



Lifelong Learning Programme

“Electrical engineers vocational education transparency – ELEVET”
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**Report from the National Focus Group
ELEVET Project**



Done by CECE

A focus group is a tool used to gather information. Its main characteristic is that it provides data for analysis but data that is gathered in an informal format; therefore a focus group can be like a good conversation. The format of the focus group provides an opportunity for participants and the facilitator to exchange information related to the topic or group of topics for which the data are being collected. A focus group conversation is private and confidential and participants and their ideas are treated with respect and integrity.

Focus groups can be powerful tools for planning and decision making. The insights and data produced by the interaction of participants in focus groups can provide feedback to initiate change, confirm satisfaction with services or help generate new hypotheses. Focus groups can be used to assess community needs before planning new offerings, provide inputs on what customers see as 'ideal' or gather feedback on how to improve services.

In situations where the questions to be asked are predominantly open-ended, such as 'tell me how this service can be improved' the facilitator of a focus group can elicit a participant's response and encourage other participants to build on them so providing more information from several points of view.

The goal of the Focus Group in Elevet project is to have recommendations on the content of the VET framework, in connection with the different countries contexts.

These reports summarize the findings of the consultation of the experts after the local focus group. The report will be then used by the international focus group that will be held in Warsaw during the 17 January 2013.

Five national focus group has been carry out

- Polish National Focus Group was held in Warsaw (SEP) on 15th November 2012.
- Danish National Focus Group was held in Odense (SDE) on 29th November 2012.
- Report of the Romanian National Focus Group Bucharest, 10th December 2012
- Italian national Focus Group was held in Rome, 16th November 2012
- Spanish National Focus Group was held in Madrid on 26th October 2012.

A total number of 130 participants from different countries attend the national focus group. Different profiles were finding: Vet centers teachers, principals, expert on the electricity field, Specialist for the electrician vocational training, Professor, academic teacher in the University, representatives from different electrical companies, responsible for the education of employees in their companies, electrical instrumentation coordinator, Deputy of President of the Central Commission for Professional Qualifications, companies Director for Production Managemen, etc...

Focus Group Agenda. An agenda was recommended for partners. In general lines the agenda was:

1. Presentation of the basic knowledge about the ELEVET project.
2. Presentation of the conclusions from the Work Packages WP2 and WP3 on the base of the following documents:
 - a) Report on existing qualifications and titles,
 - b) Compendium of best practices,
 - c) Questionnaires for companies,
 - d) Report on Consultation (on the base of the questionnaires replies).
3. Discussion about the subjects:
 - a) strong points of the electrical engineers education in Poland,
 - b) weak points of the electrical engineers education in Poland,

- c) what kind of the soft skills are needed to electrical engineer ?
 - d) what kind of the business skills are needed to electrical engineer ?
 - e) any other skills to consider in the electrical engineer education ?
 - f) the legislation connected with skilling of electrician in Poland.
4. Conclusions from discussion.

Discussion about the **weak points of electrician's education** most of the countries agree on:

1. Too many learning activities are organized as group work
2. Too much time of the education is spent on documentation issues
3. A greater focus on the balance of “nice & need” to know issues
4. Some companies (where the students do their practical training) are too narrow in their professional profile (niche companies)
5. Missing the practical application in the workplace and the basic knowledge of the management aspects.
6. Missing more and more the practical application.
7. The tendency to convert the VET practical lessons in a “master class” as if the students were at the university is significantly increasing.
8. Teachers lack of developed the practical skills in electricity.
9. The electric materials and devices are quite expensive, and with groups of 30 people in each class, it is impossible for VET schools to have one complete set of tools, devices and materials for each student, lack of resources.
10. Student's background, VET student's origin is quite diverse. Some students choose VET because they think it will be easier for them than High School, but they are not motivated at all in the topic they are registered in. Moreover some of them have serious problems with math and other subjects very important in the electric field as, mainly, “schema interpretation”.

Discussion about the **strong points of electrician's education** most of the countries agree on:

1. Alternating between school and company
2. The level of theory is very high
3. Some positive feedback from the companies.
4. Long duration of apprenticeship (4 - 4,5 years)
5. Confidence in the schools assessment of apprentices
6. The school is evaluated by external evaluators (representatives of the trade)

What kind of **soft skills** are needed to electrical engineer

1. More focus on communication in the enterprise and with customers
2. Empathy
3. Customer care and salesmanship
4. Development of social skills (Social skills are any skills facilitating interaction)
5. Communication and changed in verbal and nonverbal way.
6. Cognitive skills.

what kind of the **business skills** are needed to electrical engineer

1. Planning
2. Creation of efficiency
3. Quality assurance
4. Team working

5. Relationship management
6. Analysis and data processing
7. Knowledge about health and safety issues
8. Human resource management,
9. Problem solving,
10. Foreign languages are important.

Final conclusions

European education of electricians and electrical engineers has to focus on the individual training of students and a high professional level. Skills related to interaction and communication, customer care, planning, efficient performance, quality assurance and knowledge of health issues seem important.

Better coordination between school- and work-based learning, a better integration of cognitive skills, attitudes and students' ability to understand and complete the learning process.

It would be appropriated establish a cooperation between universities and enterprises/employers to activate training on the job before graduate.

The necessity of include management and business skills in the vocational education of electrical engineers, in addition to introduce training on the job (through collaboration with enterprises) and soft skills in the education of technicians.

The handbooks for electricians should take into account the instructions for the vocational teachers preparing the participants of courses for acquisition of the professional competences for different profession.

An International Focus Group will be carry out in Warsaw during the 17 January 2013, where all this point will be discussed with expert from all participants' countries in the project.