

skillset **AND MATCH**

**CEDEFOP'S MAGAZINE
PROMOTING
LEARNING FOR WORK**

 **CEDEFOP**

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MAIN STORY:

TOOLKIT TACKLES EARLY LEAVING
FROM EDUCATION AND TRAINING

INTERVIEWS:

MARGARITIS SCHINAS,
CESARE ONESTINI,
ANTONIO MIR MONTES,
SHANTI GEORGE,
PAUL DOWNES, LUISA MAYR

MEMBER STATES: **FINLAND**

OCCUPATION IN FOCUS:
ICT TECHNICIANS



CEDEFOP

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

We provide information, research, analyses and evidence on vocational education and training, skills and qualifications for policy-making in the EU Member States.



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JÜRGEN SIEBEL

CEDEFOP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



*I feel privileged
to be leading
Cedefop's team in
such exciting times*

”

Only a few days after joining Cedefop, it is my pleasure to welcome you to this edition of *Skillset and match*. I used to be a reader of this magazine in my previous job as manager of a large multinational company's global vocational education and training (VET) activities. In my new role, I recommend it as an introduction to the excellent work that Cedefop, its tripartite stakeholders and practitioners out in the field jointly accomplish every day: building, extending and recalibrating skills and, hence, perspectives.

Tracking this important narrative, this issue of *Skillset and match* presents the experiences of a young chef and of a VET school leader, and highlights ways to re-engage early leavers. Managing and investing in people's talents is vital for businesses, societies and individuals. We need to value their competences and empower them to stretch their skills at work, upskill, reskill and acquire new ones, and support them through proactive lifelong guidance. The validation biennale and the Cedefop-EESC policy learning forum on upskilling pathways have made this need clear.

In times of rapid change, a learning mindset is imperative. Finland's vision of future-oriented, seamless lifelong learning and its VET framework support this approach. In companies like the one I come from, a learning mindset is part of their DNA. It needs to become a reality for everyone, regardless of company size or employment type. I am pleased to see that Cedefop's tool to help design strategies for the low-skilled could also support comprehensive approaches for all.

The sustainable development agenda reinforces the need to invest in skills, within the EU and outside, allowing Cedefop and the European Training Foundation – who I congratulate on their anniversary – to put our complementary expertise to use. We also need a wider debate on education and training's role. I fully share this view expressed by President Juncker's spokesperson and his call on Cedefop to play an active part in such a debate. I feel privileged to be leading Cedefop's team in such exciting times. ■

Investing in **skills** for tomorrow's **jobs**



MARGARITIS SCHINAS

“ *We did a lot with the skills agenda that we presented, the upskilling pathways proposals. More has to come, though; we have to keep investing in digital skills* ”

CHIEF SPOKESPERSON, EUROPEAN COMMISSION *

Margaritis Schinas has been speaking for the European Commission for the past five years. President Jean-Claude Juncker's right-hand man has been a familiar face to the followers of all things EU in a period of crises and achievements. With a long career in EU institutions and politics, Mr Schinas gave *Skillset and match* an inside view of the Juncker Commission during his visit to Cedefop, in June, in his hometown, Thessaloniki. He said that ‘it was a privilege to work with Juncker because he is one of the very few politicians that are driven by empathy with others’ and has the ‘ability to connect with citizens.’

Looking back to the Commission's work in the past five years what stands out?

The Juncker Commission's main achievement was bringing back into EU policy-making something that is expected of the Commission: creative initiatives and bold ideas. The most emblematic success was the Juncker investment plan. Before the Juncker Commission we mainly had structural reform and fiscal adjustment. The Juncker Commission invented what the French call *le troisième poumon*, the third lung; in this you have investment, not by classical funds that contribute to deficits, but innovative investment that leverages private money in the areas of the new economy. EUR 400 billion invested in the last five years meant hundreds of thousands of jobs created. The Juncker Commission will

also be remembered – and judged positively by history – because it faced a sequence of unprecedented crises that shook the fundamentals of the European architecture: saving Greece, the massive migration flows, Jihadi terrorism in Western Europe, the rise of populism, and Brexit. These were challenges that many predicted would herald the end of Europe, but the Juncker Commission proved that the system is resilient, perhaps even more than many might have hoped for or expected. And then there's economic recovery: after 10 years of crisis the fundamentals are now solid. We have all EU economies growing, employment at a historic high of about 250 million; never before had we so many Europeans in work as we have now. We have 13 million new jobs in the last five years. Finally, there are big international trade

agreements (Canada, Japan, Mexico, Vietnam) that make the EU the world champion of free and fair trade. In all this you have an objective record of achievement that makes the Juncker Commission an overall success.

Education and employment, and especially digital skills for the labour market, were among the priorities of the Juncker Commission. Has enough progress been made in that respect?

Another achievement was that the Juncker Commission managed to push decisively forward with the so-called unions: the energy union, the digital union and the capital markets union. The digital union is now a reality in terms of legal environment; the legal ecosystem is there. We have portability and copyright laws; we have solid GDPR legislation enacted. But this is not enough. For the digital union to work in the years to come you need a massive investment in skills; 90% of future jobs will require digital skills. And we are not there yet. This is a challenge and it is also something that relates to Cedefop's work. Switching to new skills, creating a digital skills environment has to be a priority. We did a lot with the skills agenda that we presented, the upskilling pathways proposals. More has to come, though; we have to keep investing in digital skills. We have provided recommendations for the first time on how artificial intelligence (AI) should develop and we have to keep adjusting our approach as it evolves. We must ensure the transition and the matching of the different jobs' skillsets. And, on a more macro level, there is a need for a fundamental change of paradigm. In certain parts of Europe, vocational education and training (VET) and investing



L-R: Mr Schinas with Cedefop's L. Zahilas, G.O. Bausewein, P. Descy and M. Brugia

in skills has been something of a sideshow, something that you would do only if you were forced to. VET needs to be enshrined in academic systems, in the way we design our university studies. You cannot have education systems developing in parallel to the labour market.

