



Education and Culture

**Leonardo da Vinci**

**INCLUSIVE MODULES  
MOVING YOUNG PEOPLE ON**



**MODULE**

**SURVEY ON VET IN  
GERMANY, BELGIUM, DENMARK,  
GREECE, PORTUGAL, ROMANIA AND  
UNITED KINGDOM**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>GERMANY</b> .....	<b>2</b>
2.1	METHODS, ITEMS AND INTERVIEW PARTNERS .....	2
2.2	PERCEPTION OF MODULARISATION CONCEPT .....	3
2.2.1	<i>View of Businesses</i> .....	3
2.2.2	<i>View of Planners and Practitioners in Re-integration Schemes</i> .....	4
2.2.3	<i>View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation</i> .....	4
2.3	MAKE-UP OF A GOOD MODULE .....	5
2.3.1	<i>View of Businesses</i> .....	5
2.3.2	<i>View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes</i> .....	5
2.3.3	<i>View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation</i> .....	6
2.4	REQUIREMENTS WITH RESPECT TO THE TARGET GROUP .....	7
2.4.1	<i>View of Businesses</i> .....	7
2.4.2	<i>View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes</i> .....	8
2.4.3	<i>View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation</i> .....	8
2.5	POSSIBILITY OF INTEGRATION OF MODULARISED SYSTEM IN (PRE-) VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING .....	9
2.5.1	<i>View of Businesses</i> .....	9
2.5.2	<i>View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes</i> .....	9
2.5.3	<i>View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation</i> .....	9
2.6	CRITERIA FOR RECORDING THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERFORMANCES .....	10
2.6.1	<i>View of Businesses</i> .....	10
2.6.2	<i>View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes</i> .....	10
2.6.3	<i>View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation</i> .....	10
2.7	CONCLUSIONS .....	11
2.7.1	<i>Requirements on the Planned Tool</i> .....	11
2.7.2	<i>Cultural and System Specific Requirements to be Considered</i> .....	12
2.7.3	<i>Considerations to Ensure Implementation</i> .....	13
<b>3</b>	<b>BELGIUM</b> .....	<b>16</b>
3.1	METHODS, ITEMS AND INTERVIEW PARTNERS .....	16
3.2	PERCEPTION OF MODULARISATION CONCEPT .....	16
3.2.1	<i>View of Businesses</i> .....	16
3.2.2	<i>View of Planners and Practitioners in Re-integration Schemes</i> .....	18
3.2.3	<i>View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation</i> .....	18
3.3	MAKE-UP OF A GOOD MODULE .....	18
3.3.1	<i>View of Businesses</i> .....	18
3.3.2	<i>View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes</i> .....	19
3.3.3	<i>View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation</i> .....	19
3.4	REQUIREMENTS WITH RESPECT TO THE TARGET GROUP .....	20
3.4.1	<i>View of Businesses</i> .....	20

3.4.2	<i>View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes</i> .....	20
3.4.3	<i>View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation</i> .....	21
3.5	POSSIBILITY OF INTEGRATION OF MODULARISED SYSTEM IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING .....	21
3.5.1	<i>View of Businesses</i> .....	21
3.5.2	<i>View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes</i> .....	22
3.5.3	<i>View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation</i> .....	22
3.6	CRITERIA FOR RECORDING THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERFORMANCES .....	23
3.6.1	<i>View of Businesses</i> .....	23
3.6.2	<i>View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes</i> .....	23
3.6.3	<i>View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation</i> .....	23
3.7	CONCLUSIONS .....	24
3.7.1	<i>Requirements on the Planned Tool</i> .....	24
3.7.2	<i>Cultural and System Specific Requirements to be Considered</i> .....	24
3.7.3	<i>Considerations to Ensure Implementation</i> .....	25
<b>4</b>	<b>GREECE</b> .....	<b>25</b>
4.1	METHODS, ITEMS AND INTERVIEW PARTNERS .....	25
4.2	PERCEPTION OF MODULARISATION CONCEPT .....	26
4.2.1	<i>View of Businesses and Employees Confederations</i> .....	26
4.2.2	<i>View of Planners and Practitioners in Re-integration Schemes</i> .....	27
4.2.3	<i>View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation</i> .....	28
4.3	MAKE-UP OF A GOOD MODULE .....	28
4.3.1	<i>View of Businesses and Employees Confederations</i> .....	28
4.3.2	<i>View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes</i> .....	29
4.3.3	<i>View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation</i> .....	29
4.4	REQUIREMENTS WITH RESPECT TO THE TARGET GROUP .....	30
4.4.1	<i>View of Businesses and Employees Confederations</i> .....	30
4.5	VIEW OF PLANNERS AND PRACTITIONERS OF RE-INTEGRATION SCHEMES .....	31
4.5.1	<i>View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation</i> .....	31
4.6	POSSIBILITY OF INTEGRATION OF MODULARISED SYSTEM IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING .....	31
4.6.1	<i>View of Businesses and Employees Confederations</i> .....	31
4.6.2	<i>View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes</i> .....	33
4.6.3	<i>View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation</i> .....	33
4.7	CRITERIA FOR RECORDING THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERFORMANCES .....	34
4.7.1	<i>View of Businesses and Employees Confederations</i> .....	34
4.7.2	<i>View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes</i> .....	34
4.7.3	<i>View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation</i> .....	35
4.8	CONCLUSIONS .....	35
4.8.1	<i>Requirements on the Planned Tool</i> .....	35
4.8.2	<i>Cultural and System Specific Requirements to be Considered</i> .....	36
4.8.3	<i>Considerations to Ensure Implementation</i> .....	37
<b>5</b>	<b>PORTUGAL</b> .....	<b>39</b>
5.1	METHODS, ITEMS AND INTERVIEW PARTNERS .....	39

5.2	PERCEPTION OF MODULARISATION CONCEPT .....	39
5.2.1	<i>View of Companies</i> .....	39
5.2.2	<i>View of Planners and Practitioners in Re-integration Schemes</i> .....	39
5.3	MAKE-UP OF A GOOD MODULE.....	41
5.3.1	<i>View of Companies</i> .....	41
5.3.2	<i>View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes</i> .....	41
5.4	REQUIREMENTS WITH RESPECT TO THE TARGET GROUP.....	41
5.4.1	<i>View of Companies</i> .....	41
5.4.2	<i>View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes</i> .....	41
5.5	POSSIBILITY OF INTEGRATION OF MODULARISED SYSTEM IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING .....	43
5.5.1	<i>View of Companies</i> .....	43
5.5.2	<i>View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes</i> .....	43
5.6	CRITERIA FOR RECORDING THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERFORMANCES .....	44
5.6.1	<i>View of Companies</i> .....	44
5.6.2	<i>View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes</i> .....	44
5.7	CONCLUSIONS.....	44
5.7.1	<i>Requirements on the Planned Tool</i> .....	44
5.7.2	<i>Cultural and System Specific Requirements to be Considered</i> .....	44
5.7.3	<i>Considerations to Ensure Implementation</i> .....	45
<b>6</b>	<b>ROMANIA .....</b>	<b>45</b>
6.1	PERCEPTION ON THE CONCEPT OF MODULARISATION .....	46
6.1.1	<i>View of enterprises, companies, business world:</i> .....	46
6.1.2	<i>View of the practitioners (teachers, trainers, monitors, coordinators, monitors):</i> .	47
6.1.3	<i>View of the students:</i> .....	48
6.2	MAKE-UP OF A GOOD MODULE.....	48
6.2.1	<i>View of enterprises, companies, business world:</i> .....	48
6.2.2	<i>View of the practitioners:</i> .....	49
6.2.3	<i>View of students:</i> .....	49
6.3	REQUIREMENTS CONCERNING THE TARGET GROUP .....	51
6.4	INTEGRATION OF MODULARISED SYSTEM IN THE TRAINING AND EDUCATION OF THE STUDENTS.....	52
6.5	CRITERIA FOR RECORDING THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERFORMANCES .....	52
6.5.1	<i>Views of the companies/enterprises that employed the students</i> .....	52
6.5.2	<i>The answers of the students</i> .....	53
6.5.3	<i>View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation</i> .....	53
6.6	CONCLUSIONS.....	53
<b>7</b>	<b>UNITED KINGDOM .....</b>	<b>54</b>
7.1	METHODS, ITEMS AND INTERVIEW PARTNERS .....	54
7.2	PERCEPTION OF MODULARISATION CONCEPT .....	55
7.2.1	<i>View of Businesses</i> .....	55
7.2.2	<i>View of Planners and Practitioners in Re-integration Schemes</i> .....	56
7.2.3	<i>View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation</i> .....	56

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7.3	MAKE-UP OF A GOOD MODULE.....	56
7.3.1	<i>View of Businesses</i> .....	56
7.3.2	<i>View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes</i> .....	57
7.3.3	<i>View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation</i> .....	57
7.4	REQUIREMENTS WITH RESPECT TO THE TARGET GROUP.....	58
7.4.1	<i>View of Businesses</i> .....	58
7.4.2	<i>View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes</i> .....	58
7.4.3	<i>View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation</i> .....	58
7.5	POSSIBILITY OF INTEGRATION OF MODULARISED SYSTEM IN (PRE-) VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING .....	59
7.5.1	<i>View of Businesses</i> .....	59
7.5.2	<i>View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes</i> .....	59
7.5.3	<i>View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation</i> .....	59
7.6	CRITERIA FOR RECORDING THE YOUNG PEOPLE’S PERFORMANCES .....	59
7.6.1	<i>View of Businesses</i> .....	59
7.6.2	<i>View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes</i> .....	59
7.6.3	<i>View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation</i> .....	60
7.7	CONCLUSIONS.....	61
7.7.1	<i>Requirements on the Planned Tool</i> .....	61
7.7.2	<i>Cultural and System Specific Requirements to be Considered</i> .....	61
7.7.3	<i>Considerations to Ensure Implementation</i> .....	62

## 1 Introduction

This Overview provides a useful insight into the topic of modularisation and its implementation in Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Romania, Portugal, Greece and UK. Relevant terminology and concepts will also be discussed within this overview.

The methodology presented in the Survey includes semi-structured interviews, desk research about modularisation issues, and, consequently, a qualitative data analysis. The Survey will give a general picture about what happens in the modularised systems and how the people involved view them. It is important to note that the Survey will present different perceptions and views on modularisation from all partner countries (apart from Denmark, due the fact that the Danish partner is the Project evaluator).

It will summarise opinions of business (employers), planners and practitioners involved in reintegration schemes as well as institutions concerned with accreditation, in relation to the following topics:

- Accreditation of modularised programmes; ,
- Make-up of a good a module;
- Requirements with respect to the target group;
- Possibility of integration of modularised system in vocational education and training;
- Criteria for recording the young people's performances.

The of these interviewees is crucial since they are key actors in VET and PET systems, therefore, their contributions will be meaningful for the development of the Module Project and its products and outcomes.

Each country will present their surveys' results taking into account unique features, practices and regulations towards the modularisation system in a particular country. Thus, the Survey structure will be adapted by each country partner depending on a situation in a specific country. Possibly, some partners will present more information than others as in selected countries, for example in Germany and the UK modularisation has more developed traditions in VET/PET.

The Survey will allow drawing on findings and conclusions in order to find a common understanding within the partnership, and to share relevant experiences and practices among the country partners. As a consequence the Survey will have a positive impact on the beneficiaries and the target group that "Module-Approval of Modules in Prevocational and Education and Training" Project aims to reach.

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## 2 Germany

### 2.1 Methods, Items and Interview Partners

The research method applied was semi-structured interviews. The aim was to gain a deeper insight into the problem from different perspectives. Thus, the interviewers aimed to collect information about aspects they themselves had not taken into account. The respondents, who are considered to be experts in the area, were asked as to give an opinion about concepts of education and training from their specific points of view. It has to be noted that the perception of qualification bricks and modules relates to different concepts.

The business enterprises interviewed were embedded in an initiative of a local vocational school. The vocational school conducted so-called qualification bricks with an orientation towards those developed by the *Central Chamber of Crafts* and the *Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training*. The concept implied four so-called qualification bricks following a preparation phase by the vocational school. It is important to note that attending vocational school is compulsory in Germany for all young people under the age of 18, even for those who did not accomplish to receive an apprenticeship contract. Similar to a regular apprenticeship, these participants received education at school alternating with placement phases at a local business enterprise. This means they spend two days at school and the rest of the week they are working in a business. The qualification bricks of this concept generally have duration of twelve weeks.

Those qualification bricks developed by the *Central Chamber of Crafts* have varying durations. Their main characteristic is that they are pre-arranged and are not necessarily conducted in cooperation with business partners. They can alternatively be purely scholar. They always have an orientation towards the training and instruction regulations of the respective vocation. Consequently they are only indirectly work process oriented.

The qualification bricks under leadership of the vocational schools are directly work process related. Thus the business enterprise completely controls the placement phase according to its own business processes. These are dominated by customer needs. The interviews were conducted among small and medium sized businesses, because they are obviously the addressees where the target group of the disadvantaged young people would have best prospects to achieve an apprenticeship contract. The businesses originated from different sectors of the working world. Still the traditional crafts play a dominating role. Hence the whole concept builds up on middle-class structures. The research was made in a structurally weak region with a high rate of unemployment.

The re-integration schemes are institutions being in charge of young people, who are called disadvantaged for diverse reasons. Some with migrant background have grave language problems, others have learning difficulties or social difficulties. The group of disadvantaged individuals in Germany is strictly related to the economic situation generally. Apprenticeships are in a way types of employments with reduced salary. At the time of economical stagnation, fewer apprenticeship contracts are signed, because employments become rare.

Hence the number disadvantaged young people increases in such a period. . People who are otherwise not considered disadvantaged now belong to that category. This is the reason why re-integration schemes care not only for young people with learning difficulties or language problems, but also for those who simply cannot find an apprenticeship.

With the exception of the vocational schools all institutions conducting re-integration schemes are part of an association. One of the largest in the region is the association of *Jugendaufbauwerke* in Schleswig-Holstein. It consists of 19 facilities. A second association is that of the *Norddeutsche Gesellschaft für Diakonie*, having its roots in the care for handicapped people. Yet the association currently extends its efforts in the field of supporting disadvantaged young people. A third considerable association is represented by the so-called *MOIN Förde*. *MOIN* is the acronym for motivation, orientation, integration and network.

The schemes offer an insight into a wide range of occupations for the young people. The offer is tightly related to regional conditions and employment market. Areas, which are of particular significance in Schleswig-Holstein, are the sectors of tourism, service and gastronomy. Even today there still exists a strong orientation towards the traditional occupations of the crafts, especially as far as Schleswig-Holstein is concerned.

The institutions concerned with accreditation can be subdivided into 3 groups. The first group is represented by political representatives. The second and third groups are the social partners, employers and employees, playing the dominant role in the regulation of vocational education and training in Germany. This implies their significant role for the support of disadvantaged young people.

The research included semi-structured interviews with experts from all three fractions mentioned above. The interviews generally pursued a thematic guideline of questions. Hence the research method used to interview all experts was similar in all cases. . The aim was to extend the knowledge about modularisation in pre-vocational education and training by taking different perspectives into account.

## **2.2 Perception of Modularisation Concept**

### **2.2.1 View of Businesses**

First of all it seemed to be important to acquire if there is a specific awareness of the concept among the business partners. It turned out that they did not even know about the fact that the placement of these young people working in their businesses was integrated into a concept. The term “module” or “qualification brick” is of no significance for the businesses. The traditional concept of an apprenticeship with its elements intermediate and final exam is generally so deeply engraved into the thinking of the Germans that other concepts are either completely rejected or misunderstood. Modules are for instance considered as project work in vocational schools or the two phases of a traditional apprenticeship were considered modules. Thus the business enterprises distinguish between a regular apprenticeship and placement. Everything that is not apprenticeship is perceived as placement.

