

skillset AND MATCH

CEDEFOP'S MAGAZINE
PROMOTING
LEARNING FOR WORK

 CEDEFOP

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MAIN STORY:
14 WAYS TO TACKLE SKILL MISMATCH

NEWS: **COMMISSIONER THYSSEN
VISITS CEDEFOP**

INTERVIEWS:
MARIANNE THYSSEN, GEOFF HAYWARD,
DENISE AMYOT

FEATURE:
#CEDEFOPPHOTOAWARD 2016

MEMBER STATES: **ESTONIA**



CEDEFOP

The **European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training** (Cedefop) is the European Union's reference centre for vocational education and training.

We provide information on and analyses of vocational education and training systems, policies, research and practice.

Cedefop was established in 1975 by Council Regulation (EEC) No 337/75.

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a new lease of life of life for European

VET

JAMES CALLEJA

CEDEFOP DIRECTOR



*We will finally
be judged by what
we achieve in practice,
in education
and in workplaces,
and not by what
we say, write
and disseminate*

”

Commissioner Thyssen's visit to Cedefop has reinforced our excellent working relationship and cooperation with the Commission. As expected, Cedefop gave invaluable technical support to the proposed *Skills agenda* and in particular to the revision of the European qualifications framework and Europass recommendation, two strategic tools which many European citizens recognise as instrumental in education reform and employability respectively.

Cedefop looks forward to supporting Member States and social partners in forging a culture of skills for employment. We aspire to give European vocational education and training (VET) a new lease of life; not so much a new beginning but a sturdier commitment by all to invest in learning processes that foster skills relevant to labour market needs, and personal and social development.

In the globalised and insecure societies in which many of us live, the need to educate for inclusion and respect for diversity are becoming strategic to development. It is time to act. Vocational education is a key enabler of the values that Europe wants to see reach all citizens.

We have learned from Cedefop's conferences on globalisation and VET and on skills needs that issues of employability, acquisition of skills, qualifications and work-based learning have no geopolitical boundaries. They have diverse cultural meaning and application but what ultimately matters is what people are able to learn and do, and what provides them with a living wage and quality of life.

In our efforts to bring together governments and social partners, as well as experiences from EU Member States and beyond, we will finally be judged by what we achieve in practice, in education and in workplaces, and not by what we say, write and disseminate.

This is a challenge not just for Cedefop but for all institutions working to advise on policy. Our work programme impact must filter into VET provision and workplaces. Citizens will be better off if VET reform becomes a step towards more and better jobs. Inclusion and excellence must become VET hallmarks in the immediate future. ■

COMMISSIONER **Thyssen:**
 motivated to work
 with **Cedefop**
 for **social changes**
 in Europe



We need your help to transform the Skills agenda from ideas to results

In her first visit to Cedefop in April, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility Marianne Thyssen called the agency an invaluable source of expertise for the European Commission to rely on.

Micheline Scheys, Chair of Cedefop's Governing Board, pointed out the importance of the Commissioner's visit in getting to know the agency first hand.

Cedefop Director James Calleja welcomed Ms Thyssen to 'the European house of VET, where ideas on skills, qualifications, youth employment and European tools are generated for stakeholders.' He

said that the next big challenge is the upcoming *Skills agenda* to which Cedefop has contributed: 'We look forward to helping implementing it so that no citizen is left behind.'

Addressing the agency's staff, Ms Thyssen said that the Commission aims to achieve a new boost for jobs, growth and investment, and stressed that 'we need your help to transform the *Skills agenda* from ideas to results.'

The Commissioner noted: 'I am more motivated than ever to work with you to make social changes European citizens deserve and to make VET a first choice, not a second option.'

VET IN ACTION

During her visit, the Commissioner was pleasantly surprised by young people studying to become pastry chefs at a local VET school. They offered her home-made delicacies. Ms Thyssen revealed that her father was a pastry chef too and discussed with the students the challenges and opportunities of VET.

Cedefop's Gerd-Oskar Bausewein, Pascaline Descy, Deputy Director Mara Brugia, Cedefop Governing Board Chair Micheline Scheys, Commissioner Marianne Thyssen, Cedefop Director James Calleja, Antonio Ranieri and Loukas Zahilas





A seasoned politician in Belgium, Marianne Thyssen assumed the top-priority Employment portfolio in the European Commission in November 2014. At the same time, Cedefop became part of her portfolio.

AN IMPORTANT PARTNER

In an exclusive interview, Ms Thyssen told *Skillset and match* she was very happy about that: 'Cedefop is about skills, and skills are very important for employment. We have to build a bridge to bring together the world of work and the world of learning; the world of business and the world of skills. I think Cedefop is a very important partner there. You have your experience; you have your expertise. We have on our agenda a new European *Skills agenda* that we are launching this year and I am happy that I can count on this expertise.'

Cedefop was involved in drawing up the *Skills agenda* and Ms Thyssen explained how it can also contribute to its implementation: 'If you look at the three main strands of this agenda, then you see that it's

really about what Cedefop is doing. First of all, skilling/upskilling people, lifelong learning, reskilling, because they will have more transitions in their lives and they must have the right skills at the right moment. The second strand is about transparency, recognition, visibility of the competences people have. This is also a huge part of your work in Cedefop. The third is intelligence. What are the trends, what are the skills we will need in the future? We know for sure that it is not one-size-fits-all; as the Cedefop Director told me, we have to go into the countries; we have to look at what's going on locally.'

