VELA

VET Empowerment through
innovative and inclusive Learning Approaches

RESULT 1

Manual: Analysis of the "VELA" field of action and Exploitation of Best Practices

**Co-funded by
the European Union**

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Introduction

The Transnational Report includes specific suggestions, recommendations, and guidelines for the development of a user-friendly package.

The shock of the COVID-19 crisis on education has been unprecedented. It has set the clock back on the attainment of international education goals, and disproportionately affected the most vulnerable. According to "UN - Policy Brief: Education during Covid-19 and beyond" more than 1.5 billion learners across the planet are or have been affected by lack of educational meaning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, vocational education and training (VET) systems are being uniquely impacted and it has received limited attention compared to other parts of the education system and is often seen as having lower status. While for mainstream schools, governments have adopted protocols to allow students to return to school, in the field of VET there is a dangerous carelessness. There is an enormous variety of tools available to teachers and trainers to create their own learning material and environments, but most of them are not VET-specific.

Ready-made material with VET-specific content is much less developed. In most cases, the tools provided by public or private stakeholders focus exclusively on theoretical knowledge. There is a risk that VET learners are disadvantaged compared with learners from other educational tracks, as more efforts are put into general school subjects. This extraordinary situation is an opportunity for VET providers and learners alike to develop their digital competence.

The **VELA project** (VET Empowerment through innovative and inclusive Learning Approaches), (reference n. 2021-1-IT01-KA220-VET-000032964) funded by the Erasmus+ programme, has the purpose to present the current and prospect shapes of inclusive digital education methods and skills upgrade through digital tools to potential and current professionals in the market and to discuss the gaps in these fields and the needs of the target groups in the partner countries and the EU.

The general objective of the project is to build a more sustainable and resilient society in the EU, enhancing the delivery of education and training after COVID-19 crisis, supporting innovation and inclusion of vulnerable groups.

The project wants to support VET providers to address teaching and learning processes through the development and implementation of new and more relevant teaching and learning approaches and to strengthen vulnerable groups in facing the challenges presented by the

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SECTION 1
Introduction

recent sudden shift to online and distance learning while promoting equal opportunities and access to all.

Methodology

Over the past year, all European nations have been forced to provide responses that mitigate the impact of the crisis in the education sector generated by the pandemic. The world of education has suffered major delays but has not stopped thanks to the intervention of numerous local actors who have tried to find innovative solutions to a problem never encountered in the recent past. Given the huge scale of the crisis and the rapid proliferation of local initiatives, it was difficult to keep pace with all the actions that made it possible to continue training in the VET sector.

That's why, the purpose of this report is to collectively present the current and prospect shapes of inclusive digital education methods and skills upgrade through digital tools to potential and current professionals in the market and to discuss the gaps in these fields and the needs of the target groups in the partner countries and the EU.

The **target groups** considered to develop this analysis is characterized by:

- ⌃ Educators, facilitators and VET provider driven by the necessity to boost their digital competences in order to facilitate the involvement of vulnerable groups in education process;

- ⌃ Project managers, community leaders, instructors and social workers that are interested in improving their ability in using innovative digital tools for the increase the quality of online education.

This Result represents the theoretical framework on which the following project results will be based on. In particular, **the present Manual will mainly gather insights** about:

- ⌃ EU and international research/case study concerning inclusive digital education methods and validated best practices;

- ⌃ EU and international research/case study concerning the benefits of online learning and inclusion through innovative digital tools;

- ⌃ Direct input from VET providers emerged to their responses to the survey previously redacted by the partnership of the project.

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Methodology

This Result focuses specifically on already developed online learning methodology and applications, in order to have a validated starting point to define and develop high quality and inclusive digital solutions to teach/learn. The research will be carried out on a broad spectrum, trying to bring innovative ideas and good practices not only from partner countries, but from all European nations.

The resources have been designed for autonomous use by VET educators dealing with learners who are in need and will have an implicit potential for transferability into formal, non-formal and informal learning settings, therefore even beyond the research scope for which they are designed.

As the first point, the research analyses the VET programmes, system and tools in every part of the country, trying to focus on the national difficulties that the VET system encountered during the Coronavirus pandemic.

VET system in Europe. Analysis of the five countries of the VELA project

Analysis of Italy

All the entities of the Italian education system that can be traced back to the European expression VET presents as a sum of elements difficult to trace back to a organic design, neither from the point of view of the formative model, or from the one which defines the links between professional references and training references, nor the way in which they are conceived and pursued educational, cultural and professional objectives specific to this sector. In the structure of the technical and vocational education and training system Italian we can trace four great components:

Technical education is the most relevant, the one that is proposed mainly as a peculiar aspect of the Italian context, which presents, alongside to a number of glorious institutes and of strong technical tradition in the proper sense, an area of institutes strongly marked by an encyclopedic cultural approach.

Vocational education and training had the intention of providing operational frameworks to the industry, but that in the following is characterized by being the "popular school" in upper secondary.

The component of Education and Vocational Training, which is presented strongly differentiated both by type of intervention (there is an area with a strong "vocational education" character of training institutions with pedagogical and organizational-structural skills, in addition to another of a more caring nature, aimed at the recovery of adolescents in difficulty and discomfort), both for territories (the presence of this sub-system is capillary in the North and part of the Centre, while in Southern Italy a process of closure of existing routes in recent years)

The apprenticeship component - while representing a component of the right-duty of education and training - never represented, either from the qualitative and quantitative point of view, a particular training model.

The education and training system comprises:

1. preschool education (ISCED level 0);
2. integrated primary and lower secondary education (ISCED levels 1 and 2)
3. upper secondary education (ISCED level 344, also called second cycle of education);
4. post-secondary education (IFTS- only vocational – ISCED level 453, EQF 4);

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5.   higher education (ISCED level 453, EQF 5 for higher technical programmes), ISCED level 667, EQF 6, ISCED levels 667-767 EQF 7, ISCED level 768-864, EQF 8). Pre-school education is not compulsory and is provided by educational services for children aged less than three years operated by the regions, whereas for ages 3-6 is available at pre-primary schools which operate under the responsibility of the education ministry.

Compulsory education starts at the age of 6 and lasts for 10 years up to 16 years of age. It covers the whole first cycle of education (primary and lower secondary and two years of the second cycle- upper secondary education).

The last two years of compulsory education can be attended either in an upper secondary school or within the regional VET system.

The upper secondary school education offers both general and vocational (technical and vocational) programmes. Duration of studies is five years. At the end of the upper secondary education, students who successfully pass the final exam, receive a certificate that gives them access to higher education.

The following institutes offer education at higher level:

1.   universities (polytechnics included);
2.   high level arts, music and dance education institutes (Afam);
3.   higher schools for language mediators (SSML);
4.   higher technical institutes (ITS).

Access to university, high level arts, music and dance education institutes and higher schools for language mediators programmes is solely for students with an upper secondary school leaving certificate. The education ministry and individual institutions establish the specific conditions for admission.

Courses at higher technical institutes (ITS) are accessible to students with an upper secondary leaving certificate and to students who have attended a four-year regional vocational course followed by an additional one-year course in the higher technical education and training system (IFTS). Higher technical institutes offer short-cycle bachelor programmes, according to the Bologna structure.