### **2.2.2 View of Planners and Practitioners in Re-integration Schemes**

While the representatives of the business enterprises did not even have a clue what modules are, the planners and practitioners in re-integration schemes regularly operate with such terms as “modules” and “qualification bricks”. They even develop these instruments on their own. As a result there is a wide variety of modules with no transparency at all. Consequently there was not necessarily a linkage between these modules and demanded qualifications of respective occupations. Now the *Central Chamber of Crafts* has developed such standardised and evaluated modules called “qualification bricks” to ensure the transparency. The planners’ and practitioners’ perceptions of modules are diverse. Some apply a certain kind of modules developed for the work with disadvantaged young people. Others do not like to use the term module. They tend to use the term brick. A definition given by one of the experts generally summarises their conception of modules: “A module is a process, a sequence or a brick, which is clearly defined with respect to beginning, end and content. At the beginning an agreement is made together with the young people about what would be intended as an objective.”

All experts consider modules a sensible means. Some regard them as necessary. The advantages comprise benefits of such instruments as the opportunity to properly plan and elaborate concepts. Modules enable to individually meet the needs of every young man or woman. They have a manageable duration for the participant. This has implications on their motivation. The participants are lead from success to success in a sequence. This helps avoiding break offs. The high expense that has to be invested in administration is considered a disadvantage of the concept. Another disadvantage pointed out is that the participants no longer belong to a defined group. All experts from the practitioners’ side are acquainted with the qualification bricks developed by the *Central Chamber of Crafts*. The qualification bricks are considered to be arranged according to the needs of the businesses. Right now the concept occasionally requires machines that are not available in the businesses. While most experts regard modules as a sensible means to support young disadvantaged people, some argue that the concept of qualification bricks is too demanding for their specific target group, where a large proportion has not completed secondary modern school.

### **2.2.3 View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation**

Institutions concerned with accreditation define modules as units which have a clearly defined duration and content. Another aspect is that a module system should build up to an occupation, meaning that modules are components of a complete vocational qualification. One expert tends to regard qualification bricks as modules. The experts recognise numerous advantages related to a modularisation concept:

- Education can be more flexibly arranged;
- Break-offs and re-enter phases of a participant bear less problems;
- Individual support for young individuals is provided;
- Motivation of young people is facilitated through short-term feedback;
- Participants with deficits can find orientation.

There is an opportunity to compare vocational education systems internationally; On the other hand there are disadvantages that have to be taken into account:

- Modules create demands for single components of an occupation, not for the occupation as a whole;
- Educational theory gets less important;
- Modularised concepts lack practice, if they are conducted by re-integration schemes;
- Modularised concepts lack continuity;
- Modularised concepts could potentially ruin the dual system in Germany;
- Modularised concepts lead to a fragmentation of occupations.

## 2.3 Make-up of a good module

### 2.3.1 View of Businesses

The interviewed experts prefer a concept that is directly related to the working process. They argue that it is not the training and instruction of young people that is their core competence, but the business process. Pre-arranged qualification bricks are therefore rejected as impracticable. The qualification bricks developed by the *Central Chamber of Crafts* are, nevertheless, regarded as a helpful means to classify a placement phase in retrospective. Regulations and standardisation should be limited to the ultimate necessity. The message is clear: “Keep it simple!” Simple means that the qualification bricks should be developed and decentralised in cooperation between vocational schools and enterprises. The vocational schools should play an active role in defining the placement phase. The arrangement of qualification bricks by the *Central Chambers of the Crafts* can be a helpful means to communicate expectations from both sides. Generally representatives of the local businesses regard qualification bricks a helpful means to get young people into a regular apprenticeship. They are considered sensible, not because they relate to a modularisation concept, but because they offer the same benefits as a regular apprenticeship does.

Some experts favour the idea of a basic qualification brick. The intention is to assess as early as possible, whether or not the participant has a general aptitude for a certain occupation.

### 2.3.2 View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes

With respect to views of planners and practitioners of re-integration schemes, this aspect can be subdivided into qualities and targets of a good module.

According to planners’ and practitioners’ views, main **qualities** of a good module are, as follows:

- The structure of the good module is clearly defined. It is transparent for both participants and instructors;
- It has a manageable duration. Break-offs can be avoided by short durations;

- 
- A good module is elaborated in cooperation with the participants. It can be adjusted to individual needs, if necessary;
  - It is result-oriented;
  - Accomplishments can be controlled;
  - It offers an opportunity for a short-term success;
  - Contents match with the participants' talents;
  - It makes the participant hope to gain something.

Most important **targets** are according to planners and practitioners, as follows:

- To motivate participants to complete a module;
- To offer an opportunity to elaborate the participants' strengths and weaknesses;
- To facilitate a reflection phase that makes the young people aware of accomplishments;
- To show participants applicability of learned skills in everyday life;
- To gain employability respective maturity to start an apprenticeship.

### **2.3.3 View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation**

The group of institutions concerned with accreditation consists of representatives of three groups. Representatives, involved in the accreditation of vocational qualifications in Germany, include politicians, employers and employees.

#### **Qualities of a good module**

A good module should have the following qualities according to **representatives with political background**:

- Defined unit;
- Duration and contents are pre-arranged;
- Defined like a mini-project;
- Definite start and end;
- Transparent development of competences;
- Strong relation between theory and practice;
- Clearly defined and recorded;
- Persistently in development (improvement);
- Active participation of the young people.

According to the **employers' organisations** a good module includes the following:

- It is related to business processes;
- It is administered by excerpts of regulations for training and instruction of regular apprenticeships;
- It is made up of a meaningful structure;

- It demonstrates an enterprise's core processes;
- It is part of an apprenticeship;
- Occupation-related competences are crucial;
- Pedagogic counselling for specific groups of young people is provided.

Qualities of a good module according to representatives of the **unions**:

- Motivate young people;
- Encourage young individuals to take responsibility;
- Young people get contacts in the workforce;
- They are oriented towards regulations of a regular apprenticeship.

### **Objectives of a good module**

Objectives of a good module are according to the **political fraction**, as follows:

- Modules should develop the ability to start an apprenticeship;
- Modules should be motivating;
- Modules should develop young people's self confidence;
- A result achievement of competences must be recognisable;
- The module should be a first step towards employment and occupation;
- Modules should be regarded as holistic units bearing aspects like specific, methodical and social competences

Representatives of the **employers' organisations** record the following objectives as crucial:

- Preparation for life;
- Orientation towards demands of the economy;
- Suitability to improve prospects to enter an apprenticeship;
- Demonstration of business practice;
- Development of contacts between young people and businesses;
- Opportunities for occupational orientation;

For representatives of the unions the following objective is important:

- To get access to an apprenticeship.

## **2.4 Requirements with Respect to the Target Group**

### **2.4.1 View of Businesses**

Gaining work experience is regarded more important than achieving competences. Social competences and work ethic are regarded a crucial point especially for the target group of disadvantaged young people. At this specific point of their personal development young people should develop the maturity to enter an apprenticeship. This includes the ability to

work in team structures. According to the business representatives everything that centres on education must be conducted by the vocational school. On the other hand they favour an integral approach for the concept of qualification bricks. Thus the education at school should be work related. This could be done in projects in cooperation with local enterprises. General education should have priority for the target group. This means the ability to properly read and write and calculate. Besides, the experts come to the conclusion that creativity and a sense for aesthetics become ever more important in an increasingly service oriented market economy. This means to develop the ability to communicate with customers and counsel them in their decision-making process. Other claims made by experts from the business side address such aspects as the duration of qualification bricks. In contrast to those developed by the *Central Chamber of Crafts*, it turned out, that the representatives of the business enterprises favour a concept with qualification bricks having all the same duration. The duration of 12 weeks generally grants the businesses enough flexibility to demonstrate a complete working process. The varying duration of those qualification bricks by the *Central Chamber of Crafts* is considered to be too complicated. In general, the concept qualification bricks is judged a sensible means.

#### **2.4.2 View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes**

Planners and practitioners perceive the qualification bricks by the *Central Chamber of Crafts* a helpful guideline to develop their own modules. The requirements of the qualification bricks are regarded as too demanding for the target group of disadvantaged young people who have not even completed secondary modern school and have not developed the maturity to join such a programme. The planners and practitioners of re-integration schemes are in charge of young people who face problems to speak the German language properly or have other problems that hinder them to find an employment or apprenticeship. Seen from that perspective, qualification bricks are not yet an ideal instrument to support young people of that specific target group.

#### **2.4.3 View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation**

The experts concerned with accreditation judge qualification bricks a suitable means to support disadvantaged young people. They dramatically increase their prospects to find an apprenticeship. The crucial aspect is the placement phase. Some experts are more sceptical concerning the group of young individuals, who have language problems or social disadvantages and learning difficulties. They doubt that there is a demand for these young people at all and don't think qualification bricks are able to improve their prospects. Some experts recommend courses in German for those with a migrant background, because deficits in speaking the national language properly is often seen as an excluding factor concerning employment and education. Language problems are a big theme in nowadays political discussion in Germany. The same applies to those who have other problems. They should also be supported accordingly.

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## **2.5 Possibility of Integration of Modularised System in (Pre-) Vocational Education and Training**

### **2.5.1 View of Businesses**

All in all the concept of qualification bricks is considered a sensible means. It improves the prospects of the participants to find access to a regular apprenticeship dramatically. Young men and women gain contacts in the workforce and valuable references documenting their personal development and skills. To gain access to an apprenticeship is regarded as the number one objective of such an initiative. Even though the attempt to create an integral concept for prevocational education and training is more complicated than with regular apprenticeships, it is still regarded promising. This means, according to business representatives, that the courses at school should build up on experiences made during the placement phase. The young men and women are not generally considered disadvantaged, but as being late in their personal development. In other words they do not have the maturity yet to start a regular apprenticeship. Therefore the business representatives do not award credits to the participants of qualification bricks in the duration of an apprenticeship. Credit in duration makes no sense if the participants are not able to pass the intermediate exam later on. The motivation of business enterprises to engage themselves in such initiatives largely depends on how free they are in creating the placement phase. Tendencies towards more rigid regulations and standards of qualification bricks could reduce the motivation of business enterprises to engage themselves in such initiatives.

### **2.5.2 View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes**

Qualification bricks according to the *Central Chamber of Crafts* are generally considered too demanding for the target group of disadvantaged young people they are in charge of. While all of them have problems to find an employment or apprenticeship, the reasons are manifold, ranging from problems with the German language to those of the learning difficulties or social disadvantages. Sometime there are no problems at all. Young people simply cannot find an apprenticeship due to the market situation. Qualification bricks by the *Central Chamber of Crafts* are not sufficiently able to meet the individual requirements of the inhomogeneous group of disadvantaged young individuals. Therefore they favour their own concepts including their own modules. Some of the experts assume that qualification bricks offer prospects for the target group to find an employment or apprenticeship while others see no chance at all.

### **2.5.3 View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation**

Modules are generally judged a sensible instrument to support most disadvantaged young people. In Germany about 14% of a cohort is considered to be disadvantaged. However a modularised approach is not favoured concerning the regular vocational education. But for the disadvantaged individuals particularly the short manageable durations, including short-term feedback and performance control, offer promising prospects. Placements offer the opportunity to gain references in the workforce. Therefore qualification bricks are considered

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suitable to help young individuals to enter an apprenticeship. Young people with handicaps find helpful orientation in the world of work. The system of qualification bricks with an orientation towards training regulations of regular apprenticeships gives evidence about demanded vocational qualifications.

## **2.6 Criteria for Recording the Young People's Performances**

### **2.6.1 View of Businesses**

The recording of the young peoples' performances should cost the enterprises as little expense as possible. Therefore the recording should be standardised. The recording applied during the school project can be regarded as a prototype. The vocational school developed a standardised form in which the enterprises could make their judgment of the young peoples' performance. Afterwards the school added its own assessment. This proceeding takes into account that the business representatives are not predominantly engaged with aspects of education and training, but with business processes. One demand is therefore that these business processes are as little as possible affected by the concept. Complicated concepts require too much time and again reduced motivation and engagement from the businesses' side. Developing social competences including the ability to work in teams is regarded as one of the key competences that a young man or woman should gain in the course of the placement phase. Therefore performances in the field of such soft skills should also be recorded. The sequence of such recordings allows making a judgment about the development of the young people.

### **2.6.2 View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes**

Different ways of recording performances are mentioned by the experts from re-integration schemes. Some recommend an exam with two parts, one with practical, one with theoretical orientation. Others favour an interview where knowledge about the working process can be examined. There also seems to be a dispute among the experts about the importance of soft skills. All experts agree that the assessment of performances should cover a wide range of competences. The question is, whether the qualification bricks should be completed by handing over a certificate or not. Some like the idea of formulating a written text, while others prefer standardised forms. All experts favour a mixture of marks and formulated appraisals. A certificate should be bound to a final test or exam. This could also be conducted by work specimen or by projects.

### **2.6.3 View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation**

The experts agree that the young people having completed a module should receive a certificate. Hence the discussion turns towards how they should be certificated. One opportunity is giving marks. However marks could have a negative effect on motivation. Some experts argue that only the good participants should receive marks while the others should receive a written evaluation. Written evaluations make sense because they provide detailed and meaningful information about the young man or woman. The evaluation should

offer the participant an opportunity to assess his own accomplishments and deficits. Crucial for the whole concept seems to be that young disadvantaged people experience having success.

The experts could not come to an agreement whether certificates should be standardised or not. All experts agree that modules should not be completed by final exams. This would imply too much pressure on the participants. The experts tend to favour an evaluation by work specimen. Not only the result, but the whole process of figuring out the solution should be assessed.

## **2.7 Conclusions**

### **2.7.1 Requirements on the Planned Tool**

During the survey the interviewees were asked what they considered important while constructing the tool and what their expectations are towards workability, content, dimensions and complexity. These are the results:

#### **Workability**

According to the interviewed persons the planned tool should meet some crucial requirements concerning workability:

- It should be easy to handle and administer;
- It must be practicable;
- It must allow access for everyone;
- It should be workable net-work based;
- It should enable exchange of experiences.
- It should provide manifold possibilities;
- It must be fun to work with;
- It should name contacts for further questions.

#### **Content**

Representatives of the interviewed institutions and re-integration schemes consider the following content important:

- The tool should introduce all parties involved;
- It should allow comparability of the relevance of each dimension for the different countries;
- It should introduce positive examples from other countries;
- It should provide reports on experiences as well as reflections.

## Dimensions

According to the interviewed persons the following dimensions should be included in the tool:

- Assessment and recognition including procedures;
- Situated learning;
- Pedagogical concepts;
- Training of teachers and other professionals;
- Framework conditions (Definition of target groups, family and social contexts, hindering circumstances);
- Good practice examples for modules and qualification bricks;
- Transparency of the kind of modules available: A table indicating x occupations with the respective y modules; a list of contents of modules and addresses where you can get them;
- Juridical questions and legal framework conditions.

## Complexity

Concerning size and complexity experts have the following expectations towards the tool:

- It should not be too complex;
- It should not go too far in depth;
- It should be clearly structured and easy to grasp;
- It should not be too time consuming.

