

The Clarity Project

The link to national VET Structures

**Results from our
four Core Partner countries**

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The Clarity project

Link to national VET Structures

Introduction and background

One of the key objectives of the Clarity project was to engage with the national structures for Vocational & Employment Training. This activity constituted Work Package 5 of the project, and was led by Point Europa in the UK. Each of the four "Core Partners" (FR, HU, IT, UK) was asked to engage with their national structure, seek recognition for the project and attempt to achieve formal recognition of the project's results.

The possible outcomes for the work were the following, in order of preference:

1. Engage with the agencies which certify training, and have the Clarity products accredited as a formally-recognised training course.
2. Achieve recognition for Clarity as an "additional section" to existing training - recognising its value, and promoting it through training agencies, but outside of the formal structure.
3. Achieve a listing for Clarity in the Training Resource catalogues and directories that may exist in our countries.
4. Achieve contact with the VET structures, leading to confirmation that these national structures will not permit the attempted inclusion of new training material.

Achievable outcomes

As regards "accreditable" activities, Clarity is divided into two sections:

- Clarity A is the central activity of the project. It offers a new training resource that enables migrant workers to deliver basic workplace training, in their language. As part of the training package, migrants are recruited and trained as tutors - the process can include formal accreditation of their new abilities, where appropriate and achievable.
- Clarity B was simply "*Clarity A in action*". The new Migrant Trainers, supported through the project, took existing training in the host country language and transformed it into a related migrant-language training course. They then delivered this new material to migrant workers. As discussed below, in some cases this delivery process led directly to accredited qualifications from the training for the new participants.

Value to workers and employers

We must emphasise that the accreditation of Clarity, to become a formally-recognised qualification, was not the only valuable outcome sought for this project. In the very first place, before the attempt at accreditation started, we wanted Clarity to be of direct benefit to employers and to workers; we believe that we have certainly achieved that goal.

Even where the general Clarity course could not be accredited in the partner countries, it still directly supports the achievement of obligatory workplace training by migrant workers. This achievement improves the qualifications of the workers, and so improves their employment prospects.

Potential for future development, impact on VET achievement

We see very strong potential for the development of Clarity, following the closure of the funded project. The options that we see at the moment for development are the following:

- The new Migrant Trainers will be able to deliver the existing material in further locations. In the UK, a follow-on to Clarity is already delivering the Food Safety in Polish course to new groups of workers, on a commercial basis.

- The Migrant Trainers will be able to create different training packages, in their languages, to cover other training needs. French example: Health & Safety for workers, delivered in Cambodian and Chinese to current restaurant contacts and to new locations
- A different group of migrants, from other nationalities, will be able to use Clarity to train as Migrant Trainers and then deliver obligatory workplace training into their own languages. UK example: Food Safety in Lithuanian has already started, thanks to Clarity.

The material and its background resources are freely available to anyone who can use them. There is no barrier to adoption of the Clarity concept anywhere in Europe (or indeed the rest of the world) where it can be useful.

With the publication of the full Clarity training structure, all of the succeeding activity can lead to new contact with the national VET structures in the existing partner countries and in others. This work can (of course) be accredited on the same basis as the project's results.

Clarity and national VET structures

The activity and results in our four Core Partner countries

Situation in France

The principal organisms that have a relation with VET in France and with the Clarity project are these:

- *Association nationale pour la formation professionnelle des adultes (AFPA - the National Adult Vocational Training Association. AFPA offers certified vocational courses, including more than 400 qualifications*
- *Délégation générale à l'emploi et à la formation professionnelle (DGEFP - the Department of Employment and Vocational Training. This is the main Government department responsible for VET training across France*
- *Centre de développement de l'information sur la formation professionnelle (Centre INFFO - Centre for the development of vocational training information. This is the principal advice and information service for France*

The realistic position in France is that the procedure for creation and accrediting of new professional qualifications is extremely long, and controlled very much from the centre. Therefore, it has not been possible to make good progress with Clarity in this sense because:

- The projet is short and the total training time is not high. So, it cannot become a complete qualification
- There is no process in France for the inclusion of Clarity into an existing professional training function

So there was very limited opportunity for the Clarity project in its totality. On the other hand, and maybe more important at the level of the workers and the owner-managers of the

enterprises that we worked with, the Clarity project directly made it possible to assist workers into accredited existing training and qualifications, in French, but using description, translation and cultural support with the material. This is a truly real result for the people that we worked with, so we think Clarity had a very good effect with VET where it is most important.