At upper secondary level the following VET programmes are offered:

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- five-year programmes (EQF level 4) at technical schools leading to technical education diplomas; at vocational schools leading to professional education diplomas. Programmes combine general education and VET, and can also be delivered in the form of alternance training. Graduates have access to higher education;

- three-year programmes leading to a vocational qualification (EQF level 3);

- four-year programmes leading to a technician professional diploma (EQF level 4).

At post-secondary level, VET is offered as higher technical education for graduates of five year upper secondary programmes or four-year vocational education and training pathway programmes who passed entrance exams:

Higher technical education and training courses (IFTS):

- one year post-secondary non-academic programmes leading to a high technical specialisation certificate (EQF level 4);

- higher technical institute programmes (ITS): two- to three-year post-secondary non-academic programmes which lead to a high-level technical diploma (EQF level 5).

VET for adults is offered by a range of different public and private providers. It includes programmes leading to upper secondary VET qualifications to ensure progression opportunities for the low-skilled. These programmes are provided by provincial adult education centres (CPIA) under the remit of the education ministry.

Continuing VET targets mainly employed people. Most resources for continuing training have been planned and managed by the regions and autonomous provinces (which have mainly used European social fund regional operational programmes as a source) and the social partners (through interprofessional funds).

Continuing VET programmes pursue three goals:

1.   the maintenance/upgrading of competencies and skills;
2.   corporate competitiveness and innovation;
3.   compulsory training.

Compulsory training comprises obligatory courses related to work specific requirements, for which the employer has to make sure that a worker received a proper training tailored to the needs and conditions of the workplace. It is mandatory the training at the workplace (mandatory for the employer by law, for all employees in certain occupations, e.g. health and safety). There are also some obligatory training courses by law for some dangerous or potentially dangerous

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tasks (e.g., driving a forklift), training for preventive services (e.g. occupational physicians may be required by law to do some training regularly, as well as for the workers in the food sector in respect to the compliance with Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) food protocol, training for safety representatives who deal with occupational safety and health questions at the enterprise level and training for first aid measures (by law, a certain number of people have to be able to offer first aid), training for workers to protect themselves and others (e.g. fire exercises). Beneficiaries can obtain a formal qualification.

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Analysis of Spain

According to Spanish legislation (Act 5/2002) VET is defined as "the set of training activities that prepare people for qualified performance in diverse occupations, access to employment and active participation in social, cultural and economic life. It covers the training programmes included in IVET (Initial VET) and CVET (Continuous VET), to enable skilling, upskilling and reskilling. Initial VET (IVET) is mainly aimed at young people although it is also open to adults wishing to acquire a qualification. Vocational training for employment is offered for both the employed and unemployed workers. The Ministry for Education and Vocational Training, and the Ministry for Labour, Migration and Social Security are responsible for the VET system in Spain.

Education offered from early childhood until the end of primary school (compulsory, 6 years, learners aged 6 to 12) does not include vocational training programmes. Lower secondary education (known as ESO in Spanish), is the second and last stage of compulsory education comprising four academic years (from 12 to 16 years). After graduation, learners receive the lower secondary education certificate (título ESO, ISCED 2) which gives access to high school (bachillerato), intermediate VET (FP de grado medio) or the labour market. Students who do not obtain the ESO diploma receive an official certificate of compulsory education, which details the years studied and grades obtained.

The 2013 education reform introduced an alternative vocational path (Basic VET or FP Básica) open to ESO students aged 15 years, who meet certain age and academic requirements. Students passing this basic VET programme are awarded a diploma with academic and professional validity (Título profesional básico). Basic VET cycles run in a 2-year programme of 2 000 hours of theoretical and practical training, of which a minimum of 240 hours at workplaces. It gives direct access to intermediate VET cycles and the possibility of an exam to obtain the ESO diploma, opening up access to upper secondary general education programmes. Students who finish basic VET will obtain the ESO diploma directly if the teaching staff considers they have achieved the objectives and necessary skills of ESO level. Upper secondary education comprises high school (the general academic route, bachillerato) and intermediate VET, neither of them compulsory. High school (bachillerato) includes two academic years that are normally taken between the ages of 16 and 18. There is a core curriculum with compulsory subjects and a specialised part with several preselected options that student can select by themselves. Upon successful completion, students get the upper secondary education diploma (título de Bachillerato, ISCED 3) which gives direct access to higher VET programmes (ISCED 5) and, with a university entrance exam, to university studies (ISCED 6).

Intermediate VET has 2 000 hours of training divided into two academic years. Students who successfully complete these programmes are awarded a Technician diploma (título de Técnico) in the relevant speciality. Since the 2016/17 academic year, this qualification gives students direct access to higher level VET.

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Tertiary education includes vocational (ISCED 5) and academic programmes (ISCED 6-8). The duration of Higher VET programmes (ISCED 5) is 2 000 hours over two academic years. These studies lead to a Higher Technician diploma (título de Técnico Superior) giving access to related university studies. University studies (ISCED 6-8) include bachelor, master and PhD programmes.

VET programmes in the employment system

Vocational training for employment is the responsibility of the Labour Ministry and the regions. It includes training programmes for both employed and unemployed workers, with the aim of improving the employability of the population by professional training or retraining. It also provides an opportunity for people who left education with low or no qualifications to improve their competences and skills or level of qualification. It is based upon cooperation between labour authorities and social agents (employers and trade unions) at national and regional level, and collective sector negotiation at national level, thus constituting a single framework based on the agreements reached between the social partners and the government.

The different funding schemes for training programmes available free of charge to unemployed and employed workers are the following ones:

1. Training organised by companies for their employees (formación programada por la empresa), funded by discounts on what companies have to pay to Social Security;

2. Subsidised training schemes through open calls for proposals, such as sectoral and cross-sectoral training programmes for the employed and self employed, including those working in the social economy (cooperatives) (known as planes de formación intersectoriales, sectoriales, autónomos, y economía social);

3. Subsidised training schemes for the unemployed, including 'training plans' (planes de formación) aimed at meeting needs identified by the public employment services and specific training programmes. They are funded through open tendered calls for proposals;

4. Other training initiatives, such as individual training leaves (permisos individuales de formación -PIF), alternance training (formación en alternancia), civil servants´ training, training in prisons, among others. The way in which these initiatives are funded varies very much, depending on specific programs and institutions.

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Continuing professional development system of VET trainers, educators

As in most countries in the EU, official VET requires tertiary education as entry level to the teaching profession; in Spain (as in others like Czech Republic, Finland, France, Iceland, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Spain) teachers need a master degree. Even more, candidates need to have completed tertiary pedagogical education before teaching as in other countries like Bulgaria, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Hungary or Slovenia.

As in most countries in the EU, initial teacher training in Spain includes practice (traineeships) in schools under the supervision of experienced teachers. For teachers of practical vocational subjects, lower levels of qualification topped up by professional experience can be accepted. There is no Initial teacher training for this group. Professionals from the labour market can teach in VET, with hiring arrangements and qualification requirements being quite flexible, unless they decide to become full-time teachers. In non-regular education, informal VET or training for employment, teachers and instructors are requested to have specific accreditations on technical or content side depending on the specific topic: pedagogical aspects are not considered in those accreditations, only contents and possible previous experience in the specific work field.

