DIDACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR TRAINING VET STAFF
VET4ALL
Professional Development of VET Tutors and Trainers to enhance Social Inclusion in Work-based Learning
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DIDACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR TRAINING VET STAFF

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INTRODUCTION
INTRODUCTION

All European countries are committed to work towards ensuring more inclusive education systems. They do so in different ways, depending on their past and current contexts and histories. Inclusive education systems are seen as a vital component within the wider aspiration of more socially inclusive societies that all countries align themselves with, both ethically and politically.

Education and training systems should ensure that all learners including those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with special needs, complete their education, including, where appropriate, through second chance education and the provision of more personalised learning (ET 2020 Strategy, strategic objective 3: Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship).

The third of four strategic objectives of the ET2020 Strategy is, in fact, a real challenge for the education systems and especially in initial VET the European ET systems are still far away to reach this objective.

The promotion of inclusive education and lifelong learning for learners with disabilities and special needs is also one of the priority areas set up by the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 adopted on 15 November 2010. Moreover, in the Bruges Communiqué the European Commission suggests to increase the possibilities for disadvantaged learners in VET by offering alternative pathways, innovative VET training formats, more Work-Based Learning (WBL) in the three main forms present at EU level as it is stated in "Work-Based Learning in Europe, Practices and Policy Pointers" in the initial VET (2013):

1) Alternance schemes or apprenticeships are typically known in Austria and Germany as the "dual system";
2) On-the-job training periods in companies. On-the-job training periods typically cover internships;
3) WBL that is integrated in a school-based programme, through internships, on-site labs, workshops, etc.

VET4ALL project looks at this challenge: it develops and implements an innovative didactical approach for students with disabilities and special needs in initial VET in the frame of WBL and EU-Mobility programmes in the partner countries: Bulgaria, Romania, Italy, Malta, Spain and Belgium.
The project objectives represent a reply to the above mentioned problems as it is inspired by the following factors:

- Train teachers and staff working with the target group to make WBL or internship experiences more fruitful and aimed at future job insertion even in an European context;
- Develop flexible pathways which connect the VET formal school curriculum to Work Based Learning for students with disabilities and special needs;
- Foster the implementation of ECVET principles and tools and develop an innovative approach to Mobility in order to facilitate the access for students with disabilities and special needs;
- Increase the possibility for students with disabilities and special needs to participate to a Mobility EU Experience;
- Support enterprise mentors and staff during the WBL/internship experience of students with disabilities and special needs.

The first intellectual output of the project, the VET4ALL Didactical Guidelines, is intended for the training of VET staff working directly with students with disabilities and special needs. It is a compact presentation of how didactical processes should be organized and implemented when dealing with students with disabilities and special needs, in order to support them during the work based learning (WBL) and internship experiences.

VET4ALL Didactical Guidelines is of crucial importance as it was built after investigating the real needs of VET teachers/staff in terms of competence gaps in supporting students with disabilities and special needs during WBL/internship experiences, in each partner country.

To build it, Centro San Viator was responsible for two activities:

- reviewing and analyzing best practices and all data regarding Supported Employment, including normative, and measures to facilitate job insertion and/or WBL experiences. Each partner sent data concerning their own country;
- developing a methodology for carrying out focus groups aimed at investigating the VET staff competence gaps, used by each partner countries, which identifies the representatives of the target group.

The main results of these activities are presented in this guide and will constitute the basis to develop the second intellectual output of the project, the VET4ALL Training Curriculum for VET staff.
METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH OF THE GUIDELINES
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In each Country VET teachers/staff in the field of VET and disabilities were selected among the partner organizations and associated partners. A Focus Group of 4 hours was organized per each partner country in order to analyze the competence gap in VET teachers/staff to support students with disabilities/special needs during their WBL experiences.

In order to compare data, the Focus Group methodology took into consideration some general principles:

- Standardization of questions: we created a grid to follow, but asked the partners to feel free to allow discussions to emerge. We also agreed that the focus group would take up to four hours and would be structured in 3 key points of debate:
  - The freezing phase: the beginning of discussions, establishing the discussions framework, clarifying the objectives and presenting the topics;
  - The confrontation phase: individual commitment, pooling divergent points of view, making everyone talk, managing possible conflicts;
  - The consciousness phase: resolution, synthesis propositions.

- Number of participants per group: it was decided there would be 10 per each partner organisation, but there might be reasons to have slightly larger groups. In total 73 participants took part to the Focus Groups. They had to be VET Teachers/staff dealing with students with disabilities and special needs in the frame of WBL. In all cases, the feedback had precisely describe the composition of the group:
  - age, sex, socioeconomic status;
  - diploma, professional background;
  - Type of organization.

- Level of moderator involvement: the point was to use the grid while allowing for the emergence of a group dynamic. The moderator’s interventions corresponded to 3 functions:
  - To produce discourse: openings, restarts, requests, requests for clarifications;
  - To confirm discourse: confrontation, corroboration, reformulation;
  - To steer the discussion: refocusing, thematic reminders, deductions, reconciliations.
The Focus Group led by the partners of the project were carried out at each country between December 2018 and February 2019. Some weeks before the activity took place an invitation to participate was sent to all schools, entities and professionals participants in each Focus Group.

### Summary of professional and personal background of participants to Focus Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Male - 32</th>
<th>Female - 41</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualification / Degree</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Most of them have University Degree in different fields:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Humanities (19)</td>
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<td>- Agrarian Sciences (8)</td>
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<td>- Sciences and Mathematics (7)</td>
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<td>- Economics (6)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Computer Technology (5)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- English Philology (1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Cooking (5)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Tourism (2)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Hospitality Management (1)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Hotel Management (1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Education (2)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Engineering (1)</td>
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<td>- Counselling and Career Guidance (1)</td>
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<td>- Business and Administration (1)</td>
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<td>- Technology (1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Post secondary school (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Others (10)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational Unit</td>
<td>All Vocational Schools (Professional and Technical)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>When did you start working in the field of VET and/or disability?</td>
<td>0-3 years: 8</td>
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<td>4-7 years: 9</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More than 7 years: 56</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How many students with disabilities and special needs are accompanied/cared in your organisation (all units)?</td>
<td>1130</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many professionals/teachers/trainers work in your organization (unit)?</td>
<td>416</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many people are responsible for the training/guidance and/or vocational integration of students with disabilities and special needs among these professionals/teachers/trainers?</td>
<td>All VET teachers and support teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many students with disabilities and special needs (15-25) are you in charge of?</td>
<td>On average every professional is in charge of 8-10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you briefly describe their profile? (Age group, education level, hometown, etc.)</td>
<td>Students between 15-20 years old living in the cities where VET schools are based or in their surrounding areas. A small percentage has migrational background. A quite high percentage of students (not clearly identified) has socioeconomic disadvantages and social problems.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE LEVEL OF INTEGRATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS INTO THE WORK-BASED LEARNING CONTEXTS: DEGREE OF DIFFICULTIES AND EXPECTATIONS
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In Bulgaria, the teachers stated that difficulties for our target group are both in acquiring knowledge as well as practical skills. They identified the necessity of accurate counselling according to the disability of the student and his/her ability to learn as well as a proper training to cope with the difficulties they encounter in WBL, as for example, an unfamiliar environment, which leads to increase in the degree of stress. In many cases, they are placed in a new environment that requires of them to join quickly and work with strangers and where staff doesn't have the adequate training. Parents also experience insecurity and suspicion when their child is to be taken out of school and integrated into a real work environment.