### 2.7.2 Cultural and System Specific Requirements to be Considered

The German dual system has numerous qualities. Only one of these is to educate young men and women. Another function is to stratify society. People chose occupations according to interest but also according to offer and demand. The first year of an apprenticeship is often claimed as pure investment by the enterprises, because the apprentice has not obtained many specific competences yet. The third year is usually called the pay-off phase, because the apprentice has almost all the knowledge a journeyman has, but he is not yet being paid according to tariffs. A modularised system is considered to threaten the whole system of tariffs, because the participants of qualification bricks receive no payment. This could potentially reduce the enterprises' motivation to invest in regular apprenticeships. This is true especially for the basic vocational education. Qualification bricks are therefore considered to be a suitable means to enter an apprenticeship. Everything else is considered to have fatal consequences, not just for those disadvantaged (about 14%), but for all young people applying for an apprenticeship in Germany. These are the reasons, why modularisation is generally assessed as not compatible with the German dual system.

The situation is completely different as far as pre-vocational education is concerned. All experts interviewed, favour a modularised approach for the support of disadvantaged young individuals. Qualification bricks are considered a suitable instrument to support young people.

Their great advantage is that they are oriented towards regulations for training and instruction of regular apprenticeships. Hence they represent demanded qualifications within the world of work, because they are occupation-related.

It has to be taken into account that some of the disadvantaged young individuals do already fulfil the requirements to start an apprenticeship. They simply cannot find an employer due to the market situation. Others are not yet prepared to start an apprenticeship. They have problems of a different kind, for instance language problems or other deficits. These problems require a different approach and perhaps even different types of modules. The orientation of qualification bricks towards demanded qualifications is sensible for those who are willing and able to start an apprenticeship or find an employment. To get a job or apprenticeship is clearly a goal number one regarding the whole concept. This requires social and personal competences of the participants. The qualification bricks are a helpful means to develop and evaluate such competences in the course of time. Key elements are the placement phases. Placements offer young individuals an opportunity to gain references in the world of work. Disadvantaged young people even achieve first sector related competences. It is particularly important in the German context that education and training are conducted as work-related processes. This means education and training are related to real problems in the real world of work. This fact should be considered while creating the tool.

Other prospects are that the young people develop an ability to work independently, which is often considered a core competence to start an apprenticeship. The relatively short duration makes qualification bricks seem manageable for the target group. This can be seen as a key element for the young people to stick with it till the end of the module. This helps avoiding break-offs.

It is questionable whether the concept of qualification bricks can be implemented in all its details. Specific requirements of the enterprises as well as specific requirements of disadvantaged young individuals in re-integration schemes have to be taken into account. Nevertheless the instrument represents a helpful guideline for all those who are in charge of disadvantaged young people. Therefore the planned tool should refer to the qualification bricks provided by the *Central Chamber of Crafts* as good examples to draw from. Because of their high reference to the guidelines for carrying out regular apprenticeships they are of extreme value if it comes to the acquirement of job and occupation related skills and qualifications. The qualification bricks are therefore suitable to serve as guidelines while creating your own bricks.

### **2.7.3 Considerations to Ensure Implementation**

Placement phases are the key elements of qualification bricks. Therefore the approach largely depends on the engagements of the local business enterprises. The engagement of the businesses requires a minimum of regulations and standardisation. Educating disadvantaged young individuals is not the core competence of business enterprises. Thus their expense concerning administration should be reduced to a minimum. Still the enterprises should receive an orientation on how to arrange such a placement phase. The first step would be to

make the enterprise aware of the fact that the young man or woman is part of a concept called qualification bricks. The second step would be to help them arrange the qualification bricks according to their business processes. Qualification bricks developed by the *Central Chamber of Crafts* and the *Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training* could give suitable orientation about the contents of a placement phase, even if the classification happens in retrospective. Pre-arranged qualification bricks on the other hand seem to be not practicable particularly for the smaller businesses. The smaller businesses are though definitely the addressees for the disadvantaged young people if they apply for an apprenticeship contract.

It is remarkable that neither vocational schools nor re-integration schemes implemented the qualification bricks pre-arranged by the *Central Chamber of Crafts* and the *Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training*. Pre-arranged qualification bricks are impracticable especially in smaller businesses. They have to be adjusted according to the working process. Every effort to regulate these businesses reduces their motivation to engage themselves in such initiatives. Placements are the key elements that lead to success in the course of the school project. Almost every participant finally found access to an apprenticeship. It is yet questionable whether the same success can be realised in different contexts. The research was done in a structurally weak rural region. Still the initiative was able to build up on middle class structures of the crafts. These are structures that traditionally support the dual system in Germany, but are not existent in urban regions and the new federal states. The concept is still bound to old structures of the crafts. New areas of occupation, like wellness and generally the service sector or tourism are not opened, even though they potentially offer more prospects for the target group.

The re-integration schemes do not apply qualification bricks by the *Central Chamber of the Crafts* and the *Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training*, because for them the specific needs of the young individuals they care for is considered to be a priority. The reason is that these young men and women often suffer from various deficits that hinder them from starting an apprenticeship. Further support is required. Therefore qualification bricks are often too demanding and must be adjusted to the needs of the young people. Even these institutions use qualification bricks as an orientation, because the aim for these young people they care for is also an apprenticeship or employment, but at a later point of time.

After all those considerations there is a question, whether a single tool can possibly be created that is able to meet all requirements of the different fractions involved in the process of developing modularised structures. Perhaps understanding the qualification bricks as a defined set of demanded qualifications with orientation towards occupations is a manageable and less bureaucratic approach to solve the problem. This would mean to leave it to the re-integration schemes and vocational schools to develop appropriate modules according to their specific objectives. This implies to use the qualification bricks not as a tool but as a catalogue of qualifications. Hence this would describe an approach to regard the qualification bricks just as the objective while the details are developed decentralised by those institutions that administer the concept.

Same thing should be considered while introducing other approaches from different countries: They might serve as positive examples and provide a set of ideas to draw on as well as trigger ideas to enrich the own concept.

## **3 Belgium**

### **3.1 Methods, Items and Interview Partners**

The information and data used in this paper came from different sources:

1. a scientific evaluation of the modularisation experiment, covering the experiment in the period between 2000 and 2003 (Pelleriaux, De Rick, Op den Kamp & Peeters, 2004);
2. face-to-face interviews with employers offering employment to pupils in part-time vocational education;
3. face-to-face interview with two experts from the Service for Vocational Education (Flemish Government, Department of Education);
4. a survey conducted by the Service for Vocational Education among practitioners in part-time vocational education and training and among employers employing pupils in modularised part-time vocational education (Rapport Evaluatie experimenteel secundair onderwijs volgens een modulair stelsel, 4 juli 2005. Opgemaakt door DBO i.o.v. de stuurgroep modularisering);
5. recommendations drawn up by the Service for Vocational Education (Supplement DBO bij het Rapport Evaluatie experimenteel secundair onderwijs volgens een modulair stelsel, 4 juli 2005).

Information was gathered and structured according to the topic list provided by the coordinator of the project. In the text it will be mentioned on which source the findings are based.

### **3.2 Perception of Modularisation Concept**

#### **3.2.1 View of Businesses**

In Flanders modularisation is based in the schools and centres for part-time vocational education. The training on the job itself is not divided into modules. Therefore, the employers are involved in the modular system not directly, but indirectly.

Employers are at the moment not acquainted with the concept of modularisation. Some of the employers who engaged pupils who are trained in a modular system are aware of the existence of the modularisation experiment, others are not. But even the employers who know that modularisation exists do not know the meaning of it exactly. They are unfamiliar with the terminology (learning trajectory, part-qualification, etc.). (Sources nr. 1, nr. 2 and nr. 5).

- From the survey conducted by the SVE (source nr. 4) we know that

- more than 1 out of 10 employers state that they do not know about the modularisation experiment<sup>1</sup>;
- 7 out of 10 say to have been informed about the experiment;
- 7 out of 10 say to have been informed about the basic competencies;
- 5 out of 10 say to have been informed about the (part)qualifications; 4 out of 10 think that in the enterprise/organisation as a whole people know about the content of the (part)qualifications ;
- 9 out of 10 know which basic competencies the pupil may learn;
- 9 out of 10 know which basic competencies should be acquired on the job.

In the survey (source nr. 4) employers were asked to judge a number of statements about the modular system, but they were not asked to compare the modular system with the linear system. Therefore the following results cannot be interpreted as saying that a modular system is better/equal/worse than a linear system. With regard to the modular system,

- almost 9 out of 10 employers are of the opinion that the training in the school or centre suits the tasks on the job;
- 3 out of 10 agree with the statement that the education in the modular system is rather limited<sup>2</sup>;
- 7 out of 10 agree that pupils are flexibly employable;
- slightly more than 5 out of 10 say that a modular system trains pupils to be a better professional, 3 out of 10 do not have an opinion on this.

During the survey (source nr. 4) employers mentioned explicitly (additionally to answering the standardised questions):

- that pupils in the modular system are given more chances (n = 8);
- that the educational system should innovate, but that it should be guaranteed that the quality is maintained (n = 6);
- that the quality of the education in the modular system is lower (too low) than in the linear system (n = 6);
- that the pupils from the modular system are more motivated (n = 4);
- that motivated teachers create motivated pupils (n = 4).

When asked whether the modularisation of education should be generalised, 4 out of 10 say yes, 2 out of 10 no and 3 out of 10 didn't have an opinion on this.

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<sup>1</sup> Remember that all interviewed employers work with pupils trained in the modular system and should have been informed about all characteristics of the modular system.

<sup>2</sup> It can not be seen in the report how many of the employers did not have an opinion on this topic. Therefore we can not conclude that 7 out of 10 employers disagreed with the statement.

### **3.2.2 View of Planners and Practitioners in Re-integration Schemes**

In the survey (source nr. 4) 10 co-ordinators of the centres for part-time education involved in the modularisation experiment were questioned.

- 8 of the 10 co-ordinators agree with the statement that a modular system trains pupils to be a better professional;
- 4 think (part)qualifications have a real value on the labour market, 4 disagree with that and 2 declare not having an opinion on this;
- 6 are of the opinion that pupils coming from the modular system will have better chances for employment;
- all state that granting part-qualifications is motivating for the pupils;
- all state that modular education contributes to the pupil's well-being;
- all state that the system of part-qualifications stimulates to participate in additional education and training.

The professionals (source nr. 4) co-ordinating the modularisation experiment within the centres for part-time education were also questioned.

- all state that pupils could achieve the basic competencies on the job.

Teachers in the centres for part-time education could give their opinion as well (survey = source nr. 4):

- 8 out of 10 teachers agree with the statement that a modular system trains pupils to be a better professional;
- almost all teachers state that granting part-qualifications is motivating for the pupils;
- 9 out of ten state that the system of part-qualifications stimulates to participate in additional education and training;
- 9 out of ten state that the pupils can achieve the basic competencies on the job.

### **3.2.3 View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation**

The Service for Vocational Education (SVE) favours the concept of modularisation very strongly. The Service has introduced and developed the concept of modularisation and strongly advocates the generalisation of modular systems in secondary vocational education.

## **3.3 Make-up of a good module**

### **3.3.1 View of Businesses**

The interviews with employers (source nr. 2) reveal that all employers agree that modules should encompass different kinds of competencies. Besides the technical and practical competencies, attitudes are crucial for becoming a professional. All employers emphasise the importance of skills such as hygienic behaviour, punctuality, discipline, etc.

Some employers added the importance of stimulating the pupils by enhancing their self-esteem, by recognising their achievements (source nr. 2).

Modules should reflect the requirements of the profession. Vocational profiles should be the fundament for the making-up of modules (source nr. 2).

Some of the employers remarked that for them it is not desirable that the training on the job is defined by the centre for part-time education. They are willing to define the content of the training of the job in collaboration with the school, but within limits. The reason for this is that employers often want to prepare pupils for working in their own company by giving them a very specific company-determined training. The more a modular system imposes matters, the less the employers (source nr. 2) will accept it.

The quality of the modular system should be safeguarded. According to employers, the level of pupils coming from part-time vocational education is already very low (often really too low). Quality levels should be maintained (if possible even raised) (source nr. 2).

From the survey (source nr. 4) we know that 8 out of 10 employers agree with the statement that working with key competencies guarantees that enough attention is paid to attitudes important for executing the job, 1 out of 10 didn't have an opinion on this.

### **3.3.2 View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes**

The main point regarding the making-up of good modules is related to the discussion on the distribution of responsibilities (see also section 1.3.3): some centres prefer that the government makes the modules very concrete, others see this as a curtailing of their autonomy. For the centres it was not always clear what the government meant with the different concepts and what was really expected (source nr. 1). In Flanders, clear conceptualisations and clear definitions, illustrated with good examples, are asked for.

A concern for the planners and practitioners is the adaptation of the modules to the demands of the labour market. They want modules to be flexible (source nr. 1, source nr. 4).

From the survey (source nr. 4) we know that 9 out of 10 teachers in centres for part-time education agree with the statement that working with key competencies guarantees that enough attention is paid to attitudes important for executing the job.

### **3.3.3 View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation**

#### **Distribution of responsibilities**

As said in the first country report, many decisions concerning the concept of modularisation and concerning the making-up of modules have been made by the government, namely by the SVE. How modules should be made up was also explained in that report. But during the experiment two distinct visions grow within the SVE, one preferring a strong guidance of the schools by the SVE and one preferring to give more responsibilities to the schools and centres and to their umbrella organisations. It is very difficult to find a good balance between the responsibilities of the department of education and the responsibilities of the umbrella

organisations of the schools and centres for vocational education. But if it is decided to implement modularisation in all schools and centres, the SVE will have to develop one clear vision, especially concerning the key competencies (source nr.5).

Another issue to be dealt with is the involvement of advisory boards, such as the Flemish Educational Council (Vlaamse Onderwijsraad, VLOR). During the experiment, the Flemish Educational Council demanded regularly the opportunity to comment upon decisions and changes. Although the comments of the Council can be very useful, the consultation process takes time and impedes the flexible adaptation of educational programmes (source nr. 5).

### **Content and structure of the modules**

See the first country report (section 1.3.1 on the role of modularisation in prevocational education and training). The integration of basic competencies, auxiliary basic education and key competencies in every module requires collaboration of all teachers involved in the module. According to the SVE, teamwork is a fundamental prerequisite, for which time has to be allocated explicitly (source nr. 5).

### **Relationship between modules and the work experience**

As the content of modules is very well defined it is not so easy to really develop alternated learning. One cannot expect from the employers to follow the content of the modules meticulously. According to the SVE, the most important is that in the end all competencies are acquired. This is also a reason not to fix the duration of the modules (source nr.3 and nr. 5).

## **3.4 Requirements with Respect to the Target Group**

### **3.4.1 View of Businesses**

According to the employers, the principles of modularisation are good for the target group. Young people, being disadvantaged, having a low skills level, being confronted with many problems, ... get benefit out of things such as being valued by teachers, receiving a part-qualification, knowing what they are aiming at, having the opportunity to practice 'soft' skills, ... (source nr. 2).

One employer said that many young people misperceive professions and are not well aware of the fact that it takes time to learn a profession. Working with transparent modules and clear trajectories could be a good remedy (source nr. 2).

### **3.4.2 View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes**

The planners and practitioners of the centres generally agree that the principles of modularisation match with the features of the target group. Enhancing well-being by granting part-qualifications, making learning trajectories transparent and concrete, offering individual guidance, individualising programmes, strengthening the involvement of the pupils in their

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own learning process, etc., are all aspects of modularisation that are well accepted (source nr. 1, source nr. 4, source nr. 5).

### **3.4.3 View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation**

The SVE is of the opinion that modules may not take too long to accomplish. Modules of short duration give the pupils more often the experience of being successful (source nr. 5). The duration of a module is not fixed in part-time vocational education, which opens the way to an individual approach of the pupil.