Situation in Hungary

The most important VET organisation with relation to this Clarity project was the National Institute of Vocational and Adult Education (NSZI). The National Institute is a more-or-less new institution, established in 2007 as a research and policy body. The Institute assists in the development, coordination, research, information and counselling services of vocational education and training and adult training, including the management of the registers of the vocational examination and of accredited adult training institutions and programmes.

Because of the history of Hungary in recent decades, there is not a good comparator with vocational training systems compared to the countries of the west of Europe. In our case, the structure of vocational training was traditionally built around provision and policy by the State and there was very little opportunity for interaction with outside organisations, where they existed. There is more information on the system in Annex 1.

The Hungarian partner was not able to make progress with contacting the VET structure in their country, for the reasons given above.

Situation in Italy

The principal VET organisation contacted for Clarity project was ISFOL – the **Istituto per lo sviluppo della formazione professionale dei lavoratori** (Institute for the development of Vocational education and training). This is a public research body.

ISFOL is the Reference Point for the VET system, and delivers information, advice and documentation to the regional local authorities. In the board of the Italian RP there are:

- Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Policy
- Ministry of Education, Universities and Research
- Presidency of the Council of Ministers
- Regions
- Social Partners
- VET providers

ISFOL carries out and promotes activities of study, research, testing, documentation, evaluation, information, advice and technical assistance for the development of vocational training courses, social policies and labor. ISFOL works towards the implementation of a significant part of the national operational programs to ownership of the Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Policy Planning 2007-2013 co-financed by the Structural Funds.

The Italian institutional framework for VET used to be constituted as follows: a highly decentralised (regionalised, but with significant responsibilities attributed to provinces in several regions) vocational training system, and a very centralised Education System (including vocational education) with very limited integration between them.

The Italian VET system, in its present shape, is relatively “young” (Law 845/1978) and the ESF system was an important factor in shaping the organisation and development of regional and national provision of vocational training. Thus, the new ESF Agenda (2007-2013)

characterised by a strong reduction of funds, constitutes a major change driver for the Italian VET system; and, it is important to stress the role played traditionally by the European policies and strategies in the orientation and definition of Italian national policies as well as of the Agenda of policy makers at regional level.

The situation of the Italian partner for Clarity in relation to contact with the VET system was rather different from the other partners. This is due to the operational method used in Palermo, where it was found to be necessary to work with migrants who were not currently in jobs, because that is the massive overwhelming need for support. Therefore, the contact with Vocational Training systems had to be rather more peripheral than in other cases (especially the UK) where the work was in factories. Nonetheless, the Italian partner made good progress in building their relationship with the authority, including a presence at the Clarity final event.

Situation in the UK

The top-level policymaking structure in the UK is changing radically at the time of producing this report. The National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) structure is being replaced by QCF (Qualifications and Credit Framework) awards, certificates and diplomas. The NVQ system will continue for some time, and the qualifications themselves will be "mapped" onto the new system.

The old NVQ structure was governed by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, which had overall authority to set curricula and details of training. This has now changed; the responsibility for creation and policing of training content has been passed to a large number of "Sector Skills Councils", each fully responsible for training content in their area of expertise. Our UK work has necessarily had to use the existing NVQ structure, as the QCF system is not operational at this time. We understand that the newly-gained qualifications will be transferred into the new structure without any problems.

The relevant Council for our work is the IMPROVE agency, part of the Food and Drink Sector Skills Council. This body has full autonomy over the creation and policy-making systems for vocational training in their area of expertise.

By way of proof about the value of the Clarity project's work in the UK, we have attached a PDF report by Improve called "Putting the Plan into Action". This is a full overview of the difficulties and major challenges facing the sector as it tries to improve training for workers, and it contains several references to our new field of expertise.