Also Italian teachers indicated that young people with disabilities and special needs face additional stresses during their WBL experiences. The majority of these students are being sheltered so they experience a shock when they have to shoulder a certain amount of responsibility and when they need to answer for their own actions during work experiences. In the case of problems related to the workplace and social difficulties, these include: a quite high degree of control; problems with colleagues; disorganization in the workplace; etc.

Even though employers view positively WBL experiences involving students with disabilities and special needs, they are not willing to support them. On the parents’ side, some have concerns about safety and often have doubts about the activities where they do not immediately see the learning value. The best answer to these concerns is to involve parents from the very beginning, as for example, in the planning of learning outside the classroom.

Besides, the majority of teachers agreed that students with disabilities and special needs have few expectations in terms of results achieved in a work context and no expectations at all in terms of paid employment at the end of the qualification path.

VET teachers face a quite high number of difficulties when dealing with the
planning and management of WBL paths for students with disabilities and special needs as the lack of specific competences and continuing professional development; not clear roles of teams dealing with the target group within the schools; not efficient monitoring systems; not up-to-date tools, instruments and didactic methodologies used; low level of involvement and interaction with families; reticence of companies to cooperate; too general and not tailor made evaluation methods and tools.

All the Spanish teachers agreed WBL programs are the most appropriate alternative for SEN students to be trained allowing them to be more competitive in the world of work. Training in pre-employment skills and competences, prior to entering the labour market, must go hand in hand with specific occupational training, since it has been found that the main difficulties in maintaining the job do not derive from the execution of tasks and assigned functions, but of the difficulty to display mature behaviour according to the demands of the work environment. Thus, problems of interaction with colleagues, assuming the principle of authority, difficulty in requesting help, maintaining schedules, etc., are some of the problematic situations that can lead to the loss of the job.

They also identified a lack of an adequate work orientation that allows them to acquire a realistic and coherent “Vocational Skills” between the aspirations, the possibilities and the limitations in a specific context.

The participants agreed that one of the main measures to be adopted is to reduce the distance between the current existing training offer and the demand for qualifications that companies currently have.

EfVET, being an umbrella organization, chose professionals from different countries in order to enrich the focus group. In the case of Finland, the participants agreed that special needs colleges care more for the disabled students nowadays. In the Finnish Education System the right to study of all citizens is guaranteed. For those who are not able to start in VET directly there is a Preparatory Education Programme that enables students for work and independent living. The National Agency for Education defines the national curricula, taking into account that everyone has the right to work and to independent living. However, teachers participate in the draft of the curricula given the fact that they know exactly what kind of difficulties the students are facing. The Ministry of Education pays special attention to the task of keep training and
guiding those who demand the most support, the ones who cannot apply to mainstream education.

In Romania they found there is a lack of trust, an acquired image of themselves as vulnerable and needing continuous support. Often, they do not struggle enough to prove their qualities, and sometimes the help of state institutions demotivates them.

The hiring process becomes even more difficult for people with disabilities when their desires and expectations about the job they want meet the real offers available on the labour market. If they do not identify a job that meets all of their requirements, some of them prefer to stay out of the labour market until the offer appears.

Employers consider that WBL experiences involving students with disabilities are positive, but they feel they are not reasonably motivated to support them and expect the state to provide more financial and fiscal incentives to employers who accept this form of learning based on working.

Family support is a key factor that promotes or prevents WBL-type studies, not all of them are satisfied with the learning out of the school space, some of them claiming the lack of qualified staff (mentors), others being concern about student safety.

VET teachers in Romania find difficulties in managing and planning WBL for students with disabilities. There is a need of multidisciplinary teams and a lack of effective monitoring systems. They also demand active involvement of families in the educational process as a priority and the necessity to adapt assessment methods and tools to the specifics of disabled students.

In Malta the participants in the focus group explained that all the students with disabilities must apply to the Inclusive Unit that assesses each case individually and provides career guidance and all the information to the students and parents. The Pathway to independent Living Programme is a two-year full-time course intended to offer training in independent living skills to students with mild to moderate learning disabilities. Students will develop the knowledge and practical skills needed to gain and maintain employment. Assessment is on-going throughout the course and students are required to participate in suitable work placements.

The major difficulty reported by the interviewees is the parents’ expectations...
that not always want to follow the advices given by the Inclusive coordinator and in that case the student will be registered in a course that might not be able to conclude, or eventually progress further that MQF level 1/2. The participants also reported that the selection of the courses individually is important for the wellbeing of the students and for their future employment that must be properly selected. In their opinion, the VET provider could have the legal possibility to deny the access to students to some courses, due to a disability that will make impossible for them to participate in practical classes and/or WBL, as they can’t perform the tasks required. The Inclusive Department by MCAST (Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology) reported that their guidance and dialogue with parents is crucial to create employment opportunities for all the students with special needs.
ACCOMODATIONS TO BE PUT IN PLACE TO HAVE ADEQUATE SCHOOLING AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING: SUCCESSFUL RESULT AND SKILLS ACQUIRED
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Participants in Bulgaria said that practical training in a real work environment facilitates the transition from school to employment for SEN students but to get so we have to give teachers the freedom to set the goal of the learning, as well as the knowledge and skills according to the abilities of each particular student. They also identified the need to adapt the training spaces and materials according to their needs as well as meet the students' and employers' expectations to ease their recruiting.

Meanwhile professionals in Italy considered that successful practice demands, in particular, a deeper involvement of families and all stakeholders from the VET system. They all agreed that to have adequate and successful training it would be necessary to implement a teamwork approach, including establishing multi-disciplinary teams with more clear roles of teachers and put in place clear, coherent training routes for school staff. We need to promote and ensure an approach where pedagogical methods, materials, assessment methods and goals are tailored to individual needs; this is to establish individual learning processes using flexible approaches, which allow for the development and implementation of individual plans.

Teachers discussed also on the task-by-task evaluation system of professional expertise (skills portfolio), as a system fostering access to work and concluded that it focuses on the acquisition of learning outcomes as the starting point for the validation and recognition of competences, instead of lessons or detailed study contents. At the same time it also diversifies learning environments – increase in studying at workplaces and other different learning environments.

Relatedly the participants in Spain, they described some fundamental methodological aspects that should be taken into account when establishing the relationship between companies-VET centres-trainees. The companies, in collaboration with the VET centres, must structure the learning activities so that they are as close as possible to the needs of the labour market. We, VET
actors, must promote strategies that facilitate the responsibility for learning, motivation for learning, collaboration, the development of strategic learning clearly oriented towards the labour insertion of people with disabilities/special needs.

EfVET’s partners remarked the importance of the students visiting the future working place with the school staff before the training begins. The person professionally trained to deal with this transition is a teacher on most occasions. When meeting the employer, the teacher focuses on the strengths of the student, rather than on the disability.