Another way to stimulate experiences of success is a further integration of technical, practical and general subjects (source nr. 5).

The name of the module and of the part-qualification should reflect the content and should be clear to all stakeholders. Preferably they should be based on the terms used in the vocational profiles. The terms used in the educational structure and in the vocational structure should be univocal (source nr. 5).

Schools and centres should be stimulated to really hand over part-qualifications so the pupils have a concrete proof of their competencies (source nr. 5).

In order to give the young people access to lifelong and life wide learning, part-qualifications should give access to other forms of education and training (source nr. 5).

The SVE states that modularisation is a system that is very well adapted to the target group on the one hand and to the system of part-time vocational education on the other hand. The system helps the young people to persevere, to strive for a part-qualification and not to play truant. In order to achieve this, the modules have to be transparent and must give the pupil insight in the whole trajectory. The content has to be concrete, functional and meaningful (source nr. 3).

The teacher has to adapt a positive style. The focus is on the competencies, not on deficits. This is a way of thinking that is quite new for most teachers (source nr. 3).

## **3.5 Possibility of Integration of Modularised System in Vocational Education and Training**

### **3.5.1 View of Businesses**

From the interviews (source nr. 1) we know that employers do agree with a lot of the principles behind the concept of modularisation, but they do not say that modularisation is the way to introduce these principles nor do they say that modularisation is a bad system.

As mentioned above (section 1.2.1) 4 out of 10 employers involved in the survey and thus having experience of working with pupils coming from a modularised system (source nr. 4), favour the generalisation of modularisation, 2 out of 10 don't and 3 out of 10 didn't have an opinion on this.

### 3.5.2 View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes

According to the survey (source nr. 4), all co-ordinators of the centres for part-time vocational education and all professionals co-ordinating the implementation of the experiment agree that modularisation should be generalised in part-time vocational education, but 3 say it should only be generalised in some educational domains. All co-ordinators of the centres for part-time education and training state that if modularisation should not be introduced generally, they will try to further implement the good aspects of modularisation (source nr. 1 and nr. 4), including the new style of teaching.

To make modularisation possible,

- the government and sectoral bodies should support the schools;
- rules should be adapted to the new system;
- participation of schools in the process should be guaranteed;
- schools should have more autonomy;
- the government should give the necessary information and develop tools to support the schools, while the umbrella organisations of the educational networks should provide specific courses to prepare the practitioners.

Points of attention remain the value of part-qualifications on the labour market and the transition to systems of (adult) learning. Half of the co-ordinators say the part-qualifications have no value on the labour market at the moment (source nr. 4).

### 3.5.3 View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation

The SVE is positive about the integration of modularisation in vocational education and training (source nr. 3 and nr. 5).

But the introduction of a new system is very difficult. A lot of influencing factors have to be taken into account: organisational culture, change processes, resistance to change, etc. These cannot be influenced by the SVE as they are beyond its scope. It is up to the three educational networks and their educational guidance services (pedagogische begeleidingsdiensten) to support their schools and centres in these matters (as mentioned in the first country report) (source nr. 5).

Furthermore, such a far-reaching change of the educational system has to be broadly based. All stakeholders should be involved and should commit them to bring modularisation to a favourable conclusion. Stakeholders include both educational actors, institutes for teacher training, and labour-market actors (source nr. 5).

In order to generalise modularisation, some features of the Flemish educational system will have to be adapted to the new requirements, such as regulations concerning the staff (definition of tasks, definition of work load, proofs of competencies, etc..) and regulations concerning the granting of qualifications, the structure of the school year, .... (Source nr. 5).

Work has to be done with regard to the marketability of the part-qualifications. It is important that part-qualifications are related to professions or specialisations that are needed in the

labour market. At the moment, that is not always the case. Collaboration with sectoral bodies, employers' organisations is a prerequisite (source nr. 3). The system of qualifications should be quite smoothly adaptable in order to be able to respond to changes in the labour market.

### **3.6 Criteria for Recording the Young People's Performances**

#### **3.6.1 View of Businesses**

The employers agree that not only technical, vocational, theoretical competencies should be recorded, but also social competencies (communication, attitudes, etc.) (Source nr. 1, source nr. 4).

The most important problem related to the recording of the young people's performances is that employers do not attach a lot of value to part-qualifications. This makes it questionable whether part-qualifications will have a positive effect on the integration of young people on the labour market who do not accomplish their training and that way do not have the full qualification. (Source nr.1, source nr. 2, source nr. 5).

#### **3.6.2 View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes**

The professionals co-ordinating the modularisation experiment within the centres for part-time education were asked questions about evaluation in the survey (source nr. 4). The results were as follows:

- 9 out of 10 say that different evaluation methods have been introduced;
- 6 out of 10 state that evaluation within a modular system takes more time than within a linear system.

The evaluation research (source nr. 1) revealed that new methods of evaluation were actually introduced.

#### **3.6.3 View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation**

The Service of Vocational Education is of the opinion that pupils should obtain (part-) qualifications that give access to the labour market. Therefore it is necessary that young people's performances are registered. For each pupil schools should develop an electronic filing card to be filled in properly. Ideally, it should be possible to integrate this electronic file in an electronic portfolio. Every (part-) qualification should be well documented (source nr. 5).

Permanent evaluation is recommended. Different methods of evaluation should be used as modularisation implies competence-based learning. To have good evaluation procedures, the department of education should develop a univocal view on competence-based learning, teachers should become acquainted with the concept of modularisation, evaluation methods and vocational profiles. A system to follow up the pupils closely should be designed (source nr. 5). But it may not be forgotten that it lies within the autonomy of the schools to decide

which evaluation system will be used. The government can support them in this by providing good examples and developing models (source nr. 3).

In principle, every pupil should have a complete list for every module of all key competencies and basic competencies that should be obtained. In that way, the pupil can follow his evolution. Ideally, the employer should also follow-up the progress of the pupil (source nr. 3).

When evaluating the pupil, basic competencies, key competencies and final attainment levels should all be assessed. Soft skills cannot be left out of the evaluation as they are essential for mastering the other technical and practical competencies. (One cannot work on a building site without knowing how to communicate with colleagues.) (Source nr. 3)

In order to have a sufficient level of performance, the two days training in the centre for part-time education should be complemented with three days of work experience, because key competencies and basic competencies have to be acquired both in the centre and on the job (source nr. 3).

The performances to be recorded should be related to the content of the module the pupil is following. This does not mean that a pupil can't do anything on the job that doesn't belong to the module. That would be even an impossible situation. It means that of all the things a pupil does on the job, only the activities related with the content of the module followed at that time will be evaluated (source nr. 3). The government doesn't tell centres for part-time education whether employers should be involved in the evaluation nor how. It is up to the centres themselves to make up a good approach and to reach an agreement with the employers. Again, the government can provide support and present models, but not more than that (source nr. 3).

## **3.7 Conclusions**

### **3.7.1 Requirements on the Planned Tool**

The tool has to be

- practical;
- user-friendly;
- not time-consuming;
- taking into account of the autonomy and the responsibilities of the different stakeholders

### **3.7.2 Cultural and System Specific Requirements to be Considered**

For Flanders, the following cultural and system specific features have to be taken into account:

- the distribution of responsibilities between the government (federal and Flemish), the educational networks, advisory boards and other stakeholders;
- the professional statute and regulations concerning the employability of teachers;

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- compatibility with other provisions for education and training (secondary schools, centres for adult education, etc) where modularisation is not always well-developed or even inexistent;
  - the lack of a qualification structure.

### **3.7.3 Considerations to Ensure Implementation**

The more user-friendly and the more adaptable to the local context, the bigger the chance the tool will be used. It must give people ideas and present possibilities, but people may not get the feeling that their freedom is curtailed.

## **4 Greece**

### **4.1 Methods, Items and Interview Partners**

The study was conducted based on a qualitative methodology, since we felt it was more appropriate to research newly emerging issues and concepts of a limited breadth. We remind here that in Greece the concept of modularisation is new and it has not yet been adopted in the VET system. Hence, the aim of study was not to record and describe current practices – since they do not exist- but to discuss perceptions and possibilities for the implementation of such a concept. The methods used involved desk data and in-depth interviews with key-actors of the VET system.

The data collection started with the examination of desk data (reports, websites, papers) related to the Greek VET system and the current challenges it faces. This facilitated the identification of the key-actors and shaped the topics, which would be relevant to touch upon. In total, 8 in-depth interviews with Directors of Education and Training from the following institutions were conducted, min 1½ hour each:

- Industry Confederation (SEV)
- Employees Confederations (INE-GSEE)
- EKEPIS, i.e. the National Accreditation Body for Vocational Training
- OEEK, i.e. the responsible body for accrediting theoretical knowledge in formal VET programmes
- Vocational Training S.A., i.e. OAED affiliated organisation responsible for continuous training
- 3 KEK (Centres for Vocational Training), which had long experience in developing training programmes for socially disadvantaged groups, and were aware of the concept of modularisation

The interpretation of data was structured, in the sense that the categories had been determined by the project partnership.

## 4.2 Perception of Modularisation Concept

### 4.2.1 View of Businesses and Employees Confederations

The Industry Confederation (SEV) asserts that their members are very positively disposed towards modularisation, since it is a concept closely associated with flexibility, lifelong learning, work experience and existing knowledge, i.e. a rhetoric that proclaims organisational development and business growth. Even though, modules have not been adopted by any VET structure yet, there have been cases of businesses, which have developed internally and applied modular courses in the personnel training; ‘*Neorion*’ shipyard has set up a Centre for Vocational Training in 1995, aiming at reviving the business through re-training the staff on a modular based training programme, whereas ‘*Alumil*’ (*Aluminium Extrusion Industry*) started its training based on an individual-based modular system, which has now evolved to a group-based ‘modular’ system –i.e. the group determines the needs for the group. (note: the latter does not fulfil the requirement of individual development and flexibility, hence not sure if it can be considered modular).

SEV representative comments:

*‘The individual, either employed, or unemployed, or on his / her own initiative decides to pursue further vocational training to complement his professional profile, because they may lack some important skills or knowledge. In this context, we consider that this (modularisation) is what needs to be done, to develop right vocational programmes, in other words vocational training should be focused in relation to real needs, and not randomly’.*

SEV believes that vocational training in Greece is randomly developed –this is evident in what the employers repeatedly pointed out that the labour market is not qualified with the necessary skills that businesses need; hence, the need to restructure the VET system is a necessity in order to respond to the needs of the programmes, the employees and the market. Considering the rapid economic changes and consequently the changes in the labour market, the individual is empowered to take control of his/her own career development which would turn him or her competitive in and outside the business where he or she already works. This would open up opportunities for promotions or would secure another or better job when the person needs to change. Modularisation, in this context, would allow the acquisition not only of the ‘missing bits’ of higher level of knowledge, and lower level competences and simple technical skills, but also the acquisition and accreditation of transferable skills (a category which includes interpersonal and communication skills, individual competences, etc), which are equally important as the technical skills and cognitive knowledge, even though so far have been ‘ignored’ or downplayed by Education, employers, and employees.

The Employees’ Confederation (GSEE) has also shown a great interest in the concept of modularisation as a new method of structuring training courses. GSEE has already applied the concept of Lifelong Learning in new training programmes, which are currently at an experimental stage, and are addressed to workers and unionists –i.e. people who have a job,

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not disadvantaged groups, which are the focus of this project- as part of continuous learning/training.

Also, the concept has been mostly taken upon by sectors, i.e. banks, big companies, which restructure their training in modules, and the ‘certification’ is valid, i.e. recognised and transferable, within the sector. In this context, modularisation means flexible short programmes with options to acquire specialised knowledge; however, the employer decides who will participate and what modules to follow, according to the needs of the work/company. This means that the concept loses its ‘empowerment’ and ‘individualistic’ edge since it is not an employee’s choice –i.e. the employee will not decide for his or her own future development, career and interests.

#### **4.2.2 View of Planners and Practitioners in Re-integration Schemes**

Modularisation is perceived as the process which adds the specific and complementary knowledge element in the training programmes.

*‘I will never forget that some years ago the EU Commissioner Pdraig Flynn said that in the future we should be prepared to change jobs 17 times during our working life –of course this doesn’t mean from cleaning-man to become an astronaut, but still, the idea is associated with Lifelong learning, and the need to adapt your skills to the changing needs of current and future vocations.’*

Under these circumstances, modularisation seems to provide the means to add the necessary skills that are needed each time in the curriculum, and help a person to become more employable on a competitive and fast changing labour market. The concept though, as it is closely associated with continuous training and most crucially with continuous examinations for accreditation of each module may make people reluctant to follow this route –people, who already experienced an education system overloaded with examinations, may soon get tired of exams, tests and other formal procedures to prove their skills, especially since modularisation of continuous training will imply that the process will be endless.

Furthermore, modularisation seems appropriate to address one of the main challenges in recruiting participants for training programmes, i.e. to form a photogenic class, based on the criteria of age, education level, work experience, and work ambitions –or the training programme loses its target. To this end, a modularisation of a course is suggested, where a shared core among participants will be developed, and then specialisation will be received on a modular basis.

*‘For example, regarding training in the broader area of market research, there would be different things to teach a high-school graduate and different things when addressed to a university graduate. The former would be your field researcher, whereas the latter should know basic statistics and SPSS in order to conduct the analysis. Market research would be the full course, from where the participants should be able to choose these modules that fit their vocational profile. Still the concept would be the same; i.e. have a shared course of 100 hours and then 50 hours for specialisation’.*

### 4.2.3 View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation

It seems there is a shared understanding among key-actors that the modularisation concept is closely associated with vocational profiles – and the institutions concerned with accreditation are greatly involved in the process of designing the restructuring of VET according to these tendencies. The new system anticipates to set levels of knowledge and competences for each occupational profile; hence, each individual would be enabled to identify the missing skills to reach the next level of competence, and accordingly to choose the respective modules to complete their profile. In this system, modules are intended to be the method for employees and unemployed individuals to add the necessary knowledge and skills that correspond to each level of vocational competence in their curriculum, until they reach the level of mastery.

The system intends to address the fragmented and incoherent initial and continuous training by linking the two in modularising the relevant courses. In this framework, modules in initial VET would provide the basic skills, where the vocational expertise could be built up, whereas in continuous VET, modular programmes would be developed in a way that each programme would address a set of specific needs of the trainees - always in relation to a specific vocational profile. Thus the trainee will have the opportunity to create a portfolio of skills to enter the labour market.

## 4.3 Make-up of a good module

### 4.3.1 View of Businesses and Employees Confederations

For SEV, modules are:

*“A logical and acceptable unit of vocational training within a recognised area of competences. The content of the modules is determined in relation to the pursued competences, and should describe the necessary training steps that would lead to the achievement of this goal. A clear and measurable goal should be articulated for each module. The flexibility of the training modules relies in the fact that the trainees have the possibility to omit in their individual training programmes those modules that concern competences, which they already possess”.*

A good modular course should be short and flexible enough to allow the trainee to pick only the part of the module, he or she needs, without being forced to follow and repeat material that has already been covered in previous training. It is clear that modules should be well-defined and targeted, especially because they can play a very important role in the re-integration of unemployed groups, who have lost their contact to the market and probably have skills that are out of date. Furthermore, since they intend to address the training needs in a ‘continuous education and training’ context, they are appropriate to be used in theoretical subjects, as well as in technical skills.

GSEE gives a similar definition; however it adds another dimension at the end, i.e. accreditation:

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*“Module is a short learning unit that can stand alone, or be combined with others, and in the end, the knowledge is accredited with a certificate. The last part of formal accreditation does not exist in Greece”.*

For GSEE it is very important that the vocational training through modules strengthens the employees’ ability to negotiate a better wage, and this can only be achieved through a formal accreditation of the knowledge acquired.