As in most countries of the EU, Spain supports the idea that teachers should update their knowledge, skills and competences. In general, it is considered that, while the pedagogical competences of VET school teachers are generally considered adequate, most countries point to a growing need for VET teachers to keep up with the realities of industry and changing labour market needs. In Spain, attending CPD (Continuing Professional Development) programmes translates into wage bonuses for teachers. On the contrary, in-company trainers (mentors) usually have to meet initial requirements before starting and are not obliged to undertake CPD subsequently.

As in most countries of the EU, in Spain, accredited training courses or programmes are considered CPD, whereas there is no validation or recognition of competences acquired while teaching or training. The Ministry of Education as well as the Department of Education of Regions annually offer free training programs for all teachers in non-university education in public centres or even centres partially funded by authorities.

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Analysis of Poland

VET provided at the secondary level:

1. three-year first stage sectoral programme (branżowe szkoły I stopnia) introduced in 2017 are part of the formal education and training system. This programme is available to primary school graduates. The first stage sectoral programme combines general and vocational education and leads to a vocational qualifications diploma for a single-qualification occupation.

2. two-year second stage sectoral programme began to operate in the 2020/21 school year. This second stage sectoral programme aims at further developing the vocational qualifications attained in the first stage sectoral programme and is available to the graduates of the first stage sectoral programmes - usually 18 year-olds. The second stage sectoral programme leads to a vocational qualifications diploma for occupations consisting of two qualifications.

3. five-year vocational upper secondary programmes (technika) are part of the formal education and training system. This programme is available to primary school graduates, usually 15 year olds, that is those who received the primary school leaving certificate. The vocational upper secondary programme combines general and vocational education and leads to a vocational qualifications diploma for occupations consisting of two qualifications after passing the State vocational examination. The school director decides on the share of work-based learning, however it cannot be less than 50% of the hours foreseen for vocational education (which combines both practical and theoretical training). Graduates of these programmes, after passing the secondary school leaving examination (matura), are eligible to continue to tertiary education.

4. three-year special job-training programme (szkoły specjalne przysposabiające do pracy) for learners with special education needs (SEN) leads to a job readiness certificate. This programme is designed for learners with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities or multiple disabilities.

5. work preparation classes are available for SEN learners in seventh and eighth grade of primary school (lower secondary level) for pupils aged 15 years and older (oddziały przysposabiające do pracy).

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Post-secondary level

At the post-secondary non-tertiary level, vocational qualifications can be attained in one- to two-and-a-half year school-based programmes (szkoły policealne). Postsecondary programmes are part of the formal education and training system and are available to the graduates of general and vocational upper secondary programmes (usually 19 and 20 year-olds), as well as in the future – the second stage sectoral programmes (usually 20 year-olds). These programmes are strictly vocational and do not include general education.

Adult learning and out-of-school VET

Adult learning and out-of-school VET is available in continuing education centres, practical training centres, further training and professional development centres, and initial VET (IVET) schools offering:

- vocational qualification courses (kwalifikacyjne kursy zawodowe) based on the curricula for a qualification in a given occupation; they allow learners to take the State vocational examination and obtain a vocational qualification certificate;
- vocational skills courses based on the core VET curriculum, including learning outcomes for a qualification or common learning outcomes for all occupations;
- general skills courses that are based on the general education curriculum;
- theoretical courses for juvenile employees.

Adults, including the unemployed, may also undertake vocational training through courses provided by training companies and other non-formal education institutions. Since 2016, the qualifications based on the curricula of such courses can be included in the national qualifications framework.

VET in higher education

The law on higher education in Poland distinguishes different types of higher education institutions: academic, vocational and others, such as medical or military. The second type of school offers first (Licentiate degree) and second (Master's degree) cycle study programmes as well as uniform master's studies, but not doctoral programmes. Higher education vocational schools are also not obliged to conduct scientific research and educate academic staff.

The description of the VET system in Poland is based on the report "Vocational education and training in Europe: Poland 2018" prepared by the European Centre for the Development of The Vocational Training.

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Analysis of Romania

The issues facing Romania and its national goals for initial and continuing VET - increasing its quality and relevance – are strongly related to those at the EU level. The nation aims to decrease early leaving from education and training and increase adult learning participation by continuously adapting its diverse VET system with vocational, professional, and technological paths. These are two areas with significant room for improvement in comparison to other Member States. Measures that have the potential to affect change include promoting upskilling programs, reintegrating individuals into education and training through second chance programs, extending apprenticeships and other work-based learning programs.

The national strategic VET goals of the nation are to make VET a first option by making counseling services available to all first VET learners, strengthening essential competencies, promoting and rewarding excellence in beginning VET, and more. The ambitious list of objectives is supplemented by tools to follow graduates' careers and increasing the social partners' influence on policymaking.

The constitution guarantees public education, including tertiary, free of charge. General objectives, aims, principles, structure and organisation of the education and training system are described in the National Law of Education (2011). It defines the following education levels:

1. early education (age 0 to 6):

    - the before pre-school level (age 0 to 3)
    - pre-school education (age 3 to 6)

2. primary education (ISCED 1):

    - preparatory grade (age 6 to 7)
    - grades 1 to 4

3. secondary education:

    - lower secondary education (ISCED 2, grades 5 to 8) also called 'gymnasium' (gimnaziu)
    - upper secondary education (ISCED 3) also called 'secondary superior education', comprising:

        a) four-year general and VET (vocational and technological) programmes (grades 9 to 12) providing access to higher education;

        b) three-year school-based VET programmes (nationally referred as 'professional' programmes and may be offered as dual VET)

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c) short (720 hours of practical training) VET programmes;

4. post-secondary VET programmes (ISCED 4, postliceu);

5. higher education (ISCED 5-8).

All three levels of schooling are required: primary, lower secondary, and the first two years of upper secondary (grades 9 and 10). (11 years in total). Learners continue their studies in upper secondary education, either general or vocational, after finishing lower secondary school. Learners must submit their lower secondary diploma, results from the national examinations, and final mark transcripts for all subjects in order to enroll. The national examinations cover mathematics, the native tongue (if it is not Romanian), and the Romanian language and literature. VET institutions may hold entrance tests if the number of openings is less than the number of requests from gymnasium graduates.

There are no official VET programs in higher education. But some bachelor's and master's programs are more focused on practical application than others. All upper secondary graduates must have completed the baccalaureate examinations in order to enroll in higher education.

Ethnic minorities have the right to pursue all forms, levels, and types of education in their home tongue (including tertiary). Depending on the kind and severity of requirements recognized, special needs education is given in either conventional or specialized schools. The school board could choose to offer extracurricular activities (School after school programme). According to current regulations, non-profit educational institutions manage private education and training at all levels and in all formats.

Initial and continuing VET are regulated by the government.

At the post-secondary and higher secondary levels, initial VET is offered. Students can enroll in upper secondary VET as early as age 15. (grade 9). In upper secondary VET, certifications can be obtained through vocational, technical, and professional programs. For the purposes of this report, all types of vocational, technological, and professional (including short programs) education will be referred to as initial VET in accordance with their characteristics that fit the broad European definition of VET that "aims to equip people with knowledge, know-how, skills, and/or competences required in particular occupations or more generally". (Cedefop, 2014).

Initial VET learners may choose between the following study forms:

- daytime learning (most popular)
- evening classes

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- work-based learning
- dual form

Initial VET providers are:

- technological high schools/colleges, which provide four-year technological programmes leading to EQF level 4 or three-year professional programmes
- professional schools, which provide three-year professional programmes
- (vocational) military, theology, sports, arts and pedagogy high schools/ colleges, which provide vocational programmes
- post-secondary high schools (or 'post-high schools'), which provide postsecondary VET programmes; these are often independent departments under technical colleges or universities.