It was underlined in Romania that successful professional training involves several actors: student, family, school and company. If students are encouraged by school and by parents, the effectiveness of training as such is increasing. Parents support enables successful completion of workplace learning and effective student adaptation to that institution, by providing guidance, support and motivation.

There were identified some difficulties in the educational process diagnosis as, for example, that not all students have the professional basic knowledge or are not familiar with the actual working conditions (the existence of a work schedule, rules to be observed at the workplace etc.).

The teachers found out the need of adapted curriculum taking into account the needs of our students and creating a relevant and valuable education for the students’ social context. They also expressed the need to monitor of the practical training by the instructor in the school workshops. The success of the training session can be counted by facilitating the graduate’s transition to the workplace, the professional insertion and the results obtained by it, in time, to the future job. An effective evaluation strategy for assessing student performance needs to be developed. It should include students’ formative and summative feedback, but also from companies.

In Malta the VET tutors debated different measures that are being used to improve standards and evaluate VET programmes and employment support services for students with special needs. For example, MCAST has an Inclusion Committee to monitor the implementation of the College inclusive policy, monitor student support services and developments in the Pathways course. Jobsplus (Malta’s Public Employment Service) caters for the needs of persons
with a disability through its supported employment division and schemes to encourage employers to engage persons with disability. The Jobsplus assessment team includes professionals such as Occupational Psychologists and Occupational Therapists. Psychology and/or HR Development graduates are recruited for posts of employment support coordinators/managers. Jobsplus participants referred the need to increase the number of projects funded by the Maltese Government to promote the employability level for the persons with disabilities; and, to promote workshops within the companies to increase their participation in traineeships schemes. The participants referred that it is important to continue to develop the courses being offered, improve them and increase the number of opportunities being offered. Create and adapt new methods of assessment that can realistic measure the skills of these students with special needs. Schools also need to be updated with the latest technologies that can help to integrate these students.
COOPERATION WITH COMPANIES TO MAKE WORK-BASED LEARNING CONCRETE AND FUNCTIONING
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Bulgarian professionals observed that the aim of WBL is to develop the practical skills of the students and to acquire skills and competences for rapid realization in the labour market and that business partnership is obligatory in VET. In their case, the employers’ organizations in tourism in Veliko Tarnovo and the region provide jobs for practical training for all professions taught and studied in the school.

They all agreed that generally what is good and efficient practice for learners with disabilities and special needs in VET and in the transition to employment is good practice for ALL learners.

The Italian participants mainly focused on “La Buona Scuola” (The Good School) Reform, in fact, a comprehensive set of new education measures, which had, between others, the explicit objective of spurring stronger linkages between schools, students and the world of work so as to promote a smoother transition of Italian youth from education to jobs by providing students with better tools to develop those skills that are required by Italian enterprises.

The Guidelines for the implementation of the ASL Reform (Alternanza Scuola-Lavoro = Alternating School and Work) suggest that a major role should be played by schools and schools headmasters in: first, the analysis of local labour markets’ skill needs; and, second, in the establishment of linkages with companies in the local territory so as to satisfy those local skill needs and create bridges with enterprises.

Teachers said that the lack of effective cooperation between schools and employers in the definition of internships’ goals is confirmed by the fact that many students have, so far, participated to the ASL’s internships periods at the end of the school year, when courses have been already taught at school. The experience at the workplace has been often detached from students’ studies and, while still valuable in most cases, it does not seem to robustly constitute an integral part of the students’ education and learning paths. This is considered much more true when talking about students with special needs, due to
disability, social and background difficulties.
All in all, the implementation of the ASL reform requires, according to teachers, more clarity on the division of tasks of staff and stakeholders involved and greater support should be provided to schools and schools staff in developing the adequate skills that are key to a successful implementation.
In the North of Spain, Centro San Viator has always been working hand by hand with the companies of their area. This has let them create an important network of reliable partner companies. All participants agreed that without this network their task, training people, would be impossible as companies are crucial. Some participants remarked that not only companies are necessary to success in their goal we also need the public and private institutions that finance these activities.
The participants agreed that school has to design clear strategy that has to be revised every three years and this has to be done by the teachers of the different areas. They recalled how four years ago they decided to strengthen the relationship with all those companies of protected employment. Until then they basically used to “make use of” them to place the students, but at that time they started a dialogue to create a win-win strategy. This idea was also translated to other companies such as Decathlon and IKEA.
To give even greater coherence to all this, and given the special educational needs presented by the students, they established the figure of a tutor who remains with the group throughout the whole training period and who was the bridge between the school and company. This figure aimed to facilitate the adaptation of students to the centre and the course as well as to detect what may be the interests and individual characteristics of the students for the design of Training Plan in Work Centres (internships). During these visits the tutors talk to the companies’ staff and work with them to identify the needs and possible solutions.
In Finland they also face challenges when it comes to finding companies willing to employ students with disabilities; nonetheless they try to find solutions for this kind of difficulties. The schools and the companies cooperate and the system is similar all over the country. There are cases when companies are not interested, but then the teachers contact another company. In fact, in Finland, at the moment there are more jobs than job seekers.
In this perspective, in Romania the connections or partnerships with the companies (or employers) are carried out in accordance with the legislation in force. One of the working tools is The Framework Contract for Vocational Education for Students through State Vocational Education. The school unit organizes regular meetings with the company, round tables etc., to identify the needs and the degree of satisfaction. For a better visibility of the availability of a workplace and workplace learning activities, it would be ideal to have a database in which each company provides information on the offer, the number of students they can teach, working conditions, whether assure the raw materials and materials required in practical training sessions, incentives and other forms of support provided to practitioners etc. Educational establishments generally conclude framework contracts with economic operators for a period of at least 4 school years, which form the basis of practical training contracts for students in vocational education.

In Malta MCAST, ITS (Institute of Tourism Studies) and Jobsplus maintain a strong link with industry in order to match their practices with the local labour market needs. Representatives from industry form part of their Boards of Directors.

All entities include apprenticeships pathways as main core of the training provided, in this way all the students can develop the theoretical and practical skills necessary to enter in the labour market.

Each organization provide an online platform that helps and assist the students when they need to find a sponsor, also always with the guidance of the WBL department and inclusive coordinator.

The participants said that several factors affect the level of participation of the companies and those factors need to be improved: more workshops in the schools involving the stakeholders; creating courses that can lead to more job opportunities; decrease the courses based on practical skills; include coaches that can train/mentor the students in the companies during the WBL and not only during the school base learning; adapt the tasks that the students can do accordingly to their skills and personality; on-going feedback with companies’ mentors during the WBL and employment schemes; increase the number of monitoring visits to the companies that is two per year according to the Maltese law.
KEY FACTORS LEADING TO SUCCESSFUL VET RESULTS AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS
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In Bulgaria, PGT D-r V.Beron’s professionals claim employers’ partners play a key role in organizing and conducting practical training, especially at the second/final stage of secondary education, as well as in the assessment of vocational competences for acquiring professional qualification. Schools and employers’ organizations are also partners in analysing labour market needs, and in determining the necessary professions and specialties to be admitted for the respective school year. In Bulgaria, the partnership between business and education has long-standing traditions. It is considered both are two sides of a common process, equally interested in the final results.