A group of people that need to have access to new skills or to have their skills recognised is refugees/migrants, now a hot topic in Europe. Ms Thyssen lays out the steps the Commission is taking to help them enter Europe's labour market: 'We called together all the managers of the European social funds and agencies of the Member States to explain how Europe can help with funds and how they can use them. We explained that if they want to modify an operational programme, we are on their side to do it in a flexible way and quickly. But of course we have the skills question. We have many young people among the refugees. Sometimes for two or three years they haven't been in school. They have to go back to school, they have to be skilled. The adults probably have to be reskilled, learn a language. And of course recognition of skills, visibility, comparability; we can use the tools Cedefop has to host refugees in a proper way.'



Commissioner Thyssen addressing Cedefop staff in Thessaloniki

Watch the full exclusive interview with Commissioner Thyssen during her visit to Cedefop



labour market policies for labour market reform



Professor GEOFF HAYWARD

FACULTY OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE, UK

Two approaches to the link between vocational and higher education clashed at Cedefop's recent seminar for learning providers on promoting quality in education and training delivery. Keynote speakers Professor **Geoff Hayward** (Cambridge University) and Dr **Denise Amyot** (President & CEO Colleges and Institutes, Canada) both praised vocational education and training (VET) for equipping students with professional tools. However, while Dr Amyot stressed that even university graduates switch to VET for better employment results, Professor Hayward dismissed European VET reform as ineffective. *Skillset and match* quizzed them on their views.

Professor Hayward, are you saying that we should keep VET and higher education separate?

There are certain components of what might loosely be called vocational education and training, always a difficult thing to define, which clearly are undertaken in higher education. If someone is learning to be a doctor, in one sense isn't that VET? Except that we normally call it professional education and training. The point I'm making is that the way we design VET qualifications may make them fit for one purpose, for example progression into the labour market, but that may render them unfit for another purpose. You can have a high quality vocational qualification which enables people to move into the labour market or enables those already employed to upskill themselves quite quickly, which has high utility for that purpose.

But if the purpose is supporting progression into higher education, there is no guarantee that a quality assurance framework around the employment focus will provide the qualities you are looking for in your people making such progression. We shouldn't delude ourselves that you can do both things with the same mechanism.

Should we use another mechanism or say those qualifications are for the labour market and are not meant to prepare you for higher education?

Different countries do this in different ways. For example, if you take VET qualifications in some of the northern European countries and wish to progress into higher education, you have to do an additional year. Other countries have much more what I would call general VET programmes, where



young people are learning languages and their own language and mathematics to a very high level in addition to the vocational component of the programmes. But in other countries, those types of more general learning outcomes aren't recognised or valued by employers because they are not required for company-specific activities and so are edited out of the qualification. That's fine if you just want to use the qualification for employment purposes. But, if you want to use it for another purpose, then it's not fit for that purpose. I'm a great fan of VET, I've worked in it for many years, but, if we are serious about young people going into higher education, we need to design VET programmes that actually enable them to make the transition. And we need to work with higher education colleagues to help them understand what the learning needs of vocational education students might be. Many higher education lecturers say 'we treat everybody the

same'. That's not fair. What's fair is you recognise that there are differences between people and you need to work with and support those differences. Very often what you get from VET students is significant knowledge and expertise, which becomes really valuable later on in degree programmes, because they are doing practice work; it is just getting through those initial stages when they need to have the academic aspects they can build on. If you're not going to do that, then you have to build in remediation programmes within the first year of the higher education degrees or have a separate preparation year.

But you said that European-level programmes are wasting a lot of money; they are, as you put it, extraordinarily expensive. If you are going to build in another remedial component, then it's going to cost even more.

Yes, it is. So, I think it's an open question as to whether the

various reforms that we've seen across the European Union over the last 20 or 30 years have produced the outcomes that we wanted them to produce in terms of raising productivity or increasing competitiveness. I've always thought it was a mistake to think you can reform the labour market by reforming the education system. You need policies directed to the labour market to reform the labour market. But much of policy in this area is based on sales law of economics, which says if you create supply, you'll then create demand. I think we need to take stock and ask whether that has happened. It's a really important piece of research that needs to be done. But it needs to be done across Europe because the systems in Europe are so different. ■

Learning providers and the quality of learning delivery seminar



from university to professional education



Dr DENISE AMYOT

PRESIDENT & CEO,
COLLEGES AND INSTITUTES, CANADA

Dr Amyot, why would a student want to do applied research in a college and not a university?

First because it's very practical, you see the results immediately, whether in developing concrete new products or a new service, something that will be commercialised. It also gives you the opportunity to work closely with a potential employer, who can offer you a job afterwards. And when you prepare your CV or go to an interview this is very attractive to employers. When you can have students who had that experience they are worth gold.

You said that in Canada you have replaced the acronyms VET and TVET with professional and technical education and training because of the negative perception that the former have. Does that really make a difference?