Cedefop's role is at the interface between education and training and employment. How important for the Commission is its research and policy monitoring in VET, skills and qualifications, and its work with EU Member States?

Cedefop has always been a player in VET and skills. Its presence is well known to the skills constituency, also its link to the education system. I think that Cedefop over the years has managed to project itself as a success story in bridging the main elements of the issues we are discussing, especially with the thematic constituencies: employers, employees and Member States. But there is also a challenge for Cedefop, as for most agencies in the years to come, to reach out beyond their traditional constituencies, in this case VET and education. These will be fundamental societal choices. I would urge Cedefop

not to miss the opportunity to contribute to this broader societal debate.

Given that Thessaloniki is your hometown, how important is the presence of an EU agency such as Cedefop in the city and Greece in general?

It's no secret that I have a personal relationship with Cedefop. When the agency moved to Thessaloniki I was already in the Commission, working in the Representation in Athens; later I was a Greek MEP for Thessaloniki, so you don't have to explain many things about Cedefop to me. I am delighted that, after some ups and downs, especially in the early years, Cedefop has acquired a sound pace. It is emerging as a vital element in the overall ecosystem of what I like to call a 'European Thessaloniki'. This city has lived for many years with its back to its neighbours and Europe. Now that geopolitics is changing, Thessaloniki is turning to face its neighbours and Europe; Cedefop is a fantastic platform, a great part of reinforcing Thessaloniki's modern role. ■

* At the time of the interview, Mr Schinas was still Chief Spokesperson of the European Commission

ETF's new role in human capital development



© ETF/Andrea Guermati

CESARE ONESTINI

EUROPEAN TRAINING FOUNDATION DIRECTOR



Our ambition is to be a global knowledge hub for human capital and skills in developing and transition countries

The European Training Foundation (ETF) celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. Based high on a Turin hill, it is one of more than 40 EU agencies, and the one with the closest connection to Cedefop. Cesare Onestini, an experienced EU official who hails from nearby Lake Como, became ETF Director two years ago. He received us in his office, which overlooks the first capital of Italy, to outline his vision for the agency.

How has ETF's role evolved since it became operational 25 years ago?

The original ETF vision was of an agency created to support the transition of central and eastern Europe towards a market

economy. Today it is a centre of expertise, supporting the EU's neighbours in developing their own human capital. The area of skills has also changed completely. The vocational education and training (VET) of 25 years ago is far from what it is today; that's also true of our partner countries, which are at very different stages of development. Some of our partners are OECD members and others are developing countries. Within this broad spectrum you see the shift towards a more comprehensive skills agenda; the focus on digital impact, on qualifications recognition, looking at different ways of learning such as apprenticeship or work-based learning.

This is different from how Cedefop works. The EU has

variations between Member States' VET systems, skills and qualifications, but they are not at the scale you face. How do your experts navigate this diverse landscape?

In many ways Cedefop and ETF are complementary. We do work which overlaps in the area of thematic expertise but then diverges completely in the area of implementation. Cedefop's focus goes beyond operating geographically within the EU to very strong policy-oriented content analysis; on trends, on assessment, on feedback. We, in ETF, are much more like a development agency. We support countries in designing policy, in drafting legislative texts about reforms; we support social dialogue by actively helping to convene meetings where – often for the first time – business, trade

unions, VET providers and other stakeholders meet with public authorities. Our approach is simple: we go into the countries that we work with and support them in their own efforts of reform and transformation. With assessment, methodology and indicators, we bring the European experience. That's why the cooperation with Cedefop is very important to us, because the analysis that Cedefop does is part of the added value that we can bring; the experience of Member States is of great interest to these countries. We look at what is feasible, how we can support development and transformation, and the reality is that, in some countries, we can achieve a lot while in others we are more limited.

Some of these countries eventually join the EU, the latest to do so being Croatia. Do you work with them having in mind that they may become EU Member States?

One of the key criteria of our work is the relationship between the country and the EU; this determines the different categories and types of intervention. Some countries are already eligible accession countries, so we have a different type of approach from those that we know are in the neighbourhood but will never be candidates to join the EU. And

we also work with Central Asia which is geographically further away so, again, our types of intervention are different. Working with countries preparing to enter the EU, we support their training and the labour market reforms so that they may fully benefit from membership. That's really been a focus and we've seen this in action since the 2004 enlargement. Now, with the new push for the Western Balkans and the new agenda the Commissioner has proposed, we see a renewed interest in this transition. This is another area where ETF and Cedefop work well together because Cedefop will increasingly work with these countries as part of the pre-accession programme.

What are the challenges ahead for ETF?

One challenge is that skills have moved up the development agenda in recent years. In the countries where we work, the volume of EU assistance devoted to human capital and skills has increased significantly and is set to grow further in the next programming period. This means a growing demand for our services. At the same time, we are operating in a more crowded field, as bilateral and multilateral donors have shifted their focus towards skills. In our new strategy for 2021-27, we will prioritise

actions where ETF is contributing the greatest added value. We will increase our focus on analysis and advice, on support to the EU external services and delegations, and the development of tools, methodologies and approaches that can have wider application within our partner countries and beyond. Our ambition is to be a global knowledge hub for human capital and skills in developing and transition countries.