Likewise, in Italy teachers discussed and identified the key factors that, according to them, lead to successful VET results with a clear link to employment opportunities for students with disabilities and special needs. First a more structured legal framework on inclusive education in secondary schools: a legal framework that allows VET schools to offer different levels of work-based learning with different curricula leading to different qualification levels. Second, teachers, headmasters and staff need to be highly qualified, motivated, committed, dedicated and open in expressing their enthusiasm. Third, multi-disciplinary teams have to be established in schools and have to include all professionals involved in VET. Learners need to be better assessed prior starting the work-based learning programme. This means that the most appropriate WBL programmes are selected, matching learners’ abilities and wishes. We need a more flexible learner-centred approach, tailoring pedagogical methods and materials, the curriculum, assessment methods and goals, etc., to individual needs. The focus is, in this way, on the learners’ capabilities. The school has to be capable of matching labour market skills requirements and the learners’ skills. Teachers/trainers have to be able to adapt their pedagogical methods to match the employers’ needs. Teachers and staff expert in career counselling have to inform and guide learners regarding employment possibilities. They have to facilitate and support contact with employers, pro-
vide support with job applications, offer information and assistance to employers and provide additional support to students with disabilities and special needs.

Staff from Centro San Viator claimed that dual training generates opportunities for success and facilitates the access to the labour market for young people with disabilities/special needs and at the same time it lets them achieve greater levels of autonomy, understanding as the ability to direct its own personal process, emancipate himself/herself, generate expectations of progress, and seek personal independence and equalization within the society in which we live, stimulating their social involvement, promoting decision-making, responding to their mistakes as they have to take responsibility.

Regardless all the previous points, without family support, WBL won’t success. The family has to believe that their child will be able to work and also be involved in the preparation process.

In EfVET workshop, Finnish participants agreed that they also find difficulties. Sometimes employers do not have extra staff to support them as much as they need. Nevertheless, there are benefits that the employers can get if they hire people with disabilities. If they need extra special material the employer can obtain support from the State. The social responsibility is a very important factor; it has a marketing value for the companies.

Similar to Finland, in Italy companies also have incentives from the State to hire persons with disabilities, but the situation differs. Often, companies prefer to pay the fine instead of hiring persons with disabilities/special needs. They believe that having a worker with disabilities/special needs means less production rhythm.

So, we can notice different kinds of approaches. Two Finnish schools have even particular severe cases of disability and still they succeed making this model a good example to follow and to learn from.

All the participants agreed with the fact that personal relationships are very important. The working environment is improved with persons with disabilities. The other workers will be pleased if they can share their working space with persons with disabilities, helping to develop empathy and contribute to build a more inclusive society, rather just producing. Performance is important but it is not the most important part of what a person can provide. In order
to trust the proposal, the companies need to be willing to see the benefits and the importance of personal relationships with their own eyes.

In Finland they also face challenges when it comes to finding companies willing to employ students with disabilities, nonetheless they try to find solutions for this kind of difficulties. The schools and the companies cooperate and the system is similar all over the country. There are cases when companies are not interested, but then the teachers contact another company. In fact, in Finland, at the moment there are more jobs than job seekers.

In the same way, in Romania, Scoala Profesionala Samus' teachers have discussed and identified the key factors that, according to them, lead to success results with a clear link to employment opportunities for students with disabilities and special needs as a legal framework that allows VET schools to offer different levels of workplace education with a differentiated curriculum leading to different levels of qualification. Policy flexibility allows schools to offer different levels of VET programs (vocational and education training), different curricular areas and different qualifications according to the needs of each learner. We need partnerships for cooperation with local companies for practical training and/or work after qualification and dialogue with parents and families as equal partners and individual learning plans (students' centred). To do so teachers/trainers must be able to adapt their pedagogical methods to suit the needs of employers. VET programs need to be reviewed periodically, both internally and externally, to adapt to current and future skills requirements.

In Malta, they highlighted that one of the keys for success is that teachers, staff and support personnel need to be qualified accordingly to the task they have to face. All VET curricula are being set as outcome-oriented and more responsive to industry, nearly all public VET provision is based on home grown courses to reflect national needs, however requires more feedback from guidance services through tracer studies. Adapt the assessment learning outcomes for students with disabilities included in mainstreams courses. We need to include learning support assistants during the work placement in the companies, helping in this way the sponsor to achieve better results. Therefore, many other job opportunities would increase, if the companies are better supported in the training and in tasks related to contact with the public.
COMPETENCES AND EXPERIENCES NEEDED FROM VET TEACHERS TO SMOOTHER THE TRANSITION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND SEN FROM SCHOOL TO JOB MARKET
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Indeed in Bulgaria, VET teachers possess pedagogical competence which is insufficient for the specificity of teaching students with disabilities and SEN. They conduct the teaching process on the basis of their pedagogical experience and of their intuitive judgment of the child’s abilities. Thus the work gets more complicated and does not always produce the desired result.

Regarding learning through work, the teacher who conducts practical training plays a key role. With the purpose of successful school-to-work transition of students with disabilities and SEN, in short, the following teaching skills are required:

- Practical training in a real working environment starts after the first stage of secondary education /8-10 grade/, since the teacher has recognized student’s condition. That same student has already acquired basic vocational skills;
- To know the capabilities of SEN students and the professional competencies they have mastered to date;
- To be informed about the places for practical training, with which the school has concluded an agreement;
- To evaluate the production activities and the workload ratio at each workplace;
- To be able to choose the most suitable workplace for a particular student with disabilities or SEN;
- Explain to the employer the skills of the student with disability or SEN and the opportunities to occupy the work place;
- Document the tasks and activities the student performs, the durable results to be achieved by the training, the ways of evaluation;
- Document the rules to be followed during the practical training and introduce students to them;
- The teacher introduces the student with disability or SEN to the employer, introduces him to the mentor and together they bring him/her to the workplace.

At the same time in Italy, teachers provided information mainly on practices that they usually put in place on helping students with disabilities and special
needs to make a successful transition to employment. They were considering the importance of effective planning for each student, career exploration, preparing young people for employment, building partnerships with companies and employers.

The most relevant aspects pointed out by them for an effective work experience include the following practices and support:

**a) Documenting learning objectives**

When a work experience opportunity is secured, specific learning objectives for the student are identified and documented. These objectives relate to general goals such as learning to follow instructions, learning about workplace safety, and adhering to basic workplace expectations (such as arriving and leaving on time, being appropriately dressed, etc.). Objectives also address specific job related skills for the occupation that the student is experiencing. Learning objectives are reviewed with the student, family and employer prior to the start of the work experience opportunity.

