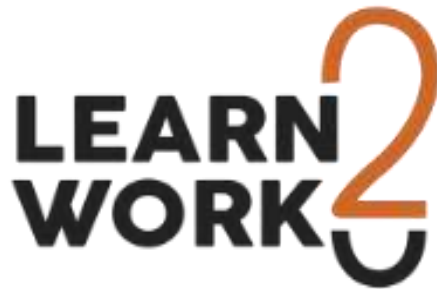


## Learn2work Project



### **Guidelines to scale-up LEARN2WORK methodology across regions: Interaction with national authorities to promote and recognize PS model adoption.**

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Document Description	
<b>Document name</b>	Guidelines to scale-up LEARN2WORK methodology across regions: Interaction with national authorities to promote and recognize PS model adoption.
<b>Abstract</b>	<p>The better way to get the support of the stakeholders is to involve them and ensure that they can experience the relevance of the Learn2work methodology. Therefore, stakeholders were invited to brief meetings (face to face meetings) after the pilot to get their impressions about the results.</p> <p>Efforts were also made regarding the collaboration with National Authorities for further ECVET recognition of the training paths. The approach follow was different from country to country in order to don't hinder the final goal: sustainability of the project results and after its end and to scale-up LEARN2WORK methodology across regions</p>
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## Introduction

Nowadays, the European Union (EU) is facing unprecedented social, economic and environmental challenges. And to cope with changes it is believed that education is the key answer to provide the children of today, which are the adults of tomorrow, with the right skills and competences to prepare them for the future which comes ahead.

In 2017, President Juncker emphasised in his State of the Union address *“Europe is more than just a single market. More than money, more than the euro. It was always about values”*. According to what is stated in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union, *“The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail”*.

According with the OECD Learning Framework 2030, namely the study *“The Future of Education and Skills - Education 2030”*, *“education can equip learners with agency and a sense of purpose, and the competencies they need, to shape their own lives and contribute to the lives of others”*. The Education 2030 shared vision is that *“Children entering school in 2018 will need to abandon the notion that resources are limitless and are there to be exploited and they will need to value common prosperity, sustainability and well-being. They will need to be responsible and empowered, placing collaboration above division, and sustainability above short-term gain. In the face of an increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world, education can make the difference as to whether people embrace the challenges they are confronted with or whether they are defeated by them. And in an era characterised by a new explosion of scientific knowledge and a growing array of complex societal problems, it is appropriate that curricula should continue to evolve, perhaps in radical ways.”*

The indicators, the signs and the advises made by many experts and demonstrated in several studies show that the need for new education solutions is emergent, new paths of education and new ways of teaching and learning have to be implemented in order to tackle the challenges of the future. Therefore, new initiatives and projects should be put in practice.

The Learn2work project intends to offer a solution to tackle two different realities but which are very connected: School offer and labour market demand. On one side, the number of European young people who neither study nor work still represent 14,2% of the European population between 15 and 29 years, according to the recent Eurofound study (2018). The same Eurofound research estimates the loss to European economies is around 142 billion euros a year (2015) - in benefits and

forgone earnings and taxes. which has a significant impact on the economic and social development of the EU.

And on the other side, industries around Europe are facing a serious problem attracting workers (namely young workers). According to the 2014 Final Conference of the European Sector Skills Council for Textile, Clothing, Leather and Footwear, it is important to ensure the attractiveness of the sector to new generations of skilled workers, foster the creation and implementation of joint programmes for education and training based on emerging needs, enhance its responsiveness in terms of training and competence development to the rapid evolution of the sector, and develop a quality training certification scheme to be adopted in Europe.

The response has to be adapted to the reality of each member state but at the same time the problem as to be faced as an European problem because it affects the whole industrial sector around Europe and also many NEETS all around Europe. In this regard, many projects and initiatives have been developed.

The Learn2work project, which started in 2015 and ends in 2018, is based on the adaptation and transfer of Production Schools to the VET reality in Portugal, Spain and Italy, applied to the footwear sector, where the goal is to strengthen the personal development of the participants/learners and improve their chances in the ordinary labour market by entering in an educational programme, which teaches them the needed professional qualifications that the footwear industry is looking for and at the same time ensuring that learners will improve their soft skills and understand what their future options are if they decide to embrace a career in the footwear industry. During the project implementation several activities and research were carried out and tested in three pilot tests in respectively Spain, Italy and Portugal. After this, the partnership have contacted and carried out the best actions to assure the sustainability of the project after its formal end and to scale-up the project results across other regions in Europe and in other industrial sectors, if possible.

This document shows the results obtained in each country represented in the partnership.

## Production Schools: current situation in Denmark<sup>1</sup>

Since the first production schools' establishment in 1978, the Danish production schools have developed into an independent school form attaining its own legislation in 1986. The fundamental aim of the production school continues being the same as it was from the very beginning: to create a practical learning environment, which can qualify young people to start and complete general and vocational education or qualify them to enter into the labour market. The learners at a production school are given the opportunity to develop professional, social and personal competences through practical work in the production professions as well as individual counselling.