### **4.3.2 View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes**

A key-distinction is whether we are referring to a module, i.e. a unit, or modules, i.e. the structure to plan and deliver the training programme. In the first case, a module is a structured learning unit, delivered in a ‘good way’.

The ‘good way’ includes factors such as the method of organising the learning material to be used (books, notes) etc. This type of training seminar would be more rigidly organised and standardised than the current non-modular ones. In this type of seminar, the content would be narrowed down to the particular area of training; then the trainers would have the flexibility to adopt the most appropriate teaching method depending on the target group and subject, rather than following the prescriptions of the Ministry of Education for traditional teaching contexts. If modules as a learning unit presuppose great flexibility not only for the trainee, but also for the training agent, then it means that there would be great difficulties in accrediting and certifying the knowledge gained, since each Training Institution would build and deliver their own modules.

As far as modules are concerned as training structures, the situation would change, since modules would provide a flexible structure to the design of the training programme. In this case, modules would be the specialising options of a shared programme. Here, no single criteria for all modules to be developed can be identified – their features would depend on the subject area and the relevant target group. The process of building modules needs a very thorough preparation stage, where the specific needs and levels of competences are identified, and some modules are added in the training programme to address special needs. Consequently, modules need to be very short, targeted, flexible and of high quality in order to support various training programmes, so for instance a Public Relations module should easily be added to IT or Management or Marketing programmes–when the trainees have a common background knowledge.

### **4.3.3 View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation**

*‘Units are the smallest bits of knowledge, skills and competences that can be assessed and if needed, be accredited; hence it implies that they need to be small, but still can stand on its own. So if this unit is accredited, it means that it is allocated certain credits, and I can use it for the rest of my working life.’*

This is a working definition given by OEEK, used within the European Qualification Framework project. As far as modules are concerned, the concept has been developed in education and training programmes in order to build flexible structures; to put it simple, it

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consists of units built in clusters that allow flexibility of training. The essential difference is that a unit refers to the content, whereas modules refer to the structure of the training programmes.

Modularisation and accreditation of units –according to the definitions above - bear the danger that the units become so small that they would represent nothing substantial or useful in the end. Hence, it is suggested that a module should last at least 150 hours and could include 2-3 units per semester (if the system is built on semesters). The novelty and contribution of the method is the possibility of an accreditation of the units as independent self-contained units, and thus enhancing the CV. Furthermore, a good module should be flexible and regard the particular path of acquiring knowledge, as much as the method of learning; new learning methods and contexts (e.g. e-learning, non-formal learning) are compatible and supported by its flexible structure. Essential for creating a good module is the development of job profiles. Thus, if one wants to become a carpenter, then this person can find out the specific knowledge and skills a carpenter needs, see which ones he or she already have – regardless of how the person acquired these skills- and choose the 2-3 modules that are missing to complete the job profile.

A good unit needs a description of the object of study, an analysis into activities, a subsequent tasks, and knowledge, skills and competences that the person needs to prove. Units also need be focused down to what a person needs to know to perform, rather than theories from the field of study.

## **4.4 Requirements with Respect to the Target Group**

### **4.4.1 View of Businesses and Employees Confederations**

SEV, commenting on the experience of its members, argues that modules are difficult to be developed by third parties – on behalf of the company- since the purpose is to tailor them in a way to reflect specific needs, and this is difficult for a third party to capture. The experience of Greek big firms (i.e. over 100 people, where they have well-developed HR and Training Dept) shows that most of modular programmes are developed in-house – experience in Greece draws from big firms. Small firms, which have no Training Department, need to turn to KEKs and other training consultancies. In this case, the development of modules requires the close collaboration of the company and the consultant. Critical stage in developing a modular course is the frequent training needs identification and updating of the training.

GSEE adds, to the above, the practical side of how a module should be structured: the training course is divided in learning units, constructed around taught hours, which reflect various needs for updating skills and further training, e.g. Health and safety, and English language for professional purposes, etc. Each module could last from 25 to 250 hours, and each trainee could choose up to which cluster of hours they would follow each module, or choose another module. It is important to consider the level on which each module needs to be. The content needs to be short, with exercises and examples, like the ones in distance learning programmes, since then, trainees respond and absorb the material better. Equally important is

the need to train the trainers in order to be able to adopt the requirements of teaching a modularised training course.

#### **4.5 View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes**

*'It is one thing to address to for example a young unemployed drop-out, who has not finished compulsory education, and you need to teach and train this person from the beginning, and another thing to address to a professional who has identified specific needs in relation to their work and needs training to cover this area only. In the latter case the module would be targeted and would last 12-14 hours, the work in this case is easy'*

Under these circumstances, in order to prepare modules for unemployed young people – or other disadvantaged groups, there needs to be a good preparation process, where one can identify the exact level of competences and gaps, and train them in the basic knowledge and skills they lack, and, on top of this work, to build modules which would address specific areas of these needs. *'Modules can then add the complementary training bits of the programme, but without the preparation it seems difficult how they could stand alone.'* However it is acknowledged that modules would be more difficult to apply to disadvantaged groups, since in this case the training would last longer, and meanwhile the trainees should be able to see some results in order to stay and complete the programme, and it would also require a number of support services (guidance, counselling) to help the trainees. It is acknowledged that without vocational profiles, and with a target group of socially disadvantaged people, the process is vague and fragmented, and it is difficult to identify the exact vocational skills the group needs to acquire.

##### **4.5.1 View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation**

The interviewees were not able to answer this question.

#### **4.6 Possibility of Integration of Modularised System in Vocational Education and Training**

##### **4.6.1 View of Businesses and Employees Confederations**

Even though SEV is not directly involved in developing Education and Training programmes, they play a key-role in policy making in the VET area, since they represent their members' view in the relevant dialogue processes. The concept of modularisation in relation to improving the VET system and hence improving employees' skills has attracted their attention and, because of this the following steps for restructuring vocational education programmes have been suggested:

- *interactive labour market analysis*, according to which, new programmes or already existing ones will be updated to respond to the current market needs. It is important to disseminate the results of the interactive labour market analysis in multiple ways to reach the interested parties.

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- *skills and competences profiling*, which will include the occupations that the analysis above highlighted, and will determine the required skills and competences for each occupation.
  - *development of training modules*, which would cover the training needs of the occupations above – as revealed in the profiling. It is important to use modules, since it secures flexibility.
  - *materialising of vocational programmes*, to give employees and unemployed people the opportunity to choose the modules independently and develop individualised programmes that reflect their personal training needs, and allow them to develop multiple skills and hence flexibility in the market.
  - *accreditation of skills and competences*, which will not give professional rights, but rather assist the individual's flexible development in the labour market.
  - *evaluation of vocational programmes*; the VET agents would go through a process of assessment of the same labour market, and those who would pass through successfully, would be rewarded.

For SEV, modularisation is a concept heavily dependent upon the existence and availability of professional profiles, which would point out the required skills and be reviewed and updated by a committee every 3 years. It is argued that modularisation could make sense only in this context, since it would target specific individual needs.

A further limitation is that the current regulatory framework does not anticipate the development of modularised courses in support of VET programmes. Only recently with the new law 3369 of 2005, on Systematisation of Lifelong Learning, two common ministerial decisions are proposed: the first is referred to the accreditation of programmes – an area of concern for EKEPIS, and the second (which has not been approved yet) is a common policy decision regarding the development and accreditation of occupational profiles. If this is approved, then professional chambers, unions and other interested parties could proceed to the development of occupational profiles, which ultimately would be accredited as such. Then this would allow the development of modularised training programmes.

For GSEE, modularisation is a necessity implicitly imposed by E.U. and the work re-organisation tendencies resulting from the employment initiatives that Bologna and Lisbon Strategies on Education and Training fuelled. The continuous updating of knowledge and skills that each vocation requires, can be achieved through formal accreditation of modules and their connection to specific job profiles. However, considering the nature of modules, it is hard to see them standing alone as the unique educational practice; it is suggested that they can only be a supplement to formal education and training, in order to address current gaps and emerging needs. Especially, as far as the main corpus of knowledge – i.e. more than competencies - is concerned, it is unlikely to be delivered comprehensively in modules, regardless of the hours spent – in this case knowledge would turn into information.

Furthermore, there have been concerns raised as to whether modularisation can function as the main educational structure, since it does not promote critical thinking, only professional

knowledge and skills. A further limitation of the method is that the trainee cannot learn the occupational culture, but only the practice, since training is detached and fragmented. Hence, questions have been raised as to the consequences the method will have on developing a vocational identity.

#### **4.6.2 View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes**

Even though there is an obvious reason for developing and introducing modules in the (continuous) vocational training, i.e. it would offer the alleged benefits of flexibility, enhance employability – especially for socially disadvantaged groups with poor qualifications, and skills -, the Greek VET system does not provide the necessary conditions to allow their implementations; despite the fact that the policy-makers are aware of the gravity of the situation, there is still no National Code of Vocations, devised at least by the Confederations which would indicate what each vocation consists of, which skills and competences it involves, and hence it could derive the modules to address these needs in training.

*‘...for us (KEKs) the Ministry of Employment announces some ‘titles’ for seminars which are frankly horrific... and when you call them and ask for clarifications, i.e. ‘what do you mean by...’ they answer ‘oh, we don’t know, it’s how you understand it! And there is no point of reference, where you could search the Greek actuality on vocational needs.’*

Without the National Code of Vocations, each actor in vocational training develops his or her own understanding of what is required and what is important; hence, vocational programmes built on these assumptions demonstrate great inconsistency, and their quality and effectiveness rely on the ‘good guess’ of each training body. In this context, modules have no frame of reference, i.e. the system provides no means where the training agents can collect information regarding the required skills of each vocation under examination, and be able on this basis, to examine a group of candidates in terms of the skills they have, and hence to develop modules to address these specific needs. Significant part of the process would be the evaluation of the candidates in order to identify their knowledge and competence level.

It is also suggested that it would be critical for KEKs to get a certification of expertise in the areas in which they develop their training seminars; this, essentially, would mean that a KEK would have the previous expertise and know-how, the education experts and insights, and connections to the market, in order to develop a successful modular course. Only the interest of the participants and the needs of the market are no adequate factors to reassure the success of the programmes.

#### **4.6.3 View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation**

It has been widely acknowledged that one of the main reasons for the inefficiency of the current VET system is the centralised structure, which allows no flexibility to the training agents to act and modify training according to their experience and local training needs. Hence, a modular system needs a decentralised VET structure, which would allow training agents to develop the training programmes in the areas they think they are most experienced;

to develop links together with their customers (learners, business partners, etc.) and to record their needs and feed-back; to have a team of experts, who would have the knowledge and experience in the area to develop and teach the training programmes. On the basis of their experience and information, training agents would be able to respond to local training needs and offer topical training.

However, some concerns have been expressed as to how the training agents are ready to undertake this role, which assumes increased responsibilities in linking with the businesses for them, identify local training needs, and develop and deliver modular programmes. It has been emphasised that the majority of the training centres, from the director to the trainer, operate on a deeply-rooted school mentality, which implies inadequate pedagogical methods (e.g. lectures), outdated and irrelevant learning material, and passive learning.

OEEK is currently planning the pilot implementation of two modular training programmes:

*‘one programme will be on International Trade, and the other in making plastic products’ in developing of the two pilot programmes we involved social partners, e.g. the plastic-manufacturers, etc... - we made the programmes together - but you know where these operations stop, you can imagine people, saying ‘what is this all about now...’ like the IEK-masters, for example, since now we are forcing them to go after the businesses and start developing links.’*

It needs to be noted that the new system would assume an active role for employers as well, since they should participate in identifying the required skills and developing the modular courses; however, the experience from the pilot programmes shows that they lack the culture and attitude to engage substantially in the process.

## **4.7 Criteria for Recording the Young People’s Performances**

### **4.7.1 View of Businesses and Employees Confederations**

The main tool for identifying needs for improvement performance is a system which combines a questionnaire and an interview, whence information is gathered in relation to the person’s qualifications, previous training and work experience. Social skills are assessed throughout the interview, and not through a separate test.

### **4.7.2 View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes**

Professional knowledge has a theoretical, practical and social dimension. Criteria normally involve the evaluation of the trainees’ theoretical knowledge; there are currently no criteria developed to identify and certify skills and competences, whilst as far as social skills are concerned, the debate on the possibility to record and evaluate them has not even sparked. Consequently, the method widely used is the written examination, for it is acknowledged as a reliable and credible assessment method, since the exam papers can be re-assessed in a case of a doubt. The test results can provide a proof of knowledge that can be used in the future if

required – by employers, other training centres, etc. In case of absence of such proof of knowledge or on top of it, a test can be conducted anew, where the current level of knowledge and competence can be assessed for the needs of specific situations. In addition, and when relevant to the nature of the training programme, an interview can be conducted to assess certain dimensions of people's competences.

### **4.7.3 View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation**

It is acknowledged that 'performance' consists as much of 'knowing' as of 'doing'; hence, criteria should assess theoretical knowledge, technical, social and professional skills and competences. However, the general view is that each vocation has different features to assess, thus, no single criterion can be adopted, only methods to evaluate the level of competence for each candidate. Consequently, it is anticipated to develop a set of methods for recording young people's performances per vocation; these methods would include written examinations, observation and work. It is relevant to note here that until now vocations are certified (the ones that are certified, at least) by various authorities, which fall either under the Ministry of Employment or the Ministry of Education. This practice has led to fragmented policies and inconsistency of actions. With the new law ESSEKA (the National System for Connecting VET with the Labour Market) it is anticipated that a new body, supervised by the two Ministries, will be responsible for the accreditation and certification of vocational knowledge.

## **4.8 Conclusions**

### **4.8.1 Requirements on the Planned Tool**

The evidence so far suggests that the development of such a tool would be welcomed, for it can target some specific needs. The landscape of the Greek VET system – as we have already discussed - is already confusing and disorienting, and this tool may be helpful in providing direction and information for the users. The following dimensions are particularly relevant to address the needs of the Greek context:

- To provide help in developing the individual's portfolio of competences;
- To relate it with the vocational profiles;
- To identify modules to acquire missing skills;
- To provide guidance through ways of accrediting knowledge;
- To suggest related and alternative vocational routes, based on existing competences.

Further questions that the tool need to ask in order to ascertain its value, include:

- whether it will do better than the existing companies;
- whether it targets successfully individuals who slip from the existing system;
- whether it provides easy access to its services.

## 4.8.2 Cultural and System Specific Requirements to be Considered

Lessons of the European experience underscore the main challenges a modular system has to address:

- The significant role trainers play in making the modular system successful, as it requires changing from didactic teaching towards the organisation of student's learning; the power relations now change, and the trainer is there to support and facilitate learning. This change requires their commitment to the novelty of new pedagogic methods; however as discussed above, in Greece the trainers' vocation has been degraded, losing its social and economic status – being now largely seen as a temporary occupation, before settling in a more secured one. This situation may create a great difficulty in introducing new pedagogical methods, and needs to be addressed together with the design of the modular system.
- On the other hand, the trainees need to change the way they see learning in the modular system, since it expects self-direction, self-regulation and active participation. In the Greek context, as presented above, participants in further training programmes lack substantial motives to become actively engaged, and are satisfied with the subsidies given by the responsible bodies of participation.