How do you see the relationship between 'sister agencies' ETF and Cedefop going forward?

We can expect increasing involvement of our partner countries in EU programmes and policy processes, giving more scope for cooperation between the ETF and Cedefop. The two agencies have distinct mandates which allow them to address different countries and different thematic areas within the broad spectrum of human capital development. They have a complementary role in giving advice to the European Commission. There is a need to ensure that policies reflect realities within the education and training and employment portfolio but also offer a strong international dimension, fostering partnerships beyond EU borders within the EU's global actor priority. ■



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The human factor at the heart of improving an institution



© Cedefop, 2019/Sakis Gioumpasis

ANTONIO MIR MONTES

HEAD TEACHER,
VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE XABEC, SPAIN



Teachers and trainers are no longer mere containers of knowledge accumulating degrees and certificates; today, they must be able to create a learning environment where teamwork is essential

In a world of innovation, globalisation and digitalisation, the education sector also faces the need to adapt. Teachers and trainers play a critical role in how education can progress: it is imperative that they are equipped, competent and prepared. It was against this background that Cedefop's second policy learning forum on the development of vocational education and training (VET) teachers and trainers was held in the spring.

Participants explored ways to build stronger bridges between school and the workplace, so that teachers and trainers can grow professionally and become

more efficient in their educational role. As keynote speaker Antonio Mir Montes described it, it is the human factor that is so essential in education.

Mr Mir Montes, Head Teacher at Valencia's Vocational Training Centre XABEC and European vocational skills week award winner in 2018, stressed to *Skillset and match* the importance of teachers and trainers in shaping education and in addressing new challenges.

He sees the human factor as crucial, especially when we want to introduce changes in education. This is because, apart from the intelligence and the will to take action, what is important is the affection; one of the failures in education is

precisely that we 'sometimes forget that what really moves the person is the affection.'

CREATING A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Mr Mir Montes explains that teachers and trainers are no longer mere 'containers of knowledge' accumulating degrees and certificates. Today, 'they must be able to create a learning environment where teamwork is essential.'

In VET another critical factor is internationalisation. If the potential is fully recognised, teachers and trainers can share their knowledge, exchanging good and bad practices as well as experiences with professionals in education from different countries. For



example, as Mr Mir Montes suggests, creating international technical departments could enable this exchange.

Another challenge is digitalisation, prevalent in today's societies and a reality in schools. How can teachers and trainers keep up with developments and stay competent? When asked about it, Mr Mir Montes indicated three ways – or scenarios – in which this challenge could be addressed. The first is starting from the school itself and realising that, within a school, there's the benefit that teachers can teach the teachers. Second is enabling teacher mobility by sending them to organisations or by providing online training for them to learn the new technologies. And there is the importance of companies and the need for people in the education sector to trust in companies more: 'Schools have to make an investment in time and in budget to send teachers to companies to learn about these new technologies and how we have to apply them in the real world when we are working.'

A GOOD LEADER

Part of the human factor equation is also the role of school leaders. The recipe for being a good leader is not simply knowledge and training. The key ingredients, as Mr Mir Montes points out, are to be a good person, a good professional and good in fostering relationships. Adding a bit of spice, a true leader needs to be 'a little crazy', approachable and able to inspire trust in people. This is an innovative and attractive attitude that will motivate others to follow their leader.

A school leader himself, Mr Mir Montes was awarded the European vocational skills week award for what he considers to be 'characteristics of our school that are attractive for education': a new pedagogy, developed with the contribution and involvement of teachers themselves; an international environment where students and teachers are able to travel to different countries every year and which welcomes many students from overseas; and constant evaluation and feedback.

EVALUATE AND PROGRESS

At XABEC students drive their own learning processes, teachers have their own development plan through evaluation and questionnaires, and learners can evaluate every single lesson from their trainers. In turn, teachers and students can evaluate, every day, the performance of the school director. At this Valencia school everyone has lost 'the fear of being evaluated'.

Mr Mir Montes believes that without failure there is no innovation so we 'need to understand that a failure is not a disaster; it's the best mechanism to improve a person and to improve an institution.' This perfectly summarises the essence of the human factor in education. ■

Watch the interview
with Antonio Mir Montes



Second policy learning forum:
Unlocking the potential of
learning at the workplace by, and
for, teachers and trainers in VET



Reaching 128 million low-skilled adults

“ *Emphasis on inclusive and comprehensive learning pathways [...] ensuring sustainable career and life transitions in a changing world* ”

Cedefop estimates that 128 million adults (about 46% of total adult population) in the EU, Iceland and Norway would benefit from upskilling and/or reskilling. The agency has started a process to support as many as possible in this aim.

Adopting a broader definition, which looks not only at education level but also at digital and cognitive skills, as well as skill obsolescence, Cedefop's latest analysis reveals that older unemployed and inactive adults are at particular risk of being low-skilled in all skills dimensions. Women are mostly at risk of having low digital skills as are older adults, even when they are employed. There are significant differences between countries.

MOBILISING STAKEHOLDERS

As part of the support process, Cedefop and the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) have jointly organised a series of policy learning events on the topic, providing a platform for countries to learn from one another and explore common challenges.

The second policy learning forum on upskilling pathways gathered more than 100 experts and stakeholders at the EESC's Brussels premises in May. Participants worked on refining a draft analytical framework prepared by Cedefop after the first forum, a year earlier, with the aim of supporting stakeholders to develop strategic, coherent and coordinated approaches to upskilling pathways for adults.

