

DECEMBER 2012



Modernising VET System

Improving Performance, Quality and Attractiveness of VET Systems

GOOD PRACTICE IN MAKING VET
MORE ATTRACTIVE

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Background and rationale for the initiative

Vocational education and training (VET) has a crucial role in promoting a knowledge-based and competitive society and in responding to the opportunities and challenges of globalisation.

The platform developed under the Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe (ERI SEE) has a major contribution in fostering regional cooperation and in supporting policy developments in specific VET areas; it has also led to an increased ownership of relevant VET stakeholders in the region.

Current developments underline ERISEE commitment to the European strategic objectives laid down in the Bruges Communiqué on enhanced European Cooperation in VET, in the strategic framework *“Education and Training 2020”*, and in the key flagship initiatives that embrace education and training (Youth on the Move and The New Skills and Jobs Agenda).

The Senior Official and Expert Workshop on Knowledge Clusters, organised on the 14–15th of December in Sarajevo, upheld the necessity of enhanced dialogue among EU Member States and South East European partner countries in the education and training field. Participants agreed that introduction of knowledge clusters on topics of common interest will support the exchange of information on different policy options and will help the advancement of the national VET systems reforms.

The establishment of the *“Modernizing the VET system – improving performance, quality and attractiveness of VET”* knowledge cluster is one of the envisaged specific outputs of the ERI SEE work programme for 2011, that is to establish 3 knowledge clusters initiated and coordinated by countries: VET (Romania), NQF (Croatia) and Evidence-Based Policy Making (Serbia).

The *“Modernizing the VET system – improving performance, quality and attractiveness of VET”* cluster was coordinated by the Romanian National Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development (NCTVETD), on behalf of the Romanian Ministry of National Education (MoNE).

The partner countries representatives participating in the cluster activities were from:

- Albania,
- Bosnia and Herzegovina,
- Bulgaria,
- Croatia,
- Kosovo*,
- Republic of Moldova,
- Montenegro,
- Republic of Macedonia,
- Serbia,
- Romania.

*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence

In order to ensure synergies with the South Eastern Europe Regional VET Network (SEE VET Net) of the ERI SEE, the cluster involved mainly representatives of SEE VET centres. It intended to base its activities on the established institutional network of VET Centres in SE Europe and to develop regional policy and practice exchange with the purpose of providing equitable and quality VET.

Furthermore, the cluster was open to participation of other interested countries and organizations supporting the development of VET in the region. The European Training Foundation was mainly involved by its representatives in all the cluster's activities, supplying an important insight on specific policies and trends in education and training in Europe neighbourhood countries.

The “*Modernizing the VET system – improving performance, quality and attractiveness of VET*” cluster aims to support the regional cooperation in VET in accordance with the diversified needs of the countries in terms of mutual learning, regional exchange of experience and good practice, and encompassing the specific phases of national reforms in VET.

OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of the Cluster is consistent with the 2008–2010 mission statement and objectives, specific objectives and ERISSE work programme for 2011:

- Development of mutual policy learning practices through enhanced institutional cooperation in Vocational Education and Training in South East Europe,
- Further support to country initiatives in the domain of mutual policy learning and cooperation in the field of education in general, and
- Initiating regional exchange of policies and practices in the area of equity and access to education, a measure of particular relevance for reducing the percentage of early school leavers, as suggested by EU2020 education benchmarks.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of the cluster were identified as follows:

- Knowledge transfer on the national policies mainly on:
- Quality assurance
- Social partnership in VET
- Matching VET supply with labour market demand
- Developing mutual policy learning practices and strengthening the exchange of information and good practice among the countries represented in the cluster,
- Supporting intra-country and inter-country co-operation on VET at regional level,
- Laying down recommendations for future ERI SEE support of regional cooperation in VET.

The Romanian coordinator of the “*Modernizing VET system – improving performance, quality and attractiveness of VET*” cluster, in cooperation with various partners, and supported by ERISSE and Kulturkontakt Austria, organized a number of expert meetings to foster mutual learning on topics of common interest (e.g. quality assurance and matching VET supply with labour market demand) and to develop a specific tool that would support the development of a quality culture at school level and the improvement of VET attractiveness and relevance.

Compendium of good practices

— A tool for visibility and sharing experiences

- Describe the importance of experience sharing and why it is important to make good practices visible
- Underline that all the countries which are not in EU are willing to be (in order to justify EU references in summary points)
- Description of how the Compendium is developed

The Compendium of good practices contains 8 chapters and presents itself as the main output of two years of common work and cooperation. The good practice examples were integrated in one of the following chapters; they reflect areas acted upon to make VET more attractive and develop the VET quality approach. Chapters are as follows:

TOPIC

1

Marketing & Communication

As education and training have an expanding role in society and interact with stakeholders such as government, learners, employers and communities in increasingly complex ways, marketing and communication also become more important, as does the need for education and training to effectively communicate their vision and practices to these audiences.

2

Guidance & Counselling

The complexity of the economy and the unrealistic ambitions of many young people made essential that there were these mechanisms and tools that could bring together and match jobs and workers; vocational guidance became one of these. At the same time, guidance and counselling aim to help people understand their potential and liabilities and make smart personal and vocational decisions.

3

Responsiveness to students' needs

The challenges of teaching today are far different from the ones faced only a few years ago. This shift is so notable that we need to take a serious look at teaching in a different light. For most of the students, there must be a very practical reason for attending a course. The problem to respond better to students' needs is an important concern of teachers involved in present and future education.

4

Links with labour market

Education plays a central role in preparing individuals to join the labour force, as well as equipping them with the skills to engage in lifelong learning experiences. The links between education and labour market have multiple aspects and provide the context to ensure the relevance of education in the labour market.

5

Improving Teaching & Learning

Improving teaching and making the entire learning process more effective are the keys to raising standards. Teaching and learning are what ultimately make a difference in the mind of the learner, and thus have an impact on knowledge, skills, attitudes and the young people's capacity of to contribute to contemporary societies.

Fostering Creativity & entrepreneurship

Teaching and learning for now and for the future require a new model of education. It requires an interactive and creative education based on individual needs and abilities.

This implies a high degree of flexibility and adaptability of the education system to these challenges. New approaches are also needed to find a way to promote students' "motivation and self-esteem". To all these, we would add the need for greater emphasis on individuality, whose development is conditioned by encouraging independent study. It means that we should emphasize the full development of all individual potentials, such as original thinking and reasoning, creativity, innovative and entrepreneurial skills.

Improving quality of VET

Quality assurance can be used as a systematic approach to modernising education systems, especially by improving the effectiveness of training. Therefore, it should underpin every policy initiative in VET and could be considered as an integrating factor of all topics specified above.

These topics are linked with the following European initiatives:

- European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF)
- The European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)
- The European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET (EQARF)

The specific objectives and the key output were achieved through a number of common activities.

Relevant examples were selected at national level by each participating country; Romania collected the examples and collated the information. During the selection of the good practice examples, our starting criterion was that a good practice is simply a process or a methodology that represents the most effective way of achieving a specific objective. Some people prefer to use the term 'good practice' as in reality it is debatable whether there is a single 'best' approach – and of course approaches are constantly evolving and being updated. So another way of defining a good practice is one that has been proven to work well and produce good results, and is therefore recommended as a model. The essence of identifying and sharing good practices is to learn from others and to re-use knowledge. The most important benefit consists in well-developed processes based on accumulated experience.

The criteria that we used for good practice selection were:

- Effectiveness: the practice works and achieves measurable outcomes
- Efficiency: the recommended practice produces results involving a reasonable level of resources and time
- Relevance: the recommended practice addresses the priority issues in the field of adult education
- Sustainability: the recommended practice can be implemented for a long period of time without a massive injection of additional resources
- Possibility of duplication: the recommended practice is replicable elsewhere
- Involvement of partnership: the recommended practice involves satisfactory collaboration among several stakeholders
- Community involvement: the recommended practice involves participation of the concerned "communities" (community, stakeholders or participants)
- Political Commitment: the recommended practice has support from the relevant national or local authorities

We consider that the Compendium would be a useful tool in the process of learning from different good practices for the different institutions/organizations/stakeholders being involved in VET.

Zoica Elena Vlăduț, Deputy Director & **Gabriela Liliana Ciobanu**, Director
National Centre for TVET Development – Romania

Acknowledgement – Kulturkontakt Austria

Especially in times of economic crises, enhancing the relevance, quality and attractiveness of vocational education and training systems is a key development priority in most European countries and beyond Europe. While education systems and especially VET systems differ greatly from country to country, the challenges they face in an increasingly globalised world are similar.

Policy and practice learning across borders is therefore an important tool to provide national reform debates with new perspectives and lessons learned that can be fruitfully used in one's own national context.

Facilitating such policy and practice learning, especially in vocational education and training, is one of the key priorities of KulturKontakt Austria – be it at a bilateral level between education experts from East-/South Eastern Europe and Austria or at a regional level. This is why KulturKontakt Austria has a long standing co-operation with ERI SEE – the Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe, which is an important platform for regional co-operation in South Eastern Europe.

This compendium of *“Good Practice in Making VET more Attractive”* shows the wide scope of education reforms in VET currently being implemented in South Eastern Europe.

We would like to use this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to this compendium for their readiness to share their experiences. Above all we would like to thank our Romanian colleagues from the Romanian National Centre for TVET Development, who have co-ordinated and drafted the compilation of this compendium.

Gerhard Kowar, *Director*
KulturKontakt Austria

Acknowledgement – Erisee

Since 2010, the Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe (ERI SEE) acting as a regional platform for cooperation in the field of education and training, has been supporting the establishment of the regional clusters of knowledge as new cooperation instruments. The clusters have proved to be extremely valuable within the “ET2020” by promoting peer-learning through regional mobility and by offering support in networking various national institutions from education and training in South Eastern Europe.

The regional cluster of knowledge “*Modernizing the VET system – improving performance, quality and attractiveness of VET*” has been established in 2011, and after two years of dedicated work, as one of its main outputs, the Compendium of good practices has been brought to life. It has been created with the strong involvement of representatives of SEE VET centres, representatives of the national ministries of education and supported by the donor institutions: KulturKontakt Austria (KKA), NL EVD International and The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The Centre for Education Policy, acting as the ERI SEE Interim Secretariat, has had the important role in facilitating this collaboration. As the coordinator of the Cluster, on behalf of the Romanian Ministry of National Education, (MoNE), the Romanian National Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development (NCTVETD) gave invaluable guidance in the process of Compendium preparation.

We would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to all of these actors, who helped making this endeavour possible.

In addition, special thanks to all of those who will use the Compendium and disseminate the best practices explored within several national contexts in VET, not only for sharing the information, but also for keeping up the spirit of successful regional cooperation created by the ERI SEE initiative.

Jasminka Cekic Markovic, *Director*
Centre for Education Policy – ERISSEE Interim Secretariat



1

Marketing & Communication

1.1 National professional skills competitions — Bulgaria

INTRODUCTION

The organization of the National Professional Skills Competitions (the national competitions) aimed to popularize the students' outstanding results and to reinforce active collaboration with employers from relevant sectors. The national competitions could be considered as a best practice example because their implementation:

- Strengthens the students' motivation to achieve better learning outcomes;
- Activates the involvement of vocational education and training (VET) teachers and partner organizations towards VET quality assurance and efficiency;
- Contributes to promoting vocational education as an important factor in the economic development, especially during crisis times, when job opportunities and career development are necessary.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The organization of the national competitions is in accordance with the National Programme for the development of school education and preschool upbringing and formation (2006–2015) and the Action plan measure from the Programme for the development of Education, Science and Youth policies in Bulgaria (2009–2013): improving quality of vocational training; activity – information and communication campaigns towards enhancing attractiveness of vocational education.

The organizations and partners involved are: Ministry of Education, Youth and Science (MEYS), Regional educational inspectorates, organizations of employers, enterprises, universities etc. The VET experts from MEYS are the main drivers in the process of developing and implementing the national competitions.

DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

The organization of the national competitions is in accordance with the National Calendar of Competitions for VET students and approved by the Minister of Education, Youth and Science for every school year. A detailed budget for the national competitions exists within the year budget of the MEYS.

“PANORAMA of Vocational Education” is a simultaneously organized part of the national competitions for a school year, which do not require real work environment conditions for their implementation. It is a special event in the VET system with the goal to increase the attractiveness of the vocational education at national level.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

- Enhance the motivation of vocational schools students to achieve better learning outcomes during the training for professional qualification acquisition;
- Provide opportunity for students to demonstrate creativity, thorough knowledge and skills in the professional area;
- Encourage development of an entrepreneurial culture based on acquired professional knowledge, skills and competences;
- Promote attitudes related to continuing learning by stimulating competitiveness;
- Support development of cooperation between vocational schools and businesses, and, later, with universities;
- Facilitate in bridging education with real business,
- Increase the attractiveness of the education in VET gymnasiums at regional and national level.

Competition topics of National Professional Skills Competitions in 2012 were:

- Competition in Applied electronics “*I can and I know how*”;
- Fashion design and patterned textiles;
- Best young baker-confectioner;
- Best young chef;
- Best young bartender;
- Best young builder;
- Landscaping and horticulture;
- Stylish furniture and wood carving;
- Best business idea;
- Best young hairdresser and makeup artist;
- Accountancy;
- Best young mechanic and vehicle driver;
- National educational and professional competition for the best gas technician;
- Young farmer;
- Best technician in machinery construction;
- National screening for young researchers “*Energy, Economics and Mathematical Modelling*”;
- Better refrigerator technician in the food industry;
- Forestry competition;
- Best young waiter;
- Fair of training firms.

The content of National Professional Skills Competitions may be diversified and updated for every edition.

CONTEXT

The National Calendar for students from VET Gymnasiums includes 20 national competitions for students from different educational fields; students from all VET schools in the country have the opportunity to participate. According to the regulations, a school, regional and/or national round are organised for every competition. Every participating (student/team) needs to be accompanied by a teacher from the relevant VET Gymnasium.

In the framework of the National Calendar of Competitions of the Centre of training firms in VET schools, which is a service unit of the MEYS, a Fair of training firms is organized every year (“*Work in a training firm*” is a subject in the vocational educational curricula: it is a compulsory subject as part of school practice for economic professions, but for most of the curricula for other professions is optional – as a tool to develop entrepreneurial attitude and skills).

All participants in the national round of the national competitions receive certificates from the MEYS. According to the regulations of the different skills competitions, a ranking of the participants determines the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place. The winners receive certificates and medals from the MEYS and awards from the business organizations.

In the framework of the National Calendar, a so-called “*PANORAMA of Vocational Education*” has been organized every school year since 2008. That event includes most of the national competitions (the number differs according to the National Calendar of Competitions) simultaneously organized every school year in April in different towns in Bulgaria (Veliko Tynovo, Varna, Plovdiv) according to the specific Calendar. The “*PANORAMA of Vocational Education*” is a kind of special forum meant to enhance the attractiveness and image of the vocational education in our VET gymnasiums, as well as in the social and business environment. The “*PANORAMA of Vocational Education*” is followed by a media information campaign at local, regional and national level.

BENEFITS

Added value to the VET quality assurance based on a close cooperation between employer organizations, HE representatives, VET experts, teachers;

- Raise the image of the professional training in the VET school system through a set of initiatives during the event;

- Information on and advertisement of the activities;
- Participation and potential winning in competitions help raise the self-confidence of students and teachers from different VET schools;
- Providing access to university for the winners – some Universities offer preferential conditions to continue education in relevant specialisation in higher education;
- The awards from business organizations for national competition's winners as part of companies social responsibility actions (sign of corporate social responsibility.). It means also that employers who participate in the competitions development and competitors' evaluation commit themselves to awarding the winners, investing in the improvement of the training facilities in schools, giving job offers, and granting scholarships to graduation, etc.
- Opportunity to exchange good practices in the system of vocational education;
- Support in identifying the gifted students and students' excellence;
- Assist the process of participants' selection for the World Skills Competitions.

FACTUAL DATA

Interest and participation in national competitions by students from VET gymnasiums constantly increases. While 290 students from 119 VET Gymnasiums participated in the national competitions in 2009, 566 students from 212 VET gymnasiums participated in 2012.

In addition, every school year more and more training firms from VET Gymnasiums participated in a special type of national competitions – the “*Young Entrepreneur*” Fair of Training Firms (with international participation):

- 600 students (from 85 Training firms) from 35 VET Gymnasiums in 2009 to
- 704 students (from 108 Training firms) from 46 VET Gymnasiums in 2012.

SOURCES AND METHODS

- Cooperation with stakeholders;
- Information from the real economy;
- Learners' research and excellence display;
- Consultations with business representatives;
- Team work ;
- Competition methods.

SUSTAINABILITY

The National Professional Skills Competitions are to be organized every school year.

The national competitions are undergoing a process of development according to the innovations in VET educational system and to the economic reality.

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1.2 The “Choose Your Path!” national programme — Romania

INTRODUCTION

In a society where school must respond to labour market needs, the National Centre for TVET Development (NCTVETD) is the promoter of the “Choose your path!” site. This site aims to encourage and establish connections between student aspirations and the choice of a professional line of work. The website was designed in such a way to support the “Choose your path” national programme, which is a new beginning for vocational education in Romania, a pathway of education and practical training aimed at the better integration of graduates on the ever-changing labour market. The programme is open to all ninth grade students planning to enrol in high school, and who want to benefit from the opportunities that fast professionalization has to offer if one switches to a specialized programme.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“Choose your path!” is planned to run for two years and it is dedicated to students who finished the ninth grade, as part of the technological high school track. In the first year of study the theoretical component has been allocated 40% of the training programme, while practical training will be 60%. In the second year of study, the theoretical component will diminish to 25%, while the focus will be on 75% practical training.

During the two years of study, the student will learn about subjects that are specific to compulsory education and specialised training modules for professional qualification. The programme provides practical training for better access to employment and therefore financial independence. Through vocational education and training, students will be guided towards achieving a new attitude and respect towards work and professional behaviour.

The purpose of the programme is to acquire a professional qualification certificate that can get students hired immediately after graduation, in Romania and in the European Union countries. In addition, following completion of the programme, they can acquire the certificate of compulsory school graduation, which will allow them to continue their high school studies (grade 11/ISCED 3).

By participating in the programme, students will gain experience and learn by means of different techniques and the appropriate training qualification of their choice. They will study the elements of general subjects and the practical aspects necessary to practice a profession.

Students will learn the Romanian language or mother tongue (other than Romanian), will acquire skills enabling them to work in a team, make decisions, and assume responsibilities. Students will be prepared to adapt better and faster to job requirements, such as professional work behaviour and quality performed tasks.

The certification exam designed to prove acquirement of professional qualification is organised by the school selected by students, together with operators/public institutions, partner schools, using their office and their equipment wherever possible. The Inspectorates of Bucharest will monitor the organization and performance of the certification exam.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The website <http://www.alegetidrumul.edu.ro/> is created in order to:

- Provide all necessary information to students, parents, schools, economic agents, practice partners for a more rapid inclusion of future graduates into the labour market,

- Promote the benefits of participation in the national programme,
- Provide all information on the educational programme, clearly specifying the professional qualifications, schools that offer it, but also the economic agents that will be involved in the implementation of practical training,
- Ensure quick access to up-to-date information, relevant to all stakeholders.

CONTEXT

The “Choose your path!” website has four sections, which allow students to find the right qualification, considering the affinities of each and what they think is best for their potential development in life. Thus, an interactive map is presented in the first section, which guides the student towards the qualification that best suits what he would like to do. At the time when the student chooses something he would like to do, he is guided towards the appropriate qualification, but also the school where this qualification is to be acquired.

The second section presents the conditions of registration and the benefits of the national programme. Here one could find details on the student enrolment periods, programme content, file submitting, etc. The templates that must be in filled in, are attached as well.

The third section presents important information for employers and their involvement in the programme. There are details about the development of the programme in terms of the economic practice partner, but also benefits of their involvement in this programme. The main reason why employers would choose to participate in this programme would be that, after its completion, they can choose for employment the students with the best results.

The fourth section is designed to present the educational offer for the two-year professional education (school years 2012–2013) in order to provide national visibility of all schools and economic agents at the national level, and of the partners that support this form of education.

BENEFITS

If students follow the vocational education and training through the “Choose your path!” national programme, they will have the following advantages:

- They can obtain a professional qualification that allows them to quickly get a job and have an income earlier than their colleagues, who go for the baccalaureate exam;
- Through a national programme that supports vocational education and training, they will receive a monthly scholarship of 200 RON (Romanian currency);
- During holidays, after completion of practice, they can continue to work for a fixed period (subject to legal requirements);
- Employers to assist the best students (where circumstances allow it) by means of additional scholarships for them;
- Upon completion of this programme, they can, at the same time, work and continue their studies at school.

FACTUAL DATA

- 19,771 positions in the educational programme
- 473 schools involved in this programme
- 1,551 employers

SOURCES AND METHODS

Promotional materials

Online platform

Site <http://www.alegetidrumul.edu.ro/>

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1.3 Using the school's website in order to enhance communication inside and outside of the organization — Romania

INTRODUCTION

The example presents how a school's website can be used as a powerful marketing and communication tool, fostering communication with different stakeholders, disseminating good practice, promoting the TVET programmes and obtaining feedback that leads to the improvement of TVET provision.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The website of the “Gh. Airinei” Post and Telecommunications Technical College offers a wide range of Information on:

- TVET programme offer, with different levels of qualifications,
- National and institutional regulations in force,
- School staff organisation (management team, quality assurance team, curricula teachers' teams),
- planning documents (strategic planning – School action plan, Operational plans),
- Self assessment reports, management reports,
- Major events at school level,
- Projects currently implemented.

There are special sections dedicated to:

- Students: the training programmes available, personal and professional development,
- Parents: meetings scheduled with parents, Q&A forum.

An educational platform offers:

- Training courses,
- Online learning materials,
- Audio and video lessons,
- A wide range of competence-based assessment tools

There are, also, different promotional materials, including video clips developed by the students attending said school.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

- Ensure transparency of school information,
- Promote school image,
- Disseminate good practices,
- Ensure quick access to up-to-date information relevant to all stakeholders,
- Support the computer-based skills acquisition, which enables students' integration in an information – based society,
- Develop a virtual educational data base.

CONTEXT

The creation of the school website (www.airinei.omad.ro) came as a response to the needs expressed by the stakeholders (school employees, students and parents, etc.) regarding ways to properly and effectively communicate and be informed.

All relevant documents (School Action Plan, Self-assessment Report, External monitoring reports, Peer review reports etc) are public and available on the web site.

Staff has access to all regulations in force, can download different professional and pedagogical materials, and can communicate with their students on an ongoing basis using the educational platforms.

As previously emphasised, students can also download a wide range of learning materials, be informed of personal and professional development opportunities, and have access to educational platforms. Parents have access to a “Questions and answers” section on the site, where they can ask for different clarifications regarding general aspects of the VET programmes and specific information on the student’s achievements.

BENEFITS

- Building and developing the partnership network
- Enhancing communication
- Fostering self-esteem in all who take part in the activities organized within the school
- Keeping all stakeholders informed
- Meeting both individual and organizational needs

SOURCES AND METHODS

- Audio and video lessons and promotional materials
- Online platforms
- Forums

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1.4 Communication/Marketing campaign designed to increase the image of VET in Montenegro (especially in the North-East of the country) — Montenegro

INTRODUCTION

Despite the high levels of unemployment in North-East Montenegro, there is a dearth of students interested in undertaking VET in agriculture and, to a lesser extent, tourism. This is particularly the case of the three-year curricula, which are oriented towards preparing young people for the work environment. The problem is less critical for the four-year curricula, which are more academically oriented, and provide a pathway to higher education. Furthermore, there are problems regarding the nature of the curricula that are attractive to students. For example, four-year “tourist technician” curricula are a popular choice for students despite the fact that graduates of such curricula have limited employment options. In contrast, three- and four-year waiter and chef (technician) curricula are much less popular despite offering greater employment prospects.

Consequently, there was a strong need for a communication/marketing campaign to alter existing perceptions of agriculture and tourism as sectors offering low-prestige employment opportunities, and also to encourage students and their key influencers (such as parents and teachers) to consider the three- and four-year VET curricula in agriculture and tourism as offering desirable and quality employment (including self-employment) opportunities for graduates. Such campaign was designed within the Project MNE/011, implemented by Luxembourg Agency for Development Cooperation, and it had a strong sector focus on agriculture (particularly organic agriculture) and tourism (particularly hospitality-related occupations), and a strong geographical focus on North-East Montenegro.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The primary target audiences for the campaign were (potential) VET students, their parents and teachers (and other key actors). Secondary target audiences included schools management and staff, employers and other social partners. In addition to the Ministry of Education and Sports, Centre for Vocational Education and schools, the consultant/company awarded the tender for the conception, development and implementation of the communication/marketing campaign was required to liaise closely with key stakeholders such as Employers Organizations, Chamber of Commerce, Centre for Information and Professional Counselling, and other relevant donor-funded projects.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

- Develop the capacities of the key institutions (Ministry of Education and Sports, Centre for Vocational Education and Training, VET schools) involved in the promotion of the VET sector to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge to fulfil their remit in this regard;
- Improve the image of agriculture and tourism, particularly in North-East Montenegro, as attractive sectors to seek employment;
- Increase awareness in relation to VET opportunities in agriculture (including organic agriculture) and tourism (including hospitality) in Montenegro, especially North-East Montenegro;
- Improve the image of the VET curricula in agriculture and tourism, especially in North-East Montenegro, as effective pathways to quality employment opportunities, self-employment and further/higher education;
- Strengthen the image of the three-year VET curricula in agriculture and tourism, especially in North-East Montenegro, as specifically oriented towards the development of knowledge and workplace skills;

- Orient pupils, especially in North-East Montenegro, towards occupational profiles and VET curricula in agriculture and tourism, which are in demand on the labour market and, therefore, offer greater employment prospects.

CONTEXT

The Campaign tone was cheerful and optimistic. It gave a new perspective on the development of Montenegro, offered solutions for local problems, and announced good strategic plans, inviting young people, as well as their parents, to take an active part in the implementation process.

The Campaign “*Heroes*” were energetic and smiling young people, clever and pragmatic – people who know what they are doing and how to inspire and influence their peers (local opinion makers). They were, at that time, attending their final year of VET schools and preparing themselves for new stages in their lives. They did not regard their professions as a burden, but more as a challenge, a chance to become independent within a short period of time while doing something fun and interesting. They were addressing their peers but also their parents, and their style, song and testimonies were the basis for communicating the key messages of the campaign.

The Campaign Song was of the hip-hop genre, so as to remain faithful to the authentic preferences of the primary target group. Song lyrics directly promoted the benefits of professional occupations in tourism and agriculture. The song was featured in radio and TV campaign videos and these were used as main tools for communicating with young people, while an additional communication strategy was prepared for parents.