*'and why would one go through the process of accrediting knowledge? They do it for foreign languages and computer skills, because they earn 100 points in ASEP contests (public sector recruiting procedure)[...] employers do not expect another accredited certificate. Employers expect from their employees to be good, to work non-paid overtime, to be low-profile, to believe that you are an executive and hence work proudly 20 hours get paid for 10 without complaining. Education is not outside the real world, it's only that the situation is convenient, and one is looking this way and the other is looking the other way'.*

- Finally, great attention is needed in designing sound quality assurance procedures, since modular systems can lead to fragmentation and incoherence of programmes; one suggestion is to design modules in groups or clusters –as, this may threaten specific objectives of modularisation, such as individual differentiation and student choice. In the Greek context, the VET system is already fragmented and incoherent in terms of the programmes, providers, and supervising bodies, hence this third point presents us with a very likely danger. Even though the presented findings suggest a shared acknowledgement of the issues, and tendencies of transformations, the problem in VET, and especially as far as the bridging of training with the labour market is concerned, is that the debate is not closing-down, but continuously opens up new issues. It is further suggested that much of this debate, in which all stakeholders (employers, training agents, work confederations, etc) participate, remains purposefully open and limited to theoretical aspects, since focused suggestions would imply a change in actions and probably a change in the status quo, which not all sides are ready to face. It becomes clear then, that forces which sustain the current VET system are highly political and hence they would resist any proposal which would imply a transformation of power.

- As discussed above, we shall suggest the employers' critical role in the transformation of VET into a modular system, since, as explained above, they will need to participate actively in the processes of identifying needs, developing programmes, and train participants. The situation though presents us with the paradox: from one side SEV presents a situation, where employers are happy to reward skilled employees and help them develop further, and argue for the importance of knowledge in a competitive economy, whilst they criticise the VET system for the shortage of skills in the labour market; on the other hand, the same employers are reluctant to invest in knowledge resources, technologies and further training, and to pay wages according to skills. Also, the questions have been raised, whether the employers are clear about the skills they seek and how eager they are to reward them.

*'this becomes clear when one examines the job ads, as we do from time to time; for example for a clerical post, they expect the person to know Microsoft Office, and a little bit of accounting, so the person could help in the Finance office, and ideally have good communication skills, so could contribute in the sales and marketing department as well. They look for 3 in 1, this is extremely difficult, and they only offer the minimum wage with no social insurance.'*

*'the educational level of the average employer in Greece is very low, they have not understood the value of training yet, and if they use it, it's only to get the subsidies... they are also spoiled from the abundant funding given away, and they don't consider participating without it. Describing a private sector in Greece where the majority of employers support the development of their personnel is at least utopian.'*

The status of the Greek VET system and the role of knowledge and learning raise questions as to whether Greek economy and society are indeed based on knowledge:

*"- Ier: So, what you are telling us is that we don't live in any knowledge society?"*

*- Iee: knowledge society is an illusion! Of course this is our view, and it remains to be scientifically validated through research, but this is what our experience indicates."*

The Greeks actuality suggests that the knowledge society – and the related concepts which have been developed, e.g. lifelong learning, competitiveness at corporate and individual levels - has not become a shared vision yet; people – and by this we refer to all stakeholders, i.e. employers, employees, training agents, the state - do not seem convinced of the long-term benefits they could gain from participating and investing time and resources in the suggested structures.

### **4.8.3 Considerations to Ensure Implementation**

*'In order such a tool to work, it needs be embedded in a structure and support its use with qualified staff. It can't be left to each individual to use it without a specialist's guidance on current vocational issues, and then the specialist should explain what this tool does and how it works, and maybe explain the results of this search through the tool. Under these circumstances, it could work, but it'd need a special care in raising*

*awareness about it; in Leonardo there are many fantastic tools and practices developed, which however never made beyond the pilot stage. These initiatives need an appropriate funding authority which does not exist – it seems that what is missing is a structure as well as a culture to valorise good-practices.’*

*‘To me, the use of such a tool sounds very unrealistic; it presupposes the users’ very good educational level. I cannot imagine how someone from the targeted group –i.e. the socially disadvantaged group s- would use it alone, without at least the support and guidance of a specialist/consultant. I think it is utopian.’*

The two excerpts above throw the light into two serious concerns related to the tool implementation. The first one addresses the structural inadequacy to support the tool, whereas the second concern addresses the characteristics of the target group, which the tool intends to assist. Regarding the first dimension, it emerges that valuable initiatives like the one under discussion, are not new in Greece; however the majority of them does not manage to survive after a pilot stage and becomes a standard practice due to the lack of an adequate structure and, most critically, of a funding authority, which will support the subsequent actions. Once this is established, special attention needs to be paid to designing the communication plan and dissemination channels, in a way that they will reach the target group, i.e. the disadvantaged group, which often tends to become isolated and detached.

It is important to point out here that Greece rates extremely high among European countries in digital illiteracy and the use of internet, a fact which makes the implementation of the tool more difficult. There are doubts as to whether the target groups have a PC at home, and whether they are disposed to use the tool for job hunting – considering that the tool offers a non-traditional way to do so. Previous experience with a similar tool reports:

*‘we have made an investment, bought machines with a touch-screen, and smart-cards, made them shielded, so people wouldn’t break them, and place them at harbours, etc, trying to reach people that wouldn’t come to us or to a similar agent. The machine was giving people the opportunity to update the profile, add new qualifications in, and it was connected with employers’ databases. Still nothing, I think there have been some 200 people who used them... the same people that would come to us anyway...The others wouldn’t go to the machine, they are disappointed, they need different support before they get to the machine. Technology itself is not convincing’*

It emerges then that the issue is not whether the tool is user-friendly enough – people are not afraid of the technology, but rather that technology is not part of their life; socially disadvantaged groups have very different everyday concerns compared to someone who is temporarily unemployed, or is currently thinking of changing jobs and ways to enhance their CVs. In the first case, where traditional channels of approaching these groups by using personal communication fail, it is hard to see how technology only will succeed. It is further suggested that the tool could address some of these issues, if it is embedded in a current structure of support, and its use will be supported by a specialist or a consultant, who will guide the individual through the system and introduce them to the possibilities of the tool.

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## 5 Portugal

### 5.1 Methods, Items and Interview Partners

The present report is a result of a non experimental research strategy, essentially with a qualitative and exploratory character.

The Survey was applied to a planner of the PIEF courses and a technician of the Justice Protocol Centre (CPJ) who plans and works directly with disadvantaged young people in prevocational training courses. In Portugal there are two types of courses that can be understood as prevocational training courses:

- The courses provided by the Justice Protocol Centre (CPJ) which coordinates these courses in 12 Portuguese educative centres.

The PIEF courses (Education and Training Integrated Programme) that have been developed by four institutions: The Education Regional Direction; the Institute of Employment and Vocational Training; the Social Security and PETI (Plan for the Elimination of the Exploration of the Infantile Work and Scholarly Abandonment).

Also one businessman was interviewed, who works with two disadvantaged young people from a PIEF course.

The results of this survey were included in the Content Analysis.

### 5.2 Perception of Modularisation Concept

#### 5.2.1 View of Companies

The firms complained that 2 hours work a week is not enough. Especially when the young person is working in a restaurant where the busy hours are at dinner time and not at lunch time when he or she is working. Thus, the cooperation is neither advantageous for the young people, nor for the restaurant. The perception of the firm is that the young people finish the module without having experienced the main skills of the “Waiter” profession.

#### 5.2.2 View of Planners and Practitioners in Re-integration Schemes

The structure of the modules in prevocational courses provided by the CPJ (Justice Protocol Centre) might need some improvements. The planners do not have any references about how the prevocational training should be realised. Everything that has been done till now, was kind of a testing phase to see how it works and if there are things that necessarily have to be improved. Some aspects really need to be reconsidered, for example at the operation level: some rules about the timetables, the duration of the workshops and modules, the programme’s quality should be improved because each trainer of each Educative Centre makes his own programme for each workshop, which on the one hand is an advantage because it is created individually, but on the other hand is a disadvantage because there is no model.

Advantages:

- 
- The programme is conceptualised “by measure“ and adapted to the trainees’ characteristics of each Educative Centre.
  - Disadvantaged young people have contact (some of them for the first time) to different professional areas; they can choose their favourite for their later future.
  - Disadvantaged young people acquire several soft skills: social skills for contact with colleagues and trainers; creation of a timetable; assiduity.

Disadvantages:

- The complexity of the process at practical and administrative levels: timetable, trainer’s payment, because there is not a model for each workshop.
- The inexistence of a programme guideline: each programme is made to measure the reality of the trainees of each educative centre, thus, two trainees of different educative centres who attend the same workshop can stay different periods of time and can obtain different competences.

The planner of the PIEF courses considers the structure of these courses as appropriate because it is necessary to keep a strong practical component. However, there are some points that should be improved. In order not to loose the flexibility in terms of territorial area, it is necessary to create some obligatory points, to create systematisation in content and competence terms to be acquired within each of these areas.

Advantages: the programme

- gets the young people out of infantile work;
- keeps the young people in the educative context to acquire the compulsory education;
- facilitates transition to labour work, more conscience and responsibility;
- helps them making decisions;
- increases the possibility of their entrance in a training course;
- great support and company of the PETI while they are in a PIEF course.

Disadvantages:

- No pre-defined programmes in the same area;
- Lack of support- after finishing the PIEF courses they no longer have the PETI support and other institutions do not give them any. As a result, even if they enter a training course after 2 or 3 months they drop out, because of the lack of support or the difference of learning levels between them and the other colleagues. Even with a PIEF course, they still have a handicap in their learning knowledge.

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### **5.3 Make-up of a good module**

#### **5.3.1 View of Companies**

The young people should be better prepared in terms of theory before coming to the restaurant and they should spend more time in the restaurant to acquire the practical basic notions of the profession. The main advantage for these young people it is to have their spare time occupied.

#### **5.3.2 View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes**

The planner of the PIEF courses considers these courses as an answer to the necessities of the young people and as having positive effects on their life project.

The main objectives of the PIEF courses are to make the young people accomplish the compulsory education and make them acquire not so much the technical competences but the social ones, the personal ones and especially the ones related to the labour market.

There are several aspects that have to be taken into account: the expectations of the young people are important for the technical team. They need to know what they think and what they would like to try out. Although the resources that we have are very important and I think it will be quite interesting to know the areas in which there is a lack of workers in the territorial area, because most of the PIEF courses are given in isolated areas and it is important to create conditions for the young people to settle down. The horizons of these young people should be opened, but it is also important to inform them about professional areas in their region which are in shortage.

However, lack of knowledge about the labour market's needs is a gap not only at the level of PIEF Courses, but also at superior level and at the development of training courses. The conjugation with the labour market should be better combined.

It would also be helpful to provide these young people with a certification beyond the educational certification. The planner of the PIEF courses considers that the young people might experience themselves better if their social, personal and work competences would be certified.

### **5.4 Requirements with Respect to the Target Group**

#### **5.4.1 View of Companies**

To be advantageous for the young people, the module should have about 330 hours (4, 5 hours a day during 3 months). Concerning the learning context, it is very important not to make a distinction between the young people and the rest of the collaborators.

#### **5.4.2 View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes**

The technician of the prevocational courses of the CPJ referred that if she would knew about the existence of a kind of tool like this, she would expect to find the answers to some of her own questions related to the more practical level of prevocational training.

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The dimensions of the tool must be:

- How should the Prevocational training be organised?
- How could some problems be solved?
- Referential to the functioning level of the workshops and in a lowest level of the modules;
- Evaluation: what criteria should the trainers consider to evaluate?

The CPJ technician cannot say what might be a good period for a module because the young people of the educative centres rarely have full contact with the modules, because they usually leave the centre before the workshop ends. However, a workshop has between 500-600 hours annually.

Although, the CPJ learning context is not a vocational training, the technician considers that there are some vocational training rules which should be considered, such as a labour context or social relation at the timetable level, assiduity, working in group, etc. The learning context has to reflect that.

The workshops must have good physical conditions, because if they need to relate to several professional areas, they should have conditions for that.

The relation between a trainer and a trainee in the educative centre context is also fundamental, because the trainer should not only teach technical knowledge about the profession, but should also open the young people's minds, develop other competences in them and diffuse new habits.

The planner of the PIEF courses would welcome a tool that organises and directs the work, but simultaneously has the flexibility to adjust to different requirements demanded by different environments. The dimensions should include, as follows:

- The planning;
- The relation between diagnosis and the final evaluation. Because what happens is that some questions of diagnosis are asked, but in the end, the subject is held in the same way;
- An example of operability: with competences, contents to acquire and examples of modules;
- With participative and dynamic methodologies;
- To adapt what makes sense to the planners and technicians and also to the young people.

As for the duration of the programme, , the young people that are in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Basic Level take between 200/250 hours annually (4,5 hours a week). The young people in the 3<sup>rd</sup> level take between 400-500 hours annually, according to the several vocational areas.

The learning context:

These young people are very demanding, especially those that have already had a contact to the labour market. So it is relatively important that the context of the vocational training is provided on different levels. Thus, the theoretical and the practical training have to be distinguished.

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Moreover, adequate conditions have to be taken into account. For example the tables should not be distributed as in a regular school class, they must be bigger to allow putting little objects on it, like tools and little machinery.

Most of all, the training should take place in an informal/practical environment, be connected with what they are learning and it has also to have some meaning for them.

## **5.5 Possibility of Integration of Modularised System in Vocational Education and Training**

The VET System in Portugal is already modularised.

### **5.5.1 View of Companies**

The workshops can be very good for the young people, but they should be organised so that they give the young people notions about several areas. They should be a part of the training courses but not a replacement.

### **5.5.2 View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes**

The Prevocational Courses are very good for disadvantaged young people, because they give them knowledge about some professional areas and some social competences. The Prevocational courses intend to increase the chances of the young person to enter the VET system, but the CPJ does not have the feedback of the future of these young people, after they leave the Educative Centre.

However, the CPJ technician does not consider the Prevocational concept to replace the Vocational training concept. It has to be taken into consideration that the Prevocational courses and the vocational courses are created for different kinds of public and for different conditions. A Prevocational course does not make sense for a 30years old man.

In addition, the PIEF courses are considered as being a good option for disadvantaged young people because they withdraw them from the infantile work and keep them in the educative context to “oblige” them acquiring the compulsory education. Also, they provide a good connection to the labour market with more conscience and responsibility.

The young people can obtain competences and finish the compulsory education, so they have more options and can even choose their vocational training course.

The prevocational training imposes itself as an urgent necessity, but for the planner, it will not replace the vocational training. Maybe the vocational training should create a more organised pathway for prevocational training, precisely because the prevocational training is one of the ways to support young people, to avoid school gaps and to increase qualification level.

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## **5.6 Criteria for Recording the Young People's Performances**

### **5.6.1 View of Companies**

The performance of the young people should be recorded, including both the professional competences and the soft skills.

### **5.6.2 View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes**

The performance of the disadvantaged young people who are in the educative centres is recorded in a personal declaration that says how many workshops, for how many hours each person has attended. However, just the technical competences are registered; the soft skills although they are considered as being very important, are not registered because the technicians considered that they are implicit. Being in a workshop, the trainees have to work in groups, so one might assume that the young people developed some soft skills.

The young people that finish a PIEF course get an educational certification. There is no formal registration of the soft skills. Although they are said to be basic for that kind of work with young people, they are not recorded. Nevertheless, it becomes clear that the young people acquire them.

## **5.7 Conclusions**

### **5.7.1 Requirements on the Planned Tool**

In general terms, it is considered quite important that the tool is logical to planners and technicians because it will guide the work with the young people. It is very important that the young people can feel their progress.

The tool must organise and orientate the work, also providing flexibility to adjust to some specific needs, considering that even in the same regions we can have different realities.