The reader is referred in particular to the following sections:

- Page 4: "Language, communication and basic skills have been highlighted as an issue and barrier to entry and progression for both non-UK nationals (migrant workers) and UK nationals. The solution: promoting more accessible and relevant learning programmes to meet the skills needs of the industry.
- Page 5: "There is a lot of on-the-job and non accredited training.... Often without a structured approach. The solution: support and encourage structured training and development...include promotion of training for in-house trainers (including migrant workers) to gain qualifications."

Accreditation in the UK

We achieved the following results on direct links to the UK VET structure:

- Full accreditation of the training given to our Migrant Trainers, who now hold certification from the Chartered Institute of Environment Health (CIEH) as accredited trainers. They are now licensed to deliver the Level 2 Food Hygiene



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course, in Polish, for Polish migrant workers. They also achieved a basic accreditation as trainers (PTTLS), and themselves received accreditation in Food Safety at levels 2 and 3

- The newly transformed training product - Food Safety in Manufacturing Level 2 - is licensed for use and leads directly to that qualification for Polish workers. The participants who attended the pilot testing through our Clarity B process have all received full accreditation on this course - which is a vital employability tool and audit requirement for their employers.

We were not able to achieve recognition of the overall Clarity Training Course. This is because the UK system only recognises a fixed series of direct training outcomes, not the process used to achieve them.

Conclusion

The project as a whole achieved a good understanding of the VET structures and authorities in each country. The relevant authorities were identified and contacted.

The achievement as regards accreditation and formal recognition of the project varied very widely across the partnership. The results were very good in the UKL, but less was achieved in the other countries - principally because of the more centralised nature of the VET structures in the other countries.

The major achievement of the project was to ensure real, practical vocational training in all of the four Core Partner countries.

Annex 1 - The Hungarian VET system

Hungary: Collective bargaining and continuous vocational training in Europe

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Although the right to participate in training is ensured by law for every citizen and employee in Hungary, and quite a wide range of adult training and CVT opportunities are offered by training companies, NGOs and employers, adult training participation rates are considerably lower than the EU average and CVT activities of employers vary greatly according to sector and company size. Social partners are involved in the policy- and decision-making processes of CVT through various tripartite bodies at national as well as regional level. In relation to legislative provisions, the role of social dialogue – advising and reviewing CVT policies - is regulated at national, regional and company level. Although life long learning as a national level policy objective, as well as various issues concerning vocational training, are widely discussed in the social dialogue forums, CVT as a company policy is practically missing from collective agreements.

Main features of the national Continuous Vocational Training system

CVT opportunities are available either within the school system (in public or higher education) or in adult training. While *Act CI of 2001 on Adult Training* – which was enacted to promote lifelong learning by setting a general regulatory framework for this sector of education – ensures the right to participate in adult training for every citizen who has completed compulsory schooling, the rights of an employee to participate in training are regulated by the Labour Code (*Act XXII of 1992*). Pursuant to the latter, the employer can support the employee's training through a study contract on paying tuition fees, travel and accommodation expenses, allowing training leave, etc. The Labour Code however guarantees a training leave only in case the training is provided within the school system or if further training is mandatory in that job or required by the employer.

Main actors of CVT outside the school system include the Parliament and various ministries responsible for making legislation concerning CVT, the Public Employment Service (Állami Foglalkoztatási Szolgálat, [ÁFSZ](#)) providing training opportunities for the unemployed and other target groups and registering and inspecting the adult training providers, and various consultative bodies including the social partners participating in the devising and governance of CVT (see next section). Although CVT providers include public and higher education institutions engaging in adult training and other budgetary or state-supported institutions (most importantly, the 9 regional training centres of the ÁFSZ), the majority of participants study at private training providers which incorporate training companies, NGOs (non-profit organizations, professional associations, etc.), and employers providing in-company (internal) training for their employees.

The state regulates by legislation the mandatory further training systems of employees in the public sector (civil servants, teachers, medical, social and cultural workers, etc.) and in some fields of the private sector where the nature of work – for example, for safety reasons or because of the constant change of regulations - requires it (e.g. in occupations related to gas production and services, commerce of plant and animal health chemicals, accountants and auditors, etc.). Apart from these, the system of CVT awarding a state recognized vocational qualification of the National Qualifications Register (*Országos Képzési Jegyzék, OKJ*) is uniform and regulated by the Adult Training Act and *Act LXXVI of 1993 on Vocational education and training*.