It does, especially with parents. Parents are part of the problem but they are also part of the solution. By changing the name they become more curious about what this is and they are blown away when they discover how practical it is and how it's not only job skills but it's also about lifelong learning, about critical thinking, about working with a team. When I go to universities, unfortunately, I always see students sitting on a chair taking notes. If you visit one of our colleges in Canada, the classroom is not like that at all. They are all doing something. For the students, the fact that you are part of a professional and technical education has a very different connotation. A lawyer's internship is professional education. A doctor: it's professional education. We owe it to our students to raise the image, the profile of professional and technical education so that they can be proud of themselves, and make sure it's not a second choice. The best example is that

you have a large percentage of university students that now come to our colleges.

What about the argument by Professor Hayward that those who want to take the step from VET to higher education are mostly not academically prepared to do that?

I disagree completely. There are areas that maybe not all students will be able to go into but with support they can make it. The best example for me is British Columbia. In all the disciplines there, the students that were in year 3 did better when they had studied years 1 and 2 at a college. Even we were flabbergasted by those results. The other thing is that we now offer a degree. So, you don't even need to go to university. ■



Quality assurance in VET

by GARY HORSLEY

14 WAYS TO TACKLE SKILL MISMATCH



The results of Cedefop's European skills and jobs survey were discussed at a conference in December which explored ways of maximising skills for jobs and jobs for skills. Inspiring cases of addressing skill mismatch were presented by international organisations, public employment services, companies and vocational education and training (VET) providers. A policy learning forum on the subject will follow next November, with the participation of ministries, VET providers and other social partners.

Public employment services: brokers of skills and jobs

COMPETENCE-BASED MATCHING

As shown by the work of VDAB Flanders on competence-based matching, public employment services have a great interest in skill mismatch. VDAB acknowledges the gap between those seeking jobs and available vacancies, both in terms of formal qualifications and experience gained in work, but finds a much greater overlap between the two when competences are added to the equation. It is promoting an approach in which jobseekers can detail all their competences, even if they seem not to be job-related, and employers can specify the ones they are looking for in a particular vacancy. Using technology to find matches between the two reduces the bridge between jobseekers and employers, ensuring that suitable candidates are linked to vacancies. It also makes the whole labour market process more transparent for all concerned.

TAILORED TRAINING FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

The Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional (Institute of Employment and Training) in Portugal takes this a stage further as part of its active employment measures. The *Active life programme* offers flexible and modular training to those registered as unemployed at employment centres, allowing them to acquire competences relevant to the labour market.

The programme helps ... give value to competences achieved through experience and on-the-job training

More than 200 000 participants in 2013 and 2015, and nearly 300 000 in 2014 were provided with professional, personal and entrepreneurial competences through the programme, promoting return to active life; many have been helped to achieve a basic qualification level.

The programme helps to adjust vocational training courses to the real needs of the labour market and give value to competences achieved through experience and on-the-job training. Courses finish, where possible, with on-the-job training to allow acquisition and development of technical, relationship, organisational and career management competences relevant to a professional qualification. Contact with current technology goes beyond training



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Graphic facilitation by The Value Web



simulation, encompassing acquisition of a labour culture, consolidation of the competences learned in training, and contacts that may have future employment potential.

The initiative is related to the national digital employability strategy and incorporates a focus on ICT skills. This can be seen in the 26 partnership protocols with higher education institutions that will allow 1 400 trainees/unemployed with higher education to undertake 200/300 hours of training to acquire ICT competences, particularly in programming.

COMPETENCE PORTFOLIOS FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The European Federation of Centres of Career Guidance and Bilan de Compétences (FECBOP) is an association founded by institutions and bodies working in vocational guidance, career counselling, recognition and accreditation of experiential learning. They cover a wide range of skills – with over 50 000 *bilans de compétences* awarded every year in France alone – but also stress how access to career guidance drives change and supports management skills development.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

- career project
- action plan

INSTITUTIONAL/SYSTEMIC OBJECTIVES

- traceability of professional pathway
- recognition of prior learning

PSYCHOLOGICAL OBJECTIVES

- valuation/valorisation
- self-confidence
- self-efficacy

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

- development of independence and career management skills

The essence of this career guidance is to identify professional skills, values, interests and motivations, establishing a personal competence portfolio. This leads to defining a realistic career projection and action plan, with sectorial or geographic mobility, autonomy, decision-making and career management skills. This is ultimately seen as promoting the empowerment and independence of the individual.

Guidance follows a modular structure based on diagnosis of initial level of career management skills. Use of e-guidance allows cost/benefits to be optimised and helps ensure a low access threshold. Tackling skill mismatch is seen as not only about finding the match between the person and the labour market: it is a broader social question of emancipation and empowerment of individuals in managing their career paths.

Skill mismatch strategies in sectors

UPGRADING SKILLS THROUGH STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS

In many cases featured at the conference, action on skill needs assessment and anticipation comes from companies or employment sectors. The construction sector in Greece has been the focus of training and qualification in the *Build up skills* programme which focuses on continuing training for on-site technicians/blue collar workers. It aims to upgrade the sector workforce by strengthening the qualifications of craftsmen, construction workers and systems installers after initial, compulsory education and training or after they have entered working life.