Starting at the age of 16, students can enroll in continuing VET, commonly known as adult vocational training. Training programs aid in the development of skills already obtained as part of an existing qualification, the acquisition of new skills in the same field of employment, the learning of fundamental/key skills, or new technical skills, particular to a new vocation.

Training is frequently less time-consuming than initial VET, is based on distinct standards, and is tailored to a particular vocation. While there are certain exceptions, general subjects are not a part of continuing VET. It is offered in the following ways by accredited private and public training organizations that take into account the demands of companies and the fundamental skill requirements of adults:

- apprenticeship at workplace
- traineeship for higher education graduates
- adult training courses

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Analysis of Cyprus

In Cyprus education developed significantly after 1960, when Cyprus gained its independence and the Cypriot economy experienced spectacular growth. Education in Cyprus is available from the pre-primary to the post-graduate level. It is compulsory at the pre-primary, primary (grades one to six) and lower secondary education (grades seven to nine) until the student reaches the age of 15.

The earliest level at which vocational education and training is available is the upper secondary level of technical schools, including evening technical schools. VET is also available through the apprenticeship system, which accepts students who leave formal education between the 8th and 10th grades.

VET at tertiary level is provided at four public institutes/colleges under the jurisdiction of various ministries and at several private colleges. The formerly known as post-secondary vocational education and training institutes (VETIs) are now higher non-university, public institutions following their accreditation by the Cyprus Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (CYQAA) in 2017.

In addition, vocational training in Cyprus is widely available for employed, unemployed, other groups at risk of exclusion from the labour market and adults in general, through public and private provision such as colleges, training institutions, consultancies, and enterprises.

The types of Vocational and Educational Training in Cyprus are:

1. Apprenticeship: a two-year initial VET programme providing practical and theoretical training to young people who have not successfully completed their secondary compulsory education and wish to be trained employed in technical occupations.

2. VET at upper secondary level: provided at technical schools for students aged 15-18, evening technical schools, and afternoon & evening classes of technical schools for adults.

3. Formal upper secondary technical and vocational education: offered free of charge in both the theoretical direction and the practical direction, the duration of studies is three years for both directions and students select their specialisation in the first year of their studies.

4. Second chance formal initial vocational education: Evening technical schools, Three-year programmes of the afternoon and evening classes of technical schools

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5. VET at Tertiary level: students may acquire, improve, or upgrade qualifications and skills so that they are better prepared for the labour market (ISCED 454, EQF level 5)

6. Training for the employed: The main bodies promoting training provision for the employed are the Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus (HRDA), the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth (MoEC), the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance (MLWSI) and other ministries and public institutions. Also, private institutions such as colleges, training institutions, consultancy firms and enterprises offer a variety of courses for adults, including many that are not subsidised by the HRDA.

7. Training for the unemployed: The main bodies promoting training provision for the unemployed are the Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus (HRDA) in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance (MLWSI) and the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth (MoEC).

8. Training for adults in general: The main bodies promoting training in general for adults are the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth (MoEC) and the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance (MLWSI).

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Good Practices: the case of Italy

Title of best practice: Fondazione ASPHI onlus

Description: Promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities in school, work, and society using digital technologies.

Specific target group and profile: People with disabilities, non-self-sufficient elderly people and their families.

Context and methodology: Asphi is dedicated to the training and counseling of educators, animators, social workers, caregivers, and information and sensibilization activities aimed at institutions, service managers and citizens.

Promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in school, work, and society using digital technologies. The Foundation carries out its activity, throughout the national territory, in the social and socio-health assistance sector, promoting the integration of disabled or disadvantaged people in school, work and society using information and communication technologies.

Asphi promotes IT and telematics courses that provide disabled and disadvantaged people with the tools and knowledge necessary to carry out a job or to reduce a disadvantage. Their participation in the research and dissemination of technical and scientific knowledge in the fields of information technology, telematics, telecommunications, and related disciplines, with the aim of creating applications for the disabled, is connected to their involvement in national and international projects always aimed at the personal development of the disabled or disadvantaged through information and communication technologies. Asphi promotes the most appropriate actions towards the business world and the Public Administration and also they intervene with the disbursement of contributions and donations of modest value, in cases particularly worthy of attention.

The Foundation has the added value of 40 years of experience, it promotes the culture of accessibility and digital usability, and has created a dedicated, highly qualified work group made

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up of people with technical expertise, human factors experts, people with disabilities. ASPHI has created a dedicated, highly qualified working group composed of people with technical expertise, human factors experts, and people with disabilities. Precisely, the group analyzes and evaluates digital systems and content (websites, mobile apps, digital documents, management applications) of public and private Organizations. The working group performs tasks by filling out feedback forms.

Inclusive digital education method

Many actions are carried out concerning this theme. Here I report what concerns the course of "Educational Robotics, Artificial/Augmented Intelligence and Inclusive Teaching" inherent inteaching the use of the robot Thymio, programming it and becoming familiar with artificial intelligence tools using them through the visual programming language Scratch, designing inclusive multidisciplinary activities with the use of the learned tools.

Through another project of the association concerning math and inclusion in elementary school, resources are also made available for home-based activities that can be assigned by teachers and implemented with the support of parents. These are mainly elementary school exercise books in the form of games using software that can be downloaded and used on the computer. Proven free multimedia guides are produced for elementary school teachers to support inclusive "teaching" of mathematics that also uses the potential of information technology and considers the different learning styles of pupils.

Gaps and mismatches identified

Gaps and mismatches of the VET institutions and the sector; absence of distance learning moodle platforms and remodeling due to the covid-19 pandemic. The response compared with leading national VET institutions (ex: University) has been sharply lower. There are no real guidelines on the duration and mode of trainers' refresher courses, the responses to beneficiaries' needs will be slower or less adequate than the others. The courses/project offered are broad but there is not certainly they've been confirmed for the next few years; along this line there does not seem to be a consolidated and structured way to programming the services offered.

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Good Practices: the case of Spain

Title of best practice: Federación Mujeres Jóvenes, (Young Women's Federation)

topic: Inclusive and accessible training for unemployed or precariously employed women

Federación Mujeres Jóvenes, (Young Women's Federation) is developing and promoting the online course "Digital Skills for Young Women" as part of the Programme for the Social and Labour Market Integration of Young Women, subsidised by the Ministry of Social Rights. This is a free training course to obtain the European Computer Driving Licence, ECDL/ICDL (European Computer Driving Licence). The training is carried out online and it is especially aimed at all young women (between 18 and 35 years old) who are unemployed, looking for their first job or in precarious employment and want to improve their employment and professional situation thanks to the knowledge of the course or the ICDL accreditation.

Target profile: Any young woman (between 18 and 35 years old) resident in Spain, who wants to improve her professional situation because she is unemployed or in a precarious job.

Context and methodology: The training is designed as a 140-hour activity. It is carried out online through the Moodle Platform of the Training Campus of the University of Alcalá. This is where participants can find all the learning materials from 6 different modules (Fundamental computer literacy, Fundamental knowledge of online applications, Word Processing, Spreadsheets, Presentations, Computer security and Digital Marketing). Every module includes gender-inclusive language and approach and accessible learning materials, practical activities, and tests. The online platform is also the contact point between learners and trainers, having common spaces to share doubts, comments, suggestions, etc. After participants have completed the course, they can take the official ICDL certification exams that combine theoretical questions with practical simulation questions.

