

Supporting the role of VET professionals to improve the trainees employability

TRAINVET4JOBS

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“TRAINVET4JOBS: Supporting the role of VET professionals to improve the trainees employability”

WP2 – Review of existing models

Qualitative interviews

Following the methodological outline for WP2, 6 qualitative interviews have been conducted in Greece by Militos S.A., involving the following persons:

Employer

Mr. Aimilios Karamanlis, knowl Social Enterprise for Education and Lifelong Learning
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VET school graduate

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Guidance professionals (2)

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VET trainers (2)

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Expert (curricula design)

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All data have been collected either through face to face interviews or by filling out a specially designed questionnaire translated to Greek, following a brief on the TRAINVET4JOBS project and its objectives.

Qualitative questionnaire

1. What does it mean to be competent?
2. How did you acquire your transversal competences?
3. Does your organisation/company organise activities/seminars, transversal competences, to develop transversal competences?
4. What does "lack of transversal competences" mean to you? / How do you identify the lack of transversal competences?
5. Which are according to you the most relevant TRANSVERSAL COMPETENCES for employability?
6. What would support the acquisition of competences?
7. What do you think about the existing training offer?
8. What should be changed in the training system of VET TRAINERS and Guidance professionals?

Question tables and replies

1. What does it mean to be competent?				
Employer	School graduate	Guidance professional	VET trainers (2)	Expert (curricula design)
<p>Competence is closely related with efficiency in terms of time. The presence or absence of experience has a great impact on competences. Therefore, I assume that competences go hand in hand with acquired experience.</p>	<p>Competent is somebody who has certain competences, allowing her/him to utilise/exploit these competences within a given frame of action, in order to be efficient.</p>	<p>(1)</p> <p>Competence is the sum of being able to successfully undertake and accomplish tasks and being able to exploit the acquired experience each time for future use in similar or other tasks in the future.</p> <p>(2)</p> <p>Having competences is about combining and utilising knowledge within a behavioural frame in line with socially accepted values.</p>	<p>(1)</p> <p>Having competences refers to the successful combination of knowledge and behavioural traits. The nature of this combination defines the competences.</p> <p>(2)</p> <p>Being competent means understanding of goals in relation to desired outcomes. Allocation of tasks in time is of great importance within this procedure. Furthermore, one</p>	<p>(1)</p> <p>Being able to successfully manage everyday issues and problems at both personal and professional level.</p>

			has to clearly understand what can be achieved through own potential, and what is support/output is required by others each time.	
Remarks on the discussion of this question				
2. How did you acquire your transversal competences?				
Employer	School graduate	Guidance professional	VET trainers (2)	Expert (curricula design)
Mainly through targeted, experiential seminars and workshops, as well as through professional experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professional experience - Focus on persona; development through own motivation 	<p>(1) Acquisition of transversal competences through certified training in mentoring and coaching, complemented by gained experience through the provision of mentoring services. A core issue in this, is the assumption that the 'training' procedure offers mutual benefits.</p> <p>(2) Through personal experience from involvement in diverse</p>	<p>(1) Through personal experience, in diverse settings and groups of people. The acquisition of transversal competences is closely related to ways of thinking of each person, as well as the incentives involved each time.</p> <p>(2)</p>	<p>(1) Through professional experience and involvement in relevant research and studies' development at undergraduate and postgraduate level.</p>

		projects and initiatives.	Mainly through the didactic experience and the exchange of views with colleagues, rather than formal channels.	
Remarks on the discussion of this question				

3. Does your organisation/company organises activities/seminars, etransversal competences. to develop transversal competences?				
Employer	School graduate	Guidance professional	VET trainers (2)	Expert (curricula design)
Yes.	No.	(1) Yes. Provision of integrated mentoring services, focusing on transversal competences to a large extent. Moreover, intracompany provisions are scheduled and implemented, in line with the mentoring methodology.	(1) Yes, mainly through exposure to certain situations and assessment thereof. This way, certain representations are built, which eventually lead to the acquisition	(1) No.