Among its objectives is forming a national platform on energy efficiency and renewable energy skills training programmes and qualification schemes for construction sector workers and technicians. There will also be a national training and qualification strategy (the ‘roadmap’) up to 2020 to achieve sustainable energy goals, with efforts to ensure adoption by all stakeholders in Greece via appropriate endorsement activities.

Partnership among stakeholders has allowed better identification of key areas of skill shortage in the construction sector

The programme is based on the belief that partnership among stakeholders has allowed better identification of key areas of skill shortage in the construction sector and that defining key qualification scheme components through this multi-stakeholder approach incorporates real market needs. Three specific training and qualification schemes will be designed to meet these needs (insulation technicians, aluminium and metal construction craftsmen, and installers/maintainers of burners) together with training materials, guidelines and pilot courses.

Graphic facilitation by The Value Web



CURRICULA FOR LABOUR MARKET NEEDS

The Bulgarian Industrial Association sees human capital as the key to enhancing the competitiveness of the economy, quality of life and prosperity of the nation. Its competence assessment system (mycompetence.bg) is an online facility that links education, training, employment and the economy, aiming to strike a balance between labour market demand and supply. One of the aims of this effort is to develop a common language and an effective system for adapting curricula, in line with the requirements of the labour market. It starts by researching job changes by sector – describing positions, skills and competences – then moves on to assessing employees and students, and so discovering where skills gaps occur. It then seeks to update university and VET programmes, to train using the latest approaches and to modernise educational standards with end employment firmly in mind. Its impact can be seen in the figures quoted for actions using the system to date. Participants come from 20 separate economic sectors, 10 regions, 17 universities and 350 enterprises: they total 8 700 users.



TRAINING FOR REGIONAL AND LOCAL GROWTH

Outside Europe, Unesco has been operating its CapEFA initiative in Madagascar, developing skills for rural out-of-school youth. It aims at equipping beneficiaries in this target group – the 2.5 million young people not in education, training and employment (NEETs) in Madagascar – with a mix of foundation, vocational and entrepreneurial skills to start farm and non-farm activities in their local communities.

The Madagascar economy does not create sufficient jobs to absorb the 480 000 new entrants to the labour market every year, so national stakeholders are keen to find measures to address youth needs. Closely aligned to the newly adopted employment and vocational training policy (October 2015), the CapEFA approach aims to identify regional and local growth drivers and business opportunities, and equip training centres for greater networking, to deliver relevant services to rural out-of-school youth within their communities.

The four pilot regions for the initiative are among the poorest in the country, with low economic activity and high youth unemployment. In these regions

5 000 rural out-of-school young women and men (15-22) have been identified and profiled at local level. More than 1 000 young women and men were trained in 2014, rising to 1 700 in 2015; 18 training centres are also being upgraded.

What VET providers do

UPSKILLING THROUGH NGO LEARNING PROVIDERS

VET providers and associated interests were also among those outlining their skill mismatch activities at the conference. Norway has had to adapt to a very specific economic driver: the collapse in the price of oil that has caused the loss of 30 000 jobs within a single year. Despite this large number of newly-unemployed, many companies require more skilled workers for their operations.

The Norwegian Association for Adult Learning has taken on the challenge of finding ways to re-educate workers from one industry so they can become qualified in another. The process involves multi-stakeholder cooperation and tries to position the company as a learning arena, with support from government and NGO learning providers.

Norway has many non-skilled employees working in industries that need their workers to have a more formal vocational background; this also applies within government departments such as health. Though they have basic education, they need either further education or updated skills to meet the industry requirements. Many untrained employees also have additional learning challenges with reading and writing skills. Government-approved NGO learning providers aim to give this group training which combines such skills with the subject-specific background they require.

KNOWLEDGE TRIANGLE: RESEARCH, INNOVATION, EDUCATION

At the University of Patras, Greece, the *European teaching factory paradigm* is a further example of such an approach, based on the knowledge triangle of research, innovation, and education. Its aims include keeping human capital up-to-date with the rapid advances in production-related technologies, tools and techniques, teaching/training up to the standards of future manufacturing challenges, and improving integration between academic/research practice and industrial/market practice.

Definition and launch of the approach was carried out in the context of the *Know-fact project*. Following

pilot runs with European industry, the project results are being used to scale up the teaching factory paradigm. This will offer two-way knowledge transfer between academia and industry, to prepare a European pool of talent for knowledge-intensive manufacturing. It will include industrial training and education for university students and take-up of research results and training for industrial personnel.

Manufacturing becomes more attractive to future talent

The university believes that integrating academic and industrial practice can improve skill development for future talent through synchronous exposure to the real-life problems of industry. Academic curricula are enriched with knowledge direct from the modern everyday manufacturing business and, because of this innovative approach, manufacturing becomes more attractive to future talent.

TRAINING TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

Aiming to improve the vocational competence of teachers and address skill mismatch prompted the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training to launch an in-service training programme for teachers from secondary vocational and technical schools in the 2014/15 academic year. The competitiveness of students entering the labour market is largely dependent on skills acquired in schools; this is where the students first encounter professions and practical work and where teachers transfer prescribed knowledge. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to be properly trained and offer students up-to-date knowledge in line with market needs.