Key areas are identified in the framework: an integrated approach to upskilling pathways;

identification of target groups; governance; monitoring and evaluation; financial and non-financial support; lifelong guidance and outreach; skills assessment, validation and recognition; tailored learning offers leading to a formal qualification and offers with work-based learning. There was agreement that the framework is a useful information source, can provide inspiration, and can act as a means for stakeholders to reflect and identify action areas.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Discussions at the forum resulted in the identification of various elements capable of supporting stakeholders to progress further in implementing upskilling pathways:

- shift in mindset: taking a strategic and integrated approach to upskilling pathways, based on a shared vision of a joined-up, accessible and flexible learning pathway, and drawing from strong political commitment, with powerful stakeholder engagement, cooperation and partnerships at all levels and in all key areas. According to this vision, upskilling and reskilling offer a common social value, a public good, shared between public institutions, social partners, civil society and beneficiaries, for empowerment in society and in the labour market;
- effective governance across all key areas: strengthened stakeholder and institutional capacity and accountability;



- learners supported towards sustainable career and life transitions with the help of career guidance services, moving decisively towards a lifelong support logic;
- a change in service culture in career guidance from a static open door to a dynamic and proactive service able to reach out to people in their own contexts;
- valuing, promoting and making visible all training and learning, including that acquired in non-formal settings. Skills assessment, validation and recognition are a systematic feature in the skills formation system of a country;
- different paths, with broad and flexible training offers in both the formal and non-formal spheres and suited to individual needs (non-linear offer, combination, own pace); with clear links to formal qualifications and to corresponding learning objectives/learning outcomes as points of reference for the validation and certification processes;
- effective communication strategies to reinforce individual motivation, inform potential beneficiaries of funding opportunities and available courses, and raise company awareness, especially SMEs, on the benefits of upskilling and reskilling and the existence of financial instruments;
- appropriate level of funding, based on cost-sharing mechanisms and specific support for SMEs (including partnerships and administrative support);

- overarching monitoring and evaluation approach informed by a comprehensive and integrated data collection system linked to quality assurance.

WAY FORWARD

The draft analytical framework will be revised and enriched following the feedback received at the forum, with the following aspects to be emphasised:

- inclusive and comprehensive learning pathways, not limited to the upskilling of low-skilled adults but which may be expanded to embrace all the reskilling needs of the adult population, ensuring sustainable career and life transitions in a changing world (aspects such as technological changes and their consequences for the future of work, digitalisation, environment, ageing society and social inclusion);
- greater emphasis on the role of the community and local institutions;
- more focus on investment in capacity building, both for infrastructure and human capital (teachers and trainers, providers, guidance professionals) and in terms of engagement and support to employers, especially SMEs.

The revised key features will be complemented by good practice examples which may inspire stakeholders in seeking ways to address challenges. The consolidated analytical framework will be available by the end of 2019. ■



Toolkit tackles EARLY LEAVING from education and training



Cedefop has presented a new edition of its vocational education and training (VET) toolkit for tackling early leaving from education and training. The toolkit is supported by research evidence from across Europe and provides practical guidance, tips, good practices and tools drawn from VET.

WHAT'S IN CEDEFOP'S TOOLKIT?



- **2** reflection tools and **2** evaluation plans for policy-makers and learning providers;
- **17** intervention approaches tailored to the needs of the **6** most common profiles of learners at risk or early leavers;
- **5** activities on how to use the toolkit for policy-making and successful practice;
- **60+** actively contributing toolkit 'ambassadors' from **18** countries;
- **200+** resources of best practices, publications, tools, statistics and quick wins.



Early leaving from education and training can be followed by unemployment, social exclusion and poverty. Fighting it is a European Union priority, and the Europe 2020 strategy set a target (early school leaving below 10%) which is on course to be met. There has been a consistent fall in the EU-28 rates of early leavers, from 14.6% in 2008 to 10.6% in 2017.

But the absolute numbers of people at risk of disconnecting remain high. Data from 2014 show that 4.4 million young people in Europe did not complete upper secondary education, and nearly 5.5 million people aged 18 to 24 were neither in employment nor in education or training in 2017.

Cedefop's toolkit aims to help young people at risk of becoming early leavers to get at least an upper secondary qualification; and early leavers to reintegrate into education or training and the labour market.

Policy-makers and practitioners can use the toolkit to identify and monitor early leavers and learners at risk; intervene to keep them in, or bring them back to, education or training; and to evaluate related measures within a country, region or institution.

COMMUNITY LIFELONG LEARNING CENTRES

The toolkit was presented at a policy forum on the role of community lifelong learning centres (CLLCs) organised jointly by Cedefop and the Lifelong Learning Platform at the Permanent Representation of Romania to the EU, in Brussels, in May.



Cedefop's toolkit aims to help young people at risk of becoming early leavers to get at least an upper secondary qualification; and early leavers to reintegrate into education or training and the labour market

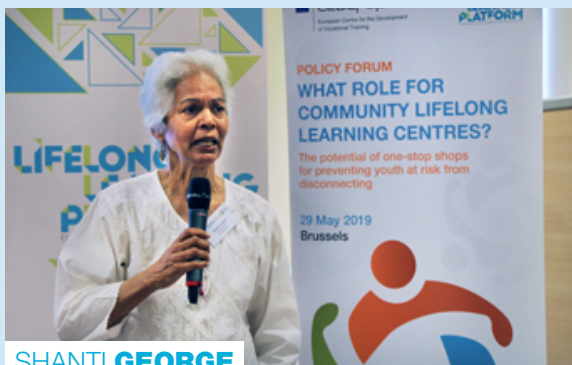
Cedefop expert Irene Psifidou, who coordinates the agency's related project, said that the new version is richer in information, user-friendly for non-experts, easy to navigate, flexible and enables monitoring and evaluation.