It is a good practice in relation to adaptation of learning materials to gender-inclusive language. This involves avoiding the initial bias or prejudice that technology and computing is a male-focused area. Materials are designed considering digital accessibility standards and recommendations so everybody can used them in an effective way no matter if they have any kind of disability or special need. Learning results are verified by an independent third party through the ICDL certification, which is widely used in Europe and worldwide. Also every year at least 15 women benefit from this course and develop their digital knowledge and skills since 2015, totalling more than 150 in total.

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Inclusive digital education method

The design and development of eLearning activities with gender-inclusive language and digitally accessible materials prevent the neglect of disadvantaged groups such as low-skilled women and people with special needs or disabilities. E-learning facilitates training without distance barriers to reach people in remote, rural and disadvantaged areas and the elements of gamification and practical exercises based on digital technology facilitate the involvement of students in the courses.

Gaps and mismatches identified

Gaps and mismatches of the VET institutions and the sector

- Lack of digital readiness of trainers and organisations
- Lack of digital accessibility skills
- Lack of preparation in gamification teaching methods in non-formal education

Skill gaps and mismatches of VET trainers and the sector:

- Deficit in specific preparation

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Good Practices: the case of Poland

Title of best practice: Support for Ukrainian women – online webinars and courses to refill the skills and find a job (in Poland).

Target group and profile: Ukrainian women, migrants, refugees.

Context and methodology: Context for both good practices is the war in Ukraine and suddenly emerged needs of migrant women.

Description: The idea of presenting this good practice is to show a) migrants (temporary migrants, war migrants) as the vulnerable group which has to find a place on the job market in a foreign country in the unexpected situation b) VET training/ VET qualifications adaptation as the form of help and support.

In February 2022 thousands of people from Ukraine fleeing from the war came to Poland, Russian invasion of their country. Among these people there were mainly women and children. They came to Poland unexpectedly, commonly without prior knowledge about the Polish job market and system, not knowing for how long, and obviously stressed and toughly experienced by war. Polish society came with unprecedented help, then some official support programs were implemented. From the beginning (even when they found a place and care in Polish families) a lot of them was in a big need to find a job and start working – according to their job and qualifications or not (and acquiring other competencies). Companies were also showing support in many ways (donating, creating volunteering programmes, helping employees to manage stress and fears), also opening job opportunities for Ukrainians.

The key competence needed was obviously the (basic or not) knowledge of the Polish language.

But some organisations and training companies introduced online trainings that were targeted to this group to help them adjust their competences to the Polish market and also opened the opportunities they've had before for Polish women from unprivileged environments to the Ukrainians.

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Here are some examples of the online education initiatives in this context:

MAMO PRACUJ (Mom if you want to work, just go for it!).

Online webinars for Ukrainian women, mentoring and publications.

Since 2011 they have been running a nationwide portal www.mamopracuj.pl, they organise webinars, video broadcasts, online courses, podcasts using the latest contemporary tools to reach Polish mothers around the world.

The portal brings together mainly women [80% of readers] (not only mothers) looking for a job with employers who know that a good employee is a happy employee and who support their employees in maintaining work-life-balance. We promote those employers who introduce solutions conducive to combining family life with professional work.

They have created an online course "Mamo Pracuj" (Mom if you want to work, just go for it!), whose 3 editions we implemented in 2018. It teaches women how to look for a job in a new labour market using social media and the Internet.

The #DAMYRADE (We'll manage) programme was created in March 2022. Shortly after the outbreak of war in Ukraine, they decided to help using their previous knowledge and experience in supporting women as part of the Mom Pracuj Foundation. The main goal in the programme is to support women from Ukraine to find their way in the Polish labour market.

They organise webinars (also in Ukrainian), provide support from specialists, develop and make available materials to assist in the job search. They inform about interesting initiatives, they have a wide knowledge base, which includes information on, among others, job offers, courses, training, support, etc.

One of the examples is a webinar: The art of finding a job and finding yourself in it - tips from HR experts.

It's prepared in two languages (Polish and Ukrainian): youtu.be/k8dd4AOdMmI

Success University:

Success University - a free, nationwide educational programme that facilitates women aged 18-25 to gain an attractive profession of the future. In the 2022 edition, female participants will learn programming. Since its inception, the Digital University Foundation's proposal has been addressed to wards of orphanages and care institutions, as well as to women in difficult life situations. This year, due to the war in Ukraine, Success University is also open to female Ukrainian citizens.

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The University of Success is Poland's only free comprehensive programme to gain future competences in communication, motivation, law, programming, cyber security and digital marketing. The organisers stress that the programme is challenging and requires months of commitment, but gives participants a real opportunity to get a well-paid and interesting job

The programme in 2022 is also aimed at Ukrainian women in their 20s and 30s who left Ukraine because of the war and are determined to take part in a year-long programme during which they will acquire new competencies in their chosen area of new technologies. Apart from a 5-day stationary workshop, which the participants will take place in one of 3 cities: Warsaw, Krakow and Wroclaw, the rest of the classes will be conducted online, and it is not necessary to be in Poland at that time.

Context and methodology

Context for both good practices is the war in Ukraine and the suddenly emerged needs of migrant women.

These good practices do not implement any especially innovative online methods or exceptional tools.

Their strength is accessibility (online) and good recognition.

It's a good practice for the answer to real needs and problems of the target group; experienced experts employed; professional network of the organisations around strengthening the expertise and enabling the access to making use of the competences acquired.

This example of good practice is not such concentrated-on methodology, special features, and not even on methods of teaching. The purpose is to show how digital education methods can be used for inclusion of such a vulnerable group as migrants and which characteristics of the online education methods make it especially inclusive in the provided context.

Gaps and mismatches identified: Not enough tools and methods implemented to make the courses attractive and engaging; sometimes the "on-site" courses are transferred too directly into online version some technologies that could be used to make online learning more attractive and inclusive are not familiar or available to the teachers; taking more advantage of the inclusive aspect of online learning, reaching the vulnerable groups.

Skill gaps and mismatches of VET trainers and the sector:

using the innovative and inclusive online tools and methods supporting the VET education; more engaging online courses; more activities to prevent lack of attention during online classes.

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Good Practices: the case of Romania

Title of best practice: Blended learning

Target group and profile: Students who find it challenging to participate in face-to-face lessons are the target group for this teaching strategy.

Description: Online learning experiences that combine in-person instruction with information and communication technology are known as blended learning.

Context and methodology: Schools all over the world have been compelled to go online because of the health crisis brought on by the SARS-COV-2 outbreak. More than 1.7 billion children have been home-schooled since April 2020, according to UNESCO, which has prompted governments, schools, and teachers to search for alternatives to keep teaching in the best possible manner.

Blended learning is a method of structuring the educational process in which remote students take part in in-person classes using technology and the internet. This mixes in-person instruction with online and other forms of remote education. This strategy can take numerous shapes depending on the course's subject, and there may be a clear distinction between the two methods of information delivery. For instance, a teacher might offer a certain subject to the students while assigning online homework and carrying out exercises to reinforce the material. Additionally, courses can be divided so that only a portion of the material is taught by the instructor, with the remainder being sent to the student by a computer program.