Currently, the production school is going through the the biggest change since its foundation. From August 1st, 2019, the production schools in Denmark will cease to exist. They will all be integrated into the new Preparatory Basic Education (FGU - Forberedende Grunduddannelse), as the last part of educational reforms that have taken place throughout the Danish educational system within the last decade.

In Denmark, today there is a wide range of preparatory offers for NEETs - both state and municipality funded and with different legislations. These offers are also spread across the spectra between education and labour market. This, according to the government, means that it is intransparent and hard to make the right choice with and for the young person, who have the need for a preparatory offer. Together with an updated educational policy objective, this was the grounds for the creation of the FGU.

The new education policy objective is that 90% of the people who have turned 25 years old must have completed an education, be in education or be in employment. This is a change from the previous objective, which was that 25 years after primary school (when people are around 40 years of age) 95% of the population should have a secondary education. Now the measure will be when people are still in their youth, and the objective can be both education and active employment (cf. 90% instead of 95%).

It means that the goals are that:

- By 2030, at least 90% of the people who are 25 years old have completed a secondary education.
- By 2030, the proportion of young people up to 25 years old who are not affiliated with education or the labor market must be halved.

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<sup>1</sup> To know more about the FGU, see <https://uvm.dk/aktuelt/nyheder/orienteringer/fgu/171208-oplaeg-fra-informationsmoeder> where facts and figures can be read in Danish.

- All young people under 25 years old who are not in nor have completed at least a secondary education has the right to an education plan and has to be offered guidance through outreach and follow-up activities in order to increase their formal skills for both their short and long term benefit.

This is also in compliance with the Education and Training 2020 but it is more ambitious because Denmark already has a rate of early school leavers from education and training (between 18-24) which is under 10%.

## **The FGU: Preparatory Basic Education**

### **Purpose**

- The new education should provide young people with knowledge, skills, clarification and motivation to complete a youth education or get unskilled employment.
- The education should strengthen the young people's knowledge and experience of democratic processes in relation to Danish society and its history. It must strengthen the independence and competences of young people for active participation in society as equal citizens in a democratic community with its outset in the individual young person.

### **Target Group**

- Young people under 25 years old without a secondary education and not in employment nor in education.
- Target group assessment is carried out by the Municipality Youth Department (Ungeindsats).
- FGU is the main way for young people who do not meet the entry requirements for VET or upper secondary education immediately after completion of compulsory education.

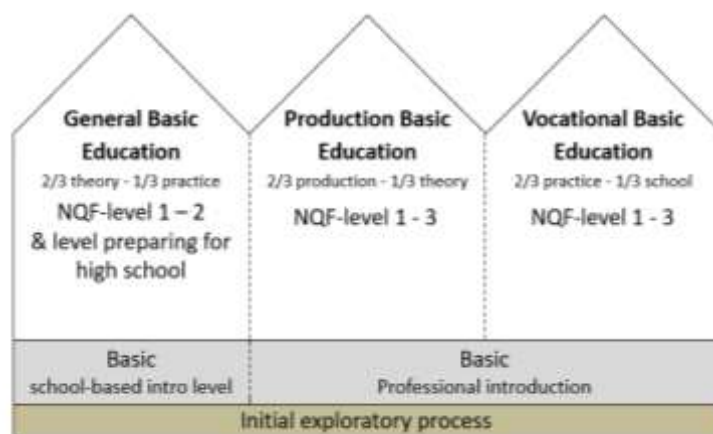
The purpose of the FGU is recognizable from that of the current production schools and the other preparatory offers that will be integrated in FGU from August 2019. FGU will have 3 tracks, that the pupil will choose from after having first been in an exploratory process and then a basic course for the first 20 weeks of the education. The education can have a maximum length of 2 years (80 weeks) and each pupil has an educational plan, which can be adjusted if necessary. The 3 tracks are - "roughly" said - a transfer of the individual offers that exist now, but put into a collective offer, which should minimize the risk of dropout and "wasted time" between offers. The pupils are still able to switch track if this is deemed necessary according to an adjusted educational plan.

The FGU will be a countrywide offer for the NEET target group. Thus, it is agreed politically that there will be:

- Approximately 90 schools, which must balance between geographical proximity and professionally sustainable environments. Of the 90 schools, 1/3 will be main institutions (with administrative duties for themselves and 2 connecting schools).
- The institutions are freeholds with independent boards. They are sustained under law and are financially supported by state and municipality.
- All 3 tracks should be at all schools. Also, pedagogical leaders must be at all schools, whereas the headmaster can be only at the main institution.
- The pupils are paid a monthly salary (based on the concept from the production schools, but the amount will be reduced) and all schools have to provide daily meals for their pupils.

