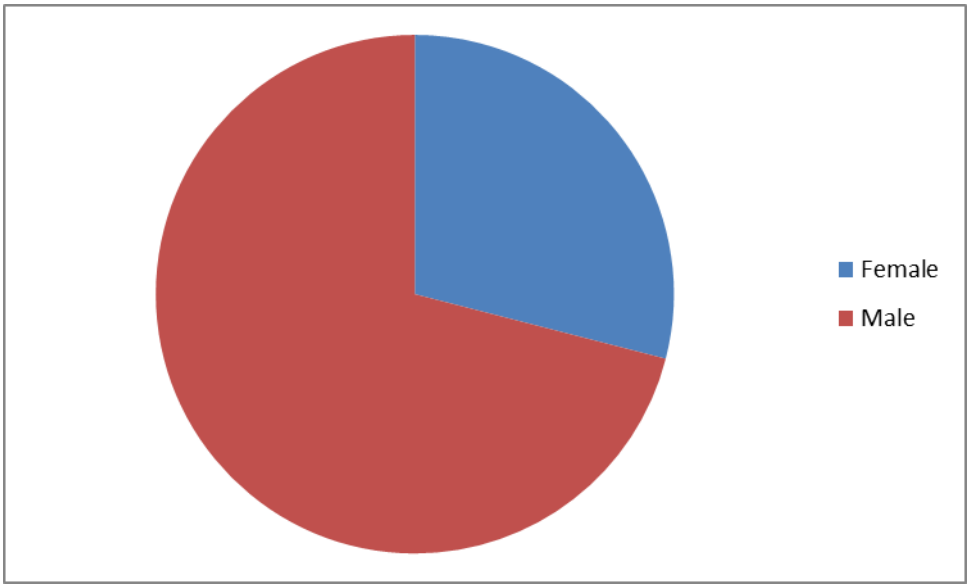


Note. N = 234.

Of the 234 participants, 67 of the participants were women (29%), 167 were men (71%). A pie chart illustrating the frequency distribution of men and women is illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Frequency distribution of participant gender.



Note. N = 234.

Of the 234 participants, 48 (19.2%) were under the age of 18, 18 (7.7%) were between the ages of 18 and 21, and 171 (73.1%) were between the ages of 22 and 40. A pie chart illustrating the frequency distribution of age groups in this sample is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Frequency distribution of age groups.

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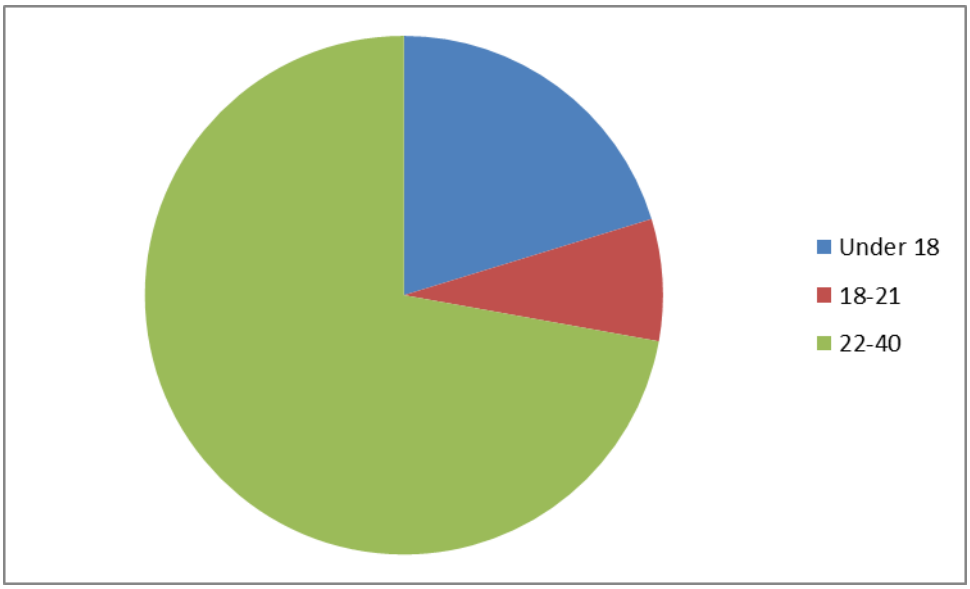

Note. N = 234

3.2 Data collection measures

The methodology designed for the evaluation by Caulfield & Wilkinson (2012) proved successful. However, some methodological changes were necessary to allow the evaluation to be conducted on a much larger scale, across six countries. There were two primary changes:

1. The use of the General Causality Orientations Scale (GCOS) was removed from the current evaluation. The GCOS is a measure of personality that assess what motivates individuals. However, assessment of how Talent 4... works with different personality types was outside of the aims and objectives of this current evaluation. It should also be noted that the GCOS is a relatively lengthy measure to complete and given the scale of the evaluation the authors felt there was likely to be significant data attrition if this measure was included.
2. The previous evaluation included semi-structured interviews with all participants, but the large scale and available funding for the current evaluation meant this was not feasible. However, it is widely accepted that the most informative and robust methods of research utilise both quantitative and qualitative measures, allowing measurement of change but also allowing an understanding of the mechanisms by which change occurs (Caulfield & Hill, 2014). In light of this, some open text exit questions were included, as detailed below.

Four questionnaires were used to collect the data. Two of the questionnaires were pre-existing and adapted for use in this research: Part A consisted of the 'personal growth' subscale of the Aspiration Index (AI: Kasser & Ryan, 1996); and Part B consisted of the Perceived Competence Scale (PCS: Williams & Deci, 1996). Part C consisted of a series of statements designed by Rideout to assess participants' understanding of their strengths and weaknesses and to record their approach to tasks

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and personal skills. In Part D, participants were asked to provide open text responses regarding what they have learned, what they did or did not enjoy, and to provide any other comments. Parts A, B and C were completed by participants both before the project and after completing the project. Part D was completed at one time point only at the end of the project. The language used throughout the scales was mildly edited from the original versions.

Part A. Aspirations Index

The Aspiration Index (Kasser & Ryan, 1996) was developed to assess individual aspirations. There are seven categories of aspirations within the full scale with five specific items within each category. The intrinsic aspirations scale of personal growth was used in this research. Participants rate: (1.) the importance to themselves of each aspiration; (2.) their beliefs about the likelihood of attaining each; and (3.) the degree to which they have already attained each. For example, participants are asked to consider the life goal 'To learn more about why I do the things I do' and rate the importance of this, the likelihood of attaining this, and the current level of attainment on a seven-point Likert rating scale. There are a total of five items for importance, five for likelihood, and five for attainment for the personal growth subscale. As noted above, attainment of personal growth is positively associated with well-being (Ryan et al., 1999; Sheldon and Kasser, 1998).

The difference between pre-intervention ratings and post-intervention ratings on the bespoke questions was analysed using SPSS (v21). The impact of the intervention across different partner groups, then countries was analysed, while controlling for pre-test scores using SPSS (v21).

Part B. Perceived Competence

Competence is proposed to be a fundamental psychological need (Williams & Deci, 1996) and perceptions of competence facilitate goal attainment. Additionally, perceived competence is predictive of maintained behaviour change and effective performance in activities. Thus, any significant changes in participant scores on the Perceived Competence Scale (PCS) would indicate changes in the likelihood of behavioural changes and levels of effective performance. The PCS is a short, four-item questionnaire devised to be specific to the behaviour or activity being studied. Individuals rate each item on a 7-point Likert scale where 1 = not at all true, 4 = somewhat true and 7 = very true. In this research the PCS assessed participants' feelings of competence in finding future employment and doing well at work.

The difference between pre-intervention ratings and post-intervention ratings on the bespoke questions was analysed using SPSS (v21). The impact of the intervention across different partner groups, then countries was analysed, while controlling for pre-test scores using SPSS (v21).

Part C. Bespoke questions

Rideout designed four bespoke questions aimed at investigating participants' perceptions of: work and employment strengths and weaknesses; problem solving style; working style; and communication style. These items were rated on a Likert 7-point rating scale. The maximum score for each item is 7 and minimum score is 1. The maximum score for the overall scale is 4 and the maximum score is 28.

The difference between pre-intervention ratings and post-intervention ratings on the bespoke questions was analysed using SPSS (v21). The impact of the intervention across different partner groups, then countries was analysed, while controlling for pre-test scores using SPSS (v21).

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Part D. Exit questions

As outlined above, the primary approach taken in this evaluation was quantitative using robust measurements of aspiration and perceived competence. Measured pre- and post-project, this quantitative aspect to measuring the participant journey allowed for each participant to act as her/his own control 'subject'. The quantitative element of the research was complemented and extended open text exit questions.