There is a wide range of adult training programmes including (in addition to foreign language and general, skills developing courses):

- programmes awarding an OKJ qualification;
- courses preparing participants for the master examination (*mestervizsga*, see next section),
- trainings regulated by public authorities (*hatósági jellegű képzés*) awarding nationally or internationally recognized qualifications, licenses which are not included in the OKJ, primarily in the fields of road, water and air transportation, plant and veterinary health inspection or food hygiene; and
- courses of various types and duration that do not award a nationally recognized qualification.

The target groups of state financed/supported trainings include the unemployed and those vulnerable to exclusion in the labour market (people living with disabilities, low skilled disadvantaged people, women, etc.), and employees of micro and small enterprises. Participation rate of the population aged 25-64 in adult learning is rather low; it was 3.8% in 2006. In 2005 49% of enterprises provided some CVT opportunities for employees, but only 34% supported their formal training (which opportunity was available to only 23% of their employees), though these numbers varied greatly according to sector and company size.

The funding of the CVT system

Public/private balance (possibly disaggregating funding by private employers, individuals, other sources, such as collective bipartite funds).

The funding of the system of CVT in adult training derives from contributions of the state (more precisely, of the Labour Market Fund, see next section; this however provides financial assistance only for the training of target groups), employers and participants. There are no statistics available on public/private balance but the governing principle of current educational policy is that each side should contribute about 1/3 of the total costs. In 2005 state financing constituted about 40% of all the costs of adult training.

The presence of public incentives to support private investment in CVT.

A financial incentive to support private investment in CVT is the opportunity available for employers (since 1997) to spend (at most) one third – or, since 2007, in the case of micro and small enterprises, 60% - of their so-called vocational training contribution (a kind of tax levied on enterprises in the amount of 1.5% of total labour cost) on financing the vocational training of their employees. A personal income tax deduction opportunity for training participants was available from 2003 until 2007.

The role of the European Social Fund.

The European Social Fund has provided financial assistance to various development programmes (e.g. modernisation of the OKJ which has created a better linkage between IVET and CVT by introducing modularized, competence-based qualifications) and the development and provision of training programmes for target groups.

The role of social dialogue and collective bargaining in the CVT system

Social partners are involved in devising the CVT system through participating in the development of state recognized vocational qualifications and advising the use of funds available for the improvement of the system, methods and programmes of VET and adult training.

The National Vocational and Adult Training Council (Nemzeti Szakképzési és Felnőttképzési Tanács, NSZFT), a consultative-advisory body of the minister responsible for VET and adult training (created in 2007 by merging the two formerly independent consultative bodies of VET and adult training), reviews proposals on creating, modifying or deleting a qualification of the OKJ. Representatives of the social partners were also members of the sectoral OKJ occupational group committees advising the development of outcome requirements from 2001, and of the Consulting Board consulting the OKJ modernisation programme in 2004-2006. Current legislation assigns the task of “continuous monitoring of the development of VET structure” to a single consultative body (OKJ committee) to be set up by the example of this board, replacing the sectoral committees.

The Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Magyar Kereskedelmi és Iparkamara, [MKIK](#)) and the Hungarian Chamber of Agriculture ([Magyar Agrárkamara](#)) develop - in cooperation with the national economic interest representative organizations - the outcome requirements of and organize master examinations (*mestervizsga*) since 1996, as a new, special form of CVT awarding a higher level vocational qualification (a master title).

Regarding the governance of the CVT system, the NSZFT and the regional development and training committees (*regionális fejlesztési és képzési bizottságok, RFKBs*) advise the use and allocation of and evaluate and coordinate tenders from sources available from the training sub-fund of the Labour Market Fund (*Munkaerő-piaci Alap, MPA*) for the development of VET and adult training and the training of target groups. The Governing Board of the Labour Market Fund (Munkaerőpiaci Alap Irányító Testülete, MAT) decides on the use of sources of the employment and rehabilitation sub-funds of the MPA.