The programme was designed to provide training directly within the work process for teachers of professional modules and other professional staff from secondary vocational and technical schools.

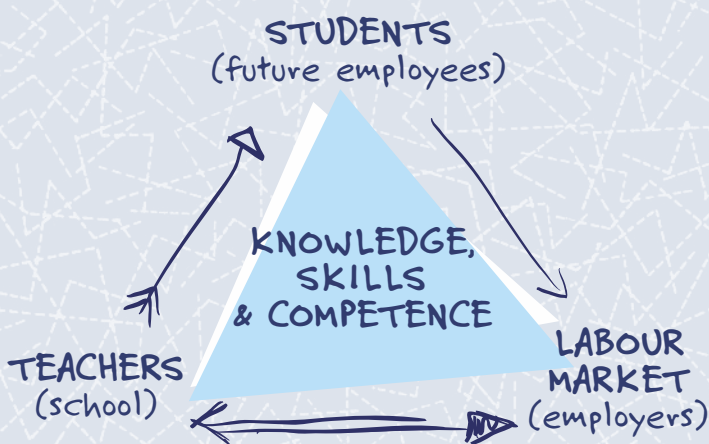


This enabled teachers and professional staff to keep pace more easily with the technological developments and other changes in their professional field and to be able to respond more quickly to labour market needs and adapt their teaching accordingly.

Creating the programme involved the cooperation of 26 different companies, which accepted teachers or other professional staff for training. These were incorporated into the companies' regular work process and most were inducted and monitored by mentors. Some companies played a dual role, since as well as providing in-company mentoring, they also supplied substitute staff to the school.

ACCREDITING SKILLS AND COMPETENCES

Helping improve skills acquisition through accreditation of skills achieved is the remit of the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) Foundation, which is dedicated to raising digital competence standards in the workforce, education and society. With 90% of jobs soon requiring some level of digital skills and 39% of the EU workforce





with insufficient digital skills (14% with none at all) the foundation aims to empower individuals, organisations and society through its quality digital skills certification programmes.

The new ECDL comprises a range of modules, each providing a practical programme of up-to-date skills and knowledge areas, validated by a test. They include base, standard and advanced modules covering aspects such as essentials, word processing, spreadsheets, databases, web editing, CAD, and security. This flexible modular structure allows the creation of profiles that match individual and organisation needs: through the module combination that individuals choose, they create their own ECDL profile.

Certification provides objective verification of employees' skills and demonstrates their competence to a recognised standard. It establishes a common skills standard when applied throughout the organisation, increasing overall efficiency and productivity as well as saving time and money. It also increases employee confidence and job satisfaction, and improves internal and external communication.

What companies can do

PRIVATE ACTION TO OVERCOME SKILL SHORTAGES

Tackling skill mismatch through training actions in the workplace was another theme of the conference. Škoda Auto Secondary Vocational School has developed a training approach in accordance with labour market needs and responding to demographic developments in the Czech Republic.

The solution lies in prediction of future needs and training in accordance with anticipated labour market development

With the 'babyboomer' generation retiring in large numbers and a low interest in technical studies among young people, there is a lack of qualified technicians/craftsmen: 750 technician vacancies per year are having an impact on capacity.

It was decided that the solution lies in prediction of future needs and training in accordance with anticipated labour market development. Experts were used to help define relevant competences and a move from 'push' to 'pull': instead of graduates searching for jobs, departments with vacancies search for graduates.

At the heart of the process are four main elements. Competences need to be precisely defined, followed by know-how transfer from experts to those who need skills upgrade. This is followed by practice in a real working environment, within a context of targeted training. The secondary vocational school is now contributing around 250 graduates per year from its in-house and distance training.

INNOVATION CULTURE

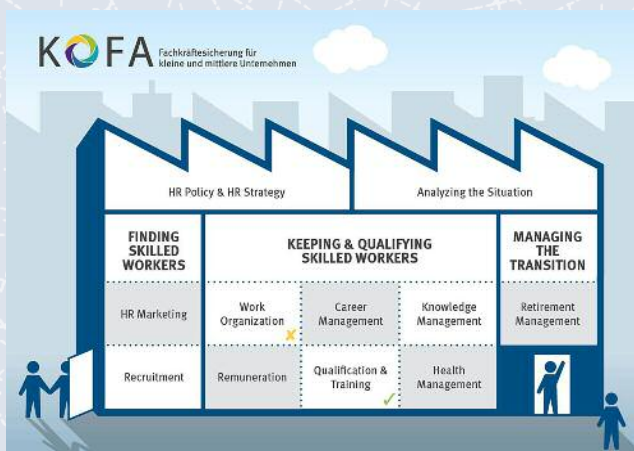
Innovation, along with necessary skills provision, is being translated into tangible results in three small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) by Confindustria Veneto SIAV SpA. This service agency of the regional Association of Entrepreneurs in Veneto, Italy (more than 12 000 companies, mainly SMEs) has created a 'factory of knowledge' to share, spread and support the culture of innovation within SMEs. It has three main fields of activity: an innovation observatory; applied research; and interventions in enterprises. Its aim is to support innovation by identifying and analysing business models in SMEs that aid knowledge and technology transfer through company-based training actions.