The government (together with all the parties in the Parliament) stand behind the agreement of FGU. And in the agreement it is clearly expressed several times that the pedagogics in FGU will be built upon the production school pedagogics. That is, the point of departure in all 3 tracks is learning by doing. However, the production track is the track, which resembles the production schools that we know today. The Production Basic Education (PGU) will have practice-based learning where theory is integrated into the work that is done in workshops, where products are made and sold at basic market conditions.

### The Structure of FGU



General Adult Education (up to 25 years old) → General Basic Education (AGU)

Production Schools → Production Basic Education (PGU)

Vocational Basic Education → Vocational Basic Education (EGU).



## The professional identities

Currently, groups of professionals are providing input to the government officials in order to make descriptions concerning the thematic professions, which will be offered at FGU.

Curricula and subject (profession) papers and templates	Professional themes to be found in FGU (April 2018) (to fit VET and local labour opportunities)
The subject's identity and purpose; Professional goals; Basic and supporting materials; Didactic principles; Working methods; IT; Interaction with other subjects; Ongoing evaluation/documentation; Final exam/tests; The basis of assessment criteria.	Building, housing and construction; Social and healthcare; Trade and customer service; Agriculture, forestry and fisheries; Communication and Media; Food and health; Environment and recycling; Engine and mechanics; Service and transportation; Industry; Music and artistic production; Tourism, culture and leisure.

## The main challenges for the future

According to the Danish partner (PSF), some of the main challenges for the future concerns:

- A more structured approach coexisting with individually planned education;
- Formal testing, progression goals and test scores coexisting with learning by doing in the workshops;
- Government officials' scholastic understanding of learning might overrule the learning by doing method;
- Bringing together employees from a range of different offers with different approaches and objectives. The aim and strengths/weaknesses of a shared identity versus (and together with) professional identities;
- How the FGU will develop over time.

For instance, progression in this regards has a focus on tests in Danish and Mathematics as a way to measure a pupil's progress. In the production schools, they are used to measure on other parameters

and PSF are still pushing for competences in labour market skills to take precedence. So, will it be possible to successfully transfer, what the production schools know to work for a large group of young people, namely practically oriented work and production in binding working communities, into the FGU? The political agreement of FGU is full of good intentions, but will the government officials be able to understand the production school pedagogics, which for some can be seen as a strange concept, to such a length that its core will be in the FGU?

The production schools are centered on learning by doing as the main parameter, and in this, the production and work in the workshops are the basis for learning. A risk - in any newly structured education - is that the government officials choose to focus on the learning as a goal in itself. That is, has the focus on the set end-goals and, thus, in lack of better understanding, prompted the use of words that end up being empty, because it is very difficult to describe workshop-based pedagogics.

It is difficult to foresee how the FGU will work. The employees will be transferred to the new institutions/schools, and with them, they will bring culture, traditions, methods, didactics, etc. But what will happen when that generation of employees leaves? Will the headmasters of the institutions understand the value of production in workshops or will the machinery needed to produce be gone with the first budget cut? The consequence is that the production schools - via the Production Basic Education - is fully incorporated into the educational system, where it before was on the outskirts. Formal recognition seem like a good thing, but will it mean a loss of pedagogical freedom?

Many questions will remain unanswered in the process leading up to the start of FGU in August 2019.

The official consequences for the production schools		Centrally set goals
Special Education Support (SPS)	Focus on dyslexia.	Language awareness in all subjects.
Focus on Danish and Math in all tracks	Strong quality supervision and learning consultants.	Great requirements for interdisciplinary collaborations between workshops, general education and special resources.

## **Interact with national authorities to promote and recognize PS model adoption**

The purpose of this section is to present the contacts and efforts made by the partners with the national authorities and stakeholders to promote and recognize and adoption of the education path developed under the Learn2work project. For the success of this task it was important to ensure that the stakeholders can understand the relevance of the Production School methodology and be acquainted with project's pilot results.

The work developed under this task was also important:

- to raise awareness about the project purposes;
- to promote the project among stakeholders;
- to disseminate the experience of the Learn2work pilot approach.

This section can be considered both as a document and as a tool useful for further developments and projects.

### **Proposed guidelines to be used in the approach with National or Regional Authorities**

In order to accomplish the collaboration with the authorities, each partner provided the National Authority of its own country with following information:

1. Brief presentation of the project with a general overview and providing the main objectives, activities and expected outcomes of the project and the work developed - very focused on the results and what have been done and the experimentation character of the project;
2. Description of the pilot methodology;
3. Description of the pilot results.

Envisaging at providing a common structure for all interviews and seeking possible comparison and a common wrap up, a set of questions were defined. However, the total or partial adaptation of the questions were possible and allowed.