Campaign key messages were derived from the song. Beside the very effective slogan “*VET is the Key!*” two targeted headlines were added: “*Be an independent person, live your own life*” (for young people) and “*Your child can become an independent adult*” (for parents).

BENEFITS

- Improved image of agriculture and tourism, particularly in North-East Montenegro, as attractive sectors to work in;
- Increased understanding on the part of the Ministry of Education and Sports, Centre for Vocational Education and Training and schools, of the importance of promoting VET;
- Greater awareness of VET opportunities in agriculture (including organic agriculture) and tourism (including hospitality) in Montenegro, especially North-East Montenegro
- Increased appreciation of the VET curricula in agriculture and tourism, especially in North-East Montenegro, as effective pathways to quality employment opportunities, self-employment and further/higher education;
- Improved awareness and image of the three-year VET curricula in agriculture and tourism, especially in North-East Montenegro, as specifically oriented towards the development of knowledge and workplace skills.

According to the research conducted, it can be concluded that the “*VET is the Key*” campaign had a positive echo among the younger population who is faced with the secondary education choice from the North-Eastern region of Montenegro. Representatives of secondary VET schools confirmed this statement by underlining that the positive effects of the campaign could be observed mainly in the increased number of newly enrolled students, but also in the increased interest of younger population in several courses, especially in the agriculture technician, tourism and catering technician, transport and veterinary courses. This has proved as a justification that the campaign implementation should be prolonged in future.

FACTUAL DATA

- 34 TV and radio appearances in local and national media, in one-month period,
- 21 PR reports overview in daily newspapers, in one-month period,
- 6 VET schools, from six target municipalities took part in the promotions,
- 7 Elementary schools visited in six target municipalities in the North-East Montenegro,
- Activities conducted: promotional event, distribution of promotional material and visits to elementary schools,
- Promotional material used: promotional leaflets, posters, promotional leaflets and brochures from schools and

exhibits (samples made by students).

SOURCES AND METHODS

- PR (press releases, invitations to media, Campaign launch press conference, music radio spot, music video spot, media appearances at local and national TV and radio stations),
- Advertising (TV) : Music TV spot, TV separate items – 4 short videos for different professions: “*Chef*” and “*Bartender*” (addressing young people) and “*Farmer*” and “*Waiter*” (addressing parents),
- Advertising (radio): 30sec and 15/20sec radio separate items,
- Advertising (print): four advertisements with different layouts – portrait and landscape,
- Promotional activities: promo caravans in focus municipalities, visits to elementary schools in focus municipalities, distribution of promo materials in focus municipalities – leaflets, posters, promotional gifts,
- Online: website www.strucnojekljucno.edu.me, Facebook profile, official YouTube channel.

SUSTAINABILITY

Although the production and distribution of advertising material is costly and requires special budget allocation, PR activities are mostly free of charge, as are the social networks, which could serve for a follow-up of the promotional campaign.

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Summary points

*The Bruges Communiqué on enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training for the period 2011–2020*¹ (Communiqué of the European Ministers for Vocational Education and Training, the European Social Partners and the European Commission, meeting in Bruges on the 7th of December 2010 to review the strategic approach and priorities of the Copenhagen process for 2011–2012) emphasises the role of developing and implementing a Marketing and communication strategy for VET as a key element in making VET more attractive. The Bruges Communiqué underlines the importance of assuring a greater visibility for the results achieved following the cooperation in VET and specifies that “The European Commission and the participating countries should consider investing in clear and targeted communication to different groups of stakeholders at national and European level. In order to facilitate the use of the available EU instruments, learners and all parties involved should receive extensive and tailored information”.

From a practical point of view and based on the experiences and examples of different countries, it is proved that marketing and communication have a continuously growing importance in making VET more attractive. Bearing that in mind, the concept of MARCOM (MARKeting + COMMunication) was adopted on a large scale, especially when educational services are the products to be sold.

The MARCOM plan is developed for a specific target audience, with an adequate message for each targeted category, and via special channels dedicated to each public type. The MARCOM planning process covers the Analysis, the Strategy building and the Implementation phase. The main requirement for a successful MARCOM plan is the customisation for the contextual situation of the organisation, as well as for the target audience.

The customer analysis answers the questions: Who are our customers? What are their needs? What are their motivations to choose our services? What are their perceptions about our offer? Usually it is possible to distinguish between several categories of beneficiaries. Our primary target is the student, but from the perspective of the marketing process their parents and other persons from their surroundings are of a major importance as well, because they have the power to influence the final decision.

Concerning the target audience, it is very important to take into account the fact that the picture will change over the time, thus the process of learning about our customer is a continuous one. In our case, marketing only among students is a non-effective investment, which can influence the decision on a very low scale. In order to define the most efficient method of reaching the target, the involvement of representatives can be useful if one is to understand their perception, motivation and interests.

The Communication Process Analysis defines the elements of the MARCOM mix, in order for it to reach our customers effectively. Because of the huge target diversity, it is necessary to design a MARCOM mix with several components that are dedicated to our main different target categories. Possible components that can be used are: advertising, direct marketing, public relations, self-promotion, other promotions etc. As marketing tools, one should choose the most appropriate for the target and for the message: e-mail, flyers, newspapers, brochures, banners, posters, fairs, promotional events, open doors, etc.

The most effective marketing examples show that they apply a “customers come first” approach in defining the message.

Within the framework of National Professional Skills Competitions (the national competitions) Bulgaria succeeds to popularize the students’ outstanding results and reinforce active collaboration with employers from relevant sectors. The “PANORAMA of Vocational Education” became a forum meant to enhance the attractiveness and image of the vocational

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/vocational/bruges_en.pdf

education for all categories of audience: potential and present students, teachers, school managers and employer representatives. As a positive and fruitful consequence is that such action triggered a media information campaign at local, regional and national level.

Various marketing campaigns were designed to increase the image of VET in Montenegro in the sector of agriculture and tourism, as well. The direct benefits of these campaigns lead to improved image of the agriculture and tourism sector, particularly in North-East Montenegro, as being both a place full of opportunities in terms of labour market demands and an educational VET segment worthwhile investing in.

The Romanian national VET system is aware of the necessity to be connected to the wider world in order to remain up-to-date and competitive. In this respect the National Centre for TVET Development created a national programme and a website to offer better and targeted information provision and guidance to attract more learners to our VET system and promote VET attractiveness *“Choose your path!”*. Most schools in Romania promote themselves by offering relevant information on their websites, keeping all stakeholders informed aiming to meet both individual and organizational needs. A good example in this respect is “Gh. Airinei” Post and Telecommunications Technical College.

The four examples from Bulgaria, Montenegro and Romania presented above allow us to identify the main elements of a good marketing plan, at both a system and provider level, in order to support their transfer and valorisation in other contexts and for other beneficiaries. Based on the good practices presented here, it is easy to conclude that a well designed and implemented MARCOM plan is a tool that allows its effective utilization within a large diversity of contexts, for very different target groups and contents to be promoted.

It is highly recommended for further users to respect the main requirements of the marketing-communication process, the customisation for the target audience & for the contextual situation of the organisation. The special attention dedicated for this process will ensure the successful implementation by answering for each situation the simple questions of: WHAT (we intend to communicate?), to WHOM, HOW and WHEN, and in a participative team to find the right answers, at the right moment, for the most interested target group.

Ilidiko Pataki, *Regional Coordinator* and **Elena Beatrice Cerkez**, *Expert*
National Centre for TVET Development – Romania



2

Guidance & Counselling

2.1 Study on preventing early school leaving prior to attaining qualification in VET schools — Montenegro

INTRODUCTION

Early school leaving² has been recognized as one of the numerous challenges encountered by the whole European society and therefore by our country. It can be defined as an unsuccessful attempt of attaining education, i.e. the qualification which is acquired upon the completion of a curriculum.

It is the general opinion that, in our society, this issue has not been sufficiently acknowledged; it is essential to continue to work on raising the awareness of all the participants in the education process, as well as to take definite measures in order to investigate and reduce the early school leaving phenomenon to the minimum extent.

Activities on preventing early school leaving address a measurable problem. The statistical indicator of early school leaving is not sufficient to analyse the cause of the problem. Qualitative analysis is crucial: its conclusions are related to the system of vocational education and they represent guidelines for further system development and improvement. Having identified the importance of the continuous research of this problem, these activities take place on a regular basis within the psychological and pedagogical departments from schools.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The idea of the working group was not to deal exclusively with early school leavers, but with the whole education system, and all the aspects and contexts as well as internal system processes leading to early school leaving and not gaining diploma. From our perspective, the research of early school leaving is related to the examination of the broader context; the recommended measures create better conditions for all students in order to complete their education.

Aiming to initiate research of the problem of early school leaving as well as to design a set of activities, which could prevent this problem, the working group was dealing with the following:

- Research of the school administration – pilot (which covered six schools from all three regions from Montenegro), and national research which covered 80% of VET schools;
- Research of the students and teachers' opinions on the issue of early school leaving and the broader context of this problem;
- Creating measures to prevent early school leaving – prevention, intervention, compensation.
- Implement definite prevention measures.

² Early school leavers are individuals below the statutory school leaving age who have withdrawn from or left an education or training programme without completing it. In an EU context this term has a specific technical meaning. The early school leaving rate is defined by the proportion of the population aged 18–24 with only lower secondary education or less and no longer in education or training. Early school leavers are therefore those who have only achieved pre-primary, primary, lower secondary or a short upper secondary education of less than 2 years (ISCED 0, 1, 2 or 3 short), and include those who have only a pre-vocational or vocational education which did not lead to an upper secondary certification. Early school leavers need to be distinguished from drop-outs, which is a more general term. Source: EU Council Recommendation on Early School Leaving (2011).

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

- An established and functional system of monitoring and registering early school leavers;
- Better involvement and linkage of all significant entities relevant in preventing early school leaving;
- Improvement of the vocational education and training quality.

CONTEXT

In compliance with the Recommendation of the European Commission, the early school leaving rate should be reduced to 10% by 2020. There are some countries that have already reached that objective on the national level (Austria, Czech Republic, Finland, Slovenia), while many countries which previously had a high early school leaving rate managed to reduce it considerably (Romania, Malta, Cyprus, Italy). This progress has been encouraged by the fact that it is possible to attain the goal, but it is necessary to make additional efforts.

BENEFITS

- Existence of a database on early school leavers;
- Raised awareness on the school's part in preventing early school leaving;
- Better assistance to first grade students in overcoming the adaptation syndrome; when aware of the early school leaving issue, one could implement preventive activities, as assisting students to overcome the adaptation syndrome, to view school as an environment where they can develop their own potential, not as a background for failure;
- Better communication among students and teachers.

FACTUAL DATA

- The psychological-Pedagogical Departments of 29 VET schools have been keeping records on students who leave school prior to obtaining a diploma. Data have been gathered and processed in the database of the Centre for Vocational Education and Training.
- 75 teachers from six secondary VET schools underwent training on constructive communication at school.

SOURCES AND METHODS

- Research of school administration – pilot and national research.
The data obtained from 29 secondary VET schools (80%), related to the last four academic years, have been analysed. The lack of systematic records and unified available databases was the first problem met during data gathering. Therefore, the creation of a database and the monitoring system have been of paramount methodological importance. Data were gathered regarding the students' socio-economic status, absences and modules that students usually quit, as well as data about reasons for early school leaving. We would like to point out that the focus is not only on quantitative data, but on qualitative analysis, risk indicators, and comparative analysis, which will serve to create measures for preventing early school leaving.
- Research of students and teachers' opinions on the problem of early school leaving and the broader context of this problem.
Based on the sample, students' and teachers' opinions on critical aspects of the system were collected – on career guidance, enrolment policy, absences from lessons, teaching quality, leisure activities and the role of parents. It was interesting to compare opinions of students and teachers on such important issues and realize that almost all entities see the responsibility for early school leaving in others, not in themselves.
- Creating measures to deal with the early school leaving problem.
The recommended measures involve three different levels – prevention, intervention and compensation measures. Prevention measures are systemic and need to be taken before a student leaves school. They are

related to systemic developments, which improve the position and opportunities of each student (e.g. career guidance, enrolment policy, popularisation of VET, promotion of all occupations, modularization of the curricula, professional training of teachers, strengthening cooperation with employers, parents, etc.).

Intervention measures are different methods of identifying students with a higher risk of early-school leaving, monitoring and counselling systems for such students with the aim to provide them with adequate support in order to finish school (surveying and monitoring students during their first grade, a cooperation plan between teachers and parents of children who tend to be absent from school or have bad performance, systemic monitoring and analysis of reasons for early-school leaving, etc.).

Compensation measures are programmes dealing with students who already left school, and who have been provided assistance in various manners in order to finish school (e.g. one-year programmes related to overcoming difficulties in learning, acquiring learning techniques, career techniques, developing self-improvement skills and goals, etc.).

- Implementing prevention measures.
The working group, composed mainly of pedagogues and psychologists employed in VET schools, created the programme for workshops on communication improvement at school, aimed at teachers and headmasters in VET schools. The plan is to work on the improvement of communication between school, on the one hand, and parents and employers at which students perform practical training, on the other.

SUSTAINABILITY

These activities are professionally and technically based on the VET schools and Centre for Vocational Education and Training capacities. The methodology of the research is carried out by the psychological and pedagogical departments of VET schools.

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2.2 The “Jobs” project — Romania

INTRODUCTION

Career guidance has an important role in creating highly educated people and professionals to manage the emerging economies by directly influencing the achievement, as the end result, of skilled people that consequently produce wealth. It should also focus on creating awareness to students on job opportunities and related fields of studies. Career guidance is based on the fact that the basics of career management skills are developed at an early age. It is also based on the assumption that the choices that individuals make in their early years of life and education have major consequences for their lifelong learning and work opportunities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The project JOBS (Job orientation training in Businesses and Schools) was implemented as a pilot phase to develop a cross-curricular teaching approach, focusing on the development of life skills as the premise for career management.

The project ties in with the demands of Romania as a country in transition, where the economy is slowly growing and beginning to stabilise. In the future, more skilled workers and trained professionals will be needed to support the economic growth and to keep up with the developments of the European market.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The goal of JOBS is to prepare the Romanian students in the last years of compulsory education and during their studies in the technical colleges to:

- Acquire life skills and competences
- Develop a realistic perception of job opportunities and work environment in their region
- Take decisions regarding their further education (vocational education or university career) and thus their professional career.

CONTEXT

The JOBS project – Job orientation training in Businesses and Schools – was developed in joint co-operation with representatives of the General Directorate for Education and Lifelong Learning in the Romanian Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports, the National Centre for VET Development and the Centre for International Projects in Education (IPE) of Zurich University of Teacher Education (Switzerland). The pilot phase was implemented in 2011–2012 and the full project will be implemented during the 2012–2016 time frame.

The educational projects have to be in close contact with enterprises in order to be able to take into account the current needs of the job market. Students, teachers and enterprises have to be prepared to meet the challenges of the global market economy together. The development of transversal competences, life skills and the ability to recognize and assess one's own potential are key elements, essential for one to be able to meet the demands of the modern employment market.

The innovative element of the project is that the needs of the labour market and the requirements of the Ministry of National Education are integrated in the curriculum of compulsory education and of the technical and professional schools. The approach ensures that students get an insight into the real life labour market, collect the necessary information

themselves, acquire and practice the necessary life skills.

The pilot phase was implemented in two schools (one a gymnasium and the other a technical college) and had as main activities the development of nine learning materials for students and providing the corresponding support for teachers in terms of training and coaching in using student-centred methods (task-based learning).

The setting requires a weekly three hour-learning slot for which at least three teachers work together as the preparation and support team.

BENEFITS

- Students are capable to identify their competences (self-confidence);
- Parents, principals and businesses get practical and standardised background information about the students' needs and aspirations, and help them to fulfil their tasks

FACTUAL DATA

- 9 learning materials;
- 2 schools piloting the materials;
- 8 teachers and 2 principals trained to develop materials and train students; they will be used in the training of 16 schools for the next phase during the school year 2012–2013.

SOURCES AND METHODS

- Promotional materials
- E-learning programmes for teachers on an online platform

SUSTAINABILITY

The project was designed to be implemented in cascade until 2016, when it is anticipated to become a general practical approach in all schools from Romania. In order to have all the teachers trained, an electronic platform is envisaged, and teacher trainers will be coached by involving the University of Bucharest and other training providers for teachers' in-service training.

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2.3 ASUC “Boro Petrusevski” (secondary traffic school in Skopje) – the “*Guidance and counselling in career development*” project — Macedonia

INTRODUCTION

In educational institutions, an adequate approach regarding the career counselling and orientation of young people is of enormous importance for society. To ensure the success of individuals and their contribution to the society development, the development of their own interests, building opinion, interests and affinities, all these start at an early age, or more correctly during the primary and secondary education.

Open institutional cooperation and collaboration with the business sector always lead to success. By understanding the meaning and importance of such development, ASUC “Boro Petrusevski” created an internal policy regarding career counselling and orientation for the students. This policy encompasses numerous activities, information, motivation and support for students in their professional and educational development.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The “*Guidance and counselling for career development*” project in ASUC “Boro Petrusevski” consists of internal counselling concerning the students’ professional orientation, defining their professional interests, and creating an environment that would lead to the development of professional interests.

There are activities meant to improve the students’ personal development, help them understand the value of volunteer work, develop skills regarding labour market analyses, improve communication skills and cooperation with the local working environment, as well as develop a sense of belonging and build a value system.

The success of many years of practice with the activities included in the project has resulted in the creation of an internal strategy aimed at guidance and counseling for career development in schools.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The primary objectives of the project, aimed at coaching the students so they would join the labour market and continue their education in high education institutions, are:

- Improving employment opportunities for students,
- Providing the student with the necessary skills for appropriate professional development,
- Building a value system.

These objectives are implemented through many individual objectives such as:

- Initiating activities for improving personal development of students,
- Developing researching skills,
- Establishing contacts with various institutions and the business sector,
- Understanding the value of volunteer work,
- Improving communication skills,
- Strengthening one’s self-image,

- Introspection,
- Socialization,
- Developing a sense of belonging

CONTEXT

The “*Guidance and counselling for career development*” project starts with primary education, that is introducing to the students the opportunities and advantages offered by the occupations and vocational profiles studied in school. The process of professional orientation in Macedonian schools begins when students start school and it includes specific contents and redistribution by academic year.

The first year questionnaire is implemented in order to determine the interests and affinities of the students who had decided on a particular vocation and want to study it.

The second year students are informed about the workshops concerning self-esteem, personality profile, interests and affinities, and horizontal and vertical transition. This age is the “crossing point” for the students as far as their further professional development goes. The students who have doubts and uncertainties are approached with a special strategy to support their choices.

Further activities are directed to the third and fourth year students – a division of students based on their decision to pursue employment or continue their education. With the students who decided to get employed, specific activities are set up, such as: searching for a job, writing a CV and the cover letter, how to behave during a job interview, work motivation, job responsibility, volunteer work, career progress.

For students who decided to continue their education, special activities are implemented, such as: testing their knowledge, counselling for and defining their choice, success analysis, contacting the universities and attending presentations, counselling on independent studying and specialised education.

The strategy for career development counselling and guidance is done via activities of the school psychologist, an expert service, a team of professors, people in charge with the Career centre in schools. As part of the activities of the Career centre, international cooperation has been agreed upon with the Republic of Slovenia and the Republic of Romania concerning experiences exchange.

BENEFITS

- Successful employment on the labour market and admission in high educational institutions,
- Developing a responsible attitude towards work,
- Students will acquire different skills which will help them gain self-confidence,
- Students will engage in researching,
- Increasing opportunities for personal development.

FACTUAL DATA

- Manual for professional orientation of the students,
- Psychological tests,
- Professional file for monitoring and counselling the students,
- Electronic file for monitoring the professional development of the students,
- Training materials for the Career centre,
- Promotional materials for the vocations represented in school (presentations, posters, leaflets and brochures),
- Activities reports,
- Medium records.

SOURCES AND METHODS

- Individual and group counselling with the students (interviews, knowledge tests, success analyses, counselling on independent studying),
- Workshops,
- Training events,
- Cooperation with social partners.

SUSTAINABILITY

The project foresees creating an electronic database for students that would be permanently updated with data received by follow-up activities on students' professional development and methodology development; this way, one could monitor the percentage of students who were successful on the labour market or those who continued their education. By cooperating with the primary and secondary schools in the Republic of Macedonia and promoting the internal strategy of our school as a good practice, the implementation of the strategy will be allowed at a higher level.

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2.4 Methods and instruments for career instruction in vocational education and training — Kosovo*

INTRODUCTION

In the system of vocational education and training in Kosovo, one of the priorities is to implement career instruction activities that will help students during their entire life with choosing their path in education, training and professions, and managing their careers.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 2005, policies regarding career guidance and different activities of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in VET schools have been implemented. As mentioned above, the strategy for career instruction is developed, the national centre for career instruction is opened, fairs where vocational schools are presented are organised and different vocational profiles are introduced. Through these activities, information regarding profile descriptions, employment opportunities and further education opportunities are introduced.

The day of open doors is introduced, where all vocational schools have opened the doors for students of ninth grades for one day, in order to inform them about the services that they provide, including a so-called “girls’ day”, when girls are encouraged to be involved in education; offices for students’ services in 4 vocational agricultural schools are established. Also the new curriculum framework of Kosovo foresees that career instructions are to begin from the 6th grade (ISCED 2) as integral parts of the curriculum and to continue till the end of the 12th grade (ISCED 3).

OBJECTIVES

- To offer support to students in making decisions regarding their future careers, and to keep them well informed.
- To develop professional competences of students so as to make their transition from school to the labour market easier.
- To advise and support students during their learning stage with the future decisions they will make when choosing their career.

CONTEXT

In line with the European Union policies for career guidance, Kosovo is committed to fully implement the strategy for career guidance and other documents that will be positively reflected in the development of human labour force.

In 2005 the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of Kosovo developed a document for career guidance, which has not been fully implemented in recent years. Therefore, in 2012 this document has been reviewed and named “*National strategy for career guidance 2012–2017*”. As per this document, we want to provide lifelong career guidance to students of all ages. This strategy describes the responsibilities of public and private institutions, which have the role of informing the students regarding career guidance.

BENEFICIARIES

Students, schools, teachers, Regional Employment Office, businesses sector in general including business associations, Non-Government Organizations, municipalities, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, trade unions, parents

FACTUAL DATA

- All vocational schools (59 schools) included in the day of open doors,
- 38 vocational schools included in fairs,
- 4 vocational schools have service centre for students,
- 92% of secondary lower schools are included in the process,
- 40 teachers (two per school) trained for career instruction,
- A guide is compiled for students' service centre,
- The strategy for career instruction is developed and launched,
- National centre for career instruction established.

RESOURCES AND METHODS

Career instructions are a type of services directed to support individuals of every age and at any time during their life, to choose their education, training and a professional career. These services include services in schools, universities and colleges, in training institutions, in public employment services, in companies, in voluntary sector/community and in the private sector.

Services could be on an individual or group basis, and could be provided face-to-face or at distance (while including auxiliary lines and services based in the internet). Those include career information (printed, stored on the computer or in other formats) evaluation and self-evaluation instruments, counselling interviews, programmes of career education and career management, trial programmes, work search programmes and transition services.

In order to support this process the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and with the Ministry of Sports and Culture have established the National Centre for Career Instruction, which is expected to be operational, even though for financial reasons it has not been for a long time. The vocational education sector has compiled a guide for students' service centre and has supported vocational schools to compile leaflets that would present services and their activities.

The guide also describes the planning process of a career, how work interviews are developed, how a CV and a cover letter must be written etc.

The centre for Students' Service supports and helps students in taking informed decisions regarding occupations which best meet their requirements and abilities. This Centre also plays an important role in assisting students to achieve their career goals and encourages them to open their minds to multiple possibilities. It advises and assists students to put their interests and talents forward, and contributes in their preparation for the labour market.

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Summary points

Career guidance practice hinges on a range of activities, which are intended to enable beneficiaries of any age and at any point of their lives to identify their capacities, competences and interests, and to make meaningful educational training and occupational decisions. It is also intended to guide individuals to manage their life paths in learning, work and other settings in which these capacities and competences are learned and/or used. The learners are central in the provision of such activities and/ or services.

Career guidance aims to empower young people to make a smooth transition from all educational levels to work and lifelong learning, as well as to ensure conditions that decrease the level of early school leaving.

Career development is an individual responsibility; people are expected to manage their own working lives and this starts in initial education and training. It is an on-going and a lifelong cycle; it affects an individual's life cycle and its economic status. In the same time career development means an increasingly demanding flexibility and adaptability at individual level which call for graduates and workers to have certain personal skills, qualities and attributes in order to compete favourably on the labour market.

Under the auspices of the European Union's Education and Training 2010 work programme, there is a set of common aims and principles for lifelong guidance provision agreed. The Council Resolution (Education/Youth) of May 2004 is an important document on strengthening policies, systems and practices for lifelong guidance in Europe

In this respect, the Resolution prioritised the centrality of the individual/learner in the provision of such services, and the needs to (i) refocus provision to develop individuals' career competency, (ii) widen access to services and (iii) improve the quality of the services.

Among the latest EU documents related to this topic is the EU Council Recommendation on Early School-Leaving (2011) that again brings forth the idea of necessary guidance for as long as possible in order to avoid drop-outs from the education system.

Consequently, at European level there is a major concern within the education process, employability mechanisms and inclusion; and this is the lifelong guidance concept that is one basic layer on which individuals could fully reach their potential goals, be active and aware of the choices they can make and integrate as active citizens in a "smart " and "knowledge-driven" 2020 society.

A broad definition of guidance is provided in "Career Guidance a Handbook for Policymakers" – a study of the OECD elaborated in 2004, where the European Commission conducted major reviews of national career guidance policies. "Guidance refers to a range of activities that enable citizens of any age, and at any point in their lives, to: identify their capacities, competences and interests; make meaningful educational, training and occupational decisions; and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which these capacities and competences are learned and/ or used. Guidance is provided in a range of settings: education, training, employment, community, and private."

Consequently, guidance has a critical role, as it:

- Enables citizens to manage and plan their learning and work pathways in accordance with their life goals, relating their competences and interests to education, training and labour market opportunities and to self-employment, thus contributing to their personal fulfilment;
- Assists educational and training institutions to have well motivated pupils, students and trainees who take responsibility for their own learning and set their own goals for achievement. Examples of such activities include information and advice giving, counselling, competence assessment, mentoring, advocacy, and teaching career decision-making and career management skills. A variety of terms is used in different countries to describe these activities. These terms include educational, vocational or career guidance, guidance and counselling, occupational

guidance, and counselling. To avoid ambiguity, the term “guidance” is used in the text to identify any or all of these forms of provision. Countries should interpret the term as referring to the appropriate provision in their own countries (i.e. Guidance and counselling)

The principles of guidance provision bring to the fore of attention the centrality of the beneficiary, enabling citizens to become competent at planning and managing their learning and career paths and the transitions, and improving access.