**b) Conducting on-site visits and meetings with the employer/company**

Before work experience commences, the support teacher undertakes an on-site visit with the employer. This visit has a variety of purposes, including:

- Becoming familiar with the workplace – with a focus on the physical layout, the “social” conditions of the workplace, and the people with whom the student will be interacting (particularly immediate supervisors and co-workers);
- Learning about the job that the student will be learning, including the specific tasks, the sequence of tasks, and the requirements of the employer for job performance;
- Determining if the student may require specific accommodations in order to learn and do the job effectively. Accommodations may take many forms and can involve strategies such as picture cues, time-keeping aids, modified job tasks, etc.;
- Determining any specific workplace safety issues and practices that may need to be reviewed with the student;
- Establishing the roles of the employer, workplace supervisors, the work experience coordinator, employment support workers (such as a mentor), and the student.
c) Introducing the student to the workplace

Before the student begins his/her work experience opportunity, some activities to introduce him/her to the workplace are important. These can include the following:

- Allow the student to participate to an interview with the employer to discuss the job and its responsibilities. This step helps to prepare the student for future job interviews;
- Providing a general orientation to the workplace and a review of the specific job the student will be learning;
- Introducing the student to workplace supervisors and potential co-workers.

Teachers also discussed on the fact that some students with disability or special needs require on the job support to effectively participate in work experience programmes. There are a number of employment training and job mentoring practices that have been proven effective in helping students develop job skills, learn job tasks and become more independent within the workplace. These include conducting job and task analyses, developing concrete task lists, identifying and developing appropriate workplace accommodations, providing timely prompts and reinforcement within the work environment, support fading strategies, etc.

However, difficulties arise when relying on support teachers to provide job related supports. Support teachers are often not readily available to leave the school because of other duties they are expected to perform, making it difficult for them to provide job support to students on work experience placements. In this regard, a student may be denied opportunities to experience work in the hosting company because a support teacher is not available. Also, the support teachers (while they know particular students well) quite often do not have received training in providing job training and coaching supports, nor they have detailed knowledge of the particular job that the student has to learn.

Besides, a student’s transition planning team would be necessary and thus be prepared to evaluate the quality of the work experience. This means that the school staff and support teachers have to take the time to determine the effectiveness of the work experience.

Depending on the nature and duration of the work experience, evaluation
may also need to involve the learning of specific job skills and competencies. This will need to be a common practice if a structured work based learning opportunity is developed for the student.

In the end, teachers agreed that the path to employment for students with a disability or a special need can be a successful one when attention is paid to the practices and strategies that make a real difference. The Focus Group has outlined some key components of effective practice that are based on research and experience in schools. Schools that implement these practices will lay the foundation for successful employment outcomes for today’s youth. These outcomes will be strengthened when students, families, community organizations and employers/companies are engaged as important collaborators in the transition to work process.

Centro San Viator considered that it is necessary to highlight the enormous potential of the young people with whom they work, who, despite having socialized in a context that is often not conducive to the development of their employability and personal competence and of encountering numerous barriers, however, show a great determination and enthusiasm to work and lead an absolutely normalized and integrated life.

To be able to advance in a social and labour integration, innovative strategies are needed oriented to participation, labour integration, empowerment, personal significance and other activities that enable the strengthening and integration of the person in their community.

It is therefore to promote the person as well as in the workplace, in all spheres of his life, since, as has been said, employability depends on many factors not directly labour.

It is precisely this support to the promotion of the person, to their integral development as a person, to prepare a person in all its facets, in all its vital areas, so that he/she is definitely in the right conditions to face employment, the labour market, which is the most real reflection of the social structure that supports us, all this will be what will characterize the work of the Program.

When designing this project, we start from the premise that competences are not only learned, but trained. Therefore, a WORK BASED LEARNING methodology that is presented as the basis of Dual Training has as its premise active participation, solving a selection of activities that are presented to students
individually and in groups in a work environment. Each activity works and promotes, in a flexible way, the development of certain competences, taking into account the individual and group level, as well as the nature of the objectives, always defining the company as a priority learning environment.

In this sense, the development of learning scenarios that facilitate the development of Professional and Personal Competences adapted to the environments and that generate wealth in society plays a key role.

In addition, these scenarios should facilitate the interaction between the productive world and the Vocational Training Centres, so that students develop their skills in the most appropriate spaces. That is why one of the fundamental aspects of this project is that companies participate in the training of students. People with special educational needs are trained, mainly, in the adult stage with an educational path that encourages them to continue to involve in programs, activities and services that continue to enhance their capabilities. The adult stage is a moment of the life cycle that requires, in function, to redouble efforts. We guarantee the necessary supports and maximize the capabilities of people with disabilities/special needs.

In addition, the school period has ended, these people who have had access to school integration demand explicitly or implicitly, the continuity in an ordinary system that allows a social insertion in the broad sense of the word, understanding the right to be formed and access a job in the ordinary company. However, reality is the group of people with disabilities/special needs, in addition to overcoming the difficulties inherent in the period of transition from youth to adult life, must face other problems than their disability as for example their access to the job market.

The complexity of the social and labour integration of people with disabilities/special needs justifies the help to establish a set of specific training actions. Training has acquired a decisive role to facilitate access and permanence in the workplace. Training programs are also the most appropriate alternative for students with special educational needs who are trained in their skills and abilities, which allow them to be more competitive in the world of work. More than 70% of people with disabilities/special needs with the ability to work are in unemployment. The reason for the task is not adequate.
While in EfVET workshop, participants discussed that there are still plenty of difficulties and limitations for persons with disabilities, even though nowadays there is greater need and demand. Overall, the system has not improved in spite of the fact that the legal framework stresses that appropriate support must be provided at all levels. Work needs to be understood not simply as an occupation or position for which one receives payment but as social relations between people, which has a great value in itself. Creating inclusive environments is about ensuring that all institutions have a budget to function effectively as they ensure that organization and assessment are made inclusive.

One should, however, not forget that, in Finland the educational system has always been very well structured, but 10-15 years ago the focus was on the schools. Now the system has enabled teachers to put learners’ abilities at the centre of the educational approach and see opportunities rather than challenges. Also, regarding the preparation of students for the life after school, teaching them how to behave at job interviews, how to apply, where and how to get support, is an obligatory part of the curricula.

Often, before organising job fairs where the employers present their companies and the vacancies they have, in cooperation with other vocational schools, the students get ready for meeting the prospective employer: they have their hair and nails done, etc. in order to look suitable for the work environment. This event is called “habitus day” and it has become very popular among the students.

Cooperation with other schools and companies is a key factor. Most schools have a system in which they have to participate in education plans to work on this. All the schools have some kind of development for the staff. They believe in lifelong learning and train themselves with personal development plans to be proactive and constant learners. People are very interested in learning.

When the students have to leave the schools and become independent in Finland they are prepared through extensive programmes. They are thought how to apply for a job, how to behave in job interviews, how to prepare documents like CVs, applications. This area is well covered and is a part of the curriculum.

In Romania, the training and professionalization of pupils, teenagers and adult learners with mental, sensory and/or associated deficiencies is a long-lasting,
complex process whose success depends largely on the professionalism of competent teachers to support and offer them the necessary education, assistance for integration into work; in details:

- The purpose of VET teacher competencies and experiences;
- Counselling to increase employment in the labour market and to help reduce the early school leaving rate;
- Identifying and applying practical, modern didactic strategies in practical and theoretical activities applied to students with mental, sensory and/or associated deficiencies at the vocational education level in order to increase their employment and professional development opportunities;
- Raising students’ interest in school by upgrading classical teaching methods centred on students and combining theory with practice to avoid monotony in developing professional skills.