		<p>(2)</p> <p>Yes, mainly through seminars, missing however a practical, tangible dimension.</p>	<p>of transversal competences through real-life case studies.</p> <p>(2)</p> <p>Yes, but sporadically and not based on a structured model and methodology.</p>	
Remarks on the discussion of this question				
Coaching skills for managerial positions in enterprises and organisations.				
4. What does “lack of transversal competences” mean to you? / How do you identify the lack of transversal competences?				
Employer	School graduate	Guidance professional	VET trainers (2)	Expert (curricula design)
Lack of transversal competences is rather important. This can be identified through the occurrence of difficulties in team-work and collaboration. Moreover, it shows in cases of inability to identify priorities and follow a time-management plan.	Lack in transversal competences can lead to/identified by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication problems - Organisational problems - Lack of team spirit - Lack of coordination 	(1) Lack of transversal competences often leads to misunderstandings and misconceptions of roles and expectancies. It can be clearly felt in the form of limited understanding of each other's roles, depriving an organisation from exploiting the available potential and knowledge. Furthermore, such a situation is	(1) - Lack of mindset - Lack of basic interpersonal communication skills This can be identified through the way persons interact within groups and teams, through	(1) It leads to severe difficulties in managing crises and difficult situations at work, as well as lack of taking responsibility at professional and personal level.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delays - Negative mood 	<p>responsible for the creation of 'desolate islands' of action, robbing off any potential added value that could be created.</p> <p>(2)</p> <p>The evidence of the lack of transversal competences is mostly identifiable in reduced efficacy, productivity, and absence of 'good practices'.</p>	<p>inadequate ways of expressing one's thoughts, and overall self-presentation at the social level.</p> <p>(2)</p> <p>The lack in transversal competence is almost everytime identified retrospectively, i.e. following some form of assessment or evaluation. In other terms, what we refer to as transversal competences is being taken for granted, without having been pre-assessed and/or methodologically approached and studied. For example, team work or team spirit, are sometimes implied, without having been tested and</p>	
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			controlled, in order to find how it can be brought into the picture in real circumstances.	
Remarks on the discussion of this question				

5. Which are according to you the most relevant TRANSVERSAL COMPETENCES for employability?				
Employer	School graduate	Guidance professional	VET trainers (2)	Expert (curricula design)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Taking up initiative and responsibility - Critical thinking - Communication skills - Identification of own and others' role/s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication skills - Team spirit - Organisational skills 	(1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Critical thinking - Learning to learn and being able to exploit knowledge on the basis of managing it in the 	(1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication skills - Mathematical way of thinking - Integrated understanding (2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Team spirit 	(1) Decision taking is the most important one.

		<p>first place (e.g. keeping track of a basic knowledge management scheme)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time management - Team spirit <p>(2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaboration and communication skills - Organisational skills - Sharing and allocating - Respect - Flexibility - Empathy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time management - Empathy - Communication skills 	
<p>Remarks on the discussion of this question</p>				

6. What would support the acquisition of competences?				
Employer	School graduate	Guidance professional	VET trainers (2)	Expert (curricula design)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mentoring at all levels (managerial and executive) - Capitalisation of professional experience through the development of an organisational context/framework that promotes and evaluates competences - Through stand-alone experiential workshops and seminars 	<p>More programmes and initiatives should be planned and undertaken, especially in enterprises and companies. Bureaucracy should be eliminated at all levels to facilitate this.</p>	<p>(1) Educational initiatives which are consistent and properly evaluated in order to provide measurable outcomes.</p> <p>(2) A collaborative approach should be introduced mainly through synergies in real-life circumstances, anticipating real-life situations.</p>	<p>(1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education and training - Team work and training including self-assessment and evaluation <p>(2) Only through properly designed training provisions, followed by thorough assessment and evaluation.</p>	<p>(1) Through real-life working experience, even at the level of apprenticeship.</p>
Remarks on the discussion of this question				

7. What do you think about the existing training offer?

Employer	School graduate	Guidance professional	VET trainers (2)	Expert (curricula design)
<p>Based on my own knowledge and experience, I assume that the quality of the existing training offer is rather low in Greece.</p>	<p>On going education at all levels within companies is kept to a minimum. This should be addressed as a priority.</p>	<p>(1) In Greece VET is not promoted as it should be, and thus deemed as not important. Lifelong learning in particular lacks an integrated model that refers to documented needs and can be evaluated.</p> <p>(2) There are specific benefits, but an overall adjustment to specific, trainee-oriented needs should be fostered, eliminating the existing 'procedural' nature of the provisions.</p>	<p>(1) There is an overall lack in VET teachers being able to teach these competences. They don't exhibit the inner qualities to do so, and eventually cannot guide the trainees accordingly.</p> <p>(2) VET is not as appealing as it should be. It is too much focused in certain job-specific skills, leaving out of the</p>	<p>(1) There are low quality and high quality programmes as well. High quality refers mainly to well prepared, organised and documented programmes.</p>