These aspects, underlined in various documents drafted by important organisations, are meant to raise awareness and appeal to peoples’ conscience that guidance and counselling are or should start from now on, to be part of our lives, and if used, at least as mechanism of prevention (for unemployment, school drop-outs, discrimination, etc.), they will lead to a better integration in active life.

The first example in this chapter provided by Montenegro details the efforts of a range of academic staff to integrate the main principles of guidance and counselling into the reality of VET schools in order to decrease the early school leaving rate. The innovative aspects in their approach lie in actually:

- focusing on the potential problems that lead to early school leaving and prevention measures to help decrease this educational risk,
- an open dialogue with all members concerned: pupils, teachers, administrative staff of schools, parents,
- real involvement and participation of VET school in these processes.

The second example is offered by Romania and it underlines the idea that career guidance and counselling from an early age are vital for each individual to fully reach personal development, become aware and involved in skills building as a part of career management. The choices that individuals make in their early years of life and education have major consequences for lifelong learning and work options for them. The lesson to be learnt from this example – the project is still to be implemented in cascade till 2016 – actually comes to “refresh and contextualise” subject and teacher training by means of strongly emphasizing the development of transversal competences, life skills and realistic self-employment assessment abilities. The title of the project speaks for itself “*JOBS – Job orientation training in Businesses and Schools*” and draws attention to the fact that guidance and counselling need to be integrated in training provision.

The example of Macedonia is presented through the experience of “Boro Petrusevski” school and the school-implemented “*Guidance and counselling for career development project*”. This example implies internal counselling for the professional guidance of students and defining their professional interests, as well as creating an environment that would lead to the development of professional interests. There are activities meant to improve students’ personal development, help them understand the value of volunteer work, study the labour market, improve communication skills and cooperation with the local working environment, as well as develop a sense of belonging, and build a value system.

This example of good practice experienced by Macedonia by means of sustained activities in the project has resulted in the creation of an internal strategy for guidance and counselling for career development in school, which can be further on implemented in other schools of primary and secondary level in order to ensure for the young students a better insertion in life and labour market. The creation of the Career centre as a body to support students with guidance and counselling and its cooperation on international level constitutes one more example of good practice for measures taken in this field.

The example “*Methods and instruments for career instruction in vocational education and training in Kosovo*” underlines the importance of developing a national approach to support students’ career guidance in VET. Involvement and participation of both ministries of education and of labour are combined and they have clear responsibilities to enact as actions for career guidance. The action is implemented nation-wide and thus a very high ratio of schools is included in the process: 92% of secondary schools, out of which all VET schools (59 schools in total) are part of and 38 vocational schools from those included participate in various fairs. The role of a National Centre for Career Instruction in assuring a holistic approach in this process is also of crucial importance.

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National Centre for TVET Development – Romania



3

► Responsiveness
to students' needs

3.1 Improving the access to VET

3.1.1 Implementation of training vouchers — Bulgaria

INTRODUCTION

The Introduction of training vouchers is a measure designed to improve the access to continuing VET and training to acquire key competences, aimed to increase personal motivation of employed and unemployed groups to acquire further qualification. It encourages personal development and the pursuing of a professional career. More qualified people ensure higher effectiveness in the workplace. Training vouchers support mobility and diversify the employment opportunities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In order to encourage public participation in lifelong learning activities, active employment policy in Bulgaria has taken several measures to provide various training opportunities, including using innovative financing mechanisms. At the end of 2009, as per Government Decree No. 251, in Bulgarian practice training vouchers were introduced as a new mechanism to fund adult training; these enable individuals to choose the type of training and the training institution. This measure was motivated by the need to seek new mechanisms to promote an active behaviour of people.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

- Increase the labour supply and the quality of the labour force;
- More intensive investment in the human capital through better and more accessible training,
- Social element – personal development and position of the individual on the labour market.

Training vouchers are applied as a mechanism to fund the training of employed and unemployed people by means of the “Human Resources Development 2007–2013” Operational Programme (“HRD” OP).

Training vouchers are applied in the implementation of various schemes designed to provide financial assistance under Priority Axis 1: Promotion of economic activity and development of inclusive labour market; and Priority Axis 2: Raising the productivity and adaptability of the employed people by the “HRD” OP. The use of training vouchers aims to enhance employees' employability and adaptability, help them retain their employment or give them time to find new employment, and to prevent them becoming unemployed.

CONTEXT

The training vouchers implemented in Bulgaria are named securities with a fixed nominal value in BGN (Bulgarian currency), entitling the holder to attend a training. As securities, vouchers have a series number and are secure. Only the Employment Agency has the right to provide training vouchers. Training through vouchers is either for acquiring professional qualification or training for key competences. Vocational training can be for acquisition of 1st, 2nd and 3rd degree of professional qualification or of a part of profession. The choice of professions is from the List of professions for Vocational Education and Training, approved by the Minister of Education, Youth and Science without the professional areas of “Crop and Livestock”, “Forestry” and “Fisheries”.

The training vouchers in Bulgaria were funded by the European Social Fund in the implementation of schemes under the “HRD” OP. Unlike the practice in most European countries, where state funding covers a part of the cost of training courses, all vouchers in Bulgaria are fully funded by the “Human Resources” OP and there is no requirement for co-

financing by individuals or employers. The nominal value of the voucher depends on the type and duration of the selected training. For vocational training, the value of the vouchers varies between 300 EUR for trainings for the 1st degree of professional qualification acquisition (with a duration of no less than 300 hours) and 900 EUR for trainings for the third level of professional qualification (lasting at least 960 hours). To train for key competences, the vouchers value is between 35 EUR for training in the “Native Language” key competence (with a duration of no less than 16 hours) and 350 EUR for language training (lasting not less than 300 hours and three levels of training). One and the same person, whether employed or unemployed, is entitled to receive only one voucher for training and only one voucher for training in key competence within the period of the “HRD” OP, i.e. up to 2013. The National Employment Agency (NEA)³ kept on its website public vouchers records, including vouchers that have been destroyed, damaged or lost.

Training financed by vouchers can be provided by training institutions that meet certain criteria; these are established in accordance with the current legislation in Bulgaria: they have no terminated contracts relating to the disbursement of the state budget or Community budget funds, no outstanding debts to the state budget; they are not in bankruptcy or liquidation, they are equipped with adequate training facilities – owned or rented within the locality in which the training will be delivered; they have developed training programmes for relevant vocational training; they are allowed to deliver trainings under the VET act and have a license for training the relevant profession/specialty as required.

The training institutions that meet the conditions are included in the List, which is published on the website of the Agency; they are made public with the “Labour Office” and their affiliates. The list is updated each month by including newly approved training institutions or excluding some of the existing ones. People can choose an educational institution from the List, contact them and obtain information from relevant training institutions about professions/ specialties or key competences trainings, offices and locations where trainings will be carried out.

Vouchers must contain the name of the voucher bearer, the type of training, the name of the selected educational institution, the value, expiration date depending on the training type, date and stamp. People submit training vouchers and afterwards they are enrolled in training in the selected institutions. Training Vouchers cannot be transferred to others or used for attending other courses, exchanged for cash, or for other services besides the training (specifically described in the voucher), used for attending trainings provided by other training institutions that are not included in the NEA list.

BENEFITS

- Ability to meet the specific needs of unemployed and employed people in the society in the context of economic crisis;
- Wider access to VET and key competences training;
- Inclusion of vulnerable groups on the labour market in the process of training through vouchers;
- Promoting LLL activities in the context of economic crisis.
- Increasing employability and creating career development opportunities.

FACTUAL DATA

In 2010 the actual implementation of vouchers for education began through the implementation of schemes under the “HRD” OP. A differentiated approach to the needs of unemployed and employed people was applied through the implementation of 4 schemes:

- The “*I can*” scheme – for employees’ vocational training and/or key competences,
- The “*Development*” scheme (for the unemployed) – training to acquire or enhance professional qualifications for people who are out of work because a company was restructured or closed down, or because their workload decreased as production was partially reduced, and
- The “*Adaptation*” scheme – for vocational training of employees moved from full time to part-time jobs; monthly stipend provided during the training, but for no longer than six months.

³ NEA – National Employment Agency – is an executive agency to the Minister of Labour and Social Policy for the implementation of the government policy on employment promotion. Finding employment allows the full use of every individual's capabilities and skills and defends its rights of dignifying existence and active social participation.

In 2011 it started the implementation of the “*I can do more*” scheme, which will enable employees on a labour contract and self-employed people, regardless of their sphere of activity, to be enrolled in courses for professional qualifications, foreign language or digital skills acquisition, in order to increase their employability and to create career development opportunities.

The “*Development*” Scheme

In 2010 – 8,574 unemployed people attended trainings through vouchers, while in 2011 there were 15,256.

In 2010 in employment after trainings through vouchers 1,836 unemployed people participated, while in 2011 there were 18,846.

The “*Adaptation*” Scheme

In 2010, 792 employees attended trainings through vouchers, in 2011 – 692.

The “*I can*” Scheme

In 2010, 39,051 employees attended the trainings through vouchers, in 2011 – 18,237 employee.

The “*I can do more*” Scheme

In June 2011 it started the implementation of the project for employees. 24,844 people participated in trainings through vouchers in 2011. During the two-year period 48,117 persons attended trainings by vouchers in 2010, and 59,529 people in 2011.

There is a clear tendency to give preference to training in key competences, especially computer and language training. 53% from the vouchers are for training in key competences, 47% – for vocational training. This trend can be explained by the increased demand by the employers in recent years of labour force which has key competences in the professional profile. On the other hand, acquiring computer and language skills facilitate access to foreign and digital sources of information, which helps increase people’s mobility to learn and work.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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3.2 Developing flexible provision and pathways in VET

3.2.1 From a project phase to established system solutions in the four-year reforming vocational education — Macedonia

INTRODUCTION

Establishment of system solutions in vocational education has shown that it is a process which requires the implementation of human, material and financial resources at the appropriate time.

The implementation of the process from a project to established system solutions in four-year vocational education made a major contribution in terms of: redefining vocations and profiles, establishing new curricula, increasing and modernising equipment in schools, implementation of various trainings for teacher and school management, changing the philosophy of teaching process into a student-centred one, and strengthening institutional capacity.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Generally speaking, the PHARE project – the reform in the four-year vocational education that generates more than 50% of the graduate secondary students, was carried out in four phases (VET 1, VET 2, VET 3 and VET 4) during the period of 1998-2006.

The situation of the secondary vocational education before the PHARE reform was characterised by a large number of occupations and an even larger number of profiles the labour market in the country did not have any demand for. The system had outdated curricula which did not match the labour market and society needs. The environment in which the reform began was characterised by a serious economic crisis, high unemployment rate, problems with the law regulations, weaknesses in the education system and transition turbulence. The reform of the secondary vocational education collided with the challenge to overcome these problems.

Nevertheless, the reform was made in difficult circumstances. It drastically changed the system of the secondary four-year vocational education. The occupations number decreased along with the number of educational profiles, there was a supply of equipment for vocational schools, many training sessions for teachers were provided in different spheres of the educational process, stronger relationships with the labour market were established.

However, many other vocational schools from the territory of the Macedonia were not included in these reform activities. The reforms began with the phase of implementation; at first, 16 schools were introduced to the reforms, and afterwards 24 other schools were included with different reform activities. In this period, the Republic of Macedonia had reformed about half of the total number of vocational schools in the country. It was necessary to deliver the reform benefits in all VET schools from the Republic of Macedonia.

Therefore, we had to introduce the PHARE project's activities for the four-year VET at a system level. It was done by the VET Centre in 2005, which in that period functioned as a department in the Bureau for the Development of Education, of course with support from the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Macedonia.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

To establish the system solutions as results of the contributions of the reform of the four-year vocational education in about 30 secondary vocational schools that were not included in the PHARE reform, with the aim of accomplishing the following objectives:

- Promoting and expanding the holistic approach for changes and reforms,
- Providing support for the process of modernization, adaptation and reforms in the system of secondary vocational education and training,
- Providing equity in creating and implementing the new curricula in the four-year vocational education,
- Supporting schools in realization of new programmes,
- Changing the philosophy of the educational process, into a student-centred one,
- Overcome the problems which can be caused by certain changes
- Opening the schools for mutual cooperation and helping each other
- Strengthening the institutional capacities and acquiring experience for the advisors from the VET Centre who have the role of trainers.

CONTEXT

The PHARE reform of the secondary vocational education represented one of the largest and most significant interventions in the educational system in the Republic of Macedonia. Contrary to the reforms in the other educational sub-systems, this reform had to work against the strong inheritance from the ex-socialist system still present in the country and strongly manifested in this educational sub-system.

Creating the educational politics during the period of former Yugoslavia was directly conditioned by the efforts of applying the policy of full employment. The basis of this policy was the understanding that every finalized (graduated) educational profile, which the educational system is “introducing” on the labour market, has to belong to an corresponding working equivalent i.e. corresponding working position. The acceptance of new employees was done according to unreal and non objective economy needs. This practice had several results:

- It increased the number of employees that are working in positions for which they do not have the required qualifications and vocational capabilities;
- It increased the number of employees with no working tasks;
- It decreased the production capacity of companies and led to a diminished usage of capacities;
- It increased the number of unemployed people and etc.

Contrary to other educational sub-systems, the secondary vocational education has endured the strongest blows from this practice in creating the educational policy in the country.

Analysing the status quo from this point of view, the reform should have influenced and has influenced the increase of students' work competences, continuation of the education to improve life in general i.e. increasing the effects regarding the cultural, social and economic context, for which it needed dissemination in the vocational schools.

BENEFITS

The state acquired a modern system of four-year vocational education and training, created to support the social and economic development through the adjustment of the vocational education and training to the labour market and students' needs. The methodological innovation was developed, aiming not only at executing changes in the secondary four-year vocational education, but at establishing a new holistic approach in dealing with the educational issues in the country.

The major benefits from the reform and the establishing of the system solutions represent the reason that “awoke” the schools. Teachers acquired more self-confidence, and it introduced a European dimension that became part of the working process in schools. In addition, the meaning of the vocational education was confirmed at a higher level, and educational and other similar processes became student-centred.

Institutional capacity was strengthened in institutions such as: the Centre for Adult Education, the Centre for Vocational Education and Training and the State Exam Centre was formed.

FACTUAL DATA

In the process of the project of establishing system solutions for the four-year secondary vocational educations the following were included:

- 32 vocational schools,
- 64 people from school management,
- 300 vocational teachers,
- 14 educational professions,
- 42 educational profiles,
- 1200 teaching programmes.

SOURCES AND METHODS

Relevant sources that were used were documentation of the PHARE project: reports, analysis, educational standards, educational programme etc.

While aiming to accomplish their goal, the project team organized: regional meetings, training workshops, conferences, seminars and school visits.

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3.3 Improving access to higher education

3.3.1 Initiatives in the correlation of TVET with higher education — Romania

INTRODUCTION

The presentation below has the purpose to show how important improvements made in the initial vocational education and training tried to create a link with higher education in Romania in the last years. Important actions have been implemented with the support of Phare projects, ensuring both IVET and HE teachers' professional development as well as strengthening institutional capacities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Starting with 1995, the IVET system in Romania has undergone a reorganization and modernization process (especially with the financial support of Phare VET RO 9405, Phare 2001–2003 and the 2004–2006 programmes).

Thus, the initial vocational education and training system in Romanian was restructured in order to ensure a better correlation with labour market needs, coherence with continuing vocational training, as well as a connection with higher education, from the lifelong learning perspective.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The two multi-annual Phare projects mentioned before supported the modernization of the TVET system and the development of the IVET curriculum, and facilitated the articulation of TVET and Higher Education.

CONTEXT

Reforms in the TVET sector started during 1994/95 and since then successive initiatives have modernized the sector. At present training is made based on Training Standards and the main principle underlying training in technical and vocational education is based on the acquisition of key skills and competences developed during compulsory education, learning acquisitions/learning outcomes being both related to academic disciplines and to those strictly related to their professionalization. The ITVET system is structured so that the students can obtain a dual certification, academic and professional, enabling both further study and employment.

The ITVET modernisation included the development of training standards and the creation and revision of qualifications in line with the requirements of the emerging national qualifications framework. Quality assurance instruments were introduced through the inter-assistance school networks and the main participants in charge with internal and external assessment have been trained. The curricula were revised in the perspective of a modular approach and an associated credit system was introduced.

Part of the further steps in adjusting TVET to provide the educational system with continuing links to higher education involved direct cooperation with representatives from higher education in order to:

- Develop vertical mobility from Level 1 – pre-university education to Level 5 – higher education.
- Develop 15 coherent core qualifications within the most often requested VET domains on the labour market.

A concept paper was developed to define and describe the core qualifications. Besides the concept paper, training material was developed supporting the description process and training the authors: analysing present qualifications, identification of educational pathways and their correlation with the Labour Market and Higher Education, description of domains and possible sub-domains. The development of the core qualifications included considerations about the different vocational routes envisaged with the restructured system: the progressive and the so-called direct VET route.

Besides a better communication and cooperation among the parties involved, the impact of these activities was a highly increased awareness that the Romanian TVET system is still facing challenges to develop vertical educational mobility and establish the context for Lifelong Learning.

A thematic seminar on the theme of IVET and HE articulation was organized and involved representatives from both the Higher Education and the Technical and Vocational Education sectors, who met to discuss the means by which the two sectors may relate more closely. It highlighted the need for qualifications with no dead ends and the identification of meeting points establishing vertical progression. The emphasis was also on identifying how progress for Romanian learners may be facilitated, from TVET to Higher Education, throughout their careers.

The workshop identified also possible models for the correlation of TVET to Higher Education, to support the development of a policy suited to Romania. The underlying concern is to be able to carry out the European Union education policy, that “lifelong” learning should be available to all citizens, and that national systems should enable opportunities for such continuing learning.

Whilst analysing other educational systems that facilitate TVET and Higher Education articulation in the Anglo-Saxon space, some of the important instruments need to be pointed out, since they provide examples of IVET and HE correlation tools in Romania:

- Enrolment/re-enrolment in formal education
Enrolment requirements are the same for choosing the IVET path or other educational paths.
For re-enrolment into the system, the conditions are accessible as well (please see point c. below). The students can choose any of the options below:
 - a — technological high school – leading to qualification 3 in EQF and Baccalaureate diploma, which gives access to higher education,
 - b — “Choose your path” – that means 2 years of education and training (please see subchapter 1.2.1 “Choose your path”, for detailed information). They can go to high school to obtain the level 3 qualification certificate and the Baccalaureate diploma, which provides access to higher education,
 - c — “Choose your path”, which lasts for 2 years. If after 1 year of education and 6 months of practice, the students decide to join the labour market, they will receive a level 2 certificate of qualification. If after some time, the student decides to come back, he can register for high school studies starting with the XIth grade. For post high school enrolment the National Law on Education from 2011 stipulates that all graduates of high schools can enrol in post high school education with or without the Baccalaureate diploma (art.44, letter g).
- Mass Higher Education
Compulsory education in Romania is free and it includes the preparatory classes up to the Xth grade (age 6–15/16). High-school is not compulsory, yet it is free and therefore accessible to each potential student. Considering the aspect mentioned before, as well as the fact that the IVET system can provide qualifications from the first level up to the third level, and some of them are also ensured in higher education through levels 4 and 5, providing access to higher education is simply a natural extension.
- Accreditation of prior learning
Prior formal learning, including learning by experience outside formal educational situations is significant and is generally accepted as qualifying prospective students for both TVET and higher education. Defining the competences developed by a learner and testing them is important. In this respect please see subchapter 3.5 “Recognition of non-formal and informal learning”.
- Credit-rating
For a complete Bachelor study programme in the HE system a certain number of credits is typically required. The individual components carry an appropriate number. It is the easiest to do, if programmes are divided

(modularised). This is near universal in Romania, with in some cases very extensive “menus”, covering the whole university and allowing cross-disciplinary study. It aids the progress from TVET to HE, as previous study is easy to credit. And it is possible for modules to be offered in IVET institutions, and credited towards a higher education award (Law on National Education no.1/2011, art.44, line 10).

BENEFITS

To sum up, the measures, activities and actions performed in IVET in Romania are supported as well by Phare projects. Among the most important benefits, we can mention the improved coherence of the TVET and HE qualifications, an increased relevance of these qualifications against the labour market needs, and increased capability of the Romanian authorities and stakeholders in designing integrated and coherent TVET and HE strategies, programmes, curricula and qualifications adapted to the labour market requirements.

FACTUAL DATA

- Definition of 15 TVET “core” qualifications and development of the curricula for the “core” qualifications;
- Definition of 16 HE qualifications;
- Four training sessions of 2 days/session for experts involved in the definition of the 16 HE qualification profiles;
- Training sessions for the experts involved in the update/improvement of the TVET curricula;
- Training sessions for the experts involved in the definition of the 15 “core” TVET qualifications;
- Elaboration of procedures and methodologies for credit transfer and recognition of non-formal and informal learning;
- Revision of the descriptions of the 15 TVET “core qualifications” in order to assure a coherent definition of competences and an appropriate progression of trainees through the training levels, etc.

SOURCES AND METHODS

Main sources and methods are mostly from Phare projects and the contribution of experts and authorities in the field.

SUSTAINABILITY

All results obtained up to now in terms of curricula revision and adjustment to labour market needs, increased relevancy of initial training through vocational and technical education, improvement of strategic planning documents at county and local level, specialized skills of teachers etc, all of the above mentioned are part of further activities and are being supported through projects co-financed by ESF through SOP HRD 2007–2013.

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3.4 Responsiveness to the stakeholders' needs

3.4.1 Collaborative evaluation of the four-year vocational education — Macedonia

INTRODUCTION

During the period October 2009–March 2010, ETF in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Science and the VET Centre of Macedonia carried out a Collaborative Evaluation of the Impact of the Reformed 4 year Secondary Vocational Education. The Evaluation was to serve as a baseline study to appraise the situation and assess the impact of the reform of secondary vocational education on the labour market and on higher education.

The importance of such evaluation is mainly the fact that the evaluation process involved a broad range of stakeholders: secondary school graduates (employed, unemployed and university students), employers, teachers, university professors, professional institutions, state institutions, non-governmental organisations, workers' associations and individuals.

The evaluation established a new approach to analysing the situation in 4 year VET by applying a collaborative approach in its implementation. This approach was a relative novelty in the country, as it actively involved all stakeholders, giving them not only a supervisory but also a developmental role. Such a division of roles and responsibilities yielded results and in a very short period of time an exceptionally broad and deep insight into 4 year VET was obtained.

Through consultations and analyses-based research, the evaluation had the task of creating a database on the quality and relevance of the reformed 4 year VET from the perspective of graduate students, employers, universities and 4 year VET schools.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The need for a collaborative evaluation has resulted from the fact that for more than ten years reforms have been implemented in the vocational education, especially in the four-year vocational education, which generates more than 50% of the graduate high school goers.

With the introduction of new curricula in all vocational schools in the territory of Macedonia in 2005, and the output of two generations of students in 2008/09 and 2009/10, who completed the education according to the new curricula, there appeared the need of a collaborative approach evaluation of all relevant stakeholders, in order to consider the results and benefits of reforms. The reform activities were mostly directed towards the students in the vocational schools, but in the long term, the results from the reforms are expected to be seen in the level of qualification of students who enter the labour market or continue their education.

Educational institutions (MES, BDE, and VET Centre) received information on how the implementation of reforms worked in vocational schools. The acquired information was not sufficient, and there were almost no data on what was happening with the students after their graduation. One could not have a complete picture of the reform results, and the relevant indicators for the changes in the vocational schools did not exist.

The collaborative approach evaluation tried to get an insight into the circumstances of the four-year vocational education and to grade the reform influence on the labour market and on higher education.

Therefore, the aim of this evaluation is not only to explore what was happening in schools before the reform was implemented, but also to determine which measure of the reform led to changes in schools and what was the quality of the final product i.e. the appropriate level of qualification of the students as a result from the reform.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The evaluation was focused on the outputs, and included a large circle of interested parties: graduate students (employed and unemployed), employers, teachers in secondary vocational schools, university professors, professional institutions, state institutions, non-profit organizations, working associations and individuals that contributed to the quality insight of the context.

The global objectives of the collaborative evaluation were as follows:

- Exploring the influence of the reformed four-year vocational education on the choice for future destinations of the graduate students and how well they are prepared to continue education – for work and for life in general
- To explore the influence of the reformed four-year vocational education on the labour market and high education from their real needs perspective.

CONTEXT

The secondary vocational education in the country has undergone deep changes in the past twelve years.

This study is a logic follow-up of the PHARE initiatives and represents an effort to make a system evaluation of the reforms for the secondary vocational education, by analysing the impact of these reforms and what changes they have caused in the social, educational and economy sphere.

The collaborative evaluation presents the current conditions after twelve years, based on the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative feedback information; it also offers possible solutions to establish a sustainable and efficient system to validate the results in secondary vocational education in the Republic of Macedonia.

BENEFITS

The benefits from the collaborative evaluation are different; however, the following are worthwhile selecting:

- Recognition of the importance of applying the collaborative approach to implement the evaluation, thus leading to a promising development for this kind of activities in the future.
- Obtaining a statistic database for the four-year vocational education. The data base should serve as a good basis for planning interventions and conducting further researches in secondary vocational education.
- Development of methodology to implement system evaluations on all levels and types of vocational education.
- Acquiring a set of research instruments in accordance with the specific target groups and character of research.
- Obtaining an analysis of the legislation regarding the vocational education. This allows an insight of all the weaknesses, overlaps and inconsistencies of the laws that are directly or indirectly regulating the vocational education.
- Obtaining initial suggestions on how to change the educational profiles in the four-year vocational education.

Identifying the needs for future development activities to:

- Establish the career guidance system for students in secondary vocational education
- Establish a system for professional and career development for teachers in secondary vocational education
- Establish a system to monitor secondary vocational education.

FACTUAL DATA

All 14 occupations in the four-year vocational education were included in the research, that is: mechanic, health care, electro-technical, agriculture-veterinary, textile and leather manufacturing, traffic regulation, construction-geodesy, economy-legal and commerce, personal services, forestry and wood processing, catering-tourism, graphics, chemist-technology, geology-mining and metallurgy.