Interventions are under way to reduce mismatch between innovation strategy and skills required for innovation in three SMEs. A strategy for innovation

through R&D and human resources investments has been established with API, a plastics/polymers manufacturer which has been diversifying its markets into automotive, packaging, industrial areas and production of bio-plastics. F.lli Poli, an advanced mechanical technologies and dies production company, has moved into new product development in a strategy for innovation supported by training and networking with mechanical and design enterprises. B2B company Sigma is now innovating to access B2C markets with new product development, underpinned by investment in creativity training to develop innovation and support marketing strategies, and through cooperation with design-on-demand online platforms.

SME HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The Cologne Institute for Economic Research focuses on securing a skilled workforce in SMEs. With the impact of skills shortages already felt by German companies in many regions, economic sectors and industries, and the demographic changes leading to shrinking and ageing of the population, it is becoming increasingly difficult for companies – in particular for SMEs – to find the qualified professionals they need.



The starting point for the institute’s work was looking to provide answers to a series of questions. What is the current skilled labour situation in SMEs and how is this changing? What solutions exist for them? Can human resource management contribute to their success and can they learn from each other through examples of good practice?

A survey of 1 500 companies offered evidence that successful human resource management can contribute to reducing skills shortages. More than 50 examples of good practice have been gathered on the KOFA website to illustrate how this can work in SME contexts. The information is presented in five main fields of action, each offering various options

from which SMEs can choose the most appropriate for their particular needs.

SHARED EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP

Cultural change to an organisational model based on people was the focus of Ederfil Becker Koop. E., a producer of electrical conductors in Legorreta and Alegia (Spain). Up to 2008 the company had a traditional hierarchical organisation but the arrival of a new general manager led to the involvement of 30% of the staff of 160 in defining the company’s new mission, vision and values. These were shared, discussed with and approved by the rest of the organisation.

Focusing on the human capital ... helps identify where skills are needed for better operation

There followed a period of high performance team training for 30% of the staff: two teams underwent two days training, every two months over one and a half years. The focus was on developing leadership skills and teamwork across the company. The outcome was self-managed teams, which took responsibility for set-up and quality control in manufacturing, greater customer orientation, and shared business vision. Focusing on the human capital rather than the hierarchical levels helps identify where skills are needed for better operation.



making people's skills visible



ERNESTO VILLALBA

CEDEFOP EXPERT

Language, ICT, intercultural or sports skills and competences are just some of those that can be acquired in an informal or non-formal setting. Recognising them can be difficult. Cedefop has published a second edition of the European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning.

Project manager Ernesto Villalba explains why they are important:

Validation aims at making people's skills visible and gives them some sort of currency, so they can utilise their full potential and not only skills acquired within formal education. Validation is necessary for full implementation of lifelong learning policies. The European guidelines assist in the development and implementation of validation arrangements at national level and point out the questions that need to be addressed when doing so. They follow the principles set in the

2012 recommendation of the European Council that asked Member States to make, no later than 2018, arrangements allowing individuals to obtain qualifications (or parts of them) and assess their skills. Cedefop has been working on validation since before 2000, and, together with the Commission and other stakeholders, has developed the guidelines and the European inventory on validation, another tool to assist the process.

Why is non-formal and informal learning often ignored and undervalued?

People are learning constantly in different settings. However, knowledge has been traditionally thought to be held in universities, or formal institutions thought to create 'real' knowledge. But this is changing, and people increasingly accept that knowledge acquired outside the classroom is as important, or even more, than that acquired at schools.

How difficult is it to validate non-formal and informal learning?

Validation is a complex process that requires commitment and

time. It includes the identification, documentation, assessment and certification of individuals' learning. Each of these stages requires a different set of tools and actors. Only a good design can make the process transparent, fair, reliable and easy for the end user to understand. We hope that the guidelines can contribute to that too.

How can validation work as a response to the refugee crisis?

Refugees arrive in Europe lacking documentation that they have certain skills or competences. But they have them and they can, and should, be used in Europe. By making these skills visible through validation we can help migrants to participate in society, reducing their social exclusion and making sure they use their full potential as individuals. ■

Scan for the 2012 European Council recommendation on validation and definitions of what constitutes non-formal and informal learning



European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning



GLOBAL TRENDS and their **impact** on VET



GEORGE KOSTAKIS

CEDEFOP EXPERT

Transformation of the labour market landscape is creating big changes in skill demand and has implications for education and training

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Cedefop launched in January a two-year research project on the impact of globalisation on vocational education and training (VET) in Europe. Experts from around the world had earlier discussed the challenges and opportunities that globalisation poses at a Cedefop conference.

Project manager George Kostakis outlines the rationale behind the new study.

To understand globalisation it is helpful to look at the definition provided by Andy Green, who refers to it as ‘the cross-border flow of capital goods, services, people and ideas’. This flow creates increased interdependence of markets across borders, greater financial integration, bigger competition within countries and across borders and increased worker and student mobility. New occupations are emerging, some become obsolete, while others

are substantially transformed because of global pressures and new technological advancements. This transformation of the labour market landscape creates big changes in skill demand and has implications for education and training. Vocational training needs to provide learners and workers with the right skills to remain employable in this changing landscape, and to interact with people from other countries with different cultures that join our societies and labour markets.