**Questions or subjects proposed to the partners where the pilot approach took place**

Topic	Questions
<b>Regulatory context</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What are the main issues/priorities that concern VET Schools/ Companies/Entities in these processes of involving young people and companies who need new employees (with the right qualifications)?</li> <li>- According to your experience/knowledge, what are the main problems/difficulties that companies usually face in the trainee’s integration/retention?</li> <li>- Which difficulties exist in the current education/VET system in order to improve its adaptation to the needs of the industrial sector?</li> <li>- Which are the main directives in terms of “Future of the Education” in our country? And to what extent they comply with recommendations made by the European Commission for Education;</li> <li>- How available is the authority to change or introduce new educational paths and ways of learning into the current education system?</li> <li>- Which are the existing legal tools that can be used to propose a new educational path or methodology? Who can propose it (only schools, companies, associations)?</li> <li>- What procedure should we follow if we would like the pilot experience to be taken into account when introducing modifications in the national and/or regional regulations?</li> <li>- If you (the authority) decide to adopt our methodology, are there or what are other steps/authorities/organisms who have to approve?</li> </ul>

**Questions or subjects proposed to the partners involved**

Topic	Questions
<b>Regulatory context</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What are the main concerns of the European authorities/entities regarding the mismatch between the current educational systems and the labour market?</li> <li>- According to your experience/knowledge, what are the main problems/difficulties encountered in the process of transference of the European recommendations into each member state context/law?</li> <li>- The most recent European Commission recommendations focus on new topics like digital competences, STEM competences and promoting the European dimension of teaching (having in mind the common European Values, inclusive education, etc... ) which is the plan to tackle the still existing mismatch between labour market and education and the fact of the young people do not pursuit or choose industrial careers (the image and the attractiveness of the footwear sector for young people is very low and the companies face severe problems in the workforce’s renewal);</li> </ul>

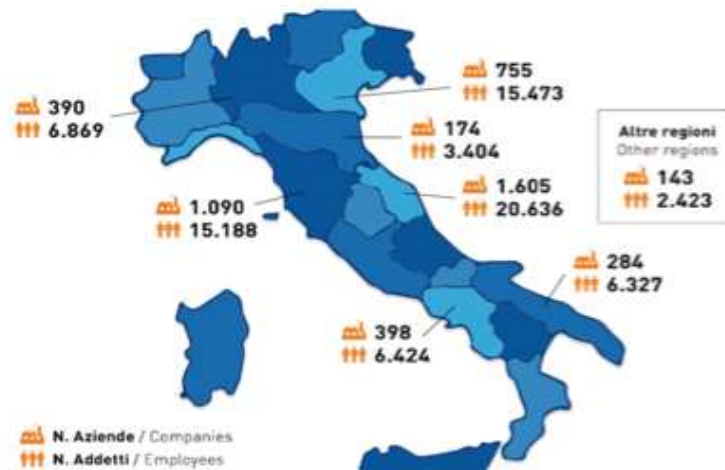
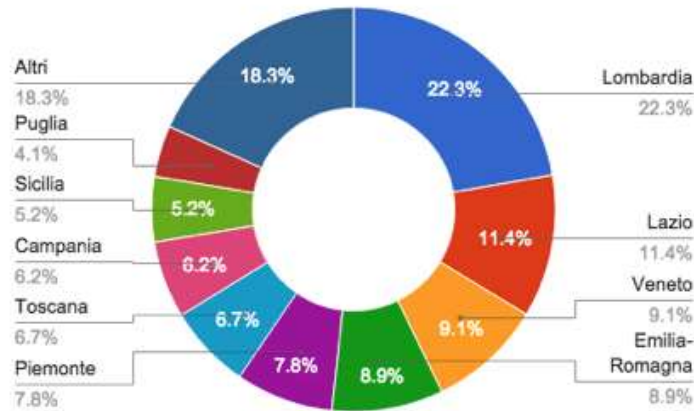
## Italy: results obtained

In the organisation of the Italian pilot the project partner ARSUTORIA school has worked together with three main national stakeholders (Assocalzaturifici, Confindustria Alto Milanese and Confindustria Pavia) to have a formal recognition of the Learn2Work training methodology from their regional authority (Regione Lombardia).

In Italy the territory is divided in regions for administrative reasons. Regione Lombardia is the regional authority in the area where ARSUTORIA school and the footwear companies of Parabiago and Vigevano districts are located. There are different responsibilities and competences at national and regional level. Universities are coordinated at national level by the MIUR (Ministero Istruzione Università e Ricerca) while all professional training courses are accredited, funded and coordinated at regional level. The picture below shows the location of Regione Lombardia and the importance of its economy in the Italian GDP and the Italian map.



The following pictures show the number of companies and employees of the footwear industry in the Regione Lombardia comparing to other Italian regions.



Fonte: stime Assocalzaturifici / Source: Assocalzaturifici estimates.