SOURCES AND METHODS

Sources for acquiring these acknowledgements and information were:

- Relevant documentation
- Graduate students from the secondary four-year vocational education (2008/2009)
 - Students – 519,
 - Employed – 52,
 - Unemployed – 128,
 - Drop-outs – 3,
 - Teachers from secondary vocational schools who teach within the secondary four-year vocational education system – 90,
 - Secondary Vocational Schools Principals – 3,
 - University professors – 30,
 - Employers/companies that have employed students who graduated the four-year vocational education – 36,
 - State and other interested institutions and organizations – 12,
 - Municipalities – 20,
 - Total scope – 893.
- Regarding the methodological approach, it involved:
 - Interviews – 111,
 - Focus groups – 62,
 - Questionnaires – 189.
 - Locations: Skopje, Bitola, Tetovo, Gostivar, Shtip, Vinica, Kochani

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3.5 Recognition of non-formal and informal learning

3.5.1 Recognition of non-formal and informal learning in the social field assessment centre of CRFPS Pro Vocație — Romania

INTRODUCTION

The Training and Resource Centre for Social Occupations “PRO VOCAȚIE” as a private non-governmental organization is actively involved in legislative framework revision; it is also a promoter of prior learning recognition, a pioneer of new methodologies, and part of the European clusters and networks. The Centre promotes, without any discrimination, the lifelong learning, training, qualification and recognition of prior learning through certification of competences.

In the context of the transition from communism regime to democracy, the reform of the welfare system from Romania became a governmental priority. A turning point was in 1997 when a number of radical reforms were introduced and Romania started rising to international standards. The main emphasis was changing the priority from “institutional” to “family” care: hundreds of large institutions were closed down and scores of alternative services were set up. Specialized staff were needed for these services. The EU Phare funds were the “instrument” in this process. The staff training for the new social services started from the training needs analysis, which revealed that most of the competences are acquired in non-formal and informal contexts.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2002, as a response to labour market needs, CRFPS Pro Vocație – the first assessment centre in the care sector was set up, based of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) methodology developed through a World Bank programme. The first qualifications recognized as per the RPL system were foster careers and personal assistant of the disabled person, due to the fact that hundreds of social institutions were closed down. Most of the new social services offering personalized assistance and care were undertaken by the family members, who became certified personal assistants. The RPL system represented a solution for the integration of those people on the labour market, by validating their acquired competences through certified assessment centres as CRFPS Pro Vocație.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

CRFPS Pro Vocație’s mission is to facilitate access to recognition of prior learning through certification of competences acquired in any context.

DESCRIPTION

Since 2002, CRFPS Pro Vocație has developed the expertise capacity in the field of recognition of prior learning in the care sector by means of active participation in:

- Assessment and certification of professional competences.
- Development of assessment tools based on occupational standards.
- Delivery of training programmes.
- Participation in the process of adoption and compatibility of the EQF.

- Development of occupational standards.
- Vocational counselling and mediation in the labour market.
- Writing proposals for funding.
- Implementation of European projects.
- Fundraising activities.

FACTUAL DATA

The success of these initiatives transformed CRFPS Pro Vocation in a national reference point for lifelong learning and quality assurance. In terms of statistics, CRFPS Pro Vocation has more than 4500 persons certified for 17 occupations in the social field, a number of 44 assessors at national level, and around 15 European projects implemented with more than 38 national and international partners.

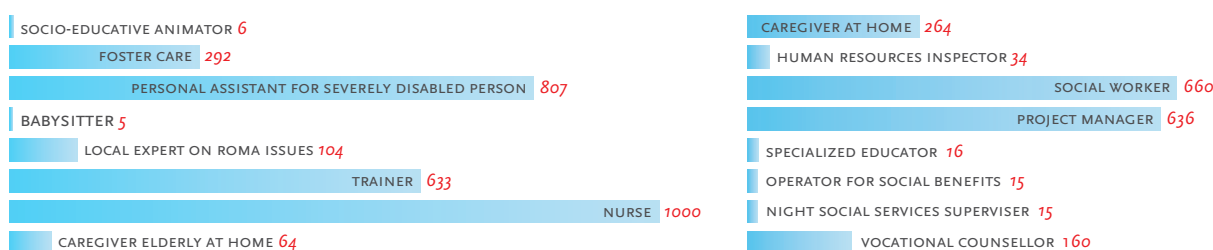


Fig. no. 1: The certifications by occupation carried out by the Pro Vocation Assessment Centre since 2003 until present day

SOURCES AND METHODS

But the main key aspects of the activities undertaken by CRFPS Pro Vocation refer to the development of a flexible recognition of prior learning process for and with the PEOPLE. This means to focus on the needs of the people and to use the main tools: information, counselling, training, recognition of prior learning, certification of the competence, in order to give value to what a person knows and is able to do. In this way, recognition of prior learning is not just an evaluation of the people. It is a tool for the people to certify their experience and to provide them with motivation for development. The counselling services became very important for this process, as a necessary tool in order to build together with the people a lifelong learning path with specific milestone; and, what is most important, with their involvement and motivation to achieve more in terms of personal and professional development. Therefore, the result of the recognition of prior learning at CRFPS Pro Vocation is not only the issued certificate, it is also reflected in the people development of how they view happiness, motivation and life satisfaction.

SUSTAINABILITY

The further strategy of CRFPS Pro Vocation include more assessors' training, increased awareness of principles for all those involved in the process (WHY, WHO, WHAT), close partnership with local authorities, relevant stakeholders at the community level in order to develop a holistic view of a career guidance-validation of prior learning-tailored training for and with the PEOPLE.

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3.6 Supporting international mobility

3.6.1 ECVET testing for recognizing learning outcomes acquired through learning mobility — Romania

INTRODUCTION

The good practice example presents how ECVET (European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training) could support the recognition of learning outcomes acquired through learning mobility of students.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the framework of the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009, when an ECVET was set up, an important number of Leonardo da Vinci sub-programme projects were dedicated to test and prepare further recommendations to improve the technical specifications for implementing a credit-system to accumulate and transfer learning outcomes in VET. One of these projects was *ECVET Automobile Service Sector Ecvet Testing (ECVET ASSET)* in the field of Automobile maintenance, having as applicants Chambre de Métiers et de l'Artisanat de Vienne and Espace formation des metiers et de l'artisanat, from Bourgoin-Jallieu, France.

The partners from Finland, Hungary, France and Romania identified a common qualification from the Automobile maintenance sector, specific units of learning for which they agreed to test the learning outcomes, and the allocation and recognition of ECVET points. They agreed to organise mobility for students for the identified units, to ensure the evaluation of the learning outcomes at the place of their acquisition, based on the instruments for mutual trust (the Memorandum of Understanding concluded between the competent authorities from the countries involved, and respectively the Learning Agreement concluded between the training providers involved and the students, who were concerned by the mobility stages).

During the implementation of the project, a number of instruments were developed and tested in order to facilitate the mobility and the recognition of learning outcomes. A number of students benefited from the advantages offered to learn in a foreign context. The implementation of ECVET Recommendation represented a good environment for making IVET an attractive pathway by offering students opportunities to work and learn in new contexts.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

- Test ECVET Recommendation;
- Develop cooperation in IVET at European level and dissemination of good practice;
- Mutual learning between competent authorities and training providers from different countries;
- Promotion of innovation and creativity.

CONTEXT

The measures taken at an European level regarding the three Recommendations in the field of European Qualifications Framework, Quality Assurance and European System for Credits in VET represented, for many countries, a starting point to reform the qualifications systems using the learning outcomes. Learning outcomes can be understood as a kind of common reference for teaching, learning and assessment. An appropriate teaching and learning strategy enables learners

to achieve learning outcomes. An appropriate assessment method is used to check if the learning outcomes have been achieved. The alignment between learning outcomes, teaching, learning and assessment helps to make the overall learning experience more coherent, transparent and meaningful for learners.

During the project the partners agreed on specific learning outcomes to be acquired during the mobility period and on signing a Memorandum of Understanding and a Learning Agreement as instruments for mutual trust between partners. They identified the needs and developed a Mobility leaflet to inform the learners about the content of mobility, Assessment tools and a General glossary to be used in order to overcome the language barriers.

Prior to the exchange, the partners agreed on the theoretical and practical activities of the unit involved in the mobility project, the practical evaluation in a real situation, the credit transfer and the cultural activities – visits, sports, competitions to be organized during the mobility process.

The assessment during the mobility period fulfilled the following conditions:

- Practical evaluation in a real situation;
- Observe assessment criteria and marks (marking guidelines);
- Benefits for the learners and organizations involved;
- Build understanding and trust;
- Improve strategic and working relationships between organisations;
- Avoid overlap and duplication of effort and address gaps in the training provision;
- Stimulate mutual learning and innovation;
- Support quality assurance and improvement;
- Provide enhanced access to resources and greater efficiency;
- Enable risks and benefits to be shared;
- Possibility of working in another environment and using performance equipment;
- Enrichment of educational and cultural horizon;
- Development of abilities, knowledge and professional experience;
- Team work;
- Increased adaptability to work in a new environment;
- Motivation for learning in the VET field;
- Positive perception of the project, which allowed development of new abilities and an enhancement of students' unexplored potential.

FACTUAL DATA

8 students from VET schools from Romania participated in a learning mobility project in a VET centre from France for a period of 3 weeks. The learning outcomes acquired were evaluated and recognized by the VET Romanian school in accordance with the specific adopted legal framework.

SOURCES AND METHODS

- The Memorandum of understanding template
- The learning agreement model
- Assessment tools
- General glossary

SUSTAINABILITY

After the implementation of the testing phase, it is expected to revise the European Recommendation for facilitating students' mobility in learning as it is envisaged in the 2020 Strategy.

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3.7 Inclusive IVET

3.7.1 Learning materials for students with disabilities — Romania

INTRODUCTION

In Romania, the National Centre for TVET Development considered the recommendations of important EU legislative education policies and with the support of Phare projects addressed the segment of inclusiveness in education through different activities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Important steps in the reform of the VET system in Romania have been achieved mostly with the support of Phare projects, which concentrated mainly on four objectives: introduction of a new type of curricula, curriculum development, teacher training and professional development, and equipment update. Such challenging targets involved demanding activities in the four main directions and also development of discerning interlinkages among various tasks of the projects, leading to activities focused on student-centred learning, inclusive education, development of auxiliary learning packages designed to support teachers in inclusive education, etc.

There is a series of Phare projects implemented by the National Centre for the Development of Vocational Education and Training that ensured the continuity in the reform actions Phare TVET RO 0180.04, Phare VET RO 9405 and the two multi-annual Phare TVET programmes 2001–2003 and 2004–2006.

Among the relevant expected outcomes, it is worth mentioning that inclusiveness in TVET education had the opportunity to raise awareness among teachers, change their attitudes, making them more open and proactive when dealing with students with various disabilities. Therefore, much attention was given to teacher training in adapting curriculum for inclusive education. Modules were adapted to facilitate social and professional integration of students with disabilities. The technical assistance of the projects was part of the training courses and the development of an adapted TVET curriculum for the integration of students with special needs.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

- Raise teachers' awareness about inclusive education,
- Accommodate various international legislation and their recommendations in a more complex vision concerning the impact and implications of the teaching and learning processes when dealing with issues related to SEN,
- Develop cooperation and mutual learning among IVET school teachers, psychologists and career guidance counsellors.

CONTEXT

The deep changes in the structure of the curriculum required a continuous revision of the curriculum and training of teachers to implement it. Likewise, student-centred learning and inclusive education topics required new training activities of teachers. A series of visits were made to special and other schools to establish the status quo of provision for students with special educational needs. Most activities were related to teacher training, development of handbooks and learning materials, learning packages, career guidance, etc. meant to support the teaching and learning process.

The courses were created as an interactive, experienced-based type of training. Much emphasis was placed on the teacher as a professional. Another important approach was to set the curriculum focus on the practical side of training and

to organising activities in mixed groups of general culture and technical subject teachers. The integration of the social partners and the Inspectorate in the training for the curriculum development process was also an important and highly valued element of the programme. Efforts were made to stimulate the set up of school/teacher networks that would support the reform programme; many of these teachers' networks are still active.

The projects implemented in IVET system confronted sensitive issues concerning the improvement of the teachers' skills to provide career guidance in high schools to an adequate level that would meet the needs of the vast majority of students, thus allowing the more specialised services provided by psychologists to target students in need of greater levels of support and guidance.

Monitoring visits have taken place to a number of these networks. A comprehensive methodological document containing training standards, programme and lesson plans has been produced in order to assist schools in preparing students for the transition from school to work, personal development and improving their performance.

FACTUAL DATA

- 100 teachers trained on the development and adaptation of curriculum auxiliaries to be used with students with disabilities,
- Training modules for "core" qualifications adapted for students with learning disabilities/special educational needs,
- Development of learning materials (throughout the implementation of the multi-annual Phare project TVET 2004–2006),
- guidebooks created to implement the learning packages for students with special educational needs (SEN),
- Networks of schools and psychological-pedagogical service for career advice and guidance purposes were established following the delivery of a regional training programme to 335 participants. A number of partnership agreements have subsequently been developed between TVET schools and a variety of stakeholders.
- Other 100 packages for facilitating individual learning for students with special educational needs;
- 22 additional teacher-and-trainer- training packages that will be used by the resource centres in various vocational domains;
- Teachers and school managers are trained to implement the individual learning materials.

BENEFITS

Raising awareness among teachers and enforced know-how about main issues related to SEN:

- Know-how about the scope of special educational needs.
- Know-how about framing learning materials.
- Know-how about differentiating learning materials.
- Know-how about eliminating bias and stereotyping.
- Know the range of possible learning activities.
- Know how to choose adequate learning activities.
- Be familiar with page layout techniques and graphics techniques.
- Be familiar with how assistive technology can be used to support the learning process.
- Be familiar with cooperative working techniques.

SOURCES AND METHODS

The human resources with valuable expertise from national and international levels have contributed to the development of the training materials based on international literature reviews in the field, experts of the projects, the technical assistance of the projects.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

- UN Declaration on Human Rights (UN 1948), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN 1989),
- the UN Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (UN 1993),
- the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO 1994),
- the Lisbon Strategy, the Bologna Process (1999),
- the Copenhagen Declaration (2002),
- the European Social Fund Support To Education And Training 2007–2013 (EC 2006),
- the European Qualifications Framework (EQF),
- Specific models presented (the medical model), ICT, etc.

SUSTAINABILITY

After the delivery of specific training to teachers on methodology to be applied with students with SEN, they were expected to produce learning materials and packages while considering such target groups and adopting specific methodology. Development of these learning materials covers all types of qualifications and they are often adjusted to the students' learning needs/educational needs.

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Summary points

The purpose of this chapter was to present a wide range of different measures and actions currently being implemented by several countries, emphasising what is new, in the process of changing or relevant examples of good practice in the field of attractive VET responding to student's needs. Countries from the Balkan region of Europe (i.e. Bulgaria, FYR Macedonia and Romania) were chosen in order to present different tools and mechanisms laid down as a broad panorama that could help one obtain an overall perspective about how these countries respond to challenges of the fast changing societies.

The Copenhagen Declaration of 29–30 November 2002 launched the European strategy for enhanced cooperation in Vocational Education and Training (VET), commonly referred to as the “*Copenhagen process*”. In 2010, on the basis of our 8 years of European cooperation, there have been defined the long-term strategic objectives for the next decade (2011–2020).

The Council conclusions of 11 May 2010 on the social dimension of education and training⁴ emphasize the idea that if Europe is to compete and prosper as a knowledge-based economy relying on sustainable, high levels of employment and reinforced social cohesion — as envisaged in the Europe 2020 strategy, the role of education and training from a lifelong learning perspective is crucial. The provision of key competences for all on a lifelong learning basis will play a crucial role in improving citizens' employability, social inclusion and personal fulfilment.

The same document draws attention to the fact that access to higher education and the creation of the conditions required for the successful inclusion of pupils with special needs in mainstream settings benefit all learners.

Increasing the use of personalised approaches, including individualised learning plans and harnessing assessment to support the learning process, providing teachers with skills to manage and benefit from diversity, promoting the use of cooperative teaching and learning, and widening access and participation, are also ways of increasing the overall quality. All segments of education are addressed including:

- Early school leaving prevention,
- The necessity of a diverse vocational offer, with a stronger emphasis on key competences, including transversal ones, can provide much needed routes for individuals to improve their qualifications and thus access the labour market.

In the case of disadvantaged groups, the relevance of VET can be increased by tailoring provision to individual needs, strengthening guidance and counselling, recognising different forms of prior learning, and promoting alternate schemes for learning at the workplace.

Increasing participation, particularly that of the low-skilled, in continuing vocational education and training, is key to an active inclusion approach and to limiting unemployment in cases of industrial change:

- Raising aspirations and increasing access to higher education for students,
- Expanding access to adult education can create new possibilities for active inclusion and enhanced social participation, especially for the low-skilled, the unemployed, adults with special needs, the elderly, and immigrants. With specific regard to the latter, learning the host country language or languages plays an important role in promoting social integration, as well as improving basic skills and employability.

*The Bruges Communiqué on enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training for the period 2011–2020*⁵ comes to underline the rich experience springing from various VET systems that should have a common language: in the knowledge society, vocational skills and competences are just as important as academic skills and competences. The

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/policy-framework_en.htm

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/vocational/bruges_en.pdf

diversity of European VET systems is an asset for mutual learning. But transparency and a common approach to quality assurance are necessary to build up mutual trust which will facilitate mobility and recognition of skills and competences between those systems.

The examples detailed throughout the chapter are illustrative of current actions designed to improve the attractiveness of VET and to improve its status and image both for the public (young people and their families) as well as for employers. Given the different paces of reviewing and reforming VET systems in various countries and their attempt to align to European guidelines in the field, as well as different contexts and histories of VET, some countries, which have been implementing certain specific types of measures for many years, may not be mentioned. In brief, some of these developments have included:

Implementation of training vouchers in Bulgaria with European financial support.

The use of vouchers for training is considered to be a means of enhanced employability; it increases the employees' adaptability to retain their employment, it gives them time to find new employment, and it prevents unemployment.

It is worth mentioning that these efforts are made so as to ensure competences based on present European guidelines. In this respect the training programme is based on the European Qualification Framework, and it includes:

- Key competences: training for communication in the native language, communication in foreign languages, mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology, digital competence, learning skills, social and civic competences, initiative and entrepreneurship.
- Further competences : cultural awareness and creativity,
- And vocational training in order to ensure the acquisition of qualifications.

The first example provided by the Republic of Macedonia illustrates the immense efforts of changing, improving the VET system with the support of Phare projects. The significant changes consist in the fact that the "European dimension" became part of the working process in schools and that there is a win-win relationship for all the "partners" of the educational process:

- The significance of the vocational education was confirmed at a higher level,
- The educational and other similar processes became student-centred,
- Teachers acquired more self-confidence,
- Institutional capacity was strengthened,
- And the society itself reached a higher level of living.

The examples of good practice illustrated by Macedonia show two important issues:

- The first example emphasizes the system solutions in the four-year vocational education generated by the Phare project reform of the secondary vocational education;
- The second example illustrates the collaborative evaluation of the four-year vocational education focused on the outputs, and on a large circle of interested parties: graduate students (employed and unemployed), employers, teachers in secondary vocational schools, university professors, professional institutions, state institutions, non profit organizations, working associations.

Romania comes with several examples of good practice referring to various aspects.

In this respect VET reforms supported by Phare projects are significant. Important changes in the curricula, introduction of the local development curriculum, introduction of the concept and real actions of a partnership between schools and representatives of the labour market, all these aim at a better insertion on the labour market. Special attention is also given to elaboration of learning materials for inclusive education and raising awareness of teachers with regard to the necessary teaching and assessment approach.

Various actions are taken as well in offering wider access to higher education through actions such as:

- Identifying, defining and describing core qualifications, ensuring the acquisition of qualifications in secondary education and having the possibility to continue further acquisition of competences in the same qualification but

- in higher/university education,
- enrolment/re-enrolment in formal education mechanisms,
- free education at tertiary level,
- mechanisms of accreditation of prior learning,
- credit rating.

Romania also provides a relevant example of the working mechanism in the process of recognition of formal and non-formal learning, in order to facilitate access to recognition of prior learning through certification of competences acquired in any context.

Details about the activities carried out on ECVET testing for the recognition of learning outcomes acquired through learning mobility are also valuable and represent a step forward for the future international recognition/accreditation/accommodation mechanisms that will give access to graduates on the labour market, irrespective of the place of the relevant competences acquisition. The efforts to create a coherent and transparent alignment between learning outcomes are more and more necessary in the present day Europe, dominated by rapid changes/necessary updates in job profile competences.

Romania also provides one more example of good practice when mentioning inclusive education in VET. Throughout the Phare projects implemented, the concern for this issue is supported by the results obtained: better awareness regarding inclusive education among students, parents, teachers, school psychologists, representatives of public authorities and the society. If, at the beginning, the term of special education needs referred mainly to students with disabilities, later on there was a more appropriate perception on the sensitive issues, encompassing and enlarging its understanding towards inclusive education with all its forms. Most importantly, information materials, training materials, shifts in mentality and more suitable approaches come to support both students and teachers to overcome these challenges and strengthen students' personal and professional development.

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4

Links with labour market

4.1 VET offer planning mechanisms — Romania

INTRODUCTION

In order to provide a TVET supply which is relevant to the forecast needs of the labour market, the National Centre for TVET Development (NCTVETD) has designed, with the support of several institutions and experts involved and with the approval of the Ministry of National Education, a model for strategic planning of the vocational and training offer through the initial TVET system. The design of this model has been accomplished in 2000, by capitalizing on the experience gathered during the 1996–2000 period; the first tools that the strategic planning of TVET supply relied on were delivered in 2004.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The relevance of the vocational training supply in connection with labour market demand may be approached from two perspectives:

- Quantitative one, taking into consideration the skills and qualifications shortages on the labour market;
- Qualitative one, taking into consideration the match between the skills describing a certain qualification and the labour market needs, on the one hand, and the quality of learning outcomes, on the other hand.

The model brought by NCTVETD deals with relevance of supply from both a quantitative and a qualitative approach, from the territorial perspective. Territoriality operates with two dimensions: a geographical one and a sector-based one.

The geographical dimension is referring to the TVET supply distribution at national, regional, county and local community level, and it is mainly aimed at decreasing the skills and qualification shortage.

The sector-based dimension takes into consideration the validation of the educational supply, defined through qualifications and associated skills, at the level of occupational economic sectors; it is aimed at decreasing the gap between the skills and qualification demand and the TVET supply.

The two dimensions, the geographical and the sector-based one, are complemented by micro-level planning, formalized through the local component of the curriculum that contributes to both the decrease of skills shortage and to the increase of the match between labour market demand and skills supply.

The model is based on decentralizing decision and its distribution on more decision-making layers, at national, regional, county and local level. Also, strategic planning represents a participatory enterprise based on the collective action of multiple economic and social partners representing the interests of employers, professional associations, employees/trade unions, public administration, relevant government organizations and also other civil society organizations. Thus, commitment to decisions and observing the common interest of all those involved is upheld.

The model combines the top-to-bottom decision-making flow with the bottom-to-top one. The planning decision belongs to the county level, which collects information based on the results of desk-research and monitoring; it is based both on the specifics of the local labour market as well as on the capacity of institutional response on behalf of the school unit. The desk-research and monitoring are performed by the next upper levels.

The model recommended by NCTVETD also takes into consideration the enrolment time frame. The TVET outputs take place only after significant periods of time, longer than 1 year, which requires an early forecast of labour market demand.

The planning process for TVET supply consists in designing the forecast for medium-term educational supply over 5–7 years and it is based on three elements:

- A comprehensive analysis of the TVET schooling capacity applied at local, county and regional level in relationship with the foreseen labour force demand and with the aspirations of the young people;
- A common strategy, based on tasks undertaken by all partners involved, respectively social partners, employers, members of the Sectorial Committees, schools, universities, local authorities, Local Employment Agencies and other stakeholders;
- Monitoring and evaluating the actions planned within the strategy, in order to achieve the strategic objectives.

The first element refers to the analysis of available resources and of those required in order to adapt the initial vocational training supply to the labour market requirements. TVET school network, human resources, physical and financial resources, partnerships between schools and companies represent the main information that defines the TVET system ability to meet the labour force demand.

The second element is aimed at formulating priorities, objectives and actions required to adapt TVET supply to the foreseen labour market demand. Also, this element is referring to partnership development at all decision-making levels, with the purpose of taking the most suitable decisions for TVET development, and also to ensure commitment from all stakeholders towards the objectives and actions planned for that purpose.

The third element is aimed at monitoring the implementation of actions planned to adapt the educational supply to the labour market requirements; it provides the feed-back required for the following planning cycle.

The process of updating and reviewing strategic documents designed from the perspective of 2020 takes place on an annual basis.

The strategic planning of TVET supply uses the following documents:

- Regional Education Action Plan (REAP) – carried out at regional level.
- Local Education Action Plan (LEAP) – carried out at county level
- School Action Plan (SAP) – carried out by the school unit at the local community level.

The purpose of these strategic documents is to improve the match between the technical and vocational education supply and the social-economic development needs, and to increase the contribution of higher education to regional development from the perspective of the year 2020.

REAP, LEAP and SAP comprise:

- The analysis of the regional/county/local context from the point of view of demographic, labour market and economic evolutions and forecasts
- The analysis of the capacity of technical vocational education and training system to meet the identified needs, through a diagnosis of the regional context;
- Priorities, targets and actions for TVET development at regional/county/local level;

REAP, LEAP and SAP are updated and reviewed on an annual basis using unitary methodological support provided by the methodology developed for this purpose. This endeavour contributes to the increase of vertical coherence between the regional-county-local planning layers and it leads to the increase of comparability for documents found at the same level of planning.

The monitoring and evaluation of the REAP, LEAP and SAP implementation are carried out based on a general framework provided by the Handbook for monitoring and evaluation. The decision process includes advisory managerial structures organized at regional, county and local level: Regional Consortia.

Regional Consortia

Regional Consortia are advisory managerial structures functioning as an interface between the Regional Development Councils (RDC) and the institutions at county level with responsibilities in the human resource development field. The Regional Consortia includes representatives of Regional Development Agency (RDA), County Councils, County Employment Agencies (CEA), school inspectorates, and social partners from the Local Committee for the Development of Social Partnerships (LCDSP) and from the Advisory Councils of CEA, NCTVETD.

Among the responsibilities of the Regional Consortia, we mention the following:

- Updating, implementing and monitoring the REAP implementation;
- Monitoring the LEAP implementation;
- Assisting school inspectorates and the LCDSP in developing and implementing the LEAP;
- Contributing to the development and the monitoring of the implementation of the Regional Action Plan for Employment (PRAO).

Local Committees for the Development of Social Partnerships (LCDSP)

The Local Committees for the Development of Social Partnerships (LCDSP) are advisory managerial structures that aim at improving the relevance and the quality of the TVET system, as support of school inspectorates. LCDSPs include representatives of: local authorities, County Employment Agency, employer's associations, trade unions, school inspectorates, NGOs.