How do these global pressures change European VET?

Education and training systems look at different actors entering the market, such as international sectoral associations and multinational companies. They provide their own standards, qualifications and training programmes. Greater mobility of learners and workers brings increased need to recognise the qualifications of people coming from different countries and different sectors, and to recognise prior learning. Cedefop organised

a conference to understand how VET systems respond to these pressures. It became obvious from the conference that national VET systems need to open up and join forces with other actors to understand and respond better to the impact of global trends on changing labour market and social structure.

What areas in VET need to be redefined as a response to globalisation?

The Cedefop study looks at three areas. The first is VET content, which needs to be reviewed. For example, national VET systems need to strengthen the relevance of national qualifications in an international context, especially in sectors where global trends and technological advancements are evident. They do this by integrating international sectoral standards to review their national qualification requirements or by including international sectoral qualifications in their national qualification frameworks. Also, training programmes and curricula are updated building on common



Cedefop conference on
the impact of
globalisation on VET

The impact of
globalisation
on VET:
challenges and
opportunities



occupational profiles. We have had examples where countries combined resources to define common occupational profiles, qualification standards and training programmes for a qualification. There is a very thin line between common training programmes, common occupational profiles and the principle of subsidiarity. But the Cedefop conference showed that, in some sectors, core occupational profiles might be an interesting initiative as long as it starts from the countries themselves and is not imposed by European-level authorities.

The second area we study to understand European VET system responsiveness is their governance model. Here, more actors need to work together compared to the traditional actors in education and training. We are

now talking not only about system-level actors, e.g. qualification authorities, standard-setting bodies, ministries, including sectoral bodies, but also additional stakeholders such as multinational companies that have introduced their own training schemes and offer their own qualifications. We know about Cisco qualifications, Microsoft qualifications; we have seen, for example, Volkswagen, Renault, and Nestlé introducing training within their industries, and also Deutsche Post who have introduced their own standards for their global courier network.

The third area, which cuts across the other two, is quality assurance. We will examine how trust for new providers and new qualifications is developed. To trust them we need to understand their quality assurance

arrangements and to acknowledge the key role national authorities play in maintaining national standards, in ensuring quality. We will check how systematic feedback loops are in taking into consideration global trends to review VET content, but also how systematic cooperation is between the stakeholders quoted. When talking about quality assurance, for example, we must look at the alignment of standards with curricula and assessment to make sure that all learners, whether they have been with private providers, a multinational company training centre, or a national training centre, have achieved the same learning outcomes.

Which are the next steps?

Our study will cover 15 countries and four sectors affected by globalisation: road transport and logistics, hospitality, automotive manufacturing, information technology and healthcare. We expect the final findings of the research project at the beginning of 2018. Until then we will be linking any interim results with other similar work carried out by Cedefop, the European Commission and other international organisations. ■



#CedefopPhotoAward 2016



In February, Cedefop launched a photo competition addressing 'Youth in education and training'. Young people have been asked to send their pictures of how they see themselves in their school- or work-based learning environment. In the first phase, Cedefop shortlisted the 10 best photos for an exhibition at the European Youth Event (EYE2016) in the European Parliament seat in Strasbourg on 20 and 21 May. The two winners, **Vasiliki Kalopita** from Greece and **Antía Varela Torres** from Spain, were invited to Strasbourg. The second phase of the #CedefopPhotoAward is now open until September 2016 for all European Union residents aged between 18 and 30. ■

photo: © Vasiliki Kalopita



➤ How to be a good entrepreneur

Vasiliki Kalopita



'This photo was taken in August 2015 at a youth exchange programme in Spain. The programme's aim was to improve the employability skills of young people through non-formal and intercultural learning methods. Twenty-one young people from four countries took part. In this photo, I was participating in a team activity about the key competences needed to become an entrepreneur.'