At the end of the programme participants were asked to provide an overall rating (from 1-5) of the programme. Participants were also asked to provide open text responses regarding what they have learned, what they did or did not enjoy, and to provide any other comments. The free text responses were analysed using a word cloud generator (http://tagcrowd.com), which is a graphical representation of word frequency. Word clouds give greater prominence to words that appear more frequently in source text.

All measures were translated in the relevant language for each partner organisation.

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4. Findings

Analysis of the quantitative data collected pre- and post- programme shows how participants' outcome scores changed between both data collection points. Analyses of the exit questions enhanced this data with participants invited to elaborate on their experiences. The quantitative and qualitative data are presented separately below under four key headings: Part A. Aspiration Index; Part B. Perceived Competence; Part C. Bespoke questions; and Part D. Exit questions.

Participant's scores were analysed using the statistical package SPSS (v21) to identify whether there were any statistically significant differences between participant's scores on the scales before and after taking part in the Talent 4… programme. The results for each section were analysed using a related t-test and the effect size for each was assessed using SPSS (v21). Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to assess the impact of the intervention across different partner groups, then countries, while controlling for pre-test scores using SPSS (v21).

This findings section presents the key evaluation findings. A detailed version of the findings including the full statistical details (in English language only) and statistical investigation of results by country can be obtained from Rideout by emailing admin@rideout.org.uk

Part A. Aspiration Index

Key findings for this section:

- Participant's scores on the personal growth sub-scale of the Aspiration Index significantly improved after taking part in Talent 4…
- There was a statistically significant increase on all elements of the personal growth subscale: the importance participant's placed on personal growth; how likely participants felt future personal growth is in the future; and how much personal growth participants have already attained.

A related t-test was conducted to evaluate the impact of the intervention on participants' overall mean scores on the personal growth subscale. There was a statistically significant increase in the personal growth subscale means of the AI from Time 1 at pre-intervention (M = 5.34, SD = 1.08) to Time 2 at post-intervention (M = 5.55, SD = 1.09), t (226) = 3.40, p = 0.001 (two-tailed). The means and standard deviations are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Means and Standard deviations for personal growth subscale of Aspiration Index scores for Time 1 and Time 2.

Time period	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Time 1 (Pre-intervention)	227	5.34	1.08
Time 2 (Post-intervention)	227	5.55	1.09

Importance of Personal Growth using the AI

A related t-test was conducted to evaluate the impact of the intervention on participants' mean scores ratings of the importance of personal growth using the AI. There was a statistically significant increase in the importance of personal growth subscale means of the AI from Time 1 at pre-intervention (M = 6.02, SD = 1.13) to Time 2 at post-intervention (M = 6.19, SD = 1.30), t (226) = 2.18, p = 0.03 (two-tailed). The means and standard deviations are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Means and Standard deviations for importance of personal growth subscale of Aspiration Index scores for Time 1 and Time 2.

Time period	**N**	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
Time 1 (Pre-intervention)	227	6.02	1.13
Time 2 (Post-intervention)	227	6.19	1.3

Likelihood of Personal Growth using the AI

A related t-test was conducted to evaluate the impact of the intervention on participants' mean scores ratings of the likelihood of personal growth using the AI. There was a statistically significant increase in the likelihood of personal growth subscale means of the AI from Time 1 at pre-intervention (M = 5.36, SD = 1.18) to Time 2 at post-intervention (M = 5.59, SD = 1.56), t (226) = 2.57, p = 0. 01 (two-tailed). The means and standard deviations are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Means and Standard deviations for likelihood ratings of the personal growth subscale of Aspiration Index scores for Time 1 and Time 2.

Time period	**N**	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
Time 1 (Pre-intervention)	227	5.36	1.18
Time 2 (Post-intervention)	227	5.59	1.56

Attainment of Personal Growth using the AI

A related t-test was conducted to evaluate the impact of the intervention on participants' mean scores ratings of the attainment of personal growth using the AI. There was a statistically significant increase in the attainment of personal growth subscale means of the AI from Time 1 at pre-intervention (M = 4.67, SD = 1.27) to Time 2 at post-intervention (M = 4.90, SD = 1.13), t (226) = 3.85, p = 0. 0001 (two-tailed). The means and standard deviations are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Means and Standard deviations for attainment ratings of the personal growth subscale of Aspiration Index scores for Time 1 and Time 2.

Time period	**N**	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
Time 1 (Pre-intervention)	227	4.67	1.27
Time 2 (Post-intervention)	227	4.9	1.13

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Part B. Perceived Competence

Key finding for this section:

- While there was an increase in participant's scores on the Perceived Competence scale after taking part in Talent 4…, this did not reach statistical significance.