Among the LCDSP responsibilities, we mention the following:

- Updating and implementing the LEAP;
- Monitoring the School Action Plans (SAP);
- Assisting school units with the SAP development and implementation;
- Analyzing and endorsing the annual enrolment plan for TVET at county level;
- Endorsing the local component of the TVET curriculum.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The major objective of TVET strategic planning consists in increasing the contribution of technical and vocational education and training via a quick and efficient transition to an inclusive, participatory, competitive and knowledge-based economy, which relies on innovation.

CONTEXT

The design of this model has been accomplished in 2000, by capitalizing on the experience gathered within the 1996–2000 period, and the first tools that the strategic planning of TVET supply relied on were delivered in 2004.

In order to substantiate the planning of medium-term supply, there was a need to forecast the labour market demand, which, in turn, could allow an estimate regarding future demand of vocational training.

Unfortunately, the educational supply planning exercise has not benefited from medium-term forecasts of the labour force demand, and this forced the Ministry of Education and NCTVETD to proceed with carrying out their own surveys. The first Labour market survey, namely The link between labour market needs and educational supply, was delivered by “Protector AS” Social Research Institute in 1997 with the support of PHARE VET Project. Since then, NCTVETD made a number of other forecasting studies and surveys within companies, the last being carried out in 2012 with the support of the project financed by ESF HRD “*Correlation of the educational supply in technical and vocational education and training with the labour market demand*”. In this project NCTVETD also provided the support for LCDPS to update the LEAP.

REAP was updated in the last 2 years with the support of projects co-financed by ESF HRD and the Regional Consortia.

BENEFITS

- Better matching TVET supply with labour market demand and the social-economic development needs
- Mutual understanding and trust building between the TVET system and social partners
- Involving social partners in decision making brings together complementary knowledge, skills and expertise provided by social partners and experts involved
- Sharing ownership of results, risks and benefits
- Providing enhanced access to resources and greater efficiency
- Supporting quality assurance and improvement of TVET supply

FACTUAL DATA

- 8 Regional Education Action Plan (REAP) – carried out at regional level
- 42 Local Education Action Plan (LEAP) – carried out at county level
- 1,100 School Action Plan (SAP) – carried out by the school unit at the local community level
- 8 Regional Consortia
- 42 Local Committees for the Development of Social Partnerships (LCDSP).

SOURCES AND METHODS

- Brochure: *“Medium-term forecast and the match of vocational training supply with labour market demand through technical vocational education and training”*
- A methodology for updating the REAP, LEAP and SAP
- A methodology for monitoring the REAP, LEAP and SAP
- Forecast for TVET demand on the horizon in 2013 and from the year 2020 perspective – carried out in 2012
- companies survey on labour demand in the short term perspective (6-12 months) – carried out in 2012

SUSTAINABILITY

All advisory managerial structures organized at regional, county and local level (Regional Consortia, Local Committees for the Development of Social Partnerships) have exercised active roles and expressed their intention to continue to have an active involvement, regardless of financial support, as they understand the crucial role they play in human resources development.

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4.2 Sector involvement

4.2.1 Croatian VET & tourism — Croatia

INTRODUCTION

We can recognize some of the key pillars and issues: Education and training for tomorrow's Croatia and Europe, Labour market evolution, The right skills and Ageing society. The awareness of this in Croatia is raising. All the key stakeholders understand that we all have to work together to put the things on the right side.

Croatian example is the proof how it could be done in the right way: it is sustainable and real. On Croatian example we could conclude and see:

- Without strong interest of employers it is not likely to happen (needs of “economy and labour market”)
- Public services (the ministries) can give strong input to economy
- Cooperation between all the stakeholders is (still) more than essential.

CONTEXT

The vision of the Croatian Tourism from the Strategic plan of the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Croatia 2011–2013: “to strengthen the role of tourism, so it can become a driver of the entire Croatian Economy and, as such, to make a contribution to the economic growth of the Republic of Croatia as well as the prosperity of all Croatian citizens”.

In the years between 2000 and 2010, the share of the income from tourism for the Croatian GDP increased from 13,6% (year 2010) up to 21,2% (year 2003.). The highest income (and the maximum in the period 2000–2010) was obtained in the year 2008 – 7,449 billion EUR.

On average, the share of income from Tourism between the years 2000 and 2010 amounted to approximately 15% of the GDP (Croatian National Bank and Croatian Bureau of Statistics).

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

Since 2008, the Ministry of Tourism has been implementing an Education and Training Programme in the Tourism and Hospitality Sector with the general objective of raising the quality of Croatian Tourism by means of educating and training of personnel (new and current).

Also, the programme has several separate objectives:

- Raising the quality of education in Tourism and Hospitality
- Strengthening the interest of young people in acquiring qualifications in Tourism and Hospitality
- Raising the standards of Education – modern equipment for schools
- Encouraging a better cooperation between VET schools and tourism companies
- Creating better conditions for the training of pupils outside schools
- Finding employment very soon after finishing school,
- Raising the employers' awareness: cooperation with the education sector is important.

BENEFITS AND DATA

At least two reasons why the occupations in the Tourism and Hospitality Sector are very attractive: easy and fast employability and quite good salaries.

The percentage of the students in the Tourism and Hospitality sector (regarding all students in Croatian Secondary schools /Gymnasiums, Vocational and Art Schools) is as follows:

- School year 2007/2008 – 8,43%,
- School year 2008/2009 – 8,77%,
- School year 2009/2010 – 9,44%,
- School year 2010/2011 – 9,22%,
- School year 2011/2012 – 9,59%

It is visible that the number of the students in the sector of Tourism and Hospitality has grown since the implementation of the Programme started.

SOURCES AND METHODS

Some examples of “good cooperation between different stakeholders (in VET & tourism):

- Between Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Science, Education and Sports,
- Between Ministry of Tourism and AVETAE (Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education),
- Ministry of Tourism has representative(s) in the Sector Skill Council for Tourism and Hospitality,
- Ministry of Tourism has representative(s) in the State Committee for the competition of the pupils in the Tourism and Hospitality sector.

Some activities of Ministry of Tourism in the period between the years 2008 and 2011:

- Participation in financing of modern equipments for VET schools in the sector,
- Participation in financing the promotion of qualifications in Tourism and Hospitality (media campaign),
- Scholarships for pupils (50% Ministry of Tourism – 50% companies),
- Participation in financing the training for the teachers to work with the GDS Amadeus software (airplane tickets),
- Participation in financing the training of new employees in new hotels or restaurants.

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4.3 Taking better notice of labour market requirements

4.3.1 Curricula modernization — Republic of Moldova

INTRODUCTION

The modernization of the existing modular curriculum and development of a course supplement for the occupation of “Plumber” designed by the Professional Capacity Building Institute (IFCP) enhances the opportunity for professional skills’ development. The curriculum designed for this occupation is based on the current needs of the labour market, and in the long run contributes to the sustainable development of the water supply and sanitation infrastructure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the proclamation of Moldova’s independence in 1990, limited financial means were allocated for the maintenance and repair of the water and sanitation systems, which often function sporadically and inefficiently throughout the country. The quality of the drinking water and the insanitary conditions of the water pipes threaten the public health and contributes to the morbidity growth.

Improvement of the water-supply infrastructure and adequate training of a labour force in the sector, who is capable of maintaining and repairing the existent utilities as well as installing and operating new ones, represent a significant premise for the public health improvement and economic growth.

Currently, the Republic of Moldova is facing an acute shortage of qualitative labour force in the sector and a big gap between the provided competences and the current needs of the labour market in all the trades relevant to the water and sanitation sector.

The present circumstances in this sector explain the need to enhance the quality of education and training by focusing the contents on the current needs of the labour market, introducing up-to-date teaching methods based on technological innovations and on both national and international exchange of experience.

OVERALL GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The overall goal of the new modular curriculum is to offer better opportunities for skills development and upgrade in the water and sanitation sector.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- Update, pilot and approve the curriculum and course supplement for the “Plumber” occupation as well as invest in the necessary equipment of the partner institutions,
- Provide pedagogical and technical training to the VET teachers and instructors,
- Develop knowledge and skills assessment instruments.

CONTEXT

One of the challenges the Republic of Moldova is facing, also within the framework of reaching the Millennium Development Goals, is providing the population with drinking water and qualitative sanitary services. Field studies undertaken in this respect show that $\frac{3}{4}$ of the population consume drinking water of a below-standards quality.

This is therefore a priority on the political agenda of the Republic of Moldova to address the problems of limited access of the citizens to secure water resources, of the unsatisfactory quality of drinking water, lack of the sanitation infrastructure, and low-quality services.

Labour resources play a crucial role in terms of good functioning and development of the water and sanitation sector. Acute shortage of labour force capable to rehabilitate the existing water supply and sanitation systems as well as install, operate, maintain and troubleshoot new ones is the reality nowadays.

At present, human resources must have a vast qualifications' portfolio, as both general and specific specializations based on the new technologies are required. The training programmes relevant to the sector are of low quality and need to be urgently aligned to the labour market needs. To improve the current state of affairs in the sector, a National Strategy on Water and Sanitation Systems was approved in 2007.

BENEFITS

- Vocational system that corresponds to the current needs of the work environment
- Up-to-date curriculum
- Well-trained human resources
- Long-term quality improvement of drinking water
- Modernization of the VET school workshops
- Better maintained water and sanitation system
- Decrease the population morbidity

FACTUAL DATA

The professional Capacity Building Institute (IFCP) in collaboration with the Austrian Development Agency ADA designed and implemented the “Plumber” curriculum in 1 pilot institution – Vocational Lyceum no. 2, Municipality of Chisinau.

Moreover, a comprehensive teacher training programme focused on methodological and technical aspects was developed and successfully implemented.

SOURCES AND METHODS

The “Plumber” curriculum provides for the organization of the educational process with focus on developing professional skills necessary for efficient employment and adaptation to the real and ever changing economic environment. Following this premise, the educational process provides for knowledge acquisition and its massive application in simulated and/or real environments.

The didactic strategies used are a combination of teaching methods with practical training means, contents organisation models and activities (working in a group or individually), models of presentation (presentation, explanation) and coordination (direct, indirect, heuristic).

The system of teaching methods contains both traditional and modern methods. A method is modern when it promotes fundamental acquisitions necessary for a contemporary person that has a long-term outlook for the future, such as independence, critical thinking, creativity and entrepreneurship, as well as an exploratory mindset. The teaching methods are diverse: from expository and interrogative models to debates, problem solving, observations, experiments, demonstrations, project development and presentations, practical activities, case-study models and simulations.

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4.3.2 Training of unemployed people for the occupations demanded by the labour market — Macedonia

INTRODUCTION

Vocational training of unemployed people according to labour market needs was a process that began in 2008, and it is still in progress. Such training has numerous benefits, among which it is important to mention: the direct connection between education and the labour market, the acquisition of professional competences by unemployed people which increases their employability; this, in turn, leads to increasing the employment in the country, reduces unemployment and strengthens institutional capacities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Republic of Macedonia, starting from the day it became independent until today, has faced numerous problems and challenges that result from the current economic and social conditions. The transition process and the economic difficulties have brought many problems in the country; the major one is the high unemployment rate, that in the period between 2005 and 2009 was between 35.2%–32.7% of the total adult population in the country.

In 2008 within the framework of the Government, an operative plan for active programmes and measures for employment was designed and a pilot measure was implemented – training unemployed people to acquire skills (occupations) required by the labour market.

This measure was managed by several relevant institutions such as: the Ministry of Labour and Social Politics, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Centre for Vocational Education and Training, the Employment Agency and UNDP, while the training was carried out in vocational schools. Each of these institutions had their own tasks, supervisions and responsibilities in executing the implementation in accordance with prepared procedures. The successful fulfilment of the trainings has led to this measure- training unemployed persons to acquire skills demanded on the labour market – to become a regular measure in the Government Operative Plan for Active Programmes and Measures of Employment; as such, the tendency is every year to expand trainings and to increase the occupations for training.

The trainings are timely planned on a period of four months: three months are for training execution in vocational schools and one month is practical working in companies in a real context. The programmes allowed the candidates to have 70% acquisition of practical skills and 30% theoretical knowledge. After the finalization of the trainings, the candidates were externally examined by an external party on their acquired skills and knowledge.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The measure aimed at training unemployed people in order for them to acquire occupational skills that are in deficit on the labour market, and at providing better employment, in accordance with the Analysis of labour market skills in Macedonia. The target group of this measure was unemployed persons in the Employment Agency in Republic of Macedonia as following:

- Unemployed people in the records for more than 6 months,
- Young people less than 27 years old, in the records for at least 3 months.

CONTEXT

Strategies and employment policies of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia and planned activities for employment and alleviation of unemployment are defined in more documents. The circumstances and structure of unemployed people, who need suitable measures for employment, encouraging employment or employment preparation are included in the annual operational plans of the Government for active employment programmes and measures.

The aim of preparing the Operative Plan is to provide on-time and successful implementation of the planned employment activities and measures for the following year. Namely, the successful delivery of the active programmes/measures for employment depends on the assigned activities of each subject, with established deadlines to conduct the activities and their coordinated fulfillment.

BENEFITS

The delivery of trainings of unemployed persons to acquire skills demanded on the labour market resulted in many valuable benefits, as mentioned below:

- Practical and operative connection of vocational education with the labour market,
- Strengthening the institutional cooperation,
- Development of human resources (institutions, schools, unemployed persons),
- Strengthening the procedures, mechanisms and instruments to carry out the trainings (from the enrolment of the candidates to their graduation),
- Direct and indirect influence over the increasing of the employment rate and decreasing of the unemployment rate in the country,
- Increased awareness of the importance of these types of trainings.

FACTUAL DATA

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Number of planned candidates	108	120	161	204	216
Number of candidates who finished training	60	66	42	184	183
Number of developed training programmes	4	5	9	40	49
Numbers of training providers	3	3	5	17	19
Cities for training	Skopje	Skopje	Skopje, Gostivar	10 cities	10 cities

SOURCES AND METHODS

The relevant sources used are as follows: annual documentation for management of the measures (these were upgraded every year), reports, analysis, Operative Government plans for active programmes and employment measures etc.

The establishing and development of a training system to acquire knowledge and skills demanded on the labour market is not something that happens at a fast pace or that can be done by one institution or individual.

This meant that in order to end up with a training system, one must pass through these phases:

- A — Establishing phase
- B — Improvement and correction phase and
- C — Development phase

All phases have their specific execution steps and time frame.

A — Establishing phase

This phase was important to be accomplished in 2008, when it had to be proved that we had the capacity to implement the measure given by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia. For this purpose, it was necessary that a legal body of representatives from all interested parties be formed; it had all the supervisions and rights to make decisions in this domain, but also the responsibility to carry out the measures. This body, called a technical working group, consisted of representatives from: The Ministry of Labour and Social Politics, Ministry of Education and Science, Employment Agency, Centre for Vocational Education and Training and UNDP.

The technical working group prepared procedures to implement the measures that could be used in the future. The procedure represented a framework of the training process from the design and delivery stage up to the final evaluation.

B — Improvement and correction phase

Based on the experience with past processes and on the analysis of the first delivered training, there was the possibility that in the following years the trainings would be improved and some of the execution procedures corrected.

Interventions for:

- Empowering the schools to be able to design their own training programmes based on the model of training programmes developed by the VET Centre,
- Opening a possibility for schools and their free competition to deliver trainings for which they consider they have the capacities and
- Including the employers in commissions that evaluate the acquired knowledge and skills of the candidates that took part in the training.

C — Development phase

Expanding the training on a wider territory in the country and covering various occupations.

While aiming to implement the above said measures, the following were organized and carried out: regular working meetings at different levels, regional meetings, trainings-workshops, school visits, study visits etc.

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4.3.3 Development of qualification standards for 23 educational profiles — Serbia

INTRODUCTION

In order to meet the future needs of the economy and the immediate needs of individuals for employment and of enterprises for skills, the Serbian Government has conducted various activities regarding the reform of vocational education and training.

The intention of the reform processes is to help with:

- New approaches to learning and teaching in vocational education and training
- Assistance in identifying and responding to individual, community and enterprise needs for skills and competences

At the moment, the existing educational profiles will be replaced with the modernised ones piloted so far. Support will be given to the establishment of the National Qualifications Framework and to test the recommended solutions in this area in three sectors that were agreed upon with employers.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In November 2011 the Ministry of Education and Science decided to systematise 23 educational profiles from pilots into the regular school system; thus, it was necessary to create the standards of qualifications and programmes. According to this, the Institute for Improvement of Education has established so called sectoral committees and started development of the required standards, according to the pilot evaluation results and to the demands expressed by the labour market representatives.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

- Define the conditions required for each respective profile,
- Define the objectives of education,
- Define the outcomes of vocational education

These activities involved representatives of 99 companies (43 small, 37 medium and 19 large companies).

CONTEXT

During the school year 2003/2004, in Serbian schools, as part of the VET reform, more than 60 modernised pilot programmes were introduced. This means also that a new approach to vocational education (programme based on outcomes, new teaching methods) was implemented. An important segment of the pilot programmes was to define the standards and qualifications required to perform a specific job or occupation. The Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Serbia stipulates their introduction into the regular system following an evaluation of the pilot programme.

BENEFITS

- Better connection of vocational education with the labour market,
- Precise definition of objectives and expected knowledge outcomes,
- skills and attitudes development,
- Further curriculum improvement,

- Objectively scored test of professional competence,
- Better correlation with other forms of education (formal and informal education, adult education, work experience)

FACTUAL INFORMATION

- Over 300 schools involved in pilot programmes,
- Over 60 pilot profiles introduced in the VET system
- Significant number of teachers and school management staff are trained
- All schools involved in pilot programmes are equipped with modern equipment
- 11 pilot profiles were systematised during the 2010/2011 school year.

SOURCES AND METHODS

The development of qualification standards was done in accordance with the available economic resources and with the input units describing tasks resulted from previously performed analyses of professions for the development of pilot programmes. For a definition of educational curricula the results obtained through DACUM functional maps are used.

The project lasted for 2 months, and was performed by 12 trained interviewers who applied the techniques of structured interviews in the companies. In cases where there were neither DACUM nor functional maps, qualifications descriptions obtained from interviews with a representative of the company or institution in the field were used as inputs, and afterwards the curricula was developed.

The study was carried out in 4 phases. In the first phase of the pilot programme six educational profiles were created, and its execution included 184 companies that were contacted and invited to cooperate. Then the interviewers conducted the research in the companies that responded. Finally, data were analysed and the occupational standards were defined.

During the study interesting conclusions regarding certain professions/jobs were reached. The defined standards of qualifications were the basis for the development of new curricula for thirty occupations in vocational schools, in different educational profiles submitted for approval to the Council for Vocational and Adult Education.

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Summary points

LINKS WITH LABOUR MARKET

The quality of human capital is crucial for Europe's success. The Europe 2020 Strategy places a strong emphasis on education and training to promote “smart, sustainable and inclusive growth”.

Vocational education and training in Europe by 2020 (ET 2020) contribute to both excellence and equity in EU lifelong learning systems and thereby to the Europe 2020 objectives of smart and inclusive growth, with IVET as an attractive learning option with high relevance to labour market needs.

The attractiveness and excellence of VET depends on multiple factors. From an overall perspective, the attractiveness of VET depends on its quality and efficiency, high standards of teachers and trainers, relevance to labour market needs and the pathways it opens to further learning with no dead-ends, including at tertiary level.

As highlighted in the Europe 2020 Strategy, partnerships among stakeholders in VET and specifically the involvement of social partners in the design, organisation, delivery and financing of VET are a prerequisite to efficiency and relevance to labour market needs. In many countries these partnerships take different forms.

The labour market relevance of VET can be strengthened by the development of forward planning tools to match skills and jobs. Based on such matching, VET providers, in cooperation with local labour market representatives, should be able to adapt the curricula accordingly in order to reflect skills shortages, surpluses, skills gaps or obsolescence. Improvements of methodologies are needed so as to make anticipation tools coherent and comparable, including the development of a common system of classifications for skills, competences and occupations based on learning.

The key actions to improve the quality and efficiency of initial and continuing VET should aim at:

- Implementing quality assurance systems at national level, as recommended by the EQAVET framework;
- Developing a competence framework for teachers and trainers in initial and continuing VET;
- Providing the workforce with high quality vocational skills, relevant for the labour market by
- Increased use of different forms of work-based learning;
- Strengthening the development of key competences to ensure the adaptability and flexibility of learners and workers;
- Making VET provision more responsive to evolving labour market needs based on forward planning tools in cooperation with social partners and public employment services.

The priority areas for European cooperation in education and training in 2012–2014, recommended by the 2012 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission, regarding the implementation of the Strategic Framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020)⁶, include “*Enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training*”. It is recommended that partnerships with business, research, and the civil society develop effective and innovative forms of networking, cooperation, and partnerships between education and training providers, and a broad range of stakeholders including social partners, business organisations, research institutions, and civil society organisations.

The 2012 Annual Growth Survey⁷ stresses that Education and training systems have to be modernised to reinforce their efficiency and quality and to equip people with the skills and competences they need to succeed on the labour market. This will boost people's confidence to be able to keep up with current and future challenges. It will help to improve Europe's competitiveness and generate growth and jobs. The 2012 Annual Growth Survey also calls for a particular focus on young people, who are among the groups that are worst affected by the crisis.

⁶ 2012 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the Strategic Framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), ‘Education and Training in a smart, sustainable and inclusive Europe’ (2012/C 70/05) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2012:070:0009:0018:EN:PDF>

The examples of good practice in the area of interest related to labour market in several countries from the “*Modernising VET system – improving performance, quality, and attractiveness of VET*” Cluster of Knowledge are the following:

The example of good practice from the Republic of Croatia, namely “*VET & Tourism*”, is focused on raising the quality of Croatian Tourism. The Ministry of Tourism is implementing a Programme of Education and Training in the Sector of Tourism and Hospitality with several objectives, among which: raising the quality of education in Tourism and Hospitality, raising the standards of Education – modern equipment for schools, encouraging a better cooperation between VET schools and tourism companies.

The example of good practice from the Republic of Macedonia presents one major aspect: Training of unemployed people for the occupations demanded by the labour market with the objective to provide better employment, according the the Analysis of labour market skills in Macedonia.

The example of good practice from the Republic of Moldova presents the initiative of the Ministry of Education, in partnership with a range of organizations and enterprises as well as social stakeholders, to create multifunctional “Competence Centres” that provide entrepreneurial education within initial and continuous vocational training and stand for centres for the recognition of informal and non-formal learning. The scope of establishing Regional Competence Centres is to develop creativity, innovation and independency for a better employment on the current labour market or for initiating one’s own small and medium businesses, which in turn would create new job opportunities.

The example of good practice from Romania presents VET offering planning mechanisms, a model for strategic planning of the IVET supply relevant to the forecast needs of the labour market. The model is based on decentralizing decisions and participatory enterprises based on the collective actions of multiple economic and social partners, which represent the interests of employers, professional associations, employees/trade unions, public administration, relevant government organizations and also other civil society organizations.

The example of Serbia comes to emphasize once again the vital aspect of a better correlation of school curricula with the labour market needs. In this respect they systematised 23 educational profiles and started to develop, define and describe the necessary standards.

The examples of good practice related to labour market in several countries from the “*Modernising VET system – improving performance, quality and attractiveness of VET*” Cluster of Knowledge show, on the one hand, different approaches, and on the other hand suggest the need for further collaboration in order to achieve a common and consistent approach in developing the labour market relevance of VET.

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⁷ Communication from the commission, Annual growth survey 2012, COM(2011) 815 final
http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/ags2012_en.pdf



5

Improving Teaching & Learning

5.1 “Learning for living: innovations in career education” — Romania

INTRODUCTION

From the perspective of the European and national education policy documents, it is important to motivate students to attend school not as a chore, but willing to find something new they could use in their everyday life. Therefore, this example is focused on the innovation in the educational process in order to help students acquire an autonomous personality and assume a value system that is necessary for their fulfilment and entrepreneurship.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In order to change the teachers’ vision into teaching as part of the new paradigm of “learning for life”, the National Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development (NCTVETD) is a partner in the Leonardo da Vinci project, “*Learning for Living: Innovations in career education*”, a project implemented by the KPC Groep, Netherlands. This project brings new elements in the educational process.

Up to now, many teachers, students and school counsellors attended the training and applied a new method of learning called “Storyboarding”. Teacher training correlated with the students’ perceptions on new approaches to learning, as well as with the interaction between the two segments represented by trainers and trainees, revealed valuable information regarding the applicability of the storyboarding method.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The project objective is to develop a method to support education for careers in the European context. Innovation consists in combining students’ personal and social context with that of the teachers/counsellors with experience. In this way, the project helps students form a lifestyle in a sustainable and meaningful manner, and it also helps prevent school leaving. The training process of the teachers and school counsellors was related in this project to their involvement in community practice built around the Storyboarding method and the concept of “learning for life”.

CONTEXT

Within the context of the student-centred learning, but also the social context we live in, teachers have a crucial role in developing the citizens of tomorrow. They have to undergo a change from a person who had an exclusive decision-making role in the classroom into a professional person, who also serves as an adviser; they should be able to understand their students’ learning skills in order to help them reach their maximum potential possible, and to participate in a self-conscious learning context connected to reality.

The students will be guided during the learning and assessment process to understand the importance and need of knowledge acquisition, which have a formative influence upon their personalities, but also upon the society they live in. If they find a connection between what they learn in school and what they face in their daily life, then they will be more interested in everything that is discussed during class.

In order to make learning happen, it is necessary to change the approach of the educational process, by focusing on individuality and each student’s experiences.

BENEFITS

After training, teachers and school counsellors, in the spirit of 'learning for life', made the big shift in students' perception of learning. Thus, in situations in which the Storyboarding method was applied, students have been found to have a greater motivation to learn and a greater openness to discover new things.

The main result of the project is the *"The approach of the educational process from the perspectives of learning for life"* Guide, that develops the concept of "learning for life" and adapts it to the Romanian specificity. This guide is a result of the project realised by NCTVETD in partnership with other two Romanian partners, Oradea University and "Mihai Viteazul" Technical College, Oradea.

The pilot activities in Romania are presented in this guide, in order to show the impact on the changing paradigm of "learning for work" into "learning for life", and see the results of applying the story-boarding method to students and teachers. This study aims to approach this new method from several perspectives:

- Of the teaching, learning, and assessment process;
- Counselling students in choosing a career path or awareness of their lives' turning points that led to the choice of development directions in their lives;
- The mentoring process, both students in teaching practice with teachers in schools, but also junior teachers who are guided by experienced teachers in schools;
- Communities of practice can be formed to share experiences and improve the quality of education.

Upon this project completion, in the pilot schools debates were held on the issue of "learning for life"; where the Storyboarding method was applied, it is expected that those who were involved in these activities would experience changes in their professional conduct.