The dimensions suggested by the interviewed people are:

- Planning;
- How to solve problems;
- Referential to the functioning level of workshops and in a lowest level of the modules;
- An example of operability: with competences, contents to acquire and examples of modules;
- Evaluation.

### **5.7.2 Cultural and System Specific Requirements to be Considered**

It is assumed that the target group of the prevocational training courses, -disadvantaged young people- committed some kind of crime and have several difficulties. Moreover, the young people cannot remain in the prevocational course or even in a workshop for the whole

duration. As a conclusion, it is quite difficult to manage modules within a limited duration for such problematic target-groups, because of possible drop-outs.

### 5.7.3 Considerations to Ensure Implementation

To ensure the implementation it is necessary to consider the context of the Educative Centres.

## 6 Romania

30 people, involved in the modularised professional development in the *Second Chance Programme* have been interviewed.

The following methods were used: *individual and group discussions* in classrooms, offices, workplaces and written questionnaires. The people interviewed work *in the Second Chance Programme*. They are practitioners, students, student graduates and partner institutions. The community partners interviewed are:

- S.C. GALMOPAN S.A.
  - Domain of activity: economical agents working in the panification and milk industry; there are about 600 employees, among which there are graduates of the Second Chance Programme;
  - Role in the programme: community partner in the Food Industry Vocational Highschool “Dumitru Moțoc” (1999-2005) involved in the training and practical activities of the students and in the professional certification of the students;
  - Persons interviewed:
    1. The brandmanager, member of the certification committee;
    2. Production department, head of the department where the students worked in the production practice stage involved in the certification process of the students.
- Qualification and certification, professional reconversion Centre SOCIAL TRADE:
  - Domain of activity: other forms of adult education –qualification courses requalification, training of the unemployed from different areas (rural, urban, poor). There are about 40 employees for vocational training, information, counselling and work mediation. The certificates for the graduates are issued by the Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and the Ministry of Education and Research. The company is accredited by the National Council for Professional Development of Adults (CNFPA);
  - Role in the *Second Chance* Programme: community partner of “Dumitru Moțoc Highschool (1999-2005), course sponsorship.

Interviewed person: Director of the Marketing Department, spokesperson of the company.

**Other information about** people who expressed their opinion concerning the modularised professional education:

- practitioners – teachers, coordinators, trainers:

- monitors, school counsellors, headmasters in the “Second Chance Programme”, PHARE programme “Accesul la educație al grupurilor dezavantajate cu focalizare pe rromi” (1999-2005);
- Students in the “Second chance – Eurrom” year III;
- Graduates of “the Second Chance – Educația 2000+” promotions 1999-2003, 2000-2004 și 2002-2006, actually working as waiters, bartenders, shop-assistants, bodyguards, working in the protection and security services.

## 6.1 Perception on the concept of modularisation

### 6.1.1 View of enterprises, companies, business world:

*Practical instruction* –it is a very important module in the vocational education of the students who attend *the Second Chance Programme*, it is more effective at workplace, in production/ micro production units as it ensures the preparation of the students for the real workplace conditions and specific technical work operations including: knowing the workplace, the discipline norms in the productive area, concrete requirements imposed on the employees in the real work process. In correlation to these aspects, the students can reflect on their own abilities, they form and can develop their own motivation/ the willingness to work, communication skills, team work, personal abilities, sense of responsibility, individual and collective, competencies specific to the job. This way their personalities can be shaped and the abilities for a career development can be oriented and assisted. Values, domains of interest, transferable competences are in the field of teacher education, whereas the main importance for them is to be able to facilitate this type of acquisitions. To create a favourable workplace, mutual trust and learning the specific jobs in a workplace where the qualified personnel and the unqualified meet, was a very resourceful educational venue. It is appreciated that the duration of the everyday practical activities especially in the final years should be close to the number of hours of a workday, and takes the age level of the participants into account.

(S.C. GALMOPAN S.A.) Galați

*Practical instruction* – a very important module within the qualification, requalification and training courses – it has a bigger impact than the theoretical instruction. Example: two days of theoretical courses, two days of practical instruction at the workplace and one day of practical instruction in the laboratory per week. Especially within the modules of practical training, a positive attitude of the trainee towards work and career (initiative, decision and promotion) is created. The duration of the courses varies between 100 and 1000 hours (2.5 to 8 months) according to the complexity of the information delivered.

Centrul de Calificare și Recalificare Profesională

(SOCIAL TRADE Galați)

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**6.1.2 View of the practitioners (teachers, trainers, monitors, coordinators, monitors):**

Modularisation ensures a flexible programme, adapted to the individual particularities and age particularities, as well as the training needs –to occupy the workplace. It allows the intervention of the teachers to perform changes, corrections, activity delivery in and outside the classroom, using formal and non-formal teaching methodologies. Guides, worksheets, evaluation sheets and self-evaluation activities are used that underline the practical character of the activities and teaching, learning and evaluation. The theoretical modules are connected with the practical ones and they complete each other to ensure the acquisition of knowledge, key abilities with a large applicability at workplace and general life skills, minimal competences to occupy a workplace and social competences that are certifiable. Examples: writing, reading, calculation, completing forms and application forms, using the computer, basic skills and a foreign language of European circulation.

The modularised education has the advantage of motivating and stimulating. Learning is focused on things that students can do. They are evaluated periodically, step by step. Training in formative evaluation is still needed as teachers who work in high schools are not familiarised with the process of accumulative evaluation that is led by self-evaluation. Many extracurricular activities are organised as they proved to be better for developing social skills than learning in the formal curricular school activities. The most important and effective topics target: knowledge – knowledge about the self, communication, problem solving strategies, conflicts, self-esteem, life style, professional choices, personal marketing (ways of introducing oneself, writing a CV, a letter of intention, assertive communication, the interview), combating discrimination and social marginalisation, training for educational abilities for life-long learning. It is compulsory that the counselling and orientation module is accomplished in partnership with the economical agents and the social community actors.

It is necessary to revise and reconsider the conditions of training and practical productive work. There should be several economical agents where the students get to know work life. Right now there is only one company allotted to each of these schools and they are not even undergoing a process of selection in terms of work space and human resources developed to support such type of on-job training. The monitors also signalled the fact that the economical agent should be motivated and interested to follow the school curricula (number of hours, academic content) necessary to be used in order to develop the necessary skills for a certification. The modularised programme should be centred on the development of key abilities. A very important focus should be on social skills. The social agent of the partner school should be a real one, effective, responsible based on knowledge and the respect of a clear legislation, concerning the practical instruction of the students. Going through the modules they should know what all workers do; being able to perform a qualified/unqualified work just like the workers.

(View of the monitors in the Second Chance Programme)

The teachers that work in the Second Chance Programme have to be trained and motivated to know how to work with students at risk, adults or children. The student teacher relationship

should be based on mutual respect, trust, knowing each other, tolerance and empathy. They should know that learning has very little steps with these participants. The progress as little as it is, should be used as a success and should become rewarding to motivate progress. The attitude and behaviour of the teachers should necessarily be changed through well structured training courses.

### **6.1.3 View of the students:**

- The Second Chance Programme is easier to follow than a regular school. The subjects are easier to follow, there is less learning, the time allowed for practice is longer, and teachers are better trained – thus they have a closer relationship to the students. The students learn in the same environments, they have approximately the same problems, learning materials, meals of the day and the accommodation is for free. “We have to learn, get mature and ready to occupy a workplace and our own place in society. We shouldn’t get influenced by the young people who do not behave well”
- (Students in year III EURROM “Elena Doamna” Highschool)
- Students mention that it is not easy to get back to school and that one stays only if it is worth it. After their graduation the situation can get difficult again if they cannot find a workplace.

(graduates of the Second Chance Programme “Dumitru Moțoc” Highschool)

## **6.2 Make-up of a good module**

### **6.2.1 View of enterprises, companies, business world:**

A good module means: to facilitate the acquisition of basic competencies needed to practice in a job, the understanding of discipline at workplace (for instance there are companies that work on Sundays, in very difficult conditions, high temperatures, humidity). A good module is a good preparation for life and society that gives the young people who come from disadvantaged areas a chance to reintegrate socially and professionally (a positive attitude about himself and the others, if they got to know what a civilised behaviour means, acquire a sense of responsibility for the quality of the services they offer and for the products they accomplish). A good module contributes to the real knowledge and practical approach to the needs of society and at workplace.

(S.C. GALMOPAN S.A. Galați)

A good module means: to get the students motivated to follow tracks in a life-long learning process through the content and methodology. A good module offers opportunities for the evaluation of the competences acquired a frame in which teachers can adapt the learning process in accordance with the needs and interests of the students. A good module gives only the basic information needed to be used in practice and to develop the competencies that are to be certified. (Centre for Qualification and Professional Re-qualification)

(SOCIAL TRADE Galați)

### 6.2.2 View of the practitioners:

A good module is: flexible, adapted to the requirements of the market and the needs of the young people who learn in the Second Chance Programme; it should use a stimulating methodology, easy content, basic skills and very much relying on what the students know how to do. If the content, methodology and pace of the module are not in the proximity of the students learning potential, they do not get motivated to go through the modules in order to obtain a certification. A good module is very practical, realistic and basically deals with forming life skills, social skills that the students did not get the chance to acquire. A good module is measurable it uses valid indicators that demonstrate what the student is able to do. A good module is connected to the other modules. The connection should be trans-disciplinary to go beyond the content and look at what happens in real life, at workplace, in society. It is logically connected from simple things to more difficult ones, building up knowledge on a step by step process. A good module aims at developing competencies that are practical and can be certified accordingly. It can be easily adapted to the school and work environment. It should rely on the material resources available. The quality of the human resources who deliver the modules is extremely important. Human relationships, the specificity of the work with students who lack knowledge and emotional maturity is very important.

### 6.2.3 View of students:

A good module is useful, it is good if it teaches us what we need in everyday life and in school as well as at the work place; a module is good if it is easy, easy to learn, it is not boring and accessible to everyone. A good module shows us what we do well and where we are wrong.

The questionnaire was also applied in the Lower Secondary School nr.7 Tecuci, that is situated in an area with poor population basically Roma community people.

The school was piloted in EDU 2000+ and PHARE programme, access to education for the disadvantaged population”, this is one of the reasons why the entire teaching staff shows an open attitude towards the changes in education.

The questionnaires were answered by 9 teachers involved in *the Second Chance Programme* and by the head of the school.

## PERCEPTION ON MODULARISATION AS A GENERAL CONCEPT

The teachers who have been working in the second chance programme for 5 years now using the modules in the pilot phase and the experimental phase have the following opinion:

- The modularised system shows a good combination between theory and practice. This appreciation refers to the balanced combination among the content, objectives and applications as well as through the project-work of the students.

- 
- As compared to the regular school system, the work with modules in the Second Chance programme involves :
    - Activities with adult students that imply the ability of the teachers to work with this specific target group. Adapting the didactic strategies with flexibility and a lot of methodological knowledge about the needs of grown up students is of an utmost importance.
      - The existence of a connection between the theoretical knowledge and their application in productive work.
      - The selection of materials is well done and the modules are well connected.
      - Coherence in the logical sequencing of the subject matter.
    - An adaptation of the evaluation items in each module to the learning capacities and the prior knowledge of the students might be necessary.
    - The advantages of the concept of modularisation are :
      - Structuring the subject –matter around a theme.
      - Compressing the volume of knowledge in favour of the internal logical sequencing of the content.
      - Progresssive evaluation

No disadvantages have been identified.

### **Which are the characteristics of a good module?**

- There are three main characteristics that make a good module:
  - Accessible content;
  - Applicability;
  - Inter-disciplinarity.
- The following general objectives should be attained through the modules.
  - Creating the writing – reading abilities;
  - Good communication;
  - Abilities for basic mathematical operations.
- The programme should be centred on the development of the following competencies:
  - Oral and written communication;
  - Computer literacy;
  - Numeracy;
  - Technical skills.
- How do we measure the competencies?
  - Through the portfolios made by the students;
  - Through the final product of a practical activity;
  - Involving students in their own evaluation;

- Written papers;
- Oral evaluations.

### **6.3 Requirements concerning the target group.**

- Are the modules adapted to the people in the identified disadvantaged groups?

Yes, because it makes them more responsible and motivates them.

- Do the modules facilitate the access of the disadvantaged groups of students to the vocational education? If yes, how?

Yes, because:

- They can learn to write, read and calculate;
- They can use a computer and they acquire basic skills;
- They are involved in the technological and professional practice.
- Enumerate 2 advantages and 2 disadvantages that the concept of modularisation involves in terms of the target group.

#### **Advantages:**

Through the portfolios proposed they apply the knowledge acquired.

The final evaluation is easy to accomplish and can be understood by the students.

#### **Disadvantages:**

The characteristics and specific age requirements of the students are not recognised , so the content of the modules does not reflect the specific target group methodologies.

- Enumerate 3 aspects that stimulates the development of students within this target group:
  - school and class climate;
  - getting responsible within the learning group;
  - competition;
  - educating their ability to express themselves.
- What would be the optimal duration of the modules?

20-25 hours (four, five weeks)

- How would you define an optimum learning context?
  - The students learn in a practical way, demonstrate and apply what they have learnt;
  - The involvement of the entire group in the learning activities, in a positive learning climate with an emphatic teacher.

## **6.4 Integration of Modularised System in the Training and Education of the Students**

- Do you think that this concept is suitable for prevocational education?
  - All the answers were affirmative.
- Are the modules useful for vocational education?
  - All the answers were affirmative.
- Do you think that the modularised system should be applied only to disadvantaged students or to all students?
  - The answers were 50% yes, 50% no.

## **6.5 Criteria for recording the young people's performances**

- Which are the important criteria to record the performance of the students?
  - Portfolios;
  - Activity products;
  - Interviews.
- Do you think that the certification of a single module makes any sense?
  - The answers are 50% yes, 50% no.
- How important are the social competencies?

Very important because it is the only way to ensure social integration.

- Do you have a modality to register the social competences of the participants in the programme?
  - Decreasing the number of conflicts in schools;
  - Decreasing the number of incidents in which the students are involved, inside and outside school;
  - Emotional participation in school life: participation in different activities organised in school, maintenance of the good school climate, less destructive actions in school

### **6.5.1 Views of the companies/enterprises that employed the students**

“Dacia-Car Service” Tecuci considers that the training of the students in the Second Chance Programme is an opportunity that serves a disadvantaged category.

They appreciate the fact that the students participate in the 6 months training programme and seem to be eager to learn.

Two of the graduate students have been employed and it is mentioned that they follow the work discipline fact that leads to their social and professional integration.

The employee is content of the partnership that has been established between the school and the company.

### **6.5.2 The answers of the students**

6 students in the lower secondary school have completed the questionnaires:

- They did not manage to attend regular classes because of poverty and the repeated failure.
- The differences between the ordinary classes and the Second Chance classes in their view are:
  - The quality of the teachers;
  - The more accessible content;
  - The possibility to learn a job besides learning.

They came back to school:

- To qualify for a profession;
- To obtain a diploma;
- To prove they can learn like the other students.

They feel their main accomplishments as the following:

- How to behave in society;
- How to be thankful to the teachers for what they taught them;
- They learn to get a driving license to “be someone in this life”;
- They learn to talk in a nice way with people and to listen to the more educated ones.

The National Agency for Employment and Vocational Training does not provide counselling or courses or accreditation for prevocational education at the moment.

In Romania, the Reintegration Schemes are managed by The National Agency for Employment and Vocational Training (and its county branches) at the moment and the courses are considered as vocational (that is, specialisation in vocational field, aiming at achieving a qualification), meaning that they are not seen as belonging to prevocational education.