Gaps and mismatches identified:

There are some gaps and mismatches between VET institutions and the sector such as:

- Romania may not be able to meet projected demand for short-cycle postsecondary VET.
- Adults who seek to re-enter the labour market and displaced workers face a shortage in services. Part-time programs are rarely available.
- Transitioning from post-secondary to university programs can be difficult, and credits are not easily transferable.
- Recent modifications in initial teacher education standards may make it difficult for teachers of vocational topics to strike a fair balance between pedagogical skills and current industry experience.

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⌃ Within the system, there is no clear logic for deciding the mix of fee-paying and free services.

⌃ There is a lack of data to guide students and inform the system.

⌃ There are still questions about how to create a successful apprenticeship scheme.

Skill gaps and mismatches of VET trainers and the sector:

In Romania, a new regulation favouring academic qualifications over industrial knowledge or the "foreman" qualification for vocational teachers has been enacted (the requirements are the same as for academic subjects). Teachers in post-secondary education must fulfill the same qualifications as those in upper secondary academic education (a bachelor's degree). People in industry can teach part-time vocational courses if they become "associate instructors," but they must exhibit pedagogical competence or complete specific training to do so. This could provide a problem in the future.

For starters, the formal prerequisite (for teachers, a bachelor's degree; for part-timers, a particular pedagogical training) may make it difficult to recruit persons with extensive industrial expertise. Second, a bachelor's degree may not adequately reflect the needs of people who would teach vocational programs rather than academic ones. For teaching vocational courses, foreman qualifications appear to be more applicable; nevertheless, part-time teaching arrangements may not be appealing, as they must complete a specialized pedagogical training module, and schools have no wage flexibility in the event of shortages.

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Good Practices: the case of Cyprus

Title of the GP: CYPRUS CYBERNET: A long course in education in Cyprus

Target group and profile: Vocational education and training Centres in Cyprus: public institutions; private institutions: colleges, training institutions, consultancy firms and enterprises offer a variety of courses for adults.

Description: CYCYB is a contemporary company of high technology, specialized in the endogenous development and supply of educational products and services for children and adults.

It offers qualitative education to children, continuous training to professionals and promotes strategic collaborations with External Educational Bodies both for harmonisation with international models and for endogenous Research and Growth.

CYCYB Ltd and its network of Educational Centres, CYBERNET TRAINING CENTERS, have placed as their objective the maintenance of avant-garde in the Training Sector in the Cypriot Market. Such a high objective is achieved only via constituted, intelligent, and flexible strategy based in the continuous retroaction, supply, reaction but also innovation in relevant internal and external economic elements of the market.

CYBERNET has developed international relations and collaborations, with European collaborations being the main priority, because of the European orientation of our country. Initial European collaborations include organizations in the United Kingdom, Greece, Sweden, Hungary, and Slovenia. These collaborations contribute already in sectors such as the continuous growth of human potential of the Company, the enlargement of CYBERNET, the guarantee of Foreign Markets, the harmonisation of the Company, its products, and services with European and International models.

CYCYB offers its services and products to children, employees, unemployed people, vulnerable groups, and adults in general. Its services include:

1. Educational seminars: Organising and conducting educational seminars all over Cyprus, strengthening the effort for the decentralisation of education.
2. Educational material: The existing educational material supports each training program separately and provides complete handouts to the students.
3. Timing: Available programs depending on the educational needs of individuals, enterprises, and organisms all over Cyprus.
4. Support: Professionals and staff aware of the processes of concretisation and application of educational programs in the most effective way.

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5. Instructors: Complete and experienced staff, that enjoys recognition and positive evaluation from most of the business and educational field.

Context and methodology

CYCYB's long history in the field of education and training is the greatest proof of its success. Thousands of students all over Cyprus have chosen CYCYB for their training and trust the quality of its services. The design of CYCYB's courses provides flexibility that responds to the needs of the learners. The teachers work with each learner to develop an individual learning plan that sets out their learning goals and capabilities. The courses it offers always follow the needs of the labour market and are created with the students as the centre.

Inclusive digital education method

Inclusive digital education can have two aspects: Inclusive Digital Tools & Inclusive Education; Inclusive Digital Tools; Regardless of the tools that may be available to an educator, e.g., e-learning platform, communication tools like MS Teams, Skype, etc., those tools should have specific features to be considered inclusive digital tools. Such features are: One Click Accessibility; resize fonts; underline links; enable negative contrast; trigger high contrast; image alt texts; screen reader; saturation; dyslexia friendly; big cursor, etc.

Inclusive Education: First, an educator should ensure the correct use of tools as described above. Then, the educator should set principles for the teaching methodology, such as: Open discussion with each student about the student's competences in the use of e-learning tools; Encourage dialogue about online learning experiences and share learning strategies; Responsiveness to student emails, chats, or messages; Set student expectations, be clear with assignment instructions; Be flexible on deadlines as some students may have limited opportunities to have their questions answered; Select course content that recognizes diversity; Use examples that speak across diverse populations; Record lectures and give access to them to all the students.

Gaps and mismatches

Although we are talking about vocational training, in Cyprus the certificates of attendance of such programmes do not have the same impact as post-secondary education or certifications.

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, it became known that there was a lack of online learning platforms. Even after the COVID-19 era, any online learning platform that was created, stopped being used.

Good practices from other five European nations

The research will be carried out on a broad spectrum, trying to bring innovative ideas and good practices not only from partner countries, but from all European nations. As follow are reported best practices identified by the partnership of VELA project from other five different countries.

Good Practices: the case of Germany

Name of the organization: ReDI School of Digital Integration – education

Title of the GP: ReDI School of Digital Integration is a non-profit tech school providing migrants and marginalized locals free and equitable access to digital education

Description: They offer high quality coding and basic computer courses in combination with a career and mentorship program, which includes the chance to collaborate with tech companies, startups and digital industry leaders. The aim is to provide to the students with valuable digital skills, a growth mindset, strengthened career skills and a strong network of tech professionals to help create new opportunities for all

Target group and profile: Migrants, kids and teens, women (provide laptops and offer childcare services).

Context and methodology:

They offer a variety of courses; from Computer Basics to more advanced tech courses. Additionally, we offer a unique career program incl. mentorship, career workshops, company visits, job matching and much more. A semester takes 3-4 months (part time) and the teachers are volunteer tech experts.

The combination of tech courses, career workshops, and a unique mentorship program is a curriculum that makes our learners more confident, empowered and ready for the job market. They have also built their own talent pool platform, since ReDI School's career support is a

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stepping stone and bridges the gap between companies looking for talents and their learners searching for a career.

Why it is a good practice …

They providing access to digital education for free with a broad different courses with high quality and also with online courses

Strenght: free and equitable access to digital education; more than 90 different courses are offered which include Digital Kids & Teens programs, specifically tailored for different age groups, regardless of their gender, social, or their ethnic background

Weaknesses: Some courses require good basic knowledge, therefore they are not accessible to everyone. Even C1 english level restricts the number of possible applicants.

The time slot of the courses is largely in the afternoon or evening, therefore not accessible to those who work for example in catering

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Good Practices: the case of Bulgaria

Name of the organization: European Software Institute – Center Eastern Europe (ESI CEE) – non-profit R&D and training

Title of the GP: Technologies for social and economic inclusion of people with autism spectrum disorders

Description :

Between 2011 and 2017 ESICEE together with Association "Autism", Bulgarian Association of Software Companies and Varna Free University "Chernorizets Hrabar '' created and tested a model for training and employability of people with ASD. The program finished with a 3-6-month internship and further employment of 10 people with ASD in ICT companies.