So, teachers:

- give up on their prerogatives based on regulatory authority, moving from an educator – transmitter of the only educational truth position to the educator as a counsellor and facilitator of training;
- become a partner in the development of the didactic act/process;
- encourage the applied and interdisciplinary nature of teaching;
- are recognized as facilitators of learning and earn their due prestige in society;
- become reflective, and always ask questions about how to approach the themes, about the act of reaching goals in the teaching process, about suitable ways of assessing students;
- know how to enhance the each student's personality, how to assess a group of students in the context and their capacities, pointing out their authentic ideas, but also their place in the whole process;
- are able to guide students towards finding the answers to questions by themselves, without sensing that they discovered largely what the teacher had wanted to convey;
- are always open to the applied nature of the concepts taught;
- are able to speak in a language suitable for students and uses appropriate and attractive interactive media in the learning process.

And students:

- are responsible, sincere, courageous, open, confident in their genuine value;
- gladly attend classes, aware of their own need for knowledge and their development;
- respect and value the teacher;
- communicate consistently, being empathic, tolerant, supporting their own point of view with consistent motivation and accepting the opinions of their colleagues;
- take active part in training, being involved in making decisions at a student group level;
- analyse and identify opportunities to develop their personality in the group/society they live in;
- are autonomous, able to choose alternatives to manifest their own actions, but assume the consequences and thus, manifest their full personal freedom.

FACTUAL DATA

- NCTVETD inspectors participated in this project in various activities and several institutions were invited to undertake joint actions, namely: University of Bucharest; Economic College “Virgil Madgearu”, Bucharest; Higher Commercial School “Nicolae Kretzulescu”, Bucharest; Economic College “Ion Ghica”, Targoviste;
- 120 teachers and counsellors trained;
- 200 students who underwent training based on the Story-boarding method;
- The “*The approach of the educational process from the perspectives learning for life*” guide;
- An article with the title “*Approach to the learning process in terms of learning for life*” posted on the iTeach.ro platform.

SOURCES AND METHODS

Story-boarding – complex method that has a very broad utility for:

- Teachers in the teaching act,
- School counsellors in guiding students in their careers,
- And also for experienced teachers, who can guide juniors in the teaching profession.

Three-scene story-boarding was also used to enable reflection on experience.

Advantages: It is a new method that can support the educational process through a deeper knowledge of the students, with all their characteristics (emotional, motivational); it allows teachers to obtain important information about how they can interact effectively with students in order to improve the learning outcomes. This method can be used successfully to guide and advise students in their professional path. Using this method, via the support and discussions exchanged between pupils/students and teachers, the former can be motivated to learn with greater pleasure and efficiency because they acknowledge the practicality of the learning approach. The method can connect more easily the theoretical aspect of learning with the practical one; practically, learning can be addressed in terms of “learning for life”. It is a suitable method to motivate junior teachers to embrace the teaching profession by emphasising their qualities that perhaps they were not aware of until mentors/experienced teachers made use of it. The method can be developed in the future by creating an electronic version that can be accessed from any computer.

SUSTAINABILITY

The implemented method is called “Storyboarding”, that is, using personal stories (experiences) to pinpoint defining moments, or turning points, in one’s life, to stimulate reflection and empower people to steer their own life and career. This method can be developed to be used in the curriculum (to evaluate work experiences and internships) and as a management tool for guidance by (senior) teachers.

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5.2 The ETF teaching and learning project – South East Europe network: “Project-based learning” — Albania

INTRODUCTION

The “Project-based learning” Project is related to the ETF Teaching and Learning Project – and it refers to the progress of the implementation/piloting of this project in some Albanian vocational schools from February to October 2011.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The organization of the Project involved important partners, namely representatives from various bodies: the Ministry of Education and Science, the National VET Agency and the Hotel and Tourism School of Tirana. All the stakeholders, as well as representatives from Agribusiness School of Korça, were directly involved in the activities of the project.

The main issue lies in supporting VET schools from Albania in the process of implementing innovative teaching and learning approaches, acquiring capacity building to support school-based innovation, sharing our experiences and supporting other VET schools in a Community of Practice.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The main objective of the project mentioned above was to familiarise participants with the “Project Based Learning” approach, develop competences of teachers to act as a community of practitioners and define shared project tasks for the next phases.

CONTEXT

A number of four schools were selected, out of which the best and most experienced teachers were selected as facilitators of this method; they participated in various school activities alongside with other teachers to help them acquire the specific competences and the know-how. An external expert was also involved and, later on, the national experts took part in these activities that were designed to:

- Improve co-operation between schools and businesses through PBL activities,
- Build teachers capacity to design and implement PBL activities at schools,
- Enhance students’ professional skills through PBL approach based on competences,
- Increase awareness of Pilot schools (PSs) regarding the PBL implementation, in order to make progress in developing confidence and the abilities required to implement effective innovative teaching and learning methods, which in turn will make students more employable.
- Increase the capacity of the VET Agency for strategic planning, and support of, school-based innovation.

BENEFITS

- Strengthened capacity of VET Agency for strategic planning,
- Improved competences of teachers by creating a networking community of teachers sharing innovative use of methods in the teaching process (the PBL specific competences),
- Refreshing the image of the teaching processes and active involvement of the partners in the teaching process: both students and teachers becoming more proactive and actively/ self-consciously involved in the learning process, facilitating thus the entrepreneurial spirit, creativity and raising self-employability participation.

FACTUAL DATA

- Delivering a two-day seminar on the PBL approach,
- Providing coaching sessions on PBL,
- Delivering open lessons at school level
- A teacher training programme is developed
- 22 teachers trained and able to design and develop project-based learning activities, and willing to share the results with other schools
- 58 pages of teacher training materials are elaborated with regard to the PBL approach.
- A template for the school projects is developed and circulated to the pilot schools.
- Four pilot schools managers are more aware, supportive, and innovative for selecting their own schools project ideas.
- Each of the four pilot schools has one facilitator supporting other teachers at school on the PBL implementation.
- Teachers of the four PSs are competent to implementing PBL with their own students.
- Four pilot schools projects are designed, developed and implemented
- Teaching and learning processes are oriented towards students' interests and needs.
- Teaching and learning are more oriented towards real work competences.
- Students are more sensitive to the PBL, more productive and show more entrepreneurship in their own schools to improve the learning outcomes.

SOURCES AND METHODS

- Cooperation with stakeholders;
- Information from the real economy, learners' reactions,
- Team work.

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5.2 Cooperation with HE for continuous teacher training

5.2.1 Partnership network for teacher training in vocational and technical engineers — Romania

INTRODUCTION

The report “*How the world’s best-performing school systems come out on top*” published in September 2007 by McKinsey & Company emphasizes and reinforces the importance of training teachers; the first chapter, “*The quality of online education system cannot exceed the quality of STI Teachers*”, is reinforcing this. By signing the Bruges Communiqué⁸, which includes direct references to the need to ensure highly qualified teachers, Member States have initiated a process of diversification, upgrading, modernization and development of initial and continuing training for teachers.

The “*National Network for teachers training in Pre-University Vocational and Technical – CONCORD*”, presented below, is one of the initiatives on how higher education institutions agreed to participate in the continuous training of the teachers. It is part of the solutions promoted in Romania to make VET more attractive with strong labour market relevance and to continue the education and training provided to teachers with high qualifications, using innovative methods of learning.

SUMMARY

Enhance the quality of initial education and training through improved teaching skills, be able to guide practical learning activities, provide students with high quality information and guidance, to integrate key skills and develop relevant and suitable evaluation methods; all these are subject of a continuous training of the highest quality.

For this purpose four largest technical universities in Romania:

- Bucharest Polytechnic University,
- University “Politehnica” of Timisoara,
- Technical University “Gheorghe Asachi”
- Technical University of Iasi and
- Cluj-Napoca with SunShine MultiMedia Ltd. UK, a company with extensive experience in international programmes of research, development, consulting, training and implementation of new technologies in teaching, and the National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education, ensured the scientific coordination of the project, providing innovative and specialised teacher training of engineers.

Fundamental guidelines were agreed on in teacher training:

- Courses are delivered by a network of partners,
- Courses meet the needs of teachers,
- Courses are flexible,
- Classes meet high quality standards.

The project implementation was financed by the European Structural Fund; therefore the courses are free for beneficiaries.

⁸ Communiqué of the European Ministers responsible doemniul education and training, the European social partners and the European Commission, after meeting in Bruges on 7 December 2010 on the review of the strategic approach and priorities of the Copenhagen process for 2011–2020
http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/vocational/bruges_en.pdf

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The CONCORD project has as the main objective the development of the skills of pre-university teachers who teach technical subjects. Training courses are delivered via activities of “mixed learning”, which include trainer assistance, self study and online learning in an interactive learning environment.

The overall objective will be met by achieving four objectives:

- Development of 11 continuing education programmes;
- Accreditation of 4 training centres for in-service training of teachers integrated into a national network, which in future will be offered within other centres;
- Create a platform for e-learning;
- University training of at least 600 teachers teaching vocational and technical education.

CONTEXT

The CONCORD project is designed to support the national goals of quality assurance in education and training by providing teacher training for engineers who teach in technical and vocational education. Courses are designed and built to include the development of modern methods by using ICT and learning solutions on e-learning platforms.

At the same time, the methods that were put into practice support the implementation of the National Education Law adopted in early 2011 and which includes lifelong learning. Quality improvement programmes are provided in partnership and some of the main directions are:

- Developing core and specialized competences to participants;
- Facilitating access to training – through e-learning solutions;
- Providing a highly customized programme tailored to meet the trainees’ needs;
- Increasing the transparency and credibility of qualifications by transnational partnership.

Nationally, the project meets the requirements for updating and acquiring new skills by the teachers involved in the initial training of students. This option is correlated with the favourable context generated by the envisaged development of the labour market.

BENEFITS

As direct beneficiaries, teachers involved in school education benefit from:

- Updating their professional skills;
- Acquiring new skills related to learning in the virtual environment offered by the e-learning platform;
- Learning experiences and collaboration with colleagues in vocational schools and higher education.
- Certificates and transferable credits.
- Develop the trainees’ professional and personal opportunities.

For the VET system:

- Accelerating the improvement of education and training;
- Human resources in education will become more competitive, creative, involved in the development of a knowledge-based society, from the perspective of lifelong learning.
- Teachers will be able to adopt a modern behaviour, to develop their professional background effectively, to ensure quality and performance in education and training;

For Higher Education

- Diversified offer of teacher training;
- Support the development of appropriate standards of professional training;
- Extending learning using ICT resources;
- Adoption of strategic guidelines and preparing operational elements for the full implementation of the Digital Agenda for Romania.

And for the policy makers responsible for education and training:

- Arguments for deciding on the strategic elements of vocational education and training modernization so as to ensure its attractiveness;
- Identify ways to support lifelong learning;
- Methods and means to support the continuing education of teachers;

REFERENCE DATA

The activities in the project led to:

- Strengthening the partnership between those involved in teachers- engineers training, those who teach specialized subjects in technical and vocational education: academics, teachers, staff in charge from the National Centre for TVET Development, specialized inspectors from the Ministry of National Education, county school inspectorates and so on;
- Implementation of a methodology to develop partnership networks in order to provide continuous training;
- Developing and implementing a quality assurance methodology of training that includes criteria, indicators and monitoring procedures for learning via the e-learning platform.
- Planning, modernization, equipment and accreditation of four training centres, one in each partner university;
- Development of 11 training programmes for in-service training;
- Providing an e-learning platform used in training and the project management database;
- Training of 600 teachers-engineers involved in school education in initial vocational education and training;
- creation of the project website;
- Thematic seminars and conferences to present the project and
- Awareness of the participants in the use of ICT in learning.

SOURCES AND METHODS

The training method adopted is complex, combining classical, theoretical, practical and experimental training activities, using the university laboratories with specific e-learning platforms. In addition, the conditions for access to learning are simple and convenient.

The participants may state the option for a training environment that includes: Management and Communication, ICT designed for beginners and advanced, general and specialized modules or only some modules.

The special courses were grouped into four areas: PROMECANIC conventional, PROELECTRIC, PROMEDIU, PROIT, each comprising specialization sub-domains. For the PROELECTRIC area, for example, the sub-domains are electrical engineering, energy engineering, electrical engineering. The other areas are similarly organized.

It is much appreciated by the participants the fact that they can access the e-materials usually three months before the participation in the courses in universities. Access is based on authentication elements that participants receive upon enrolling for the course.

During this period the trainees are assisted and guided by tutors among academics and follow a training programme communicated in advance, carry out tasks and pass an online support test.

The certification training activity performed for each module is completed after passing a final exam.

ADVANTAGES

- the learning methods that are employed support a new vision of lifelong learning for teachers, more flexible, more accessible and in line with the needs expressed by the teachers themselves;
- partnership network method can be successfully transferred and used by other teacher training institutions;
- quality assurance methodology provides courses involving relevant stakeholders;

- Using an e-learning platform reduces costs and offers attractive learning experiences;
- Permanent update of the courses offered online;
- Provides a virtual environment for collaboration between teachers supported by tutors;
- The experience developed ensures the implementation of the Digital Agenda.

SUSTAINABILITY

The activities and results of the project are designed so they can be included in a structured and integrated package of methodologies and solutions that will facilitate their transfer to other institutions and sectors. The main directions are:

- Promoting partnership network to provide specialized training programmes by attracting new partners;
- Defining suitable standards in training of teachers;
- Continue to provide training programmes, offering free online courses and improve them as per the participants' feedback;
- Increase the number of teachers in higher education with experience in the design and implementation of training programmes for teachers;
- Experience gained in creating and guiding auxiliary digital learning via an e-learning platform;
- Maintaining a permanent link with the target group, teachers who teach engineers in technical and vocational education, through the project website;
- Maintaining and updating the project website by posting current information in the field by providing online access to journals.
- Informing decision makers to promote staff development based on the identified needs in education and to improve the training programmes.

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Technical University of Cluj-Napoca www.utcluj.ro

SunShine MultiMedia Ltd. UK www.mmsunshine.com

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Summary points

IMPROVEMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

A guaranteed education and training (VET) quality is a key element of success in achieving the Lisbon goals. The analysis of the Lisbon agenda's implications led to several important actions: update of the objectives, definition of targets and rigorous planning of the achievement of indicators associated with the previous actions. The Communiqué of the European Ministers responsible for education and training, the European social partners and the European Commission adopted in Bruges on the 7th of December 2010 concerning the review of the strategic approach and priorities of the Copenhagen process for 2011–2020, brings the improvement of teaching and learning to the core of attention.

The overall vision for education and training in 2020 envisages that European VET systems will be more attractive, will have more relevance by being more career-oriented, innovative, accessible, and flexible to help ensure excellence and equity in lifelong learning.

According to this vision, the national systems should provide:

- Attractive and inclusive VET with highly qualified teachers and trainers, innovative learning methods, high-quality infrastructure and facilities, a high labour market relevance, and pathways to further education and training;
- High quality initial VET (I-VET) which learners, parents and society at large may regard as an appealing option, of the same value as general education. I-VET should equip learners with both key competences and specific vocational skills;
- Easily accessible and career-oriented continuing VET (C-VET) for employees, employers, independent entrepreneurs and unemployed people, which facilitates both competence development and career changes.

“Improving the quality and efficiency of VET and increase its attractiveness and relevance” is placed on the very first position within the strategic objectives of the above-mentioned document, which shows the importance given to the field and explicitly defines various ways of achievement:

1 — Changing the perspective on initial VET into an attractive learning option with some recommendations to:

- Raise the quality of I-VET (see also point 2 below), by improving the quality and competences of teachers, trainers and school leaders, introducing flexible pathways among all education levels and increasing public awareness of the possibilities which VET offers.
- Encourage practical activities and the provision of high-quality information and guidance, which enable young pupils in compulsory education, and their parents, to become acquainted with different vocational trades and career possibilities;
- Ensure that key competences are integrated into the I-VET curricula and develop suitable means of assessment;
- Organise teaching and learning activities, which foster the development of career management skills in I-VET.

2 — Enhance excellence, quality and relevance of initial and continuing VET

QUALITY OF TEACHERS, TRAINERS AND OTHER VET PROFESSIONALS

- Participating countries should improve initial and continuing training for teachers, trainers, mentors and counsellors by offering flexible training provision and investment.
- Participating countries should work together in identifying best practices and guiding principles with respect to the evolving nature of competences and the profiles of VET teachers and trainers.

LABOUR MARKET RELEVANCE

The labour market relevance of VET (both I-VET and C-VET), and the employability of VET graduates should be enhanced through various measures:

- Authorities in the participating countries – at national, regional, or local level – should create opportunities for enhanced cooperation between schools and enterprises in order to improve teachers' knowledge of work practices on the one hand, and trainers' general pedagogical skills and competences on the other;

- Participating countries should promote partnerships among social partners, enterprises, education and training providers, employment services, public authorities, research organisations and other relevant stakeholders, in order to ensure a better transfer of information on labour market needs and to provide a better match between those needs and the development of knowledge, skills and competences. Employers and social partners should endeavour to clearly define which competences and qualifications they need in both the short and the long term, and within as well as across sectors. The development of a common language aimed at bridging the world of education and training on the one hand, and the world of work on the other hand, should be continued and should be consistent with other EU instruments, such as the EQF;
- VET curricula should be outcome-oriented and more responsive to labour market needs. Cooperation models with companies or professional branch organisations should address this issue and provide VET institutions with feedback on both the employability and employment rates of VET graduates.

The examples included in this chapter are meant to show how countries work to achieve these goals, and some of the actions taken at national level from the wide range of recommendations:

- Organization of activities aimed at promoting the attractiveness and excellence of VET;
- Support activities to enable young students in compulsory education to discover different vocational pathways and career opportunities;
- Take appropriate measures to implement Recommendation EQAVET and development of national quality assurance for VET;
- Ensure proper integration of key competences and career management skills in initial and continuing VET, etc.

The example of the vocational education reform in Serbia shows how an adequate process for defining educational profiles can lead to a significant improvement in correlating the IVET training programmes offered with the labour market needs by:

- Defining the requirements for each reference profile;
- Defining the objectives of education;
- Defining professional education outcomes;
- Improving curriculum and assessment;
- Correlating with other forms of education and training.

The examples of Romania show how the implementation of two projects advanced promotion and support of innovation in education in the spirit of “learning for life”, and ensured a high level of qualification for the teachers who provide education and vocational training.

The first Romanian project implemented in partnership with the KPC Groep, Netherlands, developed a method to support education for a career in the European context. The innovation is to combine the personal and social context of students and teachers/senior counsellors.

The second Romanian project shows how, within a partnership, the largest technical universities in Romania, the central institution responsible for the development, initial VET, a relevant partner in innovation and implementation of IT solutions in VET, have designed a flexible schedule, and how they carry out the teachers’ training through a complex process of learning activities in a “mixed learning” vision.

The Albanian example on “*Project Based Learning*” aims to develop competences of teachers to act as a community of practitioners in implementing innovative teaching and learning approaches and to acquire capacity building to support school-based innovation.

The context in which the examples presented are achieved come to highlight once again the main conclusion of the McKinsey & Company Report “How the world’s best performing school systems come out on top” (September 2007): “*The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its Teachers*”.

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6

Fostering Creativity & Entrepreneurship

6.1 Encouragement creativity

6.1.1 Business plan competition — Romania

INTRODUCTION

Several countries have started to invest in what can be seen as a prerequisite of the successful delivery of entrepreneurship education, training and support of teachers and students.

This measure is a success because it develops entrepreneurial spirit, creativity, self-confidence, perseverance; it allows seizing business opportunities and provides knowledge regarding competition environment; last but not least, it facilitates adjustment to the real environment, encouraging competition among firms.

A firm “is an interactive method of learning in support of entrepreneurship”; the learning process is student-centred.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The students must define an idea of business following a market study and the detection of social needs and business opportunities; they then develop an enterprise project plan going through the different stages of a business plan. The evaluation is based on criteria that take into account:

- General information about training firms,
- Description of the training firms,
- Project objectives,
- Project management,
- Use of new technologies and promotion of society a based on knowledge,
- Business idea,
- Financing business,
- Business marketing,
- Future development.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

- Develops entrepreneurial spirit,
- Facilitating adjustment to the real environment,
- Encouraging competition among firms.

CONTEXT

The Ministry of Economy, Commerce and Businesses has launched the ‘Government Strategy for the Development of the Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) Sector by 2013’, developed within a project co-funded by the European Social Fund. At present, there is a drafted Government Decision on the approval of this strategy. The general objective of the strategy is the economic revival and the support for the development of SMEs over 2010-2013.

The measures and actions recommended within the ‘Promoting an entrepreneurship culture and making entrepreneurship education efficient’ Priority refer to: Continuous development of the education system in order to efficiently support the promotion of an entrepreneurship culture, with the following actions:

- Developing specific modules within the school curriculum, which provide students with the opportunity to learn about practical aspects and with the option of extending their entrepreneurship knowledge;
- Suitable teacher training;
- Supporting the partnership between businesses and the education system with a view to promote entrepreneurship by developing curricula in cooperation with local businesses; this provides students with the opportunity of a hands-on experience via activities in a company.

The concept of the training firm was introduced in the Romanian technical and vocational education and training through a project initiated within the Stability Pact and carried out in cooperation with the Austrian Ministry of Education and Culture – the ECO NET project, since 2001.

In Romania, the Business Plan Competition, aimed at all registered training firms, was introduced in the school year 2008/09 as a joint initiative of the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports, the National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education, KulturKontakt Austria and other social partners.

In the school year 2011–2012, the collaboration among the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports, the National Centre for TVET Development – ROCT, EURO 26 and Young Entrepreneurs in Romania Business Plan Competition is carried out, aimed at validating pupils' entrepreneurial skills acquired through work done by "firm". This competition stimulated creativity transfers of "firm" within the actual context of the competitive environment, attempting to acquaint students with specific economic activities.

The students must define an idea of business following a market study and the detection of social needs and business opportunities; they then develop an enterprise project plan going through the different stages of a business plan.

Competition is a way to demonstrate learning and helps firms to:

- Develop the entrepreneurial spirit,
- Develop the required skills of a dynamic entrepreneur (critical thinking, decision making, accountability, teamwork, initiative, self-organization and individual resources);
- Introducing the students to specific activities from the real economic environment using the specific risk management tools; encouraged competition among training firms.

BENEFITS

- Improve strategic and working relationships among organisations
- Develop the entrepreneurial spirit
- Encourage competition among training firms
- Build understanding and trust

FACTUAL DATA

Competition Business Plan takes place at four levels:

- Local,
- County,
- Regional and
- national levels.

This year, in this competition, the following were involved at:

- Local level: 300 training firms,
- County level: 120 training firms,
- Regional level: 40 training firms,
- National level: 8 training firms.

SOURCES AND METHODS

- Methodology for the Business Plan Competition,
- Workshops with stakeholders,
- Good practice example presentation.

SUSTAINABILITY

Currently there are only 300 training firms involved in the project, and we want to increase the number in the future. We also want to attract more partners to support this competition.

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6.1.2 Cultural education in vet curricula — Macedonia

INTRODUCTION

The UNESCO Young People's World Heritage Education Programme (WHE Programme) provides young people with the necessary knowledge, skills, network and commitment to become involved in heritage protection from local to global levels.

New pedagogic approaches are developed to mobilize young people to participate actively in the promotion of World Heritage. Jointly coordinated by the World Heritage Centre and UNESCO Associated Schools, the WHE Programme seeks to encourage and enable tomorrow's decision-makers to participate in heritage conservation and to respond to the continuing threats facing our heritage.

Young people learn about World Heritage sites, about the history and traditions of their own and other cultures, about ecology and the importance of protecting biodiversity.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Centre for Vocational Education and Training (CVET) and the Ministry of Education and Science developed guidelines to offer the WHYH programme as an elective course in vocational high schools in the country. These guidelines will support the sustainability of the project by forming a foundation to institutionalize the programme in the school system and enable more schools to offer World Heritage as an integrated student activity. The pilot schools that implemented the UNESCO teacher kit:

No.	School	Project activity – topic
1	OSTU “Nace Budzoni” – Kumanovo	Natural and cultural heritage megalithic observatory “Universe Today”
2	OUTU “Vancho Pitoshevski” – Ohrid	<i>“Cultural Heritage in the St. Naum site”</i>
3	SOU “Kosta Susinov” – Radovich	<i>“Fostering cultural and natural heritage is the responsibility of all”</i>
4	SUGS “Braka Miladinovci” – Skopje	<i>“Cultural, historical and natural wealth in the Bogomils region of origin”</i>
5	SGGU “Zdravko Cevtkovski” – Skopje	<i>“Site “Matka” as part of the world's natural and cultural heritage”</i>
6	SOU “D-r Ibrahim Temo” – Struga	<i>“Ohrid lake – our pearl”</i>
7	SOU “Jane Sandanski” – Strumica	<i>“Heritage as a bridge to connect generations”</i>
8	SOU “Mirko Milevski” – Kichevo	<i>“Religious buildings in Kicevo valley as an international cultural heritage”</i>
9	SOU “Slavcho Stojmenski” – Shtip	<i>“Different, but united”</i>
10	SOU “Drita” – Kichevo	<i>“Religious buildings in Kicevo valley as an international cultural heritage”</i>

The purpose of the programme is to strengthen the capacity of the national educational system to promote and enhance ethnic and cultural diversity, and more specifically to create opportunities for interaction and dialogue for children and youth in school and the community. In this framework WHYH is envisioned as an inter-ethnic school activity, bringing interested students of all ethnic groups together around issues of common concern.

By participating in the programme, students will gain experience and learn about different ethnicities, about the elements of general culture and practical elements necessary to practice a profession. Students will learn about world heritage and acquire skills that enable them to work in a team, make decisions, and assume responsibilities. Students will be prepared to better and faster adapt to job requirements such as working professionally and doing things of high quality.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The UNESCO teacher kit is adopted in order to:

- Encourage young people to become involved in heritage conservation both on a local and on a global level, across borders and cultural lines,
- Promote awareness among young people of the importance of the UNESCO 1972 World Heritage Convention and a better understanding of the interdependence of cultures,
- Engage youth of different ethnic, cultural and/or religious backgrounds in joint educational activities, where they can learn about and from each other,
- Develop new and effective educational approaches, methods and materials to introduce/reinforce World Heritage Education and intercultural learning in the curricula,
- Develop an integrated school activity on the topic of heritage for youth from different ethnic backgrounds,
- Create a new synergy among educators, heritage experts, environmental specialists, development stakeholders and other parties in order to promote the World Heritage Education on a national and international level,
- Develop a World Heritage Education teacher training programme.

CONTEXT

The World Heritage in Young Hands Education Kit is available to download from the UNESCO website <http://whc.unesco.org/en/educationkit> and has four sections:

- 1 — World heritage and Identity,
- 2 — World heritage and Tourism,
- 3 — World Heritage and Environment,
- 4 — World Heritage and Culture of peace,

This allows students to find an interesting topic for the project, taking into account their affinities and what they think is best for them. A team of local experts in heritage, education and teacher training were involved in developing and implementing a professional development programme for teachers to bring world heritage issues in their multicultural classrooms with skill and confidence.