It can also support CLLCs as one-stop shops for engaging young people at risk of disconnecting. The CLLCs are a welcoming, non-threatening education environment centred around the learner's needs, typically focused on non-formal education. They are in accessible locations in the local community; accessible both in terms of physical proximity and in terms of being places where

learners, including marginalised and minority group learners, feel they belong.

Cedefop Acting Executive Director Mara Brugia told participants that CLLCs and other integrated services are beneficial for young people who face multiple barriers, as they address their complex needs in a holistic manner. She added that 'our joint work to reduce and address early leaving from education and training and youth unemployment must continue beyond 2020; Cedefop works with the European Commission, your countries, social partners and practitioners to help address this issue.' ■

CLLCs AND DIVERSITY



SHANTI GEORGE

SENIOR ASSOCIATE
LEARNING FOR WELL-BEING FOUNDATION

What should CLLCs have to be effective?

You have to organise the community centre around the wellbeing of the entire community, however diverse it is, and you have to follow certain principles of learning for wellbeing; you address the whole person as well as addressing the whole community rather than a fragmented approach. You focus on relationships and

processes as well as on outcomes; you encourage the engaged participation of all people and you constantly seek feedback.

What kind of people do you need to provide this service?

You need people who are not so much looking at a checklist from their organisation but looking directly into the eyes of the people they meet, and are able to respond to diversity, to individual uniqueness and to the uniqueness of each community. We call it unique potential: if people feel that you are engaging with that within them, they are far more likely to respond to you than if they think they are a means to you achieving your targets.

How did you adapt in Europe?

I hugely enjoy the diversity of Europe. People are drawn to Europe as a tapestry of languages and cultures. I grew up in India which is a similar tapestry: once you experience that you don't want to settle for anything less. I think that's the way the world is heading and we should celebrate it, not fear it. I would have found it hard to breathe without the oxygen of diversity.

Professional teams helping individuals at risk of disconnecting



© Andrea Lapegna, 2019

PAUL DOWNES

“No single profession has all the answers for dealing with the many issues in a person’s life. You need multiple skills to address multiple needs

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION AND
DIRECTOR OF THE EDUCATIONAL DISADVANTAGE
CENTRE, DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY, IRELAND

Multidisciplinary teams can be agents of change in helping prevent young people disconnecting from education, according to Associate Professor of Education Paul Downes, speaking at Cedefop’s policy forum (pp. 12-13). He gave his thoughts to *Skillset and match* on community lifelong learning centres (CLLCs) as hubs where people can get help from teams of professionals in addressing potentially negative issues.

Tell us what an effective CLLC looks like.

The physical and relational environment is crucial. It needs to be a welcoming place, so that people feel they are not being judged when they walk through the door. The relational I’d emphasise first. The physical environment then is an expression of the relational philosophy. It might include bright colours, maybe visual representation of minorities, if they are engaged, so they can see their culture on the walls reflected through the physical environment of the centre. Simple things like couches, social spaces for young people just to sit down, hang out with others and chat. Perhaps their own art on the walls, a place

that looks like something that they own, they have a power in.

What kind of learning should they provide?

These CLLCs, as one-stop shops, can combine non-formal and formal education. The non-formal part is very much targeted at those who may have left school early and are alienated from the system; you need to have non-exam-based courses first. You are in dialogue with the learners about the kind of courses that interest them. Then you move to the phase when you work with them to see what formal education courses they could benefit from. An obvious one is the soft skills focus. Things like

conflict-resolution skills, public speaking, leadership classes, social emotional education. All these can help engage young people who are on the edge in some way.

How are you going to get those at risk into the centre?

Part of that is through outreach people they can relate to. For example, in Sweden you have ethnic minority young people who are employed as outreach. They are from the same communities, share cultural affinity and so have a basic connection with them. The same goes for social class; you want people who they recognise as being like them, who they are talking with. You have staff in the CLLCs who are from the local area; that's another aspect of the relational approach. They feel it is a place where you try to address the distrust, the alienation from the system. The system has failed so many of these people; society at large has too. To regain that trust may need small steps, perhaps initially just to get them there for a taster evening on something that would interest them, for example a movie. You find something that's a hook, and from that they build relationships. You are trying to get them to come as a peer group. The information-based model, such as leaflets, has very limited effect with this target group.

How can Cedefop's VET toolkit be useful in that respect?

Cedefop's toolkit on early school leaving, the self-reflection tool for policy-makers, explicitly commits to the issue of multidisciplinary teams for complex needs. No single profession has all the answers for dealing with the many issues in a person's life. You need multiple skills to address multiple needs. For example, somebody



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may have language difficulties and become aggressive because they cannot communicate. That affects their social relationships, it affects their mental health and they become isolated. There may be a knock-on effect such as trouble in school. There are a lot of inter-connected issues that need this more complex support.

How do you secure funding for these centres?