A related t-test was conducted to evaluate the impact of the intervention on participants' overall mean scores on the Perceived Competence scale. While there was an increase in the mean scores of Perceived Competence from Time 1 at pre-intervention (M = 5.42, SD = 1.25) to Time 2 at post-intervention (M = 5.54, SD = 1.56), this difference failed to reach significance, $t(226) = 1.49$, $p > 0.05$. The means and standard deviations are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Means and Standard deviations for perceived competence scores for Time 1 and Time 13.

Time period	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Time 1 (Pre-intervention)	227	5.42	1.25
Time 2 (Post-intervention)	227	5.54	1.56

Part C. Bespoke questions

Key findings for this section:

- Participant's understanding of their strengths and weaknesses in terms of work and employment significantly increased after taking part in a Talent 4… programme.
- Participant's self-reported methodological thinking and problem solving significantly increased after taking part in a Talent 4… programme.
- There was no significant increase in participants preference for groupwork after taking part in a Talent 4… programme.
- Participant's preference factual and literal thinking styles significantly increased after taking part in a Talent 4… programme.

Related t-tests were conducted to evaluate the impact of the intervention on participants' perceptions of: work and employment strengths and weaknesses; problem solving style; working style; and communication style.

Bespoke Question 1: *'In terms of work and employment, I have a good understanding of my strengths and weaknesses'*

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A related t-test was conducted to evaluate the impact of the intervention on participants' overall mean scores on the bespoke question: 'In terms of work and employment, I have a good understanding of my strengths and weaknesses' using a 7-point Likert rating scale where 1 = Not at all true and 7 = Very true. There was a statistically significant increase in the means from Time 1 at pre-intervention (M = 5.38, SD = 1.10) to Time 2 at post-intervention (M = 5.65, SD = 1.06), t (214) = 3.31, p = 0. 001 (two-tailed). The means and standard deviations are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Means and Standard deviations for participants' perceptions of work strength and weakness scores for Time 1 and Time 2.

Time period	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Time 1 (Pre-intervention)	227	5.38	1.1
Time 2 (Post-intervention)	227	5.65	1.06

Bespoke question 2: 'In terms of problem solving, I am methodological and go step-by-step rather than be intuitive and follow my gut instinct'

A related t-test was conducted to evaluate the impact of the intervention on participants' overall mean scores on the bespoke question: 'In terms of problem solving, I am methodological and go step-by-step rather than be intuitive and follow my gut instinct' using a 7-point Likert rating scale where 1 = Not at all true and 7 = Very true. There was a statistically significant increase in the means from Time 1 at pre-intervention (M = 4.97, SD = 1.24) to Time 2 at post-intervention (M = 5.25, SD = 1.24), t (220) = 3.47, p = 0. 001 (two-tailed). The means and standard deviations are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Means and Standard deviations for participants' perceptions of problem solving style scores for Time 1 and Time 2.

Time period	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Time 1 (Pre-intervention)	227	4.97	1.24
Time 2 (Post-intervention)	227	5.25	1.24

Bespoke Question 3: 'Where possible, I prefer to work with others rather than work on my own'

A related t-test was conducted to evaluate the impact of the intervention on participants' overall mean scores on the bespoke question: 'Where possible, I prefer to work with others rather than work on my own' using a 7-point Likert rating scale where 1 = Not at all true and 7 = Very true. There was not a statistically significant difference in the means from Time 1 at pre-intervention (M = 5.33, SD = 1.37) to Time 2 at post-intervention (M = 5.29, SD = 1.36), t (222) = 0.49, p > 0.05 (two-tailed). The means and standard deviations are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Means and Standard deviations for participants' perceptions of work strength and weakness scores for Time 1 and Time 2.

Time period	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Time 1 (Pre-intervention)	227	5.33	1.37

Time 2 (Post-intervention)	227	5.29	1.36

Bespoke Question 4: 'When communicating with others, I prefer things to be factual and literal rather than to talk about ideas and concepts'

A related t-test was conducted to evaluate the impact of the intervention on participants' overall mean scores on the bespoke question: 'When communicating with others, I prefer things to be factual and literal rather than to talk about ideas and concepts' using a 7-point Likert rating scale where 1 = Not at all true and 7 = Very true. There was a statistically significant increase in the means from Time 1 at pre-intervention (M = 5.16, SD = 1.43) to Time 2 at post-intervention (M = 5.40, SD = 1.27), t (221) = 2.47, p = 0. 01 (two-tailed). The means and standard deviations are presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Means and Standard deviations for participants' perceptions of communication style scores for Time 1 and Time 2.