			picture an integrated approached of a person's professional curriculum. This is an issue to be tackled, even at the level of secondary and upper secondary education.	
Remarks on the discussion of this question				
8. What should be changed in the training system of VET TRAINERS and Guidance professionals?				
Employer	School graduate	Guidance professional	VET trainers (2)	Expert (curricula design)
VET trainers' training should be: 1. More focused on the needs of diverse professional contexts 2. More experiential in terms of methodological planning, aiming to connect educational experiences of the trainees with certain key-concepts (e.g. empathy can be acquired mainly	N/A	(1) The institutionalisation of VET and lifelong learning is not enough. VET should be a main of interest in the educational strategy and policies, for both the labour market and the policy makers alike. VET and lifelong learning should be made a sine-qua-non ongoing practice for the public, the private and the third sector	(1) The training system should be made more interactive and participative, especially at level of group dynamics. (2) The training system for VET trainers in Greece	(1) More emphasis should be placed in practice, especially at the level of teaching techniques in adult education. Good practices should be gauged against bad practices, giving the opportunity to the trainers to choose the most appropriate one for their teaching style and in line with certain personality traits.

<p>through role playing excercises)</p>		<p>economy.</p> <p>(2)</p> <p>The system should acquire a much clearer methodological frame, being able to provide measurable results by addressing well documented targets. Furthermore, it should become more flexible to account for different needs and objectives.</p>	<p>should acquire a more profound nature, especially in terms of time, following up changes in the labour market. It should also become more holistic, paying attention to social interaction issues and understanding of diverse work environments and their dynamics beyond the national or even European level. It should be accompanied by a robust evaluation system, assessing both the didactic provisions, as well as the human capital involved in them.</p>	
<p>Remarks on the discussion of this question</p>				

Overall conclusion

Assessing the overall aspects of the interviewees and according to their positioning within the labour market and the VET system, the main points of interest gather around the following issues:

The VET system in Greece, especially concerning the training of trainers, suffers both at the level of the provision of a clear model followed by an evaluation system, as well as that of a lack in approaches targeting transversal competences. VET on the other hand has not gained the desired status within Greek society, worsening the situation. A lot of recommendations have been made, in order to make the VET system more appealing, by designing more sophisticated training routes for VET trainers in the first place. Lifelong education, engulfing VET, seems not to be a priority for enterprises at the same time, while it is clearly stated that beyond job-specific competences, transversal skills are much more needed, as the labour market is rapidly changing, calling for far more professional routes during one person's professional life, which is in stark contrast with the recent past. The economic crisis has helped to highlight the shortages of the VET system in Greece, making novel needs for readjustments more prominent.

Methodologically, it has been stated that experiential teaching methods should be used in order to address the acquisition of transversal competences, while the VET trainers and guidance professionals involved in the qualitative research, clearly stated that they have gained transversal competences through the same methodological route. Non-formal pathways, seem to be up to now the predominant way leading to transversal competences, often associated with professional experience.

Three out of six interviewees have provided overall comments complementing their answers, focusing more or less on the same issues. These statements pin down the most relevant issues, and namely:

- The extent by which in everyday professional life there is enough room for the development and actual utilisation of transversal competences
- The 'obsession' of the Greek society for tertiary education as a guarantee for employment, followed by the under-evaluation of alternative paths
- The need to move beyond job-specific training, involving the so-called transversal competences

Employer: Beyond the extent by which employees and professionals have developed transversal competences, if the enterprises'/organisations' demands at the level of hard skills/job-specific skills are not properly and proportionately weighed against the employees' output potential, it seems that there will be no room left for further development of transversal competences.

Guidance professional: The low popularity of educational training and life-long learning in Greece is deeply rooted in the educational system of Greece. VET is being undervalued vis-à-vis the 'ultimate' goal of the Greek family to provide higher education to its sons and daughters, both in terms of foreseen employability, as well as in terms of social status.

VET graduate: The development of interpersonal skills is much needed, especially during this period of financial crisis and high unemployment. Job opportunities are scarce in Greece and elsewhere, so beyond job-specific competences and knowledge, more qualitative aspects should be sought after, mainly within the field of soft skills to complement traditional job training.