There are two levels to this. One is the fundamental question around the political stability of Europe. It is recognised in the Paris declaration of 2015 that social inclusion is a key issue to help prevent social unrest and extreme alienation from society. Yet we've seen what happens in terms of the political unrest in Britain, with the Brexit vote possibly reflecting communities that feel they have no stake in society, no stake in the system. So the question is do we want to have an inclusive society? If we do, this is a key mechanism for inclusion. The other issue is about efficient use of resources, involving different departments. Ministries such as health, education, employment and social affairs rarely come together for prevention of early leaving from VET but that needs to happen. If you have a lot of

services but they are fragmented, you have to fund them in separate locations. There is also the issue of societal benefit. Not only do you have people who are more educated, but that may improve their physical and mental health and reduce issues of crime. Bringing relevant services together with common frameworks and goals is not something that costs money; it's about people being sensitised.

How do you make them listen?

You say, for example, 'look, we want services to come together at local level to address these needs that we see in the system.' You decide which of your services working together, ideally in a common location, can meet these different needs. It's very clear then who is the leader of the team, who has the responsibility. For example, I remember in the Nantes municipality, in France, I asked the services for migrants who was the lead service, who let the migrants know where everything is. And nobody could tell me. If the services themselves don't know, how can they expect the migrants to know? Coordination of services is an efficiency argument; it shouldn't cost more money to just get people to work together. ■

ICT

technicians

Cedefop continues its series on trends and challenges for selected occupations in the European labour market.

ICT technicians support the design, development, installation, operation, testing, and problem-solving of hardware and software. This mid-level occupation is predominantly male; women represent only 17% of its employment.

Some 1.9 million people were working as ICT technicians in the EU in 2017, 200 000 more than in 2006. Demand growth has slowed, though. Advancements in artificial intelligence, cloud-based services and mobile devices have polarised demand for ICT skills. The demand for ICT specialists has intensified but fewer technicians are needed as even very sophisticated ICT tools can be now mastered by people with only user-level skills.

This might explain why future job growth of ICT technicians is forecast to be quite modest: 5% between 2018 and 2030. Across Europe, Cedefop is already recording more than six online job vacancies for ICT professionals for every one ICT technician.

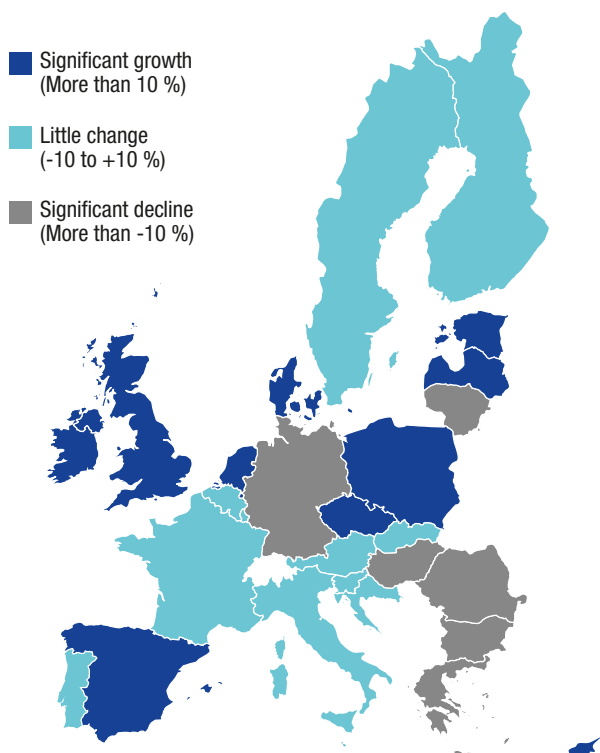
ICT TECHNICIANS IN THE EU

- **1.9 million** employees (2017)
- **46%** in ICT services and **54%** in rest of economy
- **Male-dominated** occupation (83%)
- **Mixed future employment prospects** across EU Member States
- **Declining importance** compared to **ICT professionals' jobs**

ESTIMATED DEMAND FOR ICT TECHNICIANS IN EU, 2018-30

- New jobs: **98 000**
- Replacement needs: **575 000**
- Total job openings: **673 000**

Future employment growth of ICT technicians (2018-30)



Between 2018 and 2030 about 670 000 jobs are expected to become available for ICT technicians, but this is mostly due to the need to replace workers leaving the labour market.

Ten EU Member States are expected to experience significant growth in ICT technician jobs in the future but in six countries this occupation is projected to experience a significant decline.

On top of their technical skills, ICT technicians must meet employer demand for a mix of transversal skills, including adaptability and teamwork. This is shown by online job vacancies collected by Cedefop. ■

Cedefop's
skills
forecast



Learn more
about
ICT technicians



Cedefop's skills in online
job vacancies analysis





VET, an attractive choice in

Vocational education and training (VET) in Finland is competence-based and learner-oriented, making for an attractive choice. Nine out of ten Finns think that VET is of high quality and provides skills needed for jobs. Four in ten graduates from compulsory basic education opt for vocational upper secondary education.

VET is attractive because of its flexibility and good job and study prospects: graduates may enrol in higher education or enter the labour market. The fact that vocational education is developed and delivered in cooperation with the labour market and highly professional teachers serves as a guarantee for its quality and attractiveness.



The Finnish VET system focuses on:

- flexible application and admission systems;
- a clear range of qualifications to meet the needs of working life;
- competence-based qualifications;
- flexibility of qualification structure, allowing students to complete entire qualifications, parts of them or smaller units, or combine parts of different qualification programmes or even university of applied sciences degrees;
- competence-based and individual study paths for all learners;
- more versatile learning environments and work-based learning: training agreements and apprenticeship training;
- a funding system encouraging effectiveness and outcomes.

The current Finnish EU Presidency has a series of education priorities: to advance Erasmus+ negotiations; promote future-oriented education and training; promote investment in human capital; strengthen equity, equality and effectiveness; enhance cooperation between education and research; and foster continuous learning.