In the last point, in Malta the participants debated the training being offered in the Country for VET tutors, which are the services offered at the schools, and witch points can be improved.

VET is mainly provided at MCAST and ITS, those teaching in these institutions are in their main either Assistant Lecturers or Lecturers. Some of them come from industry while others come from formal educational institutions. Those not having a teaching qualification follow an in-service course in pedagogy as part of their professional development – the Post-Graduate Course in Vocational Education and Training.

They may also follow the BTEC Certificate in Further Education Teaching. This is an eighteen-month intensive course in pedagogy at further education level specifically designed for a vocational and training institution. There are also some teaching staff who are designated as facilitators working at MCAST. These are attached to the Inclusive Education Unit and assist students with developmental delay. In MCAST there is also ongoing training for Learning Support Assistants, who assist the students with special needs in one to one tutoring on during the classes. To progress in their careers, LSAs need to successfully complete a diploma course at the University.

To ensure a smoother transition from the compulsory school to the further education system, the students are offered with a guidance and counselling service by ITS and MCAST. The team of Counsellors and Career Advisors works
together to optimize the service both to prospective students and their parents. The participants marked that this is the most important factor when dealing with the application of students with disabilities, as students will be better prepared and confident in their work-based learning. The school’s career advisers and Inclusive coordinator work together with them to clarify doubts, provide alternative paths, explore career options and decide on the right one to reach their goals through individual appointments. Career Advisers explore with them alternative study programmes available at the VET providers or elsewhere. Adults who are considering furthering their studies or are searching for alternative careers may also make use of career guidance services. During the work-based learning process the students are also assisted with the WBL/Apprenticeship department to help them to choose a sponsor, prepare them for job interviews and curriculum.

The Department of Inclusion had mentioned that although there are the Learning support teachers throughout all process, the VET tutors that provide the classes in the courses are not entirely prepared to deal with students with special needs as lack of their training. Most of them come from the industry and the training received needs to be improved to give them the right tools to teach, integrate and assess the students. These teachers are responsible for their theoretical teaching, for all the assessment process and for the work placement guidance. For these reasons they need to be ready to find alternatives, original and unique solutions to integrate the students with special needs in the entire process of school-based learning.

The interviewees concluded that all VET tutors should have specific training on how to teach students with disabilities, because the students are integrated in the mainstream’s courses, for this reason, all VET tutors must be prepared and accept the fact that is not an optional career choice, but as part of their mandatory teaching curriculum.
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS
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To summarize, in Bulgaria, the participants deduced the following conclusions:

1. Students with disabilities and SEN are easily adaptable and acquire professional skills by carrying out practical activities, therefore practical training is very effective;
2. When direct students with disabilities and SEN to employment, they feel stressed because they are separated from the familiar school environment;
3. Students with disabilities and SEN expect in the first place social adaptation and an environment that supports and cares for them. This is why they are not looking for a successful career;
4. There is a legal framework for inclusion, integration and vocational training of children with disabilities and SEN;
5. The condition of a student with disabilities and SEN determines his/her ability to perform certain activities and to practice a particular profession;
6. School teachers are not trained to assess the condition of the student, to prepare appropriate didactic materials and to apply appropriate methods for assessing students’ skills and knowledge;
7. In many cases, students with disabilities and SEN need individual work and their training in a group with other students makes it difficult for the teacher to work;
8. Employers are positive, but have no trained mentors and cannot always adapt their production activities to the capabilities of a student with disability or SEN.

In respect of the recommendations and the solutions that they proposed:

1. School-to-work transition should be as smoothly as possible:
   • Undertaking initial practical skills at school;
   • Developing professional skills in a real environment through practical training at the second high school stage;
2. Targeting a profession and vocational training have to take place after an assessment of the student’s condition and ability to practice the profession or part of it. The evaluation is to be carried out by a team of specialists;
3. In the development of didactical materials and in the learning process, the teacher has to be assisted by a teaching assistant who is trained to work with students with disability or SEN;
4. To establish mentors in the workplace;
5. To provide financial stimuli and tax relief to the employers;
6. To inform employers about documents certifying acquired vocational skills;
7. To enable schools to be more flexible in training students with disabilities and SEN, measuring the learning outcomes in relation to the abilities of each particular student;
8. To train teachers to work with students with disabilities and SEN;
9. Creating a disabled-friendly workplaces in the training workshops;
10. It is necessary that the curricula include business communication topics and preparation classes in which students write application forms, motivation letters, CVs. They also study the methodology of conducting job interviews and simulate interviews.

While the Italian Focus Group found out:

**Difficulties that are specific to disability**

1. Degree of responsibility that each student needs to have and to shoulder at work (students need to answer for their own actions during work experiences and quite often they don’t);
2. The majority of students with disabilities and special needs are being sheltered and not exposed to the reality of life;
3. Difficulty to get used to the work itself, the need to be at work on time, to do as they are told;
4. Low level of involvement and interaction with families;
5. For several reasons parents are often not enthusiastic about learning outside the classroom;
6. Students with disabilities and special needs have few expectations in terms of results achieved in a work context and no expectations at all in terms of paid employment at the end of the qualification path.

**Difficulties tied to training**

1. The difference itself between the world of work and school;
2. Schools are often detached from the real world and also from work;
3. Lack of teachers’ specific competences and continuing professional development;
4. Lack of specific training on labour market issues of many teachers, staff and school headmasters;
5. Not clear roles of school teams dealing with the target group within the schools;
6. Not efficient monitoring systems put in place;
7. Not up-to-date tools, instruments and didactic methodologies used;
8. Too general and not tailor made evaluation methods and tools.

**Difficulties tied to being integrated into a company and company life**
1. Students need to have a quite high degree of control during workplace and quite often they don’t;
2. Problems with colleagues and co-workers;
3. Degree of disorganization in the workplace;
4. Reticence of companies to cooperate: although employers view positively WBL experiences involving students with disabilities or special needs (mainly for social responsibilities), concretely they are not that willing to support them;
5. Employers are usually in a difficult position when accepting students with special needs and disabilities within their premises, as these need to be monitored constantly and their safety ensured.

**Difficulties tied to support/coaching methods**
1. Difficulties, from support teachers side, to provide job support to students on work experience placements;
2. Support teachers quite often do not have received training in providing job training and coaching supports, nor they have detailed knowledge of the particular job that the student has to learn.