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In relation to legislative provisions, the role of social dialogue on CVT is most important at national level. The social partners are involved in the decision- and policy making processes of VET through various advisory councils serving as forums for dialogue and the conciliation of interests. The most significant national consultative bodies are:

- the National Council for the Conciliation of Interests (*Országos Érdekegyeztető Tanács, OÉT*) advising the strategic development of VET; and
- the NSZFT, which in addition to advising the development of the OKJ and the use of the training sub-fund of the MPA, forms opinions in strategic questions regarding the development of the VET and adult training systems, the principles of VET and adult training support schemes, and bills concerning VET and adult training;

Social dialogue and intersectoral agreements at national level. Sectoral level.

Sectoral social dialogue committees (*ágazati párbeszéd bizottságok, ÁPBs*) were created in 2004 as the outcome of a PHARE project. Although each of the currently operating 35 sectoral, part-sectoral and sub-sectoral committees consider issues related to VET and adult training on a regular basis and several of them have formed special sub-committees or working groups dedicated to their development in accordance with the labour market needs of the sector, there are no legislative provisions regarding their role in CVT.

Territorial and local levels.

Regarding the territorial and local levels, the RFKBs prepare regional strategies of VET development, while labour councils (*munkaiügyi tanács*) serve as forums for the regional level conciliation of interests concerning the training of unemployed and other target groups supported by the labour organisation, and they review the allocation of sources of the MPA.

Professional level.

There are no legislative provisions regarding the role of social dialogue and collective agreements in CVT at professional level.

Company level, if possible, differentiating between larger firms and SMEs. If relevant, also refer to multinational companies with/without European Works Councils.

At company level, the Labour Code requires that plans regarding the training of employees be reviewed by the works council (*üzemi tanács*).

Main positions of the social partners on the CVT

Employers in SMEs are reluctant to let their employees participate in CVET partly because of the problem of substituting them for the time of the training, given the small number of employees in SMEs. Another problem is, according to SMEs, is the lack of a wide range of short-term, adequate and efficient training programmes and materials, due to their special training needs which are not adequately met by the traditional training offer of adult training institutions, although this is likely to improve with the introduction of the new OKJ, developed in 2004–2006, awarding partial and ‘built-on’ specialised qualifications and shorter, cost-effective modular training as well. For all these reasons, increasing the flexibility of training, promoting non-formal learning, and the development of training programmes delivered in alternative modes (e.g. e-learning) are of outstanding importance in their case. This is currently supported by various measures of the operational programmes of the National Development Plan as well as through tenders of the National Employment Foundation (Országos Foglalkoztatási közalapítvány, [OFA](#)) and the Leonardo National Agency.

Commentary

Although lifelong learning as a national level policy objective, as well as various issues concerning vocational training, are widely discussed in the plethora of social dialogue forums, CVT as a company policy is practically missing from collective agreements. This is partly due to the narrow-minded focus of sectoral and company level bargaining, partly to the dual system of Hungarian workplace representation. On the one hand, generally collective agreements tend to be limited to the issues, which are mandatory regulated, but at the same time the Labour Code also offers the possibility to deviate from the mandatory rules through collective agreements. By definition, company policies, such as the training policy, are not mandatory regulated issues, save the meagre regulations on individual study contracts. Furthermore, collective agreements (and trade unions’ bargaining policies) usually insist on a fairly traditional approach of defending workers’ interest: focussing on annual wage increase, preserving traditional wage supplements and non-wage allowances, maintaining wage/effort parity under performance related pay systems, etc. This traditional approach equally forecloses implementation of modern policy guidelines, such as flexicurity, and reflections to the endeavours of modern HRM techniques. Exceptionally CVT may occur more frequently under collective redundancies, as the package negotiated between the employer and works councils in order to mitigate the consequences of job losses includes retraining of the redundant workers. On the other hand, the Labour Code entitles works councils to be consulted on the training policy of the employer, but in practice this is far from being the most highlighted issue on the agenda of works councils. Furthermore, the relatively weak information and consultation rights do not allow works councils to be active partners in forming training strategies, their actions limited to a reflective-defensive approach. All in all, deficiencies of workers’ representation in CVT issue might contribute to the very low performance of the country in lifelong learning, as it is shown by the statistics above on the share of workers undergoing CVT at the workplace.

Of course, there may be exceptional company cases, even cases would qualify as ‘best practices’, however, in the lack of media reports, trade union education or targeted research, they cannot surface.



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