Continuous learning has been a focus of recent discussion in Finland as the rapid development of artificial intelligence and digitalisation requires constant updating of skills. The Finnish government has decided on parliamentary reform of continuous education, responding to the people's lifelong need for upskilling and reskilling. This reform will apply to each point of the education pathway at which the education system interfaces with the provision and funding of education, social, relocation and unemployment security, independent and labour market training, and recognition of prior learning.

Continuous learning will also be the main topic for the meeting of the EU's Directors General for VET in October during the main European vocational skills week celebrations in Helsinki. ■



by REFERNET FINLAND

More validation opportunities for citizens



Countries are making progress in the creation of validation opportunities for their citizens but more must be done to fulfil the vision of truly effective validation systems

People acquire knowledge and skills in all kinds of settings: formal, informal and non-formal. While formal learning outcomes are easily recognised, as they are accompanied by certificates or diplomas, the informal and non-formal ones are more difficult to prove. This is where validation comes in.

Practitioners, experts, stakeholders and policy-makers from countries around the world gather every two years to take stock of, and further the agenda of, validation. The 3rd validation of prior learning (VPL) biennale took place in Berlin in May, with Cedefop contributing to its organisation. The event brought together 300 participants from 40 countries to discuss how to make policies on validation work. In a shared presentation with the European Commission's Director for Skills Manuela Geleng, Cedefop outlined the preliminary results of the 2018 update of the European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning.

The inventory will be published later this year on the Cedefop website. It features, in this edition, 39 country reports covering all EU Member States (with two reports for Belgium and three for the UK nations), the EFTA countries and four neighbouring countries (Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Turkey). There are also five thematic reports and three international case studies, reviewing validation policies in Canada, Hong Kong and Mexico. A synthesis report summarises the main findings. The inventory collects data separated by area – education and training, labour market and third sector – reflecting which institutions play a central role in the different arrangements.

MORE WORK NEEDED

The data show that countries are making progress in the creation of validation opportunities for their citizens but more must be done to fulfil the vision of truly effective validation systems. In all countries under study it is possible to have the learning acquired outside formal institutions validated in some way. However, it is the comprehensiveness of the validation initiatives that remain a challenge.

Countries are increasingly creating quality assurance mechanisms specifically targeted at validation arrangements; they use various methods to assess skills acquired in non-formal and informal settings, including as simulations, observations and portfolios. However, tests and examinations, similar to those in formal education contexts, remain the main assessment tool, which might be detrimental for low-qualified individuals who would benefit most from validation opportunities.

GLOBAL PRIZE

Within the activities of the 3rd VPL biennale, a global prize for validation of prior learning was awarded in three categories: products, procedures and policies. The competition offers applicants from around the world an opportunity to communicate best practice, helping to further develop and implement effective VPL systems. Cedefop, the Commission and other international experts formed the jury.

The category 'products' includes tools and instruments that make learning outcomes visible or help assess them. The winner was *A balancing act* by VIRKE the Enterprise Federation of Norway, a model and method to describe skills acquired in the



workplace, so that they can be understood in a wider working life context and in the formal education system.

'Procedures' include structured pathways for getting learning outcomes validated, training for assessor and guidance counsellors, or mechanisms for quality assurance of validation processes. The winner was *IQ Netzwerk Brandenburg Competence assessment for refugees and migrants*. IHK-Projektgesellschaft mbH Ostbrandenburg developed a procedure for assessment of informally and non-formally acquired job-specific competences according to uniform standards in all non-regulated dual training occupations in the German VET system for migrants and refugees.

'Policies' include regional, national or industry guidelines, laws and regulations on validation of prior

learning. The winner was *Validation guidelines in Regione Piemonte*. Italy's Piemonte Region has been able to capitalise on collective experience to turn pilots into a system.

THE BERLIN DECLARATION

The biennale was organised around the development of the Berlin declaration on validation of prior learning. The declaration is meant as a grassroots push for stakeholders and policy-makers to make validation policies bolder, more effective and more inclusive.

Participants were able to modify and contribute to the drafting of the document of six paragraphs, mirroring the six policy tracks of the biennale and focusing on specific aspects of validation: organisational arrangements, financing, methods and procedures, supporting structures, post-validation pathways and legal arrangements. They then voted which elements drafted in the declaration were the more relevant and should stay.

At the end of the event, the declaration was read out and participants were asked to vote to adopt it: 92% said yes!

The next biennale will take place in Cape Town, South Africa, on 12-14 May 2021, and it will be hosted by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). ■

WHAT IS VALIDATION?



Validation means a process of confirmation by an authorised body that an individual has acquired learning outcomes measured against a relevant standard and consists of the following four distinct phases:

- identification through dialogue of an individual's particular experiences;
- documentation to make the individual's experiences visible;
- a formal assessment of these experiences;
- certification of the results of the assessment, which may lead to a partial or full qualification.

Source: 2012 Council Recommendation on validation.

European inventory on
validation of non-formal
and informal learning



Berlin declaration
on validation of
prior learning



A young chef following her dream



© Cedefop, 2019/Nikos Tzafendis

LUIZA MAYR

“*There was a woman who asked me what I’d like to become in life if everything was possible, and I thought ‘yes, I’d like to cook’*”

CHEF, APPRENTICESHIP GRADUATE

Luisa Mayr, an apprenticeship graduate from Memingen, in Germany, is one of those people who attract your attention from the moment you meet them. She is strong-minded, articulate, even in a foreign language, with an infectious enthusiasm and a smile that is sure to win over her colleagues and customers. She speaks about life, learning and work with passion. She is a living advert for vocational education and training.