The model contains the following elements: Evaluation of ICT competences of the target group; Social profile of the target group; Creation of individual training programs; Implementation of the training programs on the workplace. Internship; Employment support; Employment.   The program included 25 youths on age above 10 without taking into account their education, social functionality, prerequisite knowledge.

Target group and profile: People with autism spectrum disorders at age above 10 y.

Context and methodology:

People with disabilities in Bulgaria are among the social groups that are most vulnerable to poverty and isolation. According to data from National Social Insurance Institute and National Statistical Institute, less than 10% of people with disabilities are working, and only 4% of them were actively looking for work in 2011. In comparison, the average percentage of employed people with disabilities in the EU is between 40 and 50%. People with disabilities in Bulgaria are mostly employed in specialized social enterprises and protected work environments.

Together with social service providers, educational institutions and employer's organizations we wanted to prove that even the people with less social and professional skills are able to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills for being competitive on the employment market and for the benefit of their employers. There was a long and difficult adapting period because the included in the project people with ASD above 18 who were hired haven't been included in any type of employment before. The adaptation included professional training, social support and a

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very small amount of work per day. The newly employed people had a weekly social support at the workplace provided by a social worker. The employers and provided by the employer professional mentors also got support in finding the right workplace and position for the people with ASD. This support contained consultations with a professional trainer, social workers, and family members.

Objectives : To create and pilot a training-based model for social and economic inclusion of people with ASD.

Activities: Design and development of the model; Professional training of people with ASD ; Internships and social support; Employment and social support of people with ASD and employers.

Results: 25 persons with ASD passed through professional training and internship; 15 ICT companies provided support and employment for people with ASD; 2 hired with full-time labour contracts.

Why is it a good practice …

The program proved that regardless of the education and social skills, when the people with ASD are motivated for personal and professional development, and in addition, they get support equally by their families, their employers, their trainers and mentors, then they could bring value for themselves, for their employers and for their families.

Strength: Inclusion of all social partners and stakeholders; Companies who hired people with ASD were convinced that hiring people with disabilities brings mostly benefits for them in terms of strict implementation of job tasks and average productivity.

Weaknesses: Not always people with disabilities get equal support from all social partners.

Training and adapting period is long-lasting, resource intensive and cost ineffective.

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Good Practices: the case of France

Name of the organization: LENO/ My Green Training Box

Title of the GP: Online VET education platform - My Green Training Box

Description: My Green Training Box is a free access digital streaming platform on sustainable development relevant to many different areas: agriculture, ecological construction, CSR, health, sustainable tourism and many more.

Target group and profile: Depending on the subject the courses are dedicated to the target groups that are interested or involved in a subject, such as agriculture, CSR, health, sustainable tourism, wellbeing, intercultural dialogue as a form of self-development (self-learning) but also to trainers and teachers who can use it as a supplementary tool during classes.

Context and methodology

My Green Training Box is based on such rules: reliability content you can trust): they team up with known experts to provide courses with 100% scientifically proven content; methodology (digital education): courses are created and updated by pedagogy specialists according to predetermined pedagogical objectives, training curriculum and assessment criteria; Pedagogy (microlearning): digital training courses are bite-size learning units containing short videos, downloadable podcasts & PDF with assessment tools to evaluate the progress. They are available in many languages;

accessibility: you can access the digital materials 24h a day, 7h a week and use them as you like (e-learning, face-to-face, blended). It's free of cost.

Objectives: Good quality VET courses on sustainable development and many other socially important areas: agriculture, CSR, health, sustainable tourism, wellbeing, intercultural dialogue, reliable, with good methodology, accessible and in a form of microlearning.

Activities: Digital VET training courses in a form of bite-size learning units containing short videos, downloadable podcasts & PDF with assessment tools to evaluate the progress. Available in many languages and 100% free.

Results: About 30 courses on the platform; Cooperation with a wide range of partners (on local levels but also EU projects).

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Why is it a good practice ...

Mt Green Training Box addressed the social, important problems: sustainability, green energy, wellbeing, cultural dialogue), the courses are prepared by pedagogy specialists and experts in each subject.

Strength: good quality content – cooperation with experts; free access – no fees, no costs;

UX – lots of time spend on the usability design to make the platform user-friendly on multiple devices (mobiles, tablets); content – addressing social problems with proven knowledge, many fields and sectors of knowledge; many forms of materials: short videos, podcasts, pdf books, quizzes, discussion forums; progress assessment and certificates for completed courses;

no ads; green IT – ecological practices applied while producing the platform; personal account for each learner.

Weaknesses: not all materials are accessible to all vulnerable groups (people with disabilities).

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Good Practices: the case of United Kingdom

Name of the organization: National Foundation for Educational Research

Title of the GP: Using handheld technology to improve communication at Longwill School for Deaf Children

Description: One of the sorts of technology use is illustrated in this model of good practice, highlighting how it can support inclusive teaching and learning. Mobile game devices are being used by the Longwill School for Deaf Children to promote communication between students and their families. This could serve as a model for other educational institutions interested in improving communication with underrepresented students and their families. It also allows students to bring up difficulties that occur for them at a specific moment. Thoughts can be recorded and saved in a secure location, then shared when the student feels the time and place are right.

Target group and profile

Longwill is designed for students who have severe or profound hearing loss. Every student has a statement of special education need, and several of them have extra special needs, such as autism and behavioural issues.

The students are from the Birmingham area. Many come from low-income neighborhoods. Nearly three-quarters of students are eligible for free school meals and come from minority ethnic backgrounds. British Sign Language (BSL) is the first language for most students.

Context and methodology

Millions of youngsters around the world have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. During the COVID-19 epidemic, Heliyon performed a study to assess attitudes of technology instruction and accommodations supplied to deaf students in online distance education. This was a qualitative study that relied on one-on-one, semi-structured interviews. They interviewed a convenience sample of 15 deaf students and their instructors (n = 3) in June 2020 and analysed the responses thematically. During COVID-19, the findings indicated five primary themes connected to Deaf students' experiences with online distance learning. The following are the main themes: course content, technology, delivery method, evaluation tools, and social interactions.

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The principles of a qualitative analytical approach, thematic content analysis, and multimedia applications are followed in this excellent practice model. It focuses on the role of information and communication technology (ICT) in the learning process, as well as modern teaching methodologies related to pedagogical and scientific documentation of criteria and standards for the development of interactive applications for students with hearing impairment and deafness. When working with deaf kids, it's crucial to remember that the following factors can obstruct learning:

a) Delays in language, vocabulary, and literacy

b) Gaps in background and domain knowledge

c) Insufficient knowledge and use of learning strategies

d) Social skill deficits

e) Reliance on assistive technology

Objectives: The goal is to strengthen the connections between instructors, students, and their families at home and at school. With this extremely visual approach, teachers can simply display parents and siblings new sign vocabulary. Sharing a video of what their children have been learning makes it easier to involve families in school life.