Thanks to the connection with Assocalzaturifici, Confindustria Alto Milanese and Confindustria Pavia the Learn2Work pilot project has benefited from the involvement of a significant number of footwear companies working in the local territory. A number of footwear manufacturers<sup>2</sup> have participated in the initial survey analysis and they have expressed their interest in offering an internship to the participants of the pilot test. At the end of the pilot test other companies have joined the group of the companies to offer internships to the participants. There is also a number of companies that work in the supply chain of the footwear industry that have expressed their interest in helping the pilot test and that have offered the participants the opportunity to visit the company

<sup>2</sup> List of the companies that have signed a letter of interest: ATELIER HCI (Hermes), CALZATURIFICIO BRUNATE, CALZATURIFICIO CESARE MARTINOLI – CAIMAR, CALZATURIFICIO NEBULONI EUGENIO, CALZATURIFICIO SPERONI, CALZATURIFICIO VITTORIO VALSECCHI, FRATELLI ROSSETTI, LA GRIFFE, MARNI (Diesel Group), MOSAICON SHOES, NOVARLUX ITALIA (Luciano Padovan), NUOVA BOLLATI SCARPE, RE MARCELLO, ROVEDA (Chanel), VIGENS, SEYMECHAMLOU (Louboutin), CLEO BOTTIER (Manolo Blahnik).

(BIAFER, CONCERIA GAIERA, CONCERIA STEFANIA, ELLEDUESSE, IFABA, VILLA CORTESE, SCHMID). The association of the tanneries UNIC also supported the programme with lessons on leather.

The direct involvement of the local Confindustrias and of the national association Assocalzaturifici made possible to reach other secondary schools and other potential students. The training programme has been formalised and accredited by Regione Lombardia and the students who have attended the pilot programme will obtain a diploma (EQF4 level). The participation of the national association (Assocalzaturifici) have enhanced the possibility to bring the experience made in Regione Lombardia to other regions.

A second edition of the pilot has been submitted to Regione Lombardia for funding in the framework of IFTS (EQF4). ARSUTORIA will also evaluate in the future the possibility to develop a curriculum at ITS level (EQF5). ARSUTORIA school together with some companies are also evaluating the possibility to access to different kind of funding with support of employment agencies or using the funds for professional training that are accrued by companies in national funds (like Fondimpresa).

## Spain: results obtained

The person selected for the interview in the case of Spain was Marina Sánchez Costas, General Director of Vocational Education and Training of the Valencian Region, whose point of view was considered highly valuable on the basis of her thorough experience, responsibility and potential relevance according to the project rationale. Therefore, the questions and answers of the interview were developed as follows.

First she was asked about her general opinion on the usefulness of the method and her previous knowledge about Danish Production Schools. Generally, she found it very interesting: *“the fact that the project has brought together a number of centres to get to know the Danish Production Schools and their methodology is quite meaningful, as she mentioned, and highly profitable since the competence board could set aside arithmetic scores, which is especially attractive and motivating for those having a failure record and need to see that they are skilled”*. She had heard of Production Schools from other centres specialised in other sectors as the car industry that had visited them. The interviewer pointed out that these schools were formerly non-profit making and private entities, but that they are progressively being implemented in the Danish educational system, to which she answered that she indeed found it interesting that this school had specialisation areas focused on the service sector as for example personal image.

To the question *“which are the main problems in the current VET system to be adapted to the needs of the industrial sector?”* she answered that the main problem is the equipment and its availability in

the centres, and secondly the skilled teachers trained in the use of that equipment. *“Hence, we are making such a great effort to furnish these equipments, we have even launched a tender for equipment procurement and, above all, we are trying to promote agreements with companies that allow their personnel to train teachers by offering seminars, training courses and teacher’s in-house learning stays where they can explain their tools, machinery, etc., and which will ultimately improve the knowledge transfer from trainer to trainee. Otherwise, the centres will keep relying on out-of-date equipments and the gap between today’s productive sector and VET centres will never be closed.”* She added.

When she was asked about the availability of the education authorities to change or introduce new educational paths and learning styles within the current education system she answered that *“Valencian Region’s educational centres are governed by fixed rules but these schools can also introduce, as much as possible, those innovative methodologies and dynamics with no need of modifying the whole curricula, since there are minimum contents and competence that have to be met. When it comes to diversifying or offering specialised training we could be referring to other alternatives as certificates of professional standards, courses or separate modules.”*

To the question *“which are the existing legal tools that might be used for implementing new educational path or methodology?”* she answered that *“the approval of new training programmes could be an option. In the case of basic VET modules, the regional government do not establish the methodology to be followed, and thus methodologies could be as many as the number of teachers. In this sense, some programmes are being developed with more flexible, student-oriented and challenge/project-based contents, instead of the mere theoretical teaching, which may not work with these students’ profiles. But all of this must be in line with the regulated time schedule, minimum curricula, etc.”*

The next question was *“what is the approval process of a new methodology or course in vocational training?”* and she answered that *“there is an annual general process of approval. After the regional government publishes the curricula, the centres prepare their annual general schedule where they can introduce new methodologies to work with”.*

To the question *“to what extent do you comply with the recommendations of the European Commission for Education?”* She answered that *“they are met to the maximum extent possible, as is the case of remunerating dual training for apprentices which was not initially the Valencian model. For such purpose we have requested to the Ministry of Education to change the Royal Decree in force. Besides, we are following the recommendations on how to increase employability of our youngsters*