Becoming a vegan chef was the result of a self-realisation process. When she took the decision, she stuck by it and she is now travelling the world for work with her dog. Her first stop was at a vegan restaurant in Thessaloniki, where we met her.

Luisa’s parents liked her choice of studies and profession, but weren’t thrilled about her plan to travel as two of her three siblings live abroad.

THE EUREKA MOMENT

She says of her life journey: ‘I was 18 when I finished school and I didn’t really know what to do. I went travelling, to Australia, and it was there when I first thought about how I want to spend my future, what I’d really like to do, what fascinates me. And food did fascinate me. I was a vegetarian since I was 10, so this was always part of my life, together with the love for animals. That all came together and there was a woman who asked me what I’d like to become in life if everything was possible, and I thought “yes, I’d like to cook.” I want to bring people together around a table to talk to each other, to support

each other and then to combine it with me being vegetarian, looking more to vegan food and not doing harm to animals. That was the moment when I decided that I wanted to become a chef.’

Luisa went back to Germany from Australia and did a three-year apprenticeship as a culinary chef. She recalled the experience: ‘Well, I didn’t expect it to be so hard. I am a really sensitive, soft person and the kitchen that I worked in and did the apprenticeship was really good, they were amazing people, but they had been taught the old way and everything needed to be hard, not nice, like “don’t say too often that something was good.” It was mostly hard and tiring and we had long hours, not good pay, just like the whole picture people, in Germany at least, have in their mind when they think about a kitchen. I got confronted with all



© Cedelep, 2019/Nikos Tzafendis

of this and I was like “oh my God, I don’t know if I can do it.”

Despite her doubts, it all worked out well for Luisa: ‘I loved it. I still love what it was. I love cooking and every day there are different things to do. It has the creativity, it has everything.’

PERSEVERING

Once out of school, she went back on travelling. In Thessaloniki she looked for a job at a vegan restaurant: ‘That was a bit of a funny story, because I went on a website where people look for help with their house, with animals, with their garden. As a traveller, I could apply to help them for a few days and get some food and a place to sleep. As I was looking into that, I found a woman who opened the first vegan restaurant in Thessaloniki. I wrote to her but she didn’t reply the next day, so I decided not to

sit and wait. I brought out all my stuff from school and wrote my CV and motivational letter. I went to every vegetarian and vegan restaurant in the city and finally ended up here.’

And she loved the experience: ‘I love a small team. I had my problems with this hierarchy thing in Germany because we had a bigger kitchen. I know it had to be like that to work somehow, but I just didn’t like it. Here, working in a small team was amazing.’

Encouraged by her first professional experience, Luisa decided to continue combining work with travel, with her next long stop being Mongolia.

JUST IMAGINE!

When we asked her what she would say to other young people who are still looking into themselves to find what they want to do, she didn’t hesitate:

‘Just one thing... The question that I got asked which opened my mind up: What would you do if everything was possible? Before someone asked this question I was thinking “it’s not possible, it won’t work.” I had all these things on my mind why it won’t work, all these reasons. And she said, just imagine. Then I asked myself what if it could work. And I started dreaming and that was the way of opening up. Then I could think of different things to do and different options rather than “this won’t work, that won’t work and I am left with only two options.” So, I’d say to young people, open your minds and go for it!’ ■

Watch the interview
with Luisa Mayr

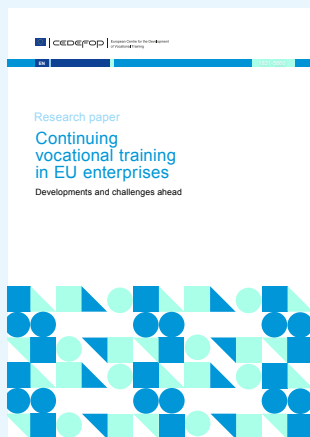


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IN FOCUS

CONTINUING VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN EU ENTERPRISES

This publication provides a comparative statistical analysis of skills development through continuing vocational training (CVT) in EU enterprises. It is based on data from the latest rounds of the CVTS survey covering EU Member States, Norway and North Macedonia and reporting on progress towards key policy objectives. The analysis considers indicators on enterprise, CVT provision, staff participation and time devoted to training and enterprise expenditure. It also looks at data concerning the reasons given by enterprises for not providing (further) training. The report pays particular attention to SME training efforts.



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IN FOCUS

4TH EUROPEAN VOCATIONAL SKILLS WEEK



14-18 OCTOBER

HELSINKI, FINLAND

The fourth European vocational skills week will take place between 14 and 18 October across Europe and beyond, with this year's main celebrations held in Helsinki. An initiative of the European Commission, with Cedefop as a partner, the 2019 theme is 'Vocational education and training (VET) for all – skills for life'. Among the Helsinki week of events will be a conference on VET providers and the presentation of the VET excellence awards, including the #CedefopPhotoAward, to this year's winners by outgoing European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility Marianne Thyssen. The #CedefopPhotoAward winning and shortlisted photostories will also be exhibited during the week.

OTHER EVENTS

OCTOBER	7	PARIS, FRANCE	2019 joint Cedefop and OECD symposium: The next steps for apprenticeship
NOVEMBER	28-29	THESSALONIKI, GREECE	Cedefop workshop on comparing qualifications
DECEMBER	11	BRUSSELS, BELGIUM	Cedefop seminar with the Finnish EU Presidency: Skills development of platform workers

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