Time period	**N**	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
Time 1 (Pre-intervention)	227	5.16	1.43
Time 2 (Post-intervention)	227	5.4	1.27

Part D. Exit questions

At the end of the programme participants were asked to provide an overall rating of the programme on a scale from 1 – 5, with one being the lowest level of enjoyment and five the highest. Of the 145 participants who provided an overall rating, 93 (64%) gave a rating of 5, 31 (21%) gave the programme a rating of 4, 17 (12%) gave the rating of 3, 4 (3%) gave the programme a rating of 2 and none of the participants gave the programme a rating of 1. A pie chart illustrating the frequency distribution of ratings is provided in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Frequency distribution of programme rating on a scale from 1-5 at the end of the programme.

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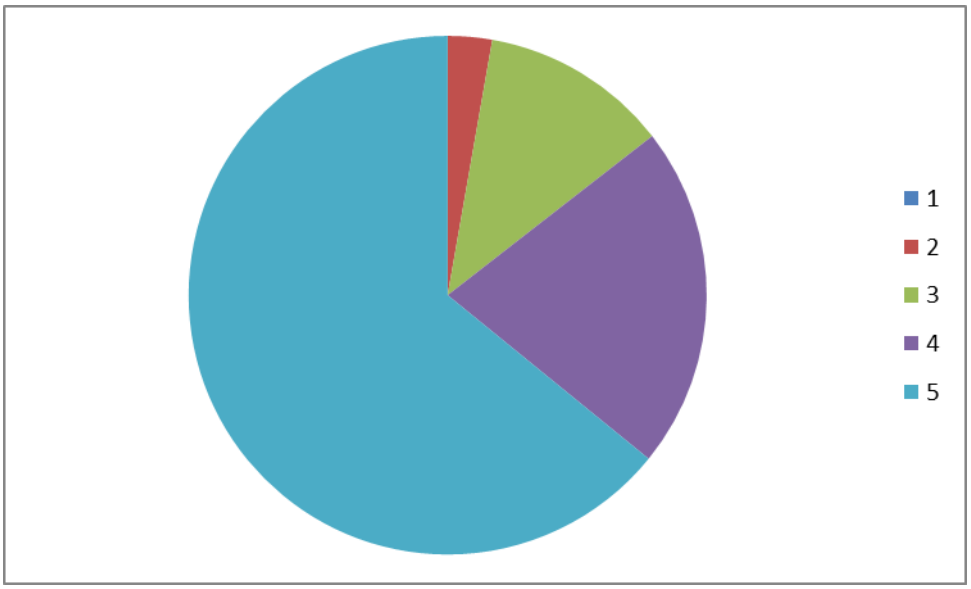

Note. N = 145

At the end of the programme participants were also asked to provide open text responses regarding what they had learned, what they did or did not enjoy, and to provide any other comments. The free text responses were analysed using a word cloud generator (http://tagcrowd.com), which is a graphical representation of word frequency. Word clouds give greater prominence to words that appear more frequently in source text. The software excludes articles, prepositions, etc. (i.e., 'on', 'at', 'in', 'a', 'an', 'the' – as well as 'yes' and 'no' responses). Relevant question response words (i.e., 'yes' and 'no' were retained by adding a tilde character to the words in the data set (i.e., 'yes~'). Words that needed to be grouped to retain meaning ('I liked everything' and 'everything was good') were grouped using tilde characters (i.e., 'I~liked~everything').

A total of 198 participants provided open text responses to the question: 'Do you think you learnt anything new about yourself as a result of doing the workshop and receiving the feedback?'. These free text responses were uploaded and analysed using tagcrowd.com to reveal the 50 frequently used words in word cloud format. Frequently used words included 'yes' (frequency = 76), 'learned' (frequency = 47), 'things' (frequency = 35), 'lot' (frequency = 24), and 'think' (frequency = 20). The word cloud data visualisation is presented in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Word cloud data visualisation of free text responses to 'Do you think you learnt anything new about yourself as a result of doing the workshop and receiving the feedback?'

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Note. N = 198

A total of 165 participants provided open text responses to the question: 'Which exercises did you enjoy most? Please say why if you can.' These free text responses were uploaded and analysed using tagcrowd.com to reveal the 50 frequently used words in word cloud format. Frequently used words included 'game' (frequency = 53), 'exercise' (frequency = 52), 'liked' (frequency = 39), 'pictures' (frequency = 21), 'planning' (frequency = 16) and 'lego' (frequency = 16). The word cloud visualisation is presented in Figure 7.