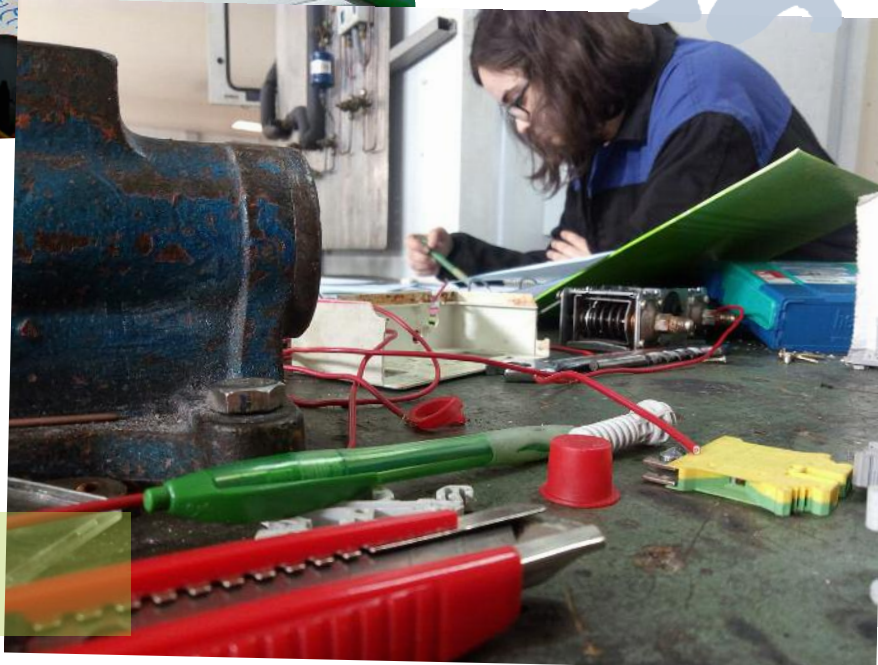


photo: © Antía Varela Torres

Women in education and training ➤

Antía Varela Torres

'The day after I heard about the contest, and as I am so interested in photography and promoting vocational training, I decided to go to a vocational school next to my high school and be immersed in the environment to get some illustrative photos of this education. There, I found this girl complementing her practical lesson with theoretical notes. She allowed me to take her photo: I thought she was a good example of how women can choose any profession regardless of stereotypes.'



Scan for more information on the #CedefopPhotoAward



Collecting information on the outcomes of vocational education and training (VET) and using it for policy-making is a priority in the Riga conclusions for VET agreed last year. Reflecting on several types of outcome for VET programmes for adults in the last five years (2010-15), a new report by the Estonian National Audit Office sheds light on how VET contributes to national priorities by supporting adult education attainment, employment and career development.

photo: © iStock, Sean Pavone



VET FOR ADULTS IN ESTONIA

MAKES FINDING WORK EASIER



Riga conclusions
on VET



Report (in Estonian) and
conclusions in English



by REFERNET ESTONIA
www.innove.ee/refernet

In Estonia, a third of adults aged 25-64 have neither a professional nor a vocational qualification. The government objective is to reduce this share to less than a quarter by 2020.

VET for adults in Estonia caters to very diverse needs. Of the adults enrolled in VET programmes, 44% lacked a professional or vocational qualification. However, more than half chose to pursue an adult VET programme on top of their previous education (20% after higher education and 36% after initial VET). Popular programmes were business services, horticulture and tourism, catering and accommodation services.

Prior to starting VET, 23.2% of adults had been registered as unemployed. After graduation, the risk of becoming unemployed decreased. The study also reported higher wages from employment and increased engagement in entrepreneurial activities.

The report indicates unequal returns among different groups of adult learners. Those who entered VET studies following higher education have better chances of improving their employability compared to those with no previous professional or vocational qualification.

The evidence points to the need to attract more adults to VET, particularly those without a prior professional or vocational qualification, the inactive, and those with unstable or low income, and to support them in their studies.

new

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IN FOCUS

THE ROLE OF EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROVIDERS



This guide is a part of the Cedefop, ETF and ILO series of guides on skills anticipation and matching. The three organisations worked closely together to develop the guides, usually with one of them taking the lead and the others providing inputs, case studies, comments and reviews. This volume covers the role of employment service providers in skills anticipation and matching, and aims to support transition and developing countries in establishing and strengthening the role of these providers. It identifies outstanding initiatives and good practices from around the world, and gives insights into strategic choices and experimental practices that different countries have undertaken in their attempts to match skills supply with labour market demands. The examples provided make this publication a useful tool for labour market actors such as training providers, guidance and counselling officers, administrators and researchers. It is especially valuable for managers and professionals working in organisations that provide employment services.

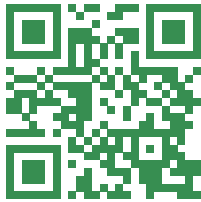


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coming up



For more information on what's coming up go to the events page on the Cedefop website: www.cedefop.europa.eu/events or scan this QR code

IN FOCUS

OPENING PLATFORM FOR THE MOBILITY SCOREBOARD

3 JUNE

THESSALONIKI, GREECE



This first event will present the newly created mobility scoreboard for initial vocational education and training (IVET) and the current policy background for mobility. Discussions will focus on how the scoreboard can support the mission of stakeholders in fostering IVET mobility across Europe.

Participants will be Erasmus+ agencies, IVET institutions, companies involved in mobility projects, mobility staff (teachers and trainers, guidance personnel), student associations, and EU-level stakeholders.

OTHER EVENTS

MAY	16	THESSALONIKI, GREECE	Cedefop workshop on labour market information for lifelong guidance
MAY	19-20	THESSALONIKI, GREECE	Cedefop workshop: Working groups to inform development of the Skills Panorama career advice tool
MAY	20-21	STRASBOURG, FRANCE	European Youth Event (#EYE2016) at the European Parliament, including #CedefopPhotoAward exhibition
MAY	26-27	MAASTRICHT, NETHERLANDS	Seminar (co-organised by Cedefop): Tackling the skills gap – The golden key to economic growth
SEPTEMBER	15-16	THESSALONIKI, GREECE	Cedefop workshop on promoting quality in learning delivery: the way ahead





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