*through upskilling with second-chance programmes or EU-funded youngsters' employability programmes which are included in basic VET and are aimed at unemployed people or NEETs aged up to 29/30 under the Youth Guarantee system."*

The interview went on with the question "what are the main problems or difficulties faced by the companies in engaging or retaining students in VET?" to which the interviewee answered that one of the problems was that it has never been analysed properly: "Consequently, we are currently undertaking a 3-year analysis in Dual training which will yield data on this matter and on employability. Apart from this, it is to be noted that we have been through an economic crisis that we are progressively leaving behind, but it has been the main reason why companies have refused to hire qualified labour force and have preferred to reduce costs and recruit under-qualified staff. Fortunately, companies have become more and more aware and have realised the need of investing in training and increase the level of skills, thus helping as well education institutions in the training process since they are an essential part of it."

Finally, the interview was concluded with this contribution of the interviewer: "I like to finish by informing you that the teachers from Sixto Marco School claimed during last week's event that the implementation of different techniques such as the competence board had been really helpful and successful and that they wanted to continue using them. Unfortunately they pointed out one more issue to address, which is that VET teachers normally do not have a permanent job since centres change the teaching staff every year, and thus their preparation focused on target groups and all the methodologies developed are discontinued, which affects both the teachers and centres, as they often lose high-qualified professionals". Then she replied that: "in that respect, we have made a proposal to list a number of job vacancies to be owned by the teachers. There are still many vacancies that cannot be filled by teachers in search for ultimate job positions, and this is why we are taking actions to allow these professionals to have their permanent jobs in those centres in order to achieve stability. The problem is that the number of students varies a lot in this sector and it is difficult to set a fixed number of permanent teachers accordingly. Nevertheless, things are changing and this fluctuation has lately become more steady thanks to our actions to attract trainees to the sector and we really hope that we can create permanent staff".

In addition to this contact with a Regional authority, of significant importance since Spain has transferred the competences in education at the autonomous level, a call was made to the Ministry of Education in Madrid and a conversation was taken with our contact Carmen Prieto. She appointed that the sustainability of the project would be targeted in the application of the Royal Decree 127/2014, of February 28, which regulates specific aspects of Basic Vocational Training. In particular

to the Fourth additional provision. Other vocational training programmes for students with specific educational needs. The results may be sustainable since in the point 1 of such provision is declared the following;

- 1. In order to provide continuity to students with special educational needs, and respond to groups with specific needs, educational authorities may establish and authorize other vocational training offers adapted to their needs. These programmes may include professional modules of a basic professional degree and other appropriate training modules to adapt to their needs. This complementary training will follow the modular structure and its objectives will be defined in learning outcomes, evaluation criteria and contents, as established in current regulations.

### **Portugal: results obtained**

After the pilot implementation in Portugal, the Portuguese partners have identified a NGO, which has a protocol with the Ministry of Education and with the Town Hall of Matosinhos, to run a school and where the applied methodology is inspired by the «learn by doing» approach. The school is one of its kind in Portugal and it was founded in 2008 to help students who suffer from social exclusion, economic difficulties, school failure, etc. to get a school certification.

The school has a unique education and training programme - learners design their own training plan which includes vocational training, artistic training, personal and social development and educational support - developed for 1 to 2 years. The education and training programme includes vocational training, artistic training, academic education to obtain a 6th or 9th grade certificate, personal and social development and educational support and psychosocial intervention.

Once identified, the partners have contacted the NGO/school and a visit to their facilities and to get more information about this education programme was promoted. Some success's factors were highlighted:

- A friendly open-door organisation, characterised by horizontal structure and unconditional acceptance;
- A secure place and a communication space;
- A practical and holistic pedagogical approach;
- An intercultural and international dimension (they also participate in Erasmus + projects and make short-term mobility's with students);
- A motivated and understanding team of professionals showing empathy for the students;

- Vocational training and internships for work-based learning.

Running for almost 10 years the NGO is now obtaining some recognition from the Government and from National Authorities and is trying to collect signatures to establish the National Network for the Second Chance Education Initiatives and also signatures to support a Public Strategy to reduce Early school dropout.

During the meeting and the visit to the school facilities the headmaster was very interested and willing to collaborate with the Learn2work partners to create a link with the industrial sector, namely the footwear sector. As it is the only school of its kind in Portugal and as it is getting some public recognition and efforts are being put into practice to be officially accredited as an alternative path within the education system. Therefore, the Portuguese partners are motivated to support the creation of other schools in other cities of Portugal (Paços de Ferreira, Trofa, Penafiel, Paredes, Valongo, Maia, Porto, Gaia, Braga, Samora Correia, Odemira, Ílhavo and Santa Maria da Feira) and try to incorporate some of the tools developed under the Learn2work project as well as workshops related to the process of making a shoe.