This part of the implementation was essential to the success of the project. Student-centred pedagogical approaches and tools have been developed to mobilize young people to actively participate in the promotion of World Heritage. They have been designed or adapted to specific local circumstances and shared throughout the participating schools.

The World Heritage in Young Hands Teachers' kit was used to develop the methodology. It contains practical examples, which can be used as guidance for teachers in implementing various project activities. The Kit is designed to stimulate imagination and creativity so as to further enrich the pedagogic approach to heritage preservation.

Through this project, there is now an expert team and a set of teachers experienced with WHYH, who can disseminate this knowledge to other educators throughout the education system and other interested organizations as well.

BENEFITS

The WHYH learning method consists of: utilizing an interactive, project based learning approach, classroom activities engaging students of different cultural backgrounds in joint research, presentations, artistic and other creative expressions, building students' intercultural communication and team work skills.

Lecture-style teaching is avoided; instead, the focus is on engaging students in joint work, collaborating across ethnic lines. Some of the research requires working in foreign languages, which opens other doors for interaction and also builds students' foreign language skills.

The participating teachers developed a new understanding of the themes in the WHYH Teacher Kit and their task was to transfer their knowledge to their principals and colleagues. The objectives were reached in terms of world heritage

awareness: participating students felt involved in heritage conservation, better understood the importance of the UNESCO 1972 World Heritage Convention and had a greater appreciation of the interdependence of cultures.

The project created opportunity for dialogue among youth of different ethnic backgrounds. The groups were mixed by ethnicity and gender and involved students working together towards achieving common goals.

FACTUAL DATA

- 289 students from the 10 pilot schools
- 40 teachers from 10 pilot schools

SOURCES AND METHODS

- Promotional materials
- Online UNESCO teacher kit in Macedonian language on the UNESCO website: <http://whc.unesco.org/fr/educationkit>
- Guidelines for WHYH programme in VET centre

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6.2 Entrepreneurship skills development

6.2.1 Training firms (virtual companies/entreprises)

ECO NET

— Bosnia and Herzegovina

INTRODUCTION

Economy and education have the responsibility to create a better environment for the development of the society as whole. Taking into account the rapid changes, not only in technology but in general, it is impossible to achieve progress without changing education and training. Furthermore, it is necessary to implement didactic concepts in the field of economic education.

This change is supported by the ECO NET project. It gives support to young people in achieving success in the labour market. The project initiated the organization of training firms (virtual companies of students). The training firm, viewed as a concept of “a real company”, presents a didactic concept successfully implemented in nearly 40 countries worldwide.

Training firms, as we know it today, were originated in Western Europe in the late 80s, due to the following reasons:

- Education policy wanted a more successful integration of the most desirable qualifications in the education system,
- Practice has shown the importance of learning through practical training (virtual enterprises),
- The advantage of virtual enterprises as a form of practical training over the teacher-centred method

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The objective is to provide young people with good education and support them on their way into the business world. To achieve this, it is necessary to create conditions for the successful management of the enterprises, and for that the following values are required: courage, curiosity, a willingness to learn and to increase teamwork, and entrepreneurial spirit.

CONTEXT

The concept of training firms is important because the training of future workers and entrepreneurs in training firms, in the field of economics, has significantly contributed to improvement of their knowledge in economics and to the development of their personal skills and competences. A new concept of training firms, in an attractive manner, carries out the student-centred teaching/learning method. This is a response to the constant demands of the economy for:

- More practical training during the process of education,
- Enlargement of the vision of future workers beyond the scope a country,
- Improvement of their knowledge of foreign languages,
- Information about the latest IT developments and technology in the teaching process.

Practical training of students in the training firm is a preparation to enter the business world. It encourages entrepreneurial thinking and acting.

FACTUAL DATA

The development of virtual enterprises has enabled us to clearly recognize the need for introducing a new subject – entrepreneurship. In the last years of the secondary vocational schools the subject “Basis of Entrepreneurship” was introduced.

Moreover, Bosnia and Herzegovina also initiated and implemented the “*Entrepreneurial learning in education systems in B&H*” project, with the support of the European Union, and in cooperation with all the concerned authorities and the Agency for Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education. The project supported the implementation of entrepreneurial learning at all levels of the education system. Six primary and eleven secondary schools participated in the project. The project is primarily focused on the development of entrepreneurial spirit in B&H, through raising awareness, attitude change, stimulating creativity and responsibility. The following documents have been created: “*Handbook for Teachers and Schools*“, “*Strategy of Entrepreneurial learning in the Educational Systems in B&H with an Action Plan for the period 2012–2015*“, adopted by the Council of Ministers in 2012.

Apart from this, Bosnia and Herzegovina is part of the regional initiative, a project led by the Republic of Croatia through the South East European Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning (SEECCEL), which also supports development of entrepreneurial competences at the level of primary schools and universities. Four primary schools and two universities have taken part in the project. A regional manual has been developed by national and international experts (www.seecel.hr)

SOURCES AND METHODS

Training firms have great significance in improving the quality of education. In addition to the theoretical knowledge that students acquire during their education, they also develop key skills for the labour market, such as the ability to work in a team, flexibility, conflicts resolution and decision-making. Students are very satisfied with their involvement in the training firms, and the educational authorities are satisfied with changing the mindset about entrepreneurship and the adoption of entrepreneurial spirit.

The context of the labour market is constantly changing, which implies the need for well-trained staff that will be ready to change both the existing and the newly established companies. Also, experience has shown so far that not only the teachers, but the students as well, are trained and capable of managing the training firms. A new modern teaching approach (training firms) motivates students and teachers to work better. It generates a pleasant atmosphere and an environment where one can work with no pressure, because the teachers and students become a team and associates.

SUSTAINABILITY

The fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted the Strategy for Entrepreneurial learning in Education systems in B&H together with the Action Plan will enable further development of entrepreneurial learning as a key competence at all levels of education systems. This provides the framework to design new training firms (virtual companies) and new entrepreneurial projects in every school that will prepare students for training and education in the 21st century and beyond. It will create young and brave entrepreneurs who can raise the level of economic progress for the next generation.

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6.2.2 Students' academy corporative social responsibility — Bulgaria

INTRODUCTION

In 2010, the Bulgarian Centre of training firms in VET schools (BUCT) was nominated and awarded by the Bulgarian Business Leaders Forum in the category *“Good practices of socially responsible SME in Bulgaria”*, because of the idea and the start of the project *“Students' Academy Corporative Social Responsibility”* (Students' Academy CSR). The design of the project was inspired by the Bulgarian Business Leaders Forum activities and its implementation is a sign of education connected to the social oriented business.

Participants in the Students' Academy CSR hold annual meetings with representatives of BBLF. Participation in Students' Academy CSR provides students with knowledge of the corporate social responsibility⁹ principles in practical terms and the necessary skills for their implementation, and helps students in the process of creating and developing a culture of contemporary socially responsible business behaviour.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Bulgarian Business Leaders Forum was set up by 12 multinational companies and NGOs, inspired by the dream of business ethics in 1998. The Bulgarian Business Leaders Forum is the leading organization in Bulgaria devoted to promoting the principles and values of corporate social responsibility.

BUCT, which is a service unit of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, and Bulgarian Business Leaders Forum jointly initiated a project called the Students' Academy CSR in 2010.

Within the framework of the Student's Academy CSR project, the Bulgarian Youth Business Leaders Forum, following the example of the Bulgarian Business Leaders Forum's awards for responsible businesses, have established an Annual call for corporate social responsibility proposals of students' training firms for the *“Annual awards for responsible business”*.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

- Developing the social skills of students in training firms, associated with implementing the ideas of corporate social responsibility in the activities of training firms, by establishing an effective link between business and schools; here are included skills that will benefit the society and extend knowledge in the field of civic education for sustainable development;
- Encouragement, development and implementation of students' projects in training firms and applying the principles of corporate social responsibility in Bulgarian training firms Network activities;
- Strengthened involvement of employers in the process of the training firm as a learning method.

⁹ Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): (definition) – continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the local community and society at large. CSR is also called corporate conscience, corporate citizenship, social performance or sustainable and responsible business.

CONTEXT

The Annual Awards for responsible businesses of the Bulgarian Business Leaders Forum is organized in 5 categories aimed at promoting the activities of companies with the most significant contribution to corporate social responsibility in Bulgaria, and at encouraging other companies to develop active social policies. The BBLF annual awards are designed at national level and companies across the country can be nominated regardless of their size and industry.

BYFBL was created by 50 managers of students training firms in VET gymnasiums in 2007 during the Annual Exhibition of Training Firms in VET schools (Fair of training firms) organized by BUCT and with the support of the Bulgarian Business Leaders Forum. The Fair of training firms is a national competition in the framework of the National Calendar of National Professional Skills Competitions, approved by the Minister of Education, Youth and Science every school year. Bulgarian Youth Business Leaders Forum starts promoting activities by organizing working groups and local youth business communities in VET schools and cities where training firms are implemented.

They hold regular meetings to discuss opportunities to improve the networking of training firms so as to increase youth participation in policy discussions and capacity to make adequate decisions. The aim of the students is to be active participants in meetings with real businesses and to gain expertise from business leaders.

As a supporting initiative a site of Bulgarian Youth Business Leaders Forum was designed – <http://byfbl.wordpress.com>.

The annual meeting of the members of the Bulgarian Youth Business Leaders Forum is organized during the traditionally held Fair of Training Firms). The purpose of the Annual Awards for Responsible Business is to promote training activities of companies with the most significant contribution to corporate social responsibility and to encourage other companies to develop active social policies. The awards are presented during the Annual Fair of the Training Firms.

Projects are nominated from the next categories:

- Investor in society – the project presents business practices aimed at long-term social development and the group's prosperity in the local area where the project is implemented.
- Investor in the Environment – the project features the most effective activities for environmental protection, creation and use of ecologically clean products.
- Investor in human capital and working conditions – promote projects which strive for sustainable development through continuous professional growth of the employees, and implement practical steps to improve working conditions.
- Investor in knowledge – distinguishes training firms working hard to improve the quality of education, to raise young Bulgarian people's level and to support scientific and research activity.
- Award for cause-related marketing – distinguishes projects of training firms that advertise their product or service and at the same time declare support for a cause. The award might be material (part of the price of the product or service is donated to a cause).

The Criteria for the competition's winner in various categories are: specific benefit to the society, partnership with other organizations, employees' involvement in the training firm, consistency in project implementation, innovation and public recognition.

The nominations are evaluated by a Committee consisting of representatives of the Bulgarian Business Leaders Forum, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Ministry of Economy, Energy and the participants, Training Firms managers participating in the Bulgarian Youth Business Leaders Forum meeting. The competition is open to training firms across the country. Training firms cannot participate in more than one category.

BENEFITS

- Expanding the area of activities of the training firms;
- Motivate the participation of many students, their initiative and responsibility to employees, society and environment;
- the development of initiatives within the Student's Academy CSR enriches the work programme in training firms;

- Attract partners from business and government institutions – inclusion of practitioners from businesses as consultants and mentors of the training firms;
- Develop skills for social responsibility within the teaching and learning activities in vocational schools;
- Integrate the topic of corporate social responsibility activities of companies in training vocational education;
- Support in organizing meetings with practitioners from businesses so as to get acquainted with the responsibility an organization has for the impacts of its decisions and activities on society and the environment;
- Promote discussions on the topics of sustainable development, health and welfare of society, business ethics, the development and implementation of socially responsible business practices in the real economic environment.

FACTUAL DATA

In the first edition of the awards in 2010, training firms were involved by sending project description and evaluation prior to the annual exhibition of training firms in the town of Plovdiv. At the Bulgarian Youth Business Leaders Forum annual meeting in Plovdiv, 76 managers of training firms were introduced to the aims and objectives of the Academy. 90 participating students from VET gymnasium training firms received the first edition of a “*Academy Corporate Social Responsibility*” leaflet.

The Bulgarian Youth Business Leaders Forum presented the concept of socially responsible businesses and organized a meeting with representatives of the Ministry of Economy and Energy, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Bulgarian Business Leaders Forum.

The second edition of the awards for responsible business was during the Fair of Training Firms – 2011, organized traditionally in the town of Plovdiv, known as the International Fair town in Bulgaria. At the final countdown, 11 training firms that preliminary registered an idea design were accepted. At the Annual Meeting of the Bulgarian Youth Business Leaders Forum they gave a presentation on their idea design. The meeting was attended by 150 students from training firms across the country.

A third edition of the Responsible Business Awards – April 2012 was organized during Fair of Training Firms – 2012, in the town of Plovdiv.

At the Annual Meeting of the Bulgarian Youth Business Leaders Forum, 14 training firms gave a presentation on their idea design. The meeting was attended by 87 students from training firms across the country (the number of participants decreased because of the demographic crisis).

SOURCES AND METHODS

Sources: information from the real economy in the country, learners’ research and business consultations.

Methods: competition methods, discussions and team work.

SUSTAINABILITY

The “*Student’s Academy Corporate Social Responsibility*” Project is a part of the Training Firm Fair that is organised every school year. The event is in the process of development.

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6.2.3 Establishing regional competence centres as an instrument for entrepreneurship skills development — Republic of Moldova

INTRODUCTION

Regional Competence Centres established within the vocational schools, or public and private enterprises, having a model of so-called “mini-factories”, provide a profitable environment for generating the creation of small enterprises that deliver products relevant for the regional market. Once established, this function as multiplication centres which provide the entrepreneurship know-how to the whole region on a sustainable basis.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Republic of Moldova seeks to develop and modernize the VET sector in line with the Copenhagen Process and the Bruges Communiqué recommendations. In order to enhance attractiveness of the VET sector, the Ministry of Education, in partnership with a range of organizations and enterprises as well as social stakeholders, takes measures to strengthen entrepreneurial education.

In the context of establishing partnerships with economic and social stakeholders, the Ministry of Education supports the initiatives of creating multifunctional Competence Centres that provide entrepreneurial education within initial and continuous vocational training and represent centres for recognition of informal and non-formal learning.

Regional Competence Centres that combine theoretical knowledge and practical activities constitute a beneficial environment for establishing partnerships with economic and social stakeholders and link education to the regional needs of the market.

Currently, there is a single Competence Centre functioning in the agricultural sector, and it is planned to replicate this kind of centre in fields such as services, construction, transport, wood-processing, food industry and catering, as well as light industry.

OVERALL GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The overall goal of establishing Regional Competence Centres is to develop creativity, innovation and autonomy for better employment chances on the current labour market, or to support the start-up of one's own small and medium business, which would generate new job opportunities.

Specific objectives of the Regional Competence Centres are:

- Establish synergy between the business sector and the vocational institutions
- Enhance relevance of the learning outcomes for the local and regional market
- Implement the “learn by doing” approach, based on available technical and financial means and in a given environment
- Develop team spirit and students' communication skills.

CONTEXT

The entrepreneurial spirit (creativity, innovation and independent activity), in its broad sense, stimulates and encourages innovative and creative thinking; it is a key instrument meant to generate economic growth and better job opportunities as well as contribute to social cohesion, and fight against social exclusion.

Entrepreneurial learning is one of the policy priorities included in the Consolidated Strategy for Education Development in the Republic of Moldova for the period of 2011–2015. The Consolidated Strategy, together with the Law on Supporting Small and Medium Enterprises of 2006, provides to include entrepreneurial education at all educational levels by designing training programmes that develop the entrepreneurial spirit.

As a result of revising the existing programmes, a new modular curriculum was elaborated and approved for piloting in 15 vocational schools starting with September 2012. This curriculum includes such modules as:

- Entrepreneurship as a career option
- Business administration and risk management
- Business financing and accountability
- Business marketing
- Business planning.

In the VET sector, entrepreneurship is a compulsory subject entitled “*Basics of Entrepreneurship*” with a workload of 72 hours (vocational schools). In technical education institutions (colleges), entrepreneurial education is an optional subject or part of the economics subjects. This theoretical workload is meant to develop such skills and abilities as planning, organizing, administering, managing and delegating tasks, developing business plans, analyzing and evaluating projects, developing communication strategies, registering data, and executing individual and independent activities.

These entrepreneurial skills have to be tested within a “real” environment, which can be simulated in a best possible way within the Competence Centres. The creation of the Competence Centres is foreseen in the Government Action Plan for 2011–2014.

BENEFITS

- Initial entrepreneurial learning provided to the students on the spot,
- Continuous learning for adults,
- Teacher training and competence multiplication,
- Development of new programmes based on public-private partnerships, to start private business for the graduates,
- Creating jobs for the regional unemployed population by means of maintaining a production lot (“mini-factory”).

FACTUAL DATA

Currently, there is a single Regional Competence Centre functioning within the Vocational school with agricultural profile located in the town of Nisporeni. This Competence Centre represents a “mini-factory” for wine production covering the whole production cycle, from grapes growing to wine bottling. This factory was set up in 2005 and launched in 2010 within an Austrian-funded Project “*MolAgri*”, and nowadays maintains its functioning on a self-finance basis. It has in its possession 4 hectares of cultivated vineyard and the capacity of producing ca. 100,000 litres of wine annually, using high-quality equipment that matches the European standards in wine production. It is equipped with a 40-tonne grapes refrigerator, a grapes-pressing installation, 5 greenhouses that are 1,300 m long, an irrigation system, and 2 tractors.

The staff of the vocational school is in continuous growth. At present, there are 66 teachers (31 men and 35 women) teaching in the school. The “mini-factory” has 2 full-time employees, 1 technician, and 1 worker. Based on the demand, part-time workers are employed also throughout the year. Since the opening of the factory, the numbers of pupils enrolled in the school has considerably grown. Thus, in the academic year 2010/2011 there were 99 pupils enrolled, whereas in 2011/2012 – 170 people, and in 2012/2013 – already 200 people.

While it started as a wine production factory, the Competence Centre of the vocational school is now extending its activities in terms of developing training modules for a range of other occupations such as cook and catering manager, machine operator and tractor driver, seamstress, computer operator, beekeeper. It also delivers in-service teacher training within the region and provides career-guidance for these occupations. The introduction of new teaching programmes and methods contributes to the quality assurance and further development of Centre's activities.

SOURCES AND METHODS

The Regional Competence Centre provides expertise in entrepreneurship based on newly developed teaching programmes with focus on:

- Learner-centred teaching approach,
- Highly technological production process,
- Teacher training inside and outside the country, study visits.

The source for sustainable maintenance of the Competence Centre is the functional partnership established among the Ministry of Education, National Agency for Rural Development, local authorities, local and regional small and medium enterprises, and Wine-Production School of Silberberg, Austria.

The sustainability of the Regional Competence Centre is also ensured by the fact that the teaching staff from the region welcomes the functioning of such centres. Moreover, employers and social partners express their openness to support the Centre's initiatives and give positive feedback on further promotion, sponsoring and development of training programmes for other trades.

The Centre is a good generator of small enterprises in the region as it shares the know-how in entrepreneurship based on the regional distinctiveness and needs of the local market, thus contributing to the overall modernization of the VET sector.

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6.3 Partnership and dialogue

6.3.1 Implementation of the manual “*Guidance for practical training*” — Bosnia and Herzegovina

INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector is perceived as being one of the sectors with the highest competitive potential for B&H, according to its economic significance with continuous rising trends in growth and development (10% of GDP, both directly and indirectly generated, 16% of export earnings and over 8% of the total employment rate). Additionally, the sector provides potential for fostering entrepreneurship and foreign investments and constitutes a good example of cross-sectoral cooperation (with environment, transport, rural development, etc.). Developing education and training for tourism staff is one of the issues that, if addressed, could help enhance the performance of the sector.

OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

The Guidelines for Practical training is an instrument meant to improve the quality of practical training in the fields of tourism and catering. Thus, the quality of future employees would be at a higher level from the perspective of the B&H economy. The guidelines will support both the teachers and students in the process of their training and education in this field.

The role of training in the process of education is to make individuals capable to bring their own future contributions to a society they live in. It is important that training provides:

- Horizontal and vertical mobility;
- Equal access to education and training resources;
- Transparency and mobility.

The Manual also provides a better cooperation between education and labour market.

CONTEXT

The Manual was developed by KulturKontakt, Austria, in cooperation with the Agency for Preschool, Elementary and Secondary Education, including the principals and teachers of the pilot schools of the Tourist Regions Final Project. The Manual was developed in order to improve the quality of practical training and to support a sustainable cooperation among the Tourist schools and the tourism industry in B&H, due to its divided labour market and incompatibility with the educational policy.

Practical training in Bosnia and Herzegovina is performed in different ways: in the tourism industry or in schools. The problems that initiated the development of the Manual are as follows:

- Poor cooperation of educational authorities with the labour market,
- Low motivation of students and very often,
- Lack of skilful trainers in companies to train students.

It helps the education authorities, schools, employers and the labour market equally, but it is also an example of good practice between vocational education and social partners.

The measures undertaken in the implementation of the Manual have encouraged the development of more effective

methods of practical training performance. According to the recommendations from the Manual, the informative meetings with parents are held and they are informed about the list of selected companies or schools to carry out the practical training. Also, the students are informed on their rights and responsibilities during training in schools or in companies. Practical training coordinators are informed about the code of conduct, pedagogical tasks and the best methods and forms of working in performing practical training. Implementation of the Manual enables (horizontal and vertical) mobility, equal opportunities, transparency and mobility, not only in the market of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but in the market of the region and beyond.

Practical training enables development of skills and both personal and social competences like: personal independence, creativity, self-initiative, motivation, responsibility; in the domain of social competences: good communication skills, cooperation and team work, development of professional cooperation.

The advantage of this kind of training is that students work in a real setting (hotels, restaurants, tourist agencies) and become aware of the demands and challenges in their future workplace. This also gives the students opportunities either to get into the world of business in the companies they have had their practice with or to start their own businesses.

FACTUAL DATA

All Tourist – Catering Schools have participated in the implementation of the Manual in B&H. The model of the methodology developed in this Manual will be used to deliver practical training for other VET occupations. The total number of the Tourist-Catering Schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina is 68.

SOURCES AND METHODS

The Implementation of the Manual will enable a change of the mindset regarding practical training and improve the quality of planning and organization of practical training. Clearly defined requirements have already made visible results.

The Manual is endorsed by employers. They expect that by a consistent implementation of the Manual the current problems, such as student's inactivity and lack of motivation, could be solved, and the students' competences and the interest of schools for training quality will be improved and intensified.

The involvement of all practical training stakeholders (employers, schools, students, parents, coordinators), including feedback from the companies, constant evaluation and self-evaluation, and the supporting documentation are good indicators of the quality improvement of practical training in companies and schools as well.

SUSTAINABILITY

All educational authorities responsible for education in Bosnia and Herzegovina (fourteen Ministries of Education) have accepted and adopted the implementation of the Manual for practical training. Following said implementation, we can expect quality improvement of practical training in acquiring knowledge, skills and competences that are essential for the labour market.

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Summary points

FOSTERING CREATIVITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Entrepreneurship is the act of being an entrepreneur or, in other words, “*All forms of learning, education and training which contribute to an entrepreneurial spirit, entrepreneurial competence and behavior*”¹⁰.

Entrepreneurship education seeks to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation required to encourage entrepreneurial success in a wide range of settings. Variations of entrepreneurship education are offered throughout the world at all levels of schooling from primary, secondary schools or vocational education up to graduate university programmes. Entrepreneurship can provide an important basis for economic competitiveness and entrepreneurship education delivers good students for the world. So we must learn “*How to be a good Entrepreneur*”.

The Oslo Agenda for Entrepreneurship Education in Europe from October 2006 advanced the ideas of fostering entrepreneurial mindsets through education and learning by a broad involvement of stakeholders; it resulted in a detailed catalogue of initiatives, out of which all responsible stakeholders can select actions for the suitable level, and adapt them to the local situation.

According to the EU 2020 Strategy, Europe faces a number of challenges that can only be met if they are dealt with by innovative, well-educated, and entrepreneurial citizens who, whatever their pathway in life, have the spirit to think innovatively, and the courage to meet and adapt to these challenges.

Moreover, a dynamic economy, which is innovative and able to create the necessary jobs, will require a greater number of young people who are willing and able to become entrepreneurs, young people who will launch and successfully develop their own commercial or social ventures, or who will become innovators in the wider organisations in which they work. Because education is key to shaping young people’s attitudes, skills and culture, it is vital that entrepreneurial education is addressed from an early age. Entrepreneurship education is essential not only to shape the mindsets of young people, but also to provide the skills and knowledge that are central to developing an entrepreneurial culture.

The Key Competence Framework¹¹ states that the entrepreneurship key competence refers to an individual’s ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation and risk taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. Developing mindsets, generic attributes and skills that are the foundations of entrepreneurship can be complemented by imparting more specific knowledge about business according to the level and type of education.

Entrepreneurship education is an important priority on the European Commission agenda.

Within the education and training agenda, the strategic framework for European cooperation, Education and Training 2020 has, as its fourth long-term strategic objective, the enhancement of creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training¹².

The Commission continues to offer its support through the Europe 2020¹³ strategy, where the need to embed creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship into education systems is highlighted in three flagship programmes: Youth on the Move, An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs, and Innovation Union.

Enhancing creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship is one of the strategic objectives of the Bruges Communiqué¹⁴,

¹⁰ This is the framework definition of the Technical Working Group on Entrepreneurship of the European Commission.

¹¹ http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/key_en.html

¹² http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc1120_en.html

¹³ http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.html

which is to be reached by a number of recommended actions at national level and support from EU level in order to:

- Promote entrepreneurship in both I-VET and C-VET
- Include cooperation with employers, VET providers and national business,
- Support services and,
- Support newly established and future entrepreneurs by encouraging start-ups for VET graduates and by promoting learning mobility for young entrepreneurs.

The great majority of European countries address entrepreneurship education through national strategies or initiatives. Thus the importance of entrepreneurship education is widely recognised.

It is important for both policy makers and practitioners to enable young people to develop entrepreneurial mindsets and skills. One important role as “facilitators” of learning is played by the teachers who are supposed to use innovative and entrepreneurial methods of teaching.

In candidate countries and other countries who face important political, economic and social changes entrepreneurship education has a main role in empowering (young and adult) people with the capacities to innovate and create.

In this Compendium of good practices, countries presented examples on how entrepreneurship is implemented in the different systems, as well as some data about results and impact.

Bulgaria and Romania present examples of creativity encouragement by referring to a Student’s academy Corporate Social Responsibility and respectively the Business plan competition.

Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Moldova present examples of training programmes for entrepreneurship skills development (opening a training firm, which is a virtual company, that offers students the opportunity to learn how to start and run a business).

Another important aspect approached for this topic is presented by Bosnia and Herzegovina, and refers to the partnership and dialogue between companies and schools to provide entrepreneurship education.