Figure 7. Word cloud data visualisation of free text responses to 'Which exercises did you enjoy most? Please say why if you can.'

Note. N = 165

A total of 147 participants provided open text responses to the question: 'Was there anything you did not enjoy?' These free text responses were uploaded and analysed using tagcrowd.com to reveal the 50 frequently used words in word cloud format. Phrase nets such as 'everything was good' and 'I liked everything' were identified and grouped using tilde characters. Frequently used words included

'no' (frequency = 39), 'game' (frequency = 17), 'exercises' (frequency = 12), and 'I liked everything' (frequency = 11). The word cloud visualisation is presented in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Word cloud data visualisation of free text responses to 'Was there anything you did not enjoy?'

Note. N = 147

A total of 101 participants provided open text responses to the question: 'Any other comments?' These free text responses were uploaded and analysed using tagcrowd.com to reveal the 50 frequently used words in word cloud format. Frequently used words included 'thank' (frequency = 14), 'participate' (frequency = 10), 'interesting' (frequency = 8), and 'useful' (frequency = 8. The word cloud visualisation is presented in Figure 9.

Figure 9. Word cloud data visualisation of free text responses to 'Any other comments?'

Note. N = 101.

5. Discussion

Talent 4 is a workshop programme designed to help participants learn more about their innate or acquired talents and skills. It is designed for people who do not have a clear idea about the kind of job and/or training they would like to do. These include people in prison and the long-term unemployed. The workshop was originally developed in a UK prison context where it was trialled over a period of three years. Following the success of delivering Talent 4 in prisons in the UK, Rideout wanted to discover whether the workshop could be delivered in other settings. In particular they were interested to see if, with suitable changes to account for language and culture, the workshop would work in a European context.

Using a methodology trialled in an evaluation of Talent 4 in prisons in the UK (Caulfield & Wilkinson, 2012), and including a sample of 234 individuals across six countries, this evaluation found:

- Participant's scores on the personal growth sub-scale of the Aspiration Index significantly improved after taking part in Talent 4…
- There was a statistically significant increase on all elements of the personal growth subscale: the importance participant's placed on personal growth; how likely participants felt future personal growth is in the future; and how much personal growth participants have already attained.
- While there was an increase in participant's scores on the Perceived Competence scale after taking part in Talent 4…, this did not reach statistical significance.
- Participant's understanding of their strengths and weaknesses in terms of work and employment significantly increased after taking part in a Talent 4… programme.
- Participant's self-reported methodological thinking and problem solving significantly increased after taking part in a Talent 4… programme.
- There was no significant increase in participants preference for groupwork after taking part in a Talent 4… programme.
- Participant's preference for factual and literal thinking styles significantly increased after taking part in a Talent 4… programme.
- Exit questions indicated that the majority of participants found the programme enjoyable.

Overall, the findings from this evaluation demonstrate that participating in a Talent 4 programme increases participant's belief that they can achieve, and increases the importance attached to self-development and achievement. Talent 4... does this through identifying individual strengths, and begins to provide direction for future education, training, employment and career possibilities. After taking part in a Talent 4… programme participants' felt their understanding of their strengths and weaknesses in relation to work and employment had significantly improved.

In conclusion, Talent 4 is an engaging programme that results in positive change for participants and provides the right conditions for individuals to go on to achieve.

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Limitations

Potential limitations to this evaluation should be noted. First, no matched control group of individuals who had not completed a Talent 4… programme was available. However, we argue that it is both valid and reliable to measure participants change over time against their own baseline. Second, while we are able to conclude that participants experienced significant change over the course of the Talent 4… programmes, we cannot say whether these changes were sustained over time.

There are also potential problems with one of the bespoke questions. While the measures used in parts A and B of the evaluation have been widely validated, the bespoke questions sought to investigate factors very specific to Talent 4… and were not validated measures. Bespoke question three, which sought to identify any changes over time in preference for working alone or in groups, could be an individual difference that is likely to be fixed (Myers and Briggs, 1988) rather than a readily changeable outcome. Many personality traits tend to be stable (Conley, 1985) and this could explain the non-significant difference on this item from Time 1 to Time 2.

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7. Appendix

Detailed findings. Email admin@rideout.org.uk for a copy (available only in English).

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