**The Recommendations/solutions that they proposed are the following**
1. A more structured legal framework on inclusive education in secondary schools needs to be put in place together with the required support;
2. Teachers, headmasters and school staff need to be highly motivated, committed and dedicated. Teachers and staff need to believe in learners’ abilities and see opportunities rather than challenges;
3. Enable schools to implement a teamwork approach, including establishing multi-disciplinary teams with more clear roles of teachers;
4. Put in place clear, coherent training routes for school staff to develop the expertise needed to cooperate with internal and external support services;
5. Promote and ensure an approach where pedagogical methods, materials, assessment methods and goals are tailored to individual needs;
6. Involving parents from the very beginning in the planning of learning outside the classroom. This gives them the opportunity to share essential information with staff and teachers;
7. Better coordinating and facilitating transition planning process;
8. Individual education/learning/training/transition plans are to be developed and implemented, and lead to individual curricula;
9. Investigating community programmes and resources that may benefit students before and after they complete the school;
10. Approaching more and more employers/companies and other organizations to arrange work experiences;
11. Partnerships involving all stakeholders and services need to be established, formalised and co-ordinated. This includes establishing co-operation structures with local companies for practical training and/or jobs after qualification and dialogue with parents and families as equal partners;
12. Providing more incentives, financial, fiscal or other, to those employers who choose to support work based learning schemes for students with disabilities and special needs;
13. Enable schools to safeguard learner-center with regard to planning, goal setting and curriculum;
14. Create a framework to enable schools to establish individual learning processes using flexible approaches, which allow for the development and implementation of individual plans for learning, education, training and transition;
15. Put in place monitoring systems that examine the efficiency of measures being implemented by schools. This would also help teachers to improve their educational skills;
16. Ensure that all VET programs and courses are under permanent review, in order to match learners’ skills to labour market skills requirements;
17. Ensure that schools focus on learners’ capabilities;
18. Ensure that schools respect learners’ wishes and expectations in all steps of the transition process;
19. Teachers and staff expert in career counselling have to inform and guide learners regarding employment possibilities. They have to facilitate and support contact with employers, provide support with job applications, offer information and assistance to employers and provide additional support to students with disabilities and special needs;
20. Staff, such as teachers, trainers, job coaches, career counsellors and mentors, as well as resources are to be permanently available throughout the transition to work and during employment. Formal job coaching programmes, career guidance and support services, including after-care and preparation of employers, are to be permanently available;

21. Competent staff has to provide also follow-up support activities, for as long as required, addressing the needs of employers and young graduates/qualified in order to maintain learners’ employment in companies.

In Spain, Centro San Viator advocated a comprehensive approach based on the empowerment of the young person, who is the main actor in his/her process and we accompany him/her throughout it; since his/her access to the dual training program, he/she participates in the planning, design and evaluation of his/her personalized insertion itinerary, becoming involved in decision-making and being jointly responsible for actions aimed at the integral development of his/her potential. Our goal is to bet on innovating in training for employment as a mechanism to get the labour insertion in ordinary companies of young people.

The most important problems the teachers have identified are:

1. Lack of training in technical and socio-professional skills among people with intellectual disabilities and/or mental illness;

2. Need to boost employability through new ways of action such as Dual Training combined with internships abroad, although we know that they are effective in promoting access to the labour market of young people, have not yet been used as a formula of improvement of labour insertion in this group;

3. Establish networking as a mechanism to improve the social and working conditions of people with disabilities and/or mental illness, including entities, vocational training centres and European companies that develop programs similar to ours and that count among their workers with people with disabilities and/or mental illness;

4. To combine innovation, internationalization and training as formulas that help in the labour insertion process of people with disabilities and/or mental illness.

To solve these problems, the team recommended that training must be structured around certain methodological criteria:

1. The training must be comprehensive and personalized. To do this, an individualized program is established that starts from the student’s initial situation,
taking into account their abilities, needs, expectations and their learning pace. This individual work favours the autonomy of the student and allows a more direct and appropriate intervention;

2. It is a general training, that is to say, the training contents must be useful for the development of the daily life of the future workers and in fact, whenever possible it should be carried out in real environments;

3. The training must be meaningful for the subject. For this, the opinions and demands of the person with disabilities must be listened to and their active participation encouraged throughout the training process. In addition, it is important to explain why it is important that they learn each one of the contents, and that they know its usefulness;

4. It must be a training adjusted to the chronological age of the student, selecting for this purpose motivating and relevant learning for an adult person, thus discarding infantile or excessively academic contents. This in general leads to the elaboration of the teaching materials, since it is not easy to find materials that adjust to the cognitive level of adults with intellectual disabilities or special needs;

5. It is a training based on transversal contents: the contents of the training and its objectives should not affect a single training area. An interdisciplinary treatment of the different areas and activities is proposed, avoiding, whenever possible, the division of the different training components and covering the different personal, social and work areas;

6. Training must include attitudinal and socio-personal elements: decision-making, choice, self-esteem, self-knowledge, ethical values, all of which are fundamental to be able to develop autonomously in adult life. It is also important to work on training contents related to the recognition and solution of problems, since the person with disability must be provided with the basic resources to be able to face problems related to work;

7. It must also be functional training prioritizing fundamentally functional components that are configured as the most appropriate for the social and labour integration of people with disabilities. These components favour the development of practical intelligence and social intelligence but not necessarily academic intelligence, an aspect highly valued in our society.
To summarize the EfVET team has presented these challenges and recommendations:

1. Employing students with disabilities/special needs in companies still represents a huge challenge. Often, companies are not willing to hire students with disabilities/special needs arguing that they run the risk of slowing the production;
2. There are still serious difficulties and limitations for persons with disabilities/special needs, even though nowadays there is greater need and demand. The system needs to be improved;
3. Importance of creating awareness and educate the society in order to understand and learn why is important to live and work in an inclusive way;
4. It is essential to identify the needs of staff within institutions/companies working with persons with disabilities/special needs with the aim of building the capacity and environment necessary to enhance inclusion;
5. Need to invest in the training of staff members working with students with disabilities/special needs;
6. Educate employers about the benefits of hiring persons with disabilities/special needs to create better awareness, understanding and expertise on different areas of inclusivity;
7. Need to move from a college-centred approach to a student-centred one;
8. Necessity of working together at European Union level;
9. Significance of having a structured legal framework on inclusive education. Finland disability legislation represents a good example.

In the Focus Group carried out in Romania the main conclusions have been:

1. The legislation on people with disabilities is correct, but it should be better known by companies, these being reluctant to host trainees, and if they are accepted, they only provide unskilled jobs;
2. Matching the job profile with the skills of young people with disabilities (the skills of the children with special needs do not match the expectations of the companies);
3. The skills of young people with intellectual disabilities are too low, and there is a lack of educational resources related to real practice, which leads to a low efficiency of disabled employees;
4. Organizing job fairs, with a special focus on young people with disabilities;
5. During the counselling hours, students receive information on the job search
stages – starting with the correct reading of an announcement, drawing up the cover letter and the CV, preparing the documents required for the job, presenting an interview, clothing, behaviour and language used during the interview;
6. Receive information on places where they can apply for a job – e.g.: County Agency for Employment, Mass Media, Internet, ads posted in shop windows, knowledge, friends.

We cannot talk about building a long-term career plan, unless there is a better collaboration between the teacher, the assistant, the tutor and the mentor.