From these examples, one can learn how public policies (taking into account the different responsibility levels – public policy, institutions, educators and relevant stakeholders)- can support the teaching of entrepreneurship within vocational training.

The example from the Republic of Macedonia presents the UNESCO Young People’s World Heritage Education Programme (WHE Programme). The aim of the programme is to develop further competences of the VET students:

- Cultural awareness and
- Creativity.

The Programme supports innovative and creative ways of teaching and learning in VET education in order to contribute to the process of integration and promotion of European and worldwide citizenship. The Programme has also made an important contribution to culture and cultural diversity. The UNESCO Young People’s World Heritage Education Programme (WHE Programme) provides young people with the necessary knowledge, skills, network and commitment to become involved in the heritage protection from local to global levels. New pedagogical approaches are developed to mobilize young people to participate actively in the promotion of World Heritage.

The project offers a new method of intercultural education, learning for history, protecting the cultural and natural heritage. The schools project offers practical opportunities for students to discuss and to take part in initiatives that protect the World Heritage.

¹⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/vocational/bruges_en.pdf

It is desired that the countries from South East Europe should continue to develop entrepreneurship education in their systems; cooperation among them could play an important role in this issue.

Exchange of good practices among schools who provide and have good results in entrepreneurship education, organize common competitions, and ensure learning mobility for young entrepreneurs could guarantee the premise to foster entrepreneurship in the region with good results on raising competitiveness.

Examples are presented for:

- a — Creativity encouragement – Bulgaria, Romania
- b — Entrepreneurship skills development – Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Moldova
- c — Partnership and dialogue – Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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7

Improving the VET quality

7.1 Quality framework developments

7.1.1 Methods and instruments for quality assurance of the Initial and Vocational Education and Training (IVET) system — Montenegro

INTRODUCTION

The significance of vocational education for the society development and the preparation of individuals for competitive participation on the labour market influenced the systemic strengthening of the school work monitoring and analysis with the aim of quality enhancement.

External quality assessment processes may improve key standards, while self-evaluation at schools ensures the identification of strengths and weaknesses of the process, with the goal of quality assurance. Human resources in schools, through external evaluation processes, are becoming responsible for quality and quality assurance. The model for a self-evaluation process must rely on systemic support, human and material resources, and positive tradition and practice from previous work.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The assessment, provision and improvement of quality have been defined by laws and regulations in Montenegro. New regulations, the General Law on Education and the Rulebook on the Content, Form and Manner of Quality Assessment of Educational Activities in Institutions, established a sustainable system of external quality assurance.

Namely, the General Law on Education has defined the responsibilities of the institutions within the process of establishing and improving quality¹⁵. Sub-legislation has defined procedures in the process of quality assessment¹⁶. The development of quality improvement plans are based on reports on external quality evaluations of education and training in schools. The report contains seven key areas, and each area includes a number of indicators.

For the 2010–2014 period, the Vocational Education Development Strategy in Montenegro has defined goals and tasks, which create assumptions for “quality vocational education on the basis of defined indicators of education quality.” The Strategy is in the area of quality assurance in VET, oriented towards “the establishment of a quality assurance system at the state and school level.” The tasks identified by the Strategy are the following: “To develop methodological framework, which supports the establishment and implementation of quality assurance system at the state and school level, to improve processes and measures of self-evaluation of educational institutions, and their implementation.”

Quality assessment in IVET has been based on a methodology¹⁷, and has been carried out by authorized officials. The level of quality is defined by the description of standard indicators. Reports contain recommendations for quality improvement in different areas.

¹⁵ Quality assurance and improvement of educational activity of institutions, at least once in four years, is conducted by the Bureau for Educational Services and Centre for Vocational Education and Training.

¹⁶ Rulebook on the contents, form and manner of quality assessment of educational activity in institutions

¹⁷ <http://www.zavodzaskolstvo.gov.me/naslovna/nadzor>

A school quality improvement plan has to be prepared based on the recommendations from the External Evaluation Report. The plan includes: measures and actions to implement identified recommendations; stakeholders; implementation schedule and progress indicators.

Since the external evaluation has been implemented every four years, policies makers in education have the opportunity to manage the implementation progress of new curricula in the field of education and training, in order to improve the knowledge, skills and competences of students as per labour market needs.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

- Quality assessment based on methodology and indicators;
- Defining quality of education and training organizers based on defined indicators;
- Support education and training organizers in the process of quality assurance and improvement;
- Improvement of vocational education and training as well as students' knowledge and skills for the labour market.

CONTEXT

The vocational education and training system, which provides competitive knowledge and skills for the labour market, has been created on the concept presented in the Book of Changes 2001. General Law on Education, adopted in 2002, enabled institutional strengthening, i.e. establishment of the Bureau for Educational Services, the Centre for Vocational Education and Training and the Examination Centre, which ensured a systemic and comprehensive approach to quality assessment and improvement.

External and internal quality assurance was enhanced by amendments on General Law on Education in 2010. The strategic development plan of vocational education and training has defined the educational goals and objectives for the period 2010–2014.

BENEFITS

- Improved conditions for knowledge and skills acquisition in IVET as per labour market needs;
- Establishing processes based on relevant indicators;
- Strengthening relationships between IVET schools and labour market;
- Raising awareness on the significance of quality assurance for development.

FACTUAL DATA

- During 2006–2010 the first cycle of external evaluation was performed in 39 VET schools;
- In 2010–2012 the second cycle of external evaluation was performed in 21 VET schools;
- 39 schools have been involved in training to implement the new concept of internal evaluation;
- New model has been piloted in 6 vocational schools;
- Training of 60 team members from school management and teachers from 20 schools.
- Training of 90 evaluators in 5 VET schools to implement the new internal evaluation model.
- New methodology is being implemented in 20 schools¹⁸.

SOURCES AND METHODS

Quality assurance in VET in Montenegro has been part of the education system reform since 2000. It has been achieved, above all, through external and internal evaluation. The external evaluation in Montenegro started in 2006.

¹⁸ Manual "Development of VET schools by Internal Evaluation Process "

The evaluation implementation has been carried out based on the Methodology composed of seven key areas, and on qualitative indicators.

The internal evaluation has been a legal obligation¹⁹ for schools since 2010; it defines the achieved level of development and identifies areas that are necessary to be developed in order to improve students' performance, knowledge and skills. The process of quality improvement started in 2006, with the development of the: *"Quality assurance model in VET in Montenegro"* methodology. The Model was developed within the *"Support for VET in Montenegro"* project – VET 2004. A working group composed of representatives of educational institutions and schools took part in the development of the Model.

A new concept of self-evaluation in VET was developed in 2010 with the support of British Council. The improvement achieved by this new concept is the creation of a coherent internal evaluation system based on objective, measurable and standardized indicators. This system is, at the same time, a key tool for continuous check of school quality and for the planning of its continuous improvement as well. The Model was sent to the European Training Foundation (ETF) for assessment, and obtained positive feedback, which resulted in its presentation at the Fourth meeting of the Community of Practice in Budva.

The Model was developed by an expert team coordinated by the Centre for Vocational Education and Training, and it was tested on focus groups up to the piloting concept. The new model was adopted covering three key dimensions: cooperation, effectiveness and resource management. The model specifies areas and responsibilities in the process of quality assessment, procedures, quantitative and qualitative indicators, assessment scale, etc.

The internal evaluation process provides insight into the level of achievement in relation to standards. In addition to this, the internal evaluation provides the maintenance of good practice, drawbacks removal, identification of developmental priorities and efficient manners to support the students, etc.

The internal evaluation process, based on the new methodological concept, was implemented in three phases:

- Preparation – training of groups, teams and teachers as assessors/evaluators in internal evaluation methods – self-evaluation;
- I phase – piloting in six schools for a two-year period;
- II phase – results analysis of piloting the internal evaluation concept with a concept revision/approval, up to three months, and
- III phase – introducing the internal evaluation upon the methodological grounds adopted by the Council.

In the first phase, based on the training programme, pilot schools, quality committees, and teachers-evaluators were prepared for testing the model in practice. During the piloting process in six schools, the Centre for Vocational Education and Training has provided necessary and continuous support in the implementation, monitoring and improvement of the internal evaluation model. The support was also provided by the Ministry of Education and Sports, Bureau for Educational Services, etc.

The activities that have been simulated ranged from the development of a four-year strategic plan of internal quality assurance, assessment of indicators, defining recommendations up to the development of an action plan, report and catalogue of quality. The piloting results have been presented to all vocational schools; based on the feedback and experience of pilot schools, the model has been improved and aligned with the realistic capacities of the schools.

PHASES – Internal quality assurance and improvement process:

- Defining areas of internal evaluation on an annual basis

¹⁹ General Law on Education, Article 17: »Quality assurance and improvement of educational activity is conducted by an institution (self-evaluation) partially every four years for certain areas, and comprehensively every two years.

- The Committee for internal quality assurance, based on the Internal Evaluation Plan, lists areas which will be the subject of internal evaluation (in the School Annual Plan and Programme), teams/evaluators, dynamics etc.
- Defining which techniques and instruments will be used;
- The Committee for internal quality assurance prepares survey sheets, forms and others, which will be used in the process of determining the indicators level.
- Appointing teachers-evaluators/internal evaluators which will carry out certain processes, i.e. collect data and validate parameters of success;
- Internal evaluation – self-evaluation;
- Teacher evaluators and teams for assessment of quality indicators collect data, conduct surveys, analyse documentation, etc.
- Processing and analysis of the achieved results;
- Drafting reports, defining levels of qualitative indicators, defining recommendations.
- Reporting;
- Teacher-evaluators and teams of quality assessment submit reports to the Committee for internal quality assurance.
- Adopting measures to improve quality;
- The Committee for internal quality assurance draws up an integral report (partial – annually, and comprehensive – every two years), runs it by the school principal and prepares it in the form that will be submitted to consideration by the Teachers' Committee and School Board. An action plan to removing the drawbacks identified by the process of internal quality assurance will be structured.
- Work on quality improvement.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE PROCESS – SUSTAINABILITY

The implementation of the Self-evaluation model in VET schools has been supported by the Ministry of Education and Sports and the Centre for Vocational Education and Training. Planned activities of the Centre for Vocational Education and Training involve trainings of teams for quality assurance and teachers-evaluators in VET schools.

In addition to this, the Evaluation Department of the Centre for Vocational Education and Training continuously monitors self-evaluation results, improves indicators and quality standards, reporting process, etc.

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7.2 Benchmarking and mutual learning

7.2.1 Improving quality assurance (QA) in initial Vocational Education and Training through schools' networks — Romania

INTRODUCTION

The example presents how schools' cooperation through mutual learning activities, online forums and exchanges of good practice and innovative approaches on topics of common interest can create sustainable networks of shared knowledge and lead to the improvement of quality assurance in IVET.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the Romanian TVET system, a number of 16 schools' networks on the main professional domains (Agriculture, Chemistry and environment, Commerce, Construction, Electric, Electronics, Food industry, Textile industry, Mechanics, Tourism and catering, Wood industry) were set up starting with 2011. Each network consists of 6 schools; one of them has the coordination role. The networks were established following a national selection process. The cooperation of schools in each network is based on a Partnership agreement, detailing the roles and responsibilities of each partner school. A Steering Committee was set up for each network, involving representatives from all the member schools.

In order to foster institutional capacity building in all participating schools, a training programme on "*Improving quality assurance (QA) in initial Vocational Education and Training (TVET) through schools networks*" was elaborated, and 2 representatives from each school and representatives from school inspectorates were trained.

According to the *Partnership agreement*, each network implements an agreed upon annual action plan. Activities include peer learning²⁰ visits, online discussions using specific platforms developed for each network, peer review²¹ activities and collection and dissemination of good practice examples.

The schools' collaboration strengthened leadership across each network. Teachers, trainers, students and other staff are motivated and stimulated by opportunities to work with colleagues in other IVET schools on common issues. Peer support is a powerful method of continuous professional development. Staff also benefit from working with colleagues on a larger scale on broader issues, such as transition into and beyond TVET schools.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

- Quality improvement of TVET provision
- Cooperation and dissemination of good practice
- Mutual learning
- Promotion of innovation and creativity.

²⁰ DEF: mutual learning (source: CEDEFOP)

²¹ DEF: Evaluation, by colleagues or peers, of VET activity or management for formative or summative purposes (source – CEDEFOP)

CONTEXT

In Romania, there are currently 1270 schools offering TVET training programmes for 16 professional domains. At national level, cooperation among TVET schools was piloted for the first time in 2005, as part of the implementation of a PHARE TVET programme, that is the quality assurance component.

During this pilot exercise, 20 TVET experienced schools that have already gone through a yearly quality assurance cycle, were allocated to 100 TVET schools in a “mentor” system. As the original pilot schools had already gone through the 1st self-assessment cycle, they could use their experience in advising TVET schools that had just joined the pilot phase. From this “mentor” system a Regional School Networks was developed in 2007.

In time, this approach did not lead to significant improvements of TVET provision because the domains in which qualification were offered by different member schools from the same regional network were different; consequently, specific problems related to connection with labour market, development of local curricula, development of teaching and learning auxiliary materials and assessment instruments could not be discussed and solved together.

Therefore, there has been some experience in Romania of TVET schools working together to improve outcomes for learners. Focus on good quality collaboration between TVET schools and other stakeholders networks has proved an effective way to improve the delivery of services and raise standards of VET within communities. However, not all networks functioned to the benefit of VET providers, and establishing a school network system oriented on specific professional domains was seen as a strong tool in strengthening the TVET schools networks.

Furthermore, in all the teachers’ and school managers’ feedbacks, when asked what could be done to foster cooperation among TVET schools at national level, the development of domain-oriented schools networks was suggested.

BENEFITS

- Build understanding and trust,
- Improve strategic and working relationships among organisations,
- Avoid overlap and effort duplication and address provision gaps,
- Bring together complementary skills sets and expertise,
- Stimulate mutual learning and innovation,
- Support quality assurance and improvement,
- Provide enhanced access to resources and greater efficiency,
- Allow risks and benefits to be shared.

FACTUAL DATA

- 96 IVET schools involved in the networks,
- 16 networks set up at national level,
- 234 representatives of schools and school inspectorates trained on the topic,
- 48 peer learning activities successfully finalised.

SOURCES AND METHODS

- A methodology for the development of schools network,
- A partnership agreement model,
- A format for the schools’ network,
- Annual action plan,
- Self assessment report,
- Regulation for organization and operation,
- Good practice example presentation.

SUSTAINABILITY

Currently there are only 96 IVET schools involved in the project. After a full year piloting phase, it is envisaged to revise the Methodology for the development of schools' networks and to recommend the development of the networks to all the schools in the system.

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Summary points

Quality assurance is a key instrument in the reform of Vocational Education and Training (VET). Quality assurance increases the effectiveness of VET outcomes, in terms of improving the match between demand and supply, of the workforce employability, and access to training and lifelong learning, especially for vulnerable groups.

VET systems must be responsive to the changing needs of the economy, society and individuals, thus increasing their flexibility and guaranteeing at the same time global coherence throughout the system. VET providers need to continuously adapt and update their provision and services in order to increase the effectiveness in meeting stakeholders' needs, as a vital condition to remain competitive. The development and reform of the VET systems entails a devolution process designed to achieve greater closeness to real needs at regional and local levels and involve local stakeholders in the training provision. Quality assurance is a key instrument in supporting this process.

VET system covers a diversity of programmes, leading to a wide range of qualifications. This diversity is a rich foundation on which to build mutual learning, and a challenge when it comes to defining the criteria aimed at assuring transparency of the VET systems quality. This is a crucial issue in increasing mutual trust, as well as in supporting mobility and lifelong learning.

In the field of vocational education and training, through the Copenhagen Declaration (2002), quality assurance has become a priority at European level.

At the European Commission initiative, a Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) was elaborated in 2003, as a meta-reference framework; its objectives are:

- The improvement of cooperation between the EU Member States (highlighting the methods and models/templates exchange, as well as common quality criteria and principles applied to vocational training) and
- Increase of the level of mutual trust in the quality of vocational training. It includes a model based on quality cycle (Planning – Implementation – Evaluation – Review)

This framework proposes a methodology focused on the training providers' self-assessment, combined with periodical external monitoring.

In 2007, CQAF was revised and a *Recommendation of the European Parliament and Council on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET (EQARF/EQAVET)* was issued. EQARF/EQAVET includes a set of common quality criteria, detailed at system and provider level, and a set of performance indicators. The focus is on improving the quality of vocational training.

The Council conclusions on the role of education and training in the implementation of the 'Europe 2020' strategy²² sets up a set of four strategic objectives, one of them referring to improving quality and efficiency of VET, with emphasis on:

- Improving the key competences
- Developing the initial and continuous training of teachers and trainers
- Improving the attractiveness of the teachers' profession
- Strengthening the VET providers management
- Implementing efficient quality assurance mechanisms at VET provider level

*The Bruges Communiqué on enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training for the period 2011–2020*²³ (Communiqué of the European Ministers for Vocational Education and Training, the European Social Partners

²² http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc1120_en.htm

²³ http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/vocational/bruges_en.pdf

and the European Commission, meeting in Bruges on 7 December 2010 to review the strategic approach and priorities of the Copenhagen process for 2011–202), emphasises the importance of ensuring the sustainability and excellence of vocational education and training, strengthening that:

“If Europe is to maintain its position as the strongest exporter of industrial products in the world, it must have world class VET. In a knowledge-based society, vocational skills and competences are just as important as academic skills and competences. The diversity of the European VET systems is an asset for mutual learning. But transparency and a common approach to quality assurance are necessary to build up mutual trust, which will facilitate mobility and recognition of skills and competences between those systems. In the decade ahead we must give high priority to quality assurance in our European cooperation in VET”.

Improving the quality and efficiency of VET is one of the strategic objectives of the Bruges Communiqué, which is to be reached by a number of recommended actions at national level and with EU level support, such as:

- Take adequate measures to implement the EQAVET Recommendation and make progress towards national quality assurance frameworks for VET,
- Establish at national level a common quality assurance framework for VET providers, which also applies to associated workplace learning and which is compatible with the EQAVET framework,
- Improve initial and continuing training for teachers and trainers, by offering flexible training provision and investment,
- Improve teachers’ knowledge of work practices on the one hand and trainers’ general pedagogical skills and competences on the other,
- Organise activities aimed at promoting VET attractiveness and excellence,
- Create opportunities for enhanced cooperation between VET institutions and enterprises (profit and non-profit), for example through traineeships for teachers in enterprises.

The examples of good practice included in the Compendium illustrate relevant national developments in setting up and implementing quality assurance mechanisms at system level.

The example provided by Montenegro details how the evaluation of VET schools has been set up and continuously improved, starting with 2006. A coherent self-evaluation model based on specific objectives and on measurable and standardized indicators was developed and tested. The process included the development of the key concept and of methodological support, the training of resource personnel (assessors/evaluators in internal evaluation methods – self-evaluation), the pilot stage, the revising of the approach based on the pilot results and the generalization of the model. The implementation of the self-evaluation model in VET schools has had great support from the Ministry of Education and Sports and by the Centre for Vocational Education.

The example provided by Romania outlines how VET schools’ cooperation through mutual learning activities, online forums, and exchanges of good practice and innovative approaches on topics of common interest can create sustainable networks of shared knowledge and lead to the improvement of quality assurance in IVET. The example demonstrates the important role that the cooperation of schools’ has in supporting teachers’ continuous professional development and in facilitating mutual learning. Examples of VET schools’ good practices in different domains are inspiring and motivating in staff’s and students’ road to excellence.

The examples are presented for:

- Quality framework developments
Methods and instruments for quality assurance of the initial and vocational education and training (IVET) system
Montenegro
- Benchmarking and mutual learning
Improving quality assurance (QA) in initial Vocational Education and Training through schools’ networks
Romania

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8

Conclusions and implications
for future developments in
making VET more attractive

Conclusions and implications for future developments in making VET more attractive

Today's Europe is facing major economic and social challenges. Globalisation, restructuring and innovation have led to a highly competitive environment. To succeed in the present new knowledge-based economy, we need high quality VET systems, which respond to the needs of today and address the challenges of tomorrow. Shaping VET systems accordingly is the shared responsibility of national authorities, social partners, schools, teachers and learners: all have a mutual interest to achieve effective VET systems through closer cooperation.

Among the strategic objectives aiming to improve the relevance, quality and efficiency of VET, making VET more attractive is a priority. The examples presented in the compendium offer a wide range of directions leading to increase the attractiveness and prestige of vocational education and training:

- Raising awareness, through national skills competition, of the essential contribution that high standards of competence make to the achievement of economic success and personal fulfilment;
- Increase public awareness of the possibilities VET offers through developing marketing and communications strategies;
- Recommend measures aiming to create better conditions for all students in order to reduce early school leaving;
- Developing a cross-curricular teaching approach, focusing on the development of life skills as the premise for career management;
- Introduce training vouchers as a new mechanism to fund adult training in order to increase their participation in VET programmes;
- Reform the VET system, develop learning outcomes as oriented towards qualifications based on educational profiles and reshape the curriculum;
- Facilitate recognition of non formal and informal learning and of learning outcomes acquired in international mobility;
- Support inclusive VET through the development of teaching and learning materials for students with special educational needs;
- Improve responsiveness to labour market needs by developing and implementing strategic planning models for the IVET offer;
- Enhance sector involvement in the design and delivery of VET programmes;
- Train unemployed people to acquire skills and competences required by the labour market;
- Involve HE in VET teachers' continuous training;
- Encourage mixed learning;
- Develop creativity and entrepreneurial skills through specific teaching and learning methods;
- Create multifunctional Competence Centres that provide entrepreneurial education;
- Develop methods and instruments for quality assurance of the VET systems;
- Foster VET schools cooperation through inter assistance networks.

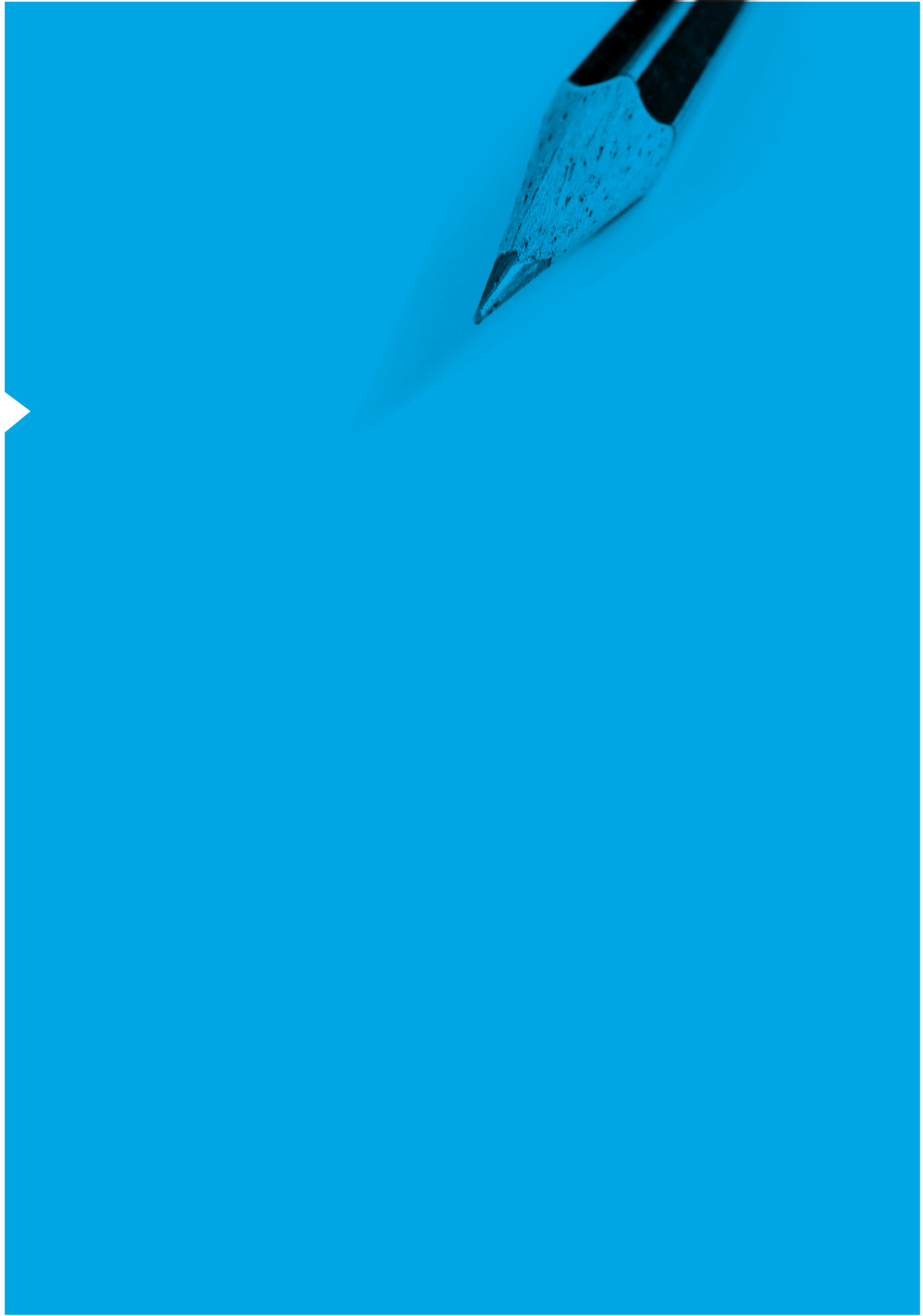
Sharing information on how different national VET systems have dealt with these challenges is extremely important for the South Eastern Europe countries, as they face in many cases similar socio-economic challenges. In the process of developing the compendium, the participating countries have found it a worthwhile experience to exchange ideas and practices as they aimed to learn from each other, to find solutions to common problems and develop new ideas. This has contributed to the creation of a community of practice between VET practitioners within and between the VET systems of the SEE region. Examples provided in the compendium can be a source of inspiration for moving forward the VET developments in the region.

Furthermore, VET faces a serious and deeply embedded problem in the SEE region: its status in the community and amongst policy makers. This is why enhancing the prestige of VET as well as making VET more attractive in the eyes of the community and the individuals so as to promote an equal esteem is of crucial importance for countries in the region. This compendium is the result of the commitment and of the enthusiastic and voluntary efforts of SEE countries' VET Centres representatives involved in its elaboration, as well as of the particular commitment and support of KulturKontakt Austria and the technical support provided by ETF.

This compendium could be considered as a starting point for our SEE cooperation in VET, which should continue in the coming years, deepening and enlarging the targeted areas and levels in order to make VET more attractive. This

compendium of good practices addressing issues relevant at system level, could be complemented by further in-depth research in the form of other compendium addressing relevant issues at VET providers' level in order to ensure further mutual learning among all actors in education: VET providers, teachers and students.

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