So far, the partners have subscribed the National Network for the Second Chance Education Initiatives and also the Public Strategy to reduce Early school dropout. The school has participated and has spoken during the Portuguese Learn2work Final Seminar. Further contacts and collaboration will be put in practice with the goal to incorporate the footwear in the workshops offer, take advantage of the interest shown to have more connection to companies, aiming at the employability of the students.

In parallel, the Portuguese partners have also contacted and sent information about the project and its results to ANQEP. Despite the contacts that were carried out with ANQEP, it was not possible to collect the entity's position in relation to this matter. After some previous similar experiences in Portugal to get the support and call the attention of National Authorities for these issues, the partnership decided to follow a different approach in this regard by joining efforts with an existing initiative in the field, namely to develop a closer collaboration with the NGO - Second Chance School of Matosinhos.

## **Belgium: results obtained**

The approach followed in Belgium was different from the approach followed in the other countries due to the characteristics of the partners located in Belgium and also to the fact that there was no pilot in Belgium. The goal was to obtain a broader (European) perspective about the experience and about the project results.

To do so, the responsible partners have identified the organization, which in their opinion, best represents the stakeholders who may have the power to promote a change. The organization selected was IndustriAll Europe, which is the European Trade Union for several manufacturing sectors, including Aerospace; Automotive; Basic Metals; Chemicals & basic materials; Defence; Energy; ICT; Mechanical Engineering; Pharmaceuticals; Shipbuilding; and Textile, Clothing, Footwear and Leather.

The interviews aimed, on one hand, at identifying the best practices or concerns expressed by other industrial sectors, and on the other hand, to look at them from the point of view of the employees. As an organization that represents the employees, it was interesting to see their views, knowledge and experiences carried out in the related field with an EU perspective.

It was considered interesting to interview two representatives from the organisation: the Policy Advisor in charge of industrial relations and the Policy Advisor responsible for education and training. Both interviews took place at IndustriAll Europe headquarters in Brussels on different dates in accordance to the availability of the interviewees. In this report, the results of the two interviews as a whole will summarize. The questions posed were adapted to the conversation.

To the question *“What are the main concerns of the European authorities/entities regarding the mismatch between the current educational systems and the labour market?”*, the perspective shared was that *“the educational system is not adapted to the industry needs. The most notorious current example is the mismatch on Digital Skills, and in this regard, we have seen how the European Commission and international organisations as well as private stakeholders under initiatives such as the Digital Jobs Coalition, are trying to catch up the speedy transformation of our industry and society, although we are very behind of what our workers need.”* Another important aspect which was mentioned is that *“not only the contents need to be adapted, but also the teaching methods. Evidence in particularly the Northern European countries has shown that best practices such as dual training or apprenticeships based on hands-on learning are more successful in approximating the education to the industry needs and equip newcomers with the right skills and competences. The Learn2Work methodology is also an example of best practice in this field. Then there is the problem of non-formal and informal learning and the need that Member States ensure their validation in order to contribute to highlight individual capabilities and facilitate mobility. The situation varies from country to country, but in any case, it remains very cumbersome and slow.”*

To conclude, based on the information obtained during the interviews *“the big concern is how to tackle the mismatch in view of the rapid transformation change in society and the economy thanks to various factors such as digitalisation and a decarbonised economy to respond to climate change. How*

*to advocate quickly because we need strong VET systems because the reality is that we do not have enough VET centres and work-based learning methods in Europe, despite the availability differs from regions to regions and from countries to countries, but the number is definitely not enough.”*

According to IndustriAll Europe, VET studies should be valorised as the higher educations are and should be at the same level of relevance. In this sense they welcomed the New Skills Agenda which promotes VET education, as well as other Commission initiatives like the European Vocational Skills Week, launched two years ago. Despite the existence of these initiatives, IndustriAll Europe believes that European Authorities are late and they are still a few years behind if we want to catch up what the society and future employees need.

Moreover, IndustriAll Europe highlighted that *“the curricula requires to have a broader approach because we want people to know «how to learn», «how to be good citizens», «how to easily adapt to changes», «how to work in groups». They need soft skills. The right and updated curricula should be jointly elaborated by educational centres, employees and employers in order to better identify what the real needs of the current and future generations of workers are, and therefore a major dialogue is needed.”*

To the question *“According to your experience/knowledge, what are the main problems/difficulties encountered in the process of transference of the European recommendations into each Member States’ context/law?”* It was emphasized that the education policy is outside the EU competences and the European Institutions have limitations on their actions in this field. European Institutions can only recommend and propose because at the end it is up to each Member State to decide what action to undertake and how much money they want to spend within education. The only hope is that the EU recommendations are indeed followed by the Member States, but the problem is that the availability and systems of education are very diverse among Member States. Additionally, IndustriAll Europe also emphasized that the legal systems and national industry and education structures are different from Member State to Member State and this needs to be taken into account when developing any strategy or initiative.

To the question *“What will be the most successful way to tackle the still existing mismatch between labour market and education and the fact that young people do not choose industrial careers (the image and the attractiveness of the footwear sector for young people is very low and the companies face severe problems in the workforce’s renewal)?”*, the contributes were very fruitfull.