### **6.5.3 View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation**

In the National Curriculum for compulsory education the methodology for constructing the modules is established at national level, yet the modules cannot be recognised or accredited individually, since the relationship to the credit, as well as the credit accumulation system are not yet functional. With the Second Chance Programme the credit system is functional. Each module has a number of credits that once accumulated lead to the completion of the work for certification.

## **6.6 Conclusions**

According to the stakeholders that were interviewed, the young people who belong to disadvantaged categories need a modularised programme of the type used in the Second Chance Programme which should be improved if centred on the following aspects:

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- Training for the general and specific competencies necessary to practice a profession based on the identification of what the students already know. The approach should be differentiated and strictly connected to the individualised needs of the students;
  - As the students come back to school after they failed to obtain the minimal academic results, in order to reintegrate them, special modules need to be used: a module for counselling to give them emotional support, and teach them how to act and react under stress and in crisis situations – the psychological assistance seems to be considered as very important by all those interviewed;
  - The modular evaluation is very important to offer partial qualification along the programme and not only at the end of the programme; if the learning routes are individualised there should be an individualised route for qualification of the students in a flexible way as soon as they finished a module.
  - The mobility of the students along the time of the programme should be ensured. If they interrupt school and leave for another town they should find the chance to follow their studies from where they left them, not to start everything from the beginning. The school-community partnership is very important. If the school did not identify the needs and the local resources, the student will not really get a chance of a social reintegration.

The results of the experimental phase in the Phare Programme will be available in September, when the modularised system for disadvantaged young people will be developed nationwide after a review of the programme itself.

## **7 United Kingdom**

The following report presents interim results of the UK survey undertaken in February–April 2006.

### **7.1 Methods, Items and Interview Partners**

#### **Background on satellite partners**

Our partners include the following:

- QCA (Qualification and Curriculum Authority)
- London Region Post-14 Network
- ASDAN (Award Scheme Development & Accreditation Network)

#### **QCA – Qualification and Curriculum Authority**

QCA is a non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). It is governed by a board, whose members are appointed by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, and managed on a day-to-day basis by an executive team. Main responsibilities of the QCA are as follows

- QCA maintains and develops the national curriculum and associated assessments, tests and examinations; and accredits and monitors qualifications in colleges and at work.
- QCA regulates awarding bodies, qualifications, examinations and national curriculum assessments to ensure that the qualifications' market is fit for purpose, that qualifications are fair, standards are secure, public confidence is sustained and that QCA acts as the public champion of the learner.

### **The London Region Post-14 Network and ASDAN**

The Network is based in the School of Lifelong Education and International Development at the Institute of Education, University of London. The Network was launched in 1989 to develop links between those concerned with post-16 education and more recently, 14+ education and training. The Network's agenda is to provide a forum for sharing information about new developments and to analyse and discuss policy issues addressing all sectors of post-14 education and training. Network members include Schools, Colleges, Universities, LEAs and many other organisations in the London region, including LSCs, Connexions and the Voluntary Sector. Within this project we are collaborating with ASDAN.

ASDAN (Award Scheme Development & Accreditation Network) is a pioneering curriculum development organisation and an internationally recognised awarding body, which grew out of research work at the University of the West of England in the 1980s. ASDAN offers a wide range of curriculum programmes and qualifications for all abilities, mainly in the 11-25 age group. ASDAN is a successful initiative that has been developed and managed by teachers and lecturers, alongside a dedicated and highly efficient administrative team.

ASDAN was formally established as an educational charity in 1991. The stated purpose of the charity is "to promote the personal and social development of learners through the achievement of ASDAN Awards, so as to enhance their self esteem, their aspirations and their contribution to the community".

ASDAN programmes and qualifications blend activity-based curriculum enrichment with a framework for the development, assessment and accreditation of key skills and other personal and social skills, with emphasis on negotiation, co-operation and rewarding achievement. The programmes are learner centred, offering opportunities for a negotiated curriculum which is modular and activity based. All ASDAN's programmes are modular...

Our methods included semi-structured interviews with practitioners, employers and those working in the institutions concerned with accreditation.

## **7.2 Perception of Modularisation Concept**

### **7.2.1 View of Businesses**

Interviews with employers uncovered that they consider modularisation to be a positive tendency. Most of the training provided within workplaces is of a modular structure. Interviews with employers highlighted the following:

- There is a natural tendency to break down learning programmes into the same structure as a unitised qualification.
- Modules give learners an opportunity to learn about an area ‘step-by-step’.
- Modular programmes should encompass work-related and activity-based approaches.

### **7.2.2 View of Planners and Practitioners in Re-integration Schemes**

Interviews with practitioners highlighted that modules are perceived as:

- activity-based;
- competence-based.

Modularisation has been described as a positive tendency within the further education sector. A module is defined in terms of:

- the broad curriculum area that it might cover (e.g. module on *Information Handling* or *Drug Abuse*, etc);
- activities a learner needs to undertake;
- skills a learner needs to acquire.

### **7.2.3 View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation**

Regarding perception and definition of modularisation, our interviews with institutions concerned with accreditation highlighted the following:

- A module is defined as an area of skills, knowledge and understanding that has been adapted for the purpose of learning and/or certification.
- Two types of modules have been identified: (1) an *input module* or a module of learning, if it has been designed for learning purposes, or (2) an *output module* or an outcome module, if it has been designed for output purposes (for the purposes of certification or assessment). There is not necessarily a one-to-one relationship between a module of outcome and a period of learning. Outcome modules can be used to collect evidence across a series of input modules or phases of learning.
- Modularisation could allow the comparisons of cognate areas or related areas in different subjects. Some skills (e.g. reception skills) would appear in a number of occupational areas, e.g. leisure or tourism. Modularisation to some degree gives an opportunity to describe cognate areas and to examine whether they are similar in skills, knowledge and understanding.

## **7.3 Make-up of a good module**

### **7.3.1 View of Businesses**

The discussion with employers allowed us to draw on the following aspects with respect to the make-up of a good module:

- Modules should be oriented towards the specific aims of a relevant occupational area.

- Modules should be more activity-based and less classroom-based (practical tasks should be incorporated into modules).
- Modules should be designed taking into account special requirements of different target groups (e.g. less able young people).
- Learners should have a clear understanding of practical aims and objectives of each module of a cluster of modules or so-called ‘qualification bricks’.

### **7.3.2 View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes**

Our empirical data demonstrate that practitioners draw on the following characteristics of a good module:

- Modules should be flexible, e.g. a strict timetable may prevent meaningful learning (often courses are designed to fit into the timetable, not to provide learning).
- Modules should provide learners with the opportunity to develop a number of skills that need to be assessed.
- Modules must be activity-based: learners must be allowed to do something in order to develop their skills.

Practitioners note that the following factors need to be taken into account when constructing a good module:

- The ability of the learners they want to deliver the module to;
- Meaningful, relevant and appropriate curriculum content with opportunities for young people to develop their skills;
- Co-operation among the practitioners while constructing a module.

### **7.3.3 View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation**

Views of institutions concerned with accreditation on the make-up of a good module include the following:

- The construction of modules is exactly what it is – a construction. It requires a series of assumptions about the nature of competences. The outcomes are not independent of the mode, duration and location of learning.
- An appropriate model for generating modules based on empirical and theoretical studies on the nature of competences in a specific occupational area needs to be developed.
- Modularisation demands effective understanding of competences. If a cognate area such as reception work is going to be identified, it may well be present in different occupational areas. It may be possible to devise a common input and outcome module for it and it may indeed be of benefit in two different ways: (1) It may be of benefit for workers from different occupational areas to come together to discuss their experiences; this may actually bring about a very rich learning environment. Also, the discussion of different learning contexts actually helps the learning of everyone. (2) It also helps the labour market because it may be that skills that are described differently in different occupational

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areas are in fact the same, which may allow employers to look for labour in areas where they may never have thought of looking before.

## **7.4 Requirements with Respect to the Target Group**

### **7.4.1 View of Businesses**

The views of business are summarised below, as follows:

- Modules should be activity-based, with specific references to a relevant occupational area; activity-based modules are perceived as ‘less boring’ by learners.
- Learners should be able to acquire a relevant work-place experience.
- Tutors/trainers should understand (and where relevant get appropriate training) how to work with disadvantaged learners.
- Modules should be flexible: the timescale should be negotiated between a learner and a training provider.
- Modules should be developed in a way that would encourage disadvantaged young people to develop their confidence.
- Modules should not be too long in duration (between 10 and 30 hours).

### **7.4.2 View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes**

Practitioners maintain that modules are suitable for those disengaged from the educational process. The modules are especially suitable for the target group because they:

- are activity-based;
- provide an out-of-classroom learning context;
- are soft-skills oriented.

All these factors enable schools to devise a more flexible learning context.

The following benefits (associated with benefits for disadvantaged young people) have been identified:

- Modules enhance learners’ motivation, as they are more activity-based and less classroom-based.
- Flexibility in delivering modules allows for a certain extent of personalisation of the learning process and for appealing to the learners’ interests.
- Modules re-engage difficult learners as modules provide opportunities to develop their soft skills and celebrate what they can do by doing a particular activity within a module.

### **7.4.3 View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation**

Modularisation is associated with the following benefits for the target groups:

- In breaking the learning programmes down into a series of discrete periods or phases, modules enable people to stop, reflect on what they have learnt, get feedback and take their understanding through into the next phase of learning or professional performance.
- The content of the modules should not be overloaded with theory; there should be a combination of theory and practical work.
- The learning context should be adapted to the specific target group's requirements (e.g. by taking into account specific learning difficulties).

## **7.5 Possibility of Integration of Modularised System in (Pre-) Vocational Education and Training**

### **7.5.1 View of Businesses**

The views of employers are as follows:

- Modules are suitable for a wider integration into workplace learning.
- Employers need to have a better understanding of the modularisation concept, aims and benefits. Sometimes employers would tend to break down their programmes into smaller 'bricks' without referring to these as modular programmes.
- Better co-operation between employers and planners/practitioners is needed.

### **7.5.2 View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes**

Modules have been successfully integrated into pre-vocational/vocational education and training programmes.

### **7.5.3 View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation**

Modularisation and unitisation are helpful at any stage of educational training, but one has to be very clear about (1) what is being broken up and (2) how it is being broken up.

## **7.6 Criteria for Recording the Young People's Performances**

### **7.6.1 View of Businesses**

Interviews with employers highlight the importance of formative assessment as a way to both record young people's achievements and to facilitate further learning.

### **7.6.2 View of Planners and Practitioners of Re-integration Schemes**

Practitioners maintain that:

- Accreditation as a form of recording the young people's achievements should be defined in terms of skills.

- Formative assessment is most appropriate while assessing skills that learners get from doing a particular activity.
- Learners should be able to get credit from completing activities within a module.
- To get a credit they do not have to complete a whole module; they need to complete a required number of activities.
- Actual accreditation comes from skills that learners get.

### 7.6.3 View of Institutions Concerned with Accreditation

Experts highlighted different types of assessment, as follows:

- Formative assessment is a form of assessment where the principal function is to enhance the learning of individuals.
- Summative assessment is used to provide a record of what the person achieved for a variety of purposes.
- Continuous assessment using observation (which could be confused with formative assessment) need not be formative. It might be oriented entirely towards gathering evidence which is used towards certification and for summative purposes.
- There is a tendency within pre-vocational/vocational education for formative assessment to be based on continuous assessment. There are, however, certain disadvantages, such as those noted here:

*For disadvantaged young people: it affects your ability as an assessor to separate the tricky behaviour (e.g. being late or disruptive) from their competence in an occupational area. In other words the assessors' judgement could be affected by the relationship they have with the learner. Whereas if they sit down to a written test, that may be highly problematic and intimidating, but the test would be most likely marked by someone who has no particular relationship with the learner and therefore it would be a fair assessment (extract from an interview with a QCA expert).*

- For the validity you may want a continuous assessment by the person who is in close proximity to the learners. However, this type of assessment may not be the fairest type of assessment.
- The current tendency is to use continuous assessment for summative purposes. However, the combination of the methods of assessment varies from occupational area to occupational area, from awarding body to awarding body and from level to level.

The main criteria for recording young people's achievements are as follows:

- Emphasis on validity;

Sophisticated balance of input and output regulations: there should be more attention paid to the quality of the learning processes and learning programmes; outcomes should not be ignored but they do not carry responsibility for the quality assurance of learning; overemphasis on outcomes gives rise to overemphasis on evidence and summative assessment;

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*For disadvantaged young people learning programmes might be intimidating and difficult. Obviously they would want certification and outcomes; it needs to be there. But it should not dominate . . . it need not dominate all considerations in building up and validating learners' competences (extract from an interview with a QCA expert).*

The importance of supportive inspection of both input (or learning process) and certification; there should be a small population of highly professional inspectors or assessors who should continue to be vocational practitioners and who should receive professional recognition for the assessment work they are doing.

## **7.7 Conclusions**

### **7.7.1 Requirements on the Planned Tool**

Within the fieldwork we discussed with the practitioners and experts the potential merit of the tool that we are developing. Our respondents shared the view that such a tool could become a very useful device that would enable planners and practitioners to reflect upon a number of relevant issues while designing and implementing modules, in particular for disadvantaged young people. The discussion about dimensions demonstrated that the dimensions that we have identified have been considered by the practitioners to be significant and relevant to the issues of modularisation.

Practitioners/planners suggested the following requirements for the tool:

- The tool should be flexible.
- The tool should be simple and easy to use.
- The tool should provide guidance for practitioners/planners on how to construct sensible modules for disadvantaged young people.
- The tool should be adaptable to local conditions.

### **7.7.2 Cultural and System Specific Requirements to be Considered**

The fieldwork indicated that there are a number of specific requirements to be considered and taken into account within national settings, such as:

- The current perception and attitudes towards modularisation within the sector of pre-vocational/vocational education and training;
- The extent to which modularisation has been introduced and/or developed;
- The situation in the labour market (e.g. unemployment);
- The general features and/or historical development of pre-vocational/vocational training in a particular country;
- The various social problems (e.g. social factors that affect disengagement of the target group);
- The distinctive cultural features that may affect the development of modularisation.

### 7.7.3 Considerations to Ensure Implementation

The construction of modules requires complex integration of skills, knowledge and understanding of how to operate effectively. Our interviews indicated that the issue of how one breaks things down is a fundamental question. If the skills are broken down inappropriately into discrete modules, the individual's performance cannot be assessed adequately. Practitioners/planners maintain that a great deal of damage could be done to the learning programme by breaking down skills inappropriately. To avoid this, as suggested by experts:

- You need a decent analysis of the nature of occupational performance.
- You need to examine the genuine constituency of the performance in terms of knowledge, skills and understanding.
- You need to be clear that the desegregation that you are undertaking into modules is advantageous in terms of learning and advantageous in terms of the eventual competences you are intending to promote.
- You have to look into the nature of the competence itself and look to the most effective way in which the competence could be acquired through the learning programme.
- There should be combination of empirical analysis and theoretical dimension.

As noted by experts/ practitioners the main objectives of various kinds of pre-vocational training have been related to the issue of engaging young people, especially disadvantaged (e.g. unemployed) young people. Pre-vocational training as a kind of what we call 'orientation stage' facilitates an easier transition from school to a world of employment or further training, by providing learners with opportunities to 'sample' a range of vocational areas and to develop a number of skills and competences including personal and transferable skills. The courses should develop learners' confidence and self-assurance, supporting them into recognition and utilisation of their skills and abilities. Modularisation further contributes to learner's motivation as it has the potential to provide units of learning which are accessible and have short-term goals.

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