These are some difficulties on providing support that the teachers pointed out:
1. The obstacles, in the opinion of professionals, to continue to work with young people with disabilities are: on the one hand are skills and, on the other hand, are attitudes of the population;
2. Low qualified education implies a lack of social and cognitive abilities and a lack of basic skills for work: working habits, work discipline, responsibility, punctuality, professional development, good communication, time management, teamwork, skills problem solving and independent thinking;
3. Currently compulsory education does not provide the basic skills needed to get a job;
4. Wrong attitudes: lack of motivation, low self-esteem, and firstly, wrong expectations (great inconsistency between their capacities and the jobs they want);
5. Employers attitude: feelings such as ignorance, fear and hostility towards people with disabilities;
6. Parental responsibility for schooling children and ensuring their education / development;
7. Community awareness and mobilization;
8. Difficult social and family contexts: It is normal to find overprotection in the family;
9. Complete lack of work experience;
10. Lack of specific training resources for young people with disabilities.

There is a general lack of skills, including competences for an independent life, different skills and habits of self-care, communication skills, teamwork, learning skills and obtaining new information in order to improve the knowledge and skills, social adaptability, concentration and stability of attention, self-control activity and involvement in various activities.

1. **Motivation for work**: low desire to work and to be active;
2. **Professional and vocational orientation training**: acquiring knowledge and skills for a concrete job, working habits and skills, practice, theoretical training, physical skills and competences, the link between individual interests and professional development, stable interest in a concrete area, knowledge and information with regard to the obligations and responsibilities of workers;

- Developing and mastering pre-professional skills, contributing to successful of the work, concentration, development of personal potential;
- Gaps between the real situation and the state of the school’s equipment;
- Young people should be better counselled when making career choices, have a clearer picture of the future of their career;
- The experience and diploma obtained at the workplace is an incentive for their motivation;

3. **External reality**: possibilities in the city; adequate social achievement chance; adequate jobs; unemployment in the region;

4. **What factors made it easier for you to provide this help?**

- My professional experience acquired through training courses;
- Continuous collaboration between state institutions, employers, school, family;
- The jobs existence, favoured by the geographical area we are in;
- The confidence obtained by the students in front of the employers during the practical training sessions in their unit, during the four years of study.

In relation of the trained (techniques, local knowledge and understanding of the environment and the stakeholders) tutors opined:

1. Tutors need to be well informed about their role, how to organize their activities and how to cope with the difficulties of inclusion;
2. More emphasis is needed on how to acquire skills to help young people with disabilities integrate into the workplace;
3. Creating more adapted workshops, where they can be trained, gaining experience for the transition to the labor market, linking school learning workshops with specific training in a real job;
4. Strong and meaningful involvement of teachers and mentors with work experience with people with disabilities - they should be involved in the development of programs;
5. Improving the material base, training young people with disabilities in school and the employer;
6. Developing a special curriculum for students, aimed at developing their skills, interactions, social adaptation and professional consultation;
7. Grouping students by categories of deficiency and division into groups in order to acquire professional skills.

The recommendations that they proposed are the following:
1. Better coordination between educational institutions (schools), employment agencies, parents and potential employers;
2. Better education and VET for disabled people; specialization in one field according to the labor market requirements;
3. Early career knowledge, early training starting with selecting a professional field;
4. Bringing the “world of work” into the school;
5. Continuous development of professional skills for both students and teachers;
6. Career counselling and psychological counselling for young people with disabilities;
7. Ensuring the training of managers and staff working with young people with disabilities;
8. Young people with disabilities should be able to get professional training, regardless of their level of knowledge;
9. Financing training for people with disabilities before starting their work to enable them to find work opportunities;
10. Wage subsidies are the most important reason for hiring;
11. Keeping work can be done by constantly assessing skills, from the employer’s point of view;
12. Individual conversations on the importance of working tasks and compliance to the work program;
13. Long-term observations of individual abilities;
14. Tests for professional adaptability;
15. Practical skills, focusing on key competences, using a variety of tools;
16. Working in a small group, educational situations, role plays;
17. Visits to companies and institutions which opens the interest of a young person with disabilities, or where is a possibility of employment;
18. Developing skills such as: efficiency, organizational capacity, power to concentrate on the task, conscientiousness according to which the employees are assessed at the workplace;
From the point of view of young employees, the job involves:
• An attractive salary package;
• Flexible working program;
• Socializing and adapting at the workplace;
• Information access;
• Other benefits - vouchers, holidays, team-buildings, catering at the workplace;
• On-the-job trainings.

The conclusions and recommendations of the Malta team are:
1. It is useless employing learning support assistants when their work is not monitored. There should be an audit of all personnel working in the inclusion and special education field. Learning support assistants should become ‘Teacher’ Assistants to progress in their career and increase the number of teachers well trained to deal with all inclusion issues.
2. Explore different models for the effective deployment of LSAs so that they:
   • work within wider teaching teams;
   • help teachers to meet the needs of all learners in a class; and
   • give 1:1 support to a limited number of learners, under the direction of the class teacher; and introduce of evidence-based teaching approaches – team teaching, peer tutoring, collaborative learning, etc. – to support a wider range of learning needs as part of regular classroom practice;
3. Need for guidelines about the administration of medicine during school hours, based on common-sense and flexibility. There is also a lack of insurance policies for staff that stops them from helping in the administration of medication;
4. Training can also be provided by schools for parents whose children have difficulties in learning. Teachers and learning support assistants should also be trained in how to deal with parents, especially those who have some difficulties;
5. Psychologists should not be stopped from observing students in the classroom, where children are best observed. Psychologists should also consult with parents and teachers;
6. Ensure that all public learning organizations commit to partnering and consulting with recognized social partners when planning and delivering VET courses. VET system development and provision within a Lifelong Learning perspective requires effective horizontal and vertical pathways with other components of education and training, in line with the needs of the labour market.
The successful collaboration between learning organizations and social partners should include forecasting, adaptation of curricula, improving individuals’ access to further education and training and raising public awareness;

7. Constant technological progress, the newly created jobs require more information processing skills such as literacy, numeracy and ICT knowledge, the number of jobs that require low levels of skills is declining;

8. Training should be made available for school staff, learners and their parents to support learner self-advocacy. Teachers should use assessment for learning to support learners in self-review and in making decisions about their learning. Using the flexibility available within the curriculum, teachers should plan a range of accessible and relevant learning opportunities for all learners, taking a universal design for learning approach. Teachers should work together to pilot evidence-based teaching approaches that actively involve all learners. Alternative assessment and accreditation pathways should be established for those learners who require them. In this way it is possible to assess and monitor the progress of all learners, including those with the most complex needs. It is necessary to create innovative approaches to curriculum development to enable schools to plan a curriculum for all learners.

These guidelines are the first step towards a network that is able to cooperate in the development and support of the WBL/internship experiences. From the Work Based Learning experience, students with disabilities or special/additional learning needs should be able to demonstrate their practical abilities. Perhaps if a task-by-task approach was certified it would be fairer for young people with disabilities or with additional learning needs to gain qualifications. More training should be provided for both employers and tutors on how to deal most effectively with these students with disabilities or special/additional learning needs. The young person will perform a professional activity which aims to be a tool, a form of support and not an end in itself.