Activities: Students can use game consoles to record videos of themselves and their peers (Sony PSP, which are handheld devices with a camera). Educators can encourage parents and siblings of kids to use this gadget to record their own messages. The goal is to promote communication between the young learners and their families. When it comes to bedtime stories, this technology is also helpful. Many parents speak sign language as a second language, which can limit their ability to read bedtime stories to their children. Teachers can now record themselves signing bedtime stories for their students and download them to their consoles. Students can utilize the device to take down their thoughts. This is easier for them than taking notes in English because sign language is their first and most developed language.

Results: The pupils are enthusiastic about utilizing the technology and have found it to be quite simple to learn.

Teachers quickly had their students film themselves and their peers narrating stories in British Sign Language.

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Why it is a good practice ...

This form of practice is beneficial because it includes children who may have previously felt excluded, as well as families who are better connected into the community and have more possibilities for contact. Since implementing this strategy, teachers have witnessed an increase in the quality of ideas and the depth of their thinking.

Strength: Collaboration, engagement, and tenacity are just a few of the advantages. It also increased student enthusiasm, provided a classroom alternative to literature, increased awareness and acceptance of diversity, and assisted students in developing interpersonal relationships.

Weaknesses: One of the most significant problems is a lack of resources: many schools are unable to provide their deaf or hard-of-hearing children with the necessary technology to help them learn more effectively.

In addition, a) a lack of technological understanding, b) time constraints, and c) a growing demand for digital skills and abilities hinder the usefulness of deaf educators.

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Good Practices: the case of Greece

Name of the organization: Areadne

Title of the GP: Areadne…micro-changes in classrooms and communities around the world.

Description

Areadne is a teacher training centre offering a range of onsite and online teacher training courses in Greece and abroad.

Target group and profile: The main target market of Areadne is the staff of educational organizations. They offer courses to every teacher in primary, secondary, adult, or vocational education and training.

Context and methodology

Areadne is owned by a group of experienced teachers, trainers and teacher trainers based in Kalamata, a small sea-side city in southern Greece, who strongly believe that change can only take place at the micro-level. All their programmes and projects, whether local, national, or international, aim at micro-changes in classrooms and communities around the world.

The main aspect of their course is to promote collaboration between participants. Lessons are held in the centre's classrooms and computer lab, as well as outside. Their approach is to base the learning process on practical rather than theoretical knowledge. The courses are designed on active learning methods and, at the end of the courses, teach participant are able to use the taught techniques effectively.

Objectives: Provide high-quality and innovative training courses to teachers around the world

Activities: Informal training programmes with structured study visits and workshops, Outdoors learning, Social programmes

Why it is a good practice …

The team members are people who have worked with migrant children in formal education and collaborate with Second Chance Schools and various organisations specializing in programmes

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for the elderly. They offer inclusive training programmes. They offer EQF Level 7 Certificate in Autism in collaboration with Alrite Autism Centre.

Strenght: They offer EQF Level 7 Certificate in Autism in collaboration with Alrite Autism Centre.

None of their courses require extended knowledge on specific topics

All their courses are designed for teachers and educators regardless their age, ethnicity, gender or social status.

Weaknesses: They do not have free access on their online learning platform.

Field research: VET providers' inputs on inclusive digital educational method

This section is linked to the survey previously created by the partnership. The survey collected 93 answers in total. The characteristics of the sample are the following:

⇒ Their age is 40.86% in the 40-49 range, 29.03% in the 50-59 range, 17.78% in the 30-39 range, 6.67% in the 18-20 range, and 6.67% are over 60 years old.

⇒ 52 of them are women, 37 are men, and one person preferred not to answer.

⇒ Their countries of origin are: Italy 30%, Spain 25.56%, Poland 14.44%, Romania 11.11%, Cyprus 14.44%, Greece 3.33%, and Portugal 1.11%.

⇒ According with the target groups, the professional roles of the respondents are: psychologists, trainers, educators, university professors, researchers, coordinators, consultants, project managers, technicians, ICT trainer, social workers.

Below we propose the comparison among the countries regarding the inputs from VET providers who responded to the questionnaire.

Q15. To what extent, your activities are inclusive for people with disabilities?

		Answers	Ratio
Poor;		10	11.11%
Fair;		22	24.44%
Good;		39	43.33%
Very good;		15	16.67%
Excellent.		4	4.44%
No Answer		0	0%

Q17. Do you use any inclusive digital tool with your learners? Or do you make normal tools inclusive for everyone?

		Answers	Ratio
Yes, I use inclusive digital tools;		17	18.89%
Yes, I use normal tools trying to make them inclusive for everyone;		40	44.44%
Yes, I use inclusive digital tool and when I don't have it, I make normal tools inclusive for everyone;		20	22.22%
No, I don't use inclusive tools because I don't know them;		10	11.11%
Other.		3	3.33%
No Answer		0	0%

Q19. If you could have the opportunity to participate in a training program through an e-learning platform, that could support you to further develop your competencies in existing tangible and digital tools, would you be interested to take part in?

		Answers	Ratio
Yes, I would like to participate but only in an online way;		49	54.44%
Yes, I would like to participate but just modules that I can implement in my work;		33	36.67%
No, I can't.		8	8.89%
No Answer		0	0%

Q20. Can you suggest, at least, three topics you would like to explore through an e-learning platform, related to the general topic "Digital Accessibility to support VET educators in involving people with disabilities in e-learning"?

		Answers	Ratio
Digital accessibility for creating documents;		47	52.22%
How can we make digital tools inclusive for everyone;		63	70%
Web content accessibility guidelines;		33	36.67%
Gender, social and cultural perspectives for inclusion;		35	38.89%
Quality and innovation in e-learning;		47	52.22%
DigComp 2.2 alignment;		19	21.11%
Other		1	1.11%
No Answer		3	3.33%

Conclusion

Starting from the Q15, VET providers consider the extent to which inclusive activities are carried out by educators, we can see that 40% of them consider them to be good, for the 25.81% they are fair, while for 16.13% they are very good, and for 4.30% they are excellent. There is also the 10.75% of respondents that defined poor the inclusive activities.

More specifically, with Q17, when asked if they use inclusive digital tools with their students, or if they have normal inclusive tools for everyone, the affirmative responses have 3 declensions: 44.44% say they use normal tools trying to make them inclusive for everyone. 22.22% use inclusive digital tools and when thay don't have it they make normal tools inclusive for everyone. Then, 18.89% say they use inclusive digital tools. 11.11% say they don't use inclusive digital tools because they don't know them. Lastly, 3.33% indicate "other" as their answer.

Besides, regarding the Q19 and Q20, responses received from educators express strong intention (91%) to participate in a training program through an e-learning platform that could support them to develop their competencies in existing tangible and digital tools. In this regard, it should also be noted that as many as half of them are interested in doing so on-line. On the other hand, 36% participation is tied to the practical-day-to-day aspect, in this sense the connection with the actual possibility of implementing the skills they would acquire is diriment.

Lastly, it appears very significant that only less than 1 in 10 people (8.89%) do not consider themselves interested in the opportunity presented.

Going into the topics that could be covered in the e-learning platform and related to the general topic "Digital Accessibility to support VET educators in involving people with disabilities in e-learning", as many as 7 out of 10 educators indicate to make digital tools inclusive for everyone. A little further down with 5 out of 10 (52%) responses we have "Quality and innovation in e-learning". The remaining indications are around 30 percent with "Gender, social and cultural perspectives for inclusion" (35%), "Web content accessibility guidelines 33%, DigComp 2.2 alignment (21%).

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SECTION 7
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