One of the interviewed identified two different problems that are believed to be interlinked. *“On one hand, companies face the problem to attract newcomers to the industry. Here, all stakeholders, private and public, need to jointly work to improve image of the manufacturing positions. In order to*

*attract people, it is first necessary that they have a better knowledge of how products are being done. In general, teachers but also citizens have little interest and knowledge on how the infrastructure of our society and the products are made. Some just complain saying that the industry is polluting, but on the other hand, they are not able to live without the product. People do not realise that behind a product, there are human capabilities and skills, and that such transmission of knowledge is about to be lost unless somebody else acquires the skills.”*

IndustriAll Europe have also stated that *“when we do not know something, we cannot like or dislike it, we simply ignore it. It is therefore relevant that when youngsters choose to study a specific career path such as footwear manufacturing, they understand what they are going to learn and do in the process of making a shoe.”*

In this regard, it was advised to promote Open Days to allow the students to know the factories and to promote the industry engagement and it was also highlighted that the social partners and public bodies have to be involved because they should help educational centres in making such Open Days possible.

Another option suggested was to organise «Learning Factories». It was suggested that *“such factory should not necessarily have the new and more innovative equipment/machines (probably also more expensive), but those explicitly identified as being more «teaching friendly», where students can identify the process and can help learners discover and understand what a specific process is about.”*

According to the interviewed, it is important to expose the students to all manufacturing processes before starting in a company:

- *“For improving the image of the industry: if they see, they understand, and if they understand they will be able to appreciate.*
- *For motivation reasons: it is frustrating to be part of a value chain and never have seen the result of the part that you have worked on.*
- *For selection purposes: students will be able to identify which occupation that best fit them.*
- *For facilitating the transition between the education and first employment, to better prepare students for the work, and also avoid possible negative surprises when starting at the company.”*

Another important aspect highlighted was the lifelong learning: *“companies should also work much more on the re-skilling and upskilling of the current workforce, in particular in relation to digital skills and the upcoming automation of processes”*. It was mentioned that according to the OECD study, the jobs that are more at risk of automation are low skilled jobs with repetitive tasks. And the reality, according to IndustriAll Europe, is that these are the workers that require more training but they are

the ones who are receiving less. Companies often complain that there is a gap between education curricula and industry needs, but on the other hand, companies do not grant enough resources to retrain and upskill their workers. Companies should invest much more in their most valuable asset, their workforce. In addition, it was also mentioned that there is also the problem of certain employees' reluctance to go back to be re-skilled because of some bad experiences in the past or because they are not interested or feel able to do so and they prefer to follow a stable life. As a good practice, employees should be entitled and encouraged to take a specific number of training hours to up-skill during their career. IndustriAll Europe have also recommended that the employees should have the opportunity to be completely re-skilled once in their working lives in order to be more prepared in case of crisis in a specific industry. Thus, to support life long learning so that employees do not find themselves locked within their initial education received, normally focused on a specific field is essential. This could be an important aspect because, accordingly to the interviewed, *“young people might feel reluctant to enter the footwear industry and they might fear being trapped if the industry does not grow, because of the very specific skills and competences required”*. Having this in consideration, *“they may prefer to choose more horizontal options, such as accounting or marketing, which can provide a wider range of options”*. To fight this, IndustriAll Europe recommends that *“governments and industry should work together in order to find «an insurance plan» that reassures youngsters that they will be re-skilled if the worst should happen.”*

Finally, it was once again highlighted that another measure to tackle the mismatch between labour market and education is to put VET as the first choice of education or improve the image and the opportunities that VET studies can provide.

In order to accomplish this goal, a strong communication campaign promoted by all stakeholders, including VET centres is required. For instance, real figures on integration into work after VET studies should be easily available and made public. Young people, also the parents, need to know the figures of employability after the studies.

To the question *“What are the main issues/priorities that concern VET Schools/ Companies/Entities in these processes of involving young people and companies who need new employees (with the right qualifications)?”* the role of VET centers was highlighted. Training courses require long hours of preparation and studies and teachers and schools want such investment to pay back. Consequently, it is understandable that they will be reticent to re-do them or modify them substantially.

However, new technologies and digital opportunities are speedily transforming the industry, whereas the transformation of the educational systems does not correspond to the fast changing companies'

needs, at least not the speed required. So, according to IndustriAll Europe, one of the priorities should be to find a mechanism to speed up the process of adaptation of education to the match fast changes of the industry.

Another conflict of interest between the education world and the industry was identified. The duty of one teacher or school is to provide long-term competences and capabilities for, at least, the next ten years in e.g. the scientific world. However, a SME wants people to be operational on their first day if possible. Despite that, the timeframe should not be reduced, otherwise the students' competences would be obsolete very fast. Two solutions are being proposed by IndustriAll Europe:

«learning factories» (with tools and methodology from L2W) and industrial courses (assuring that they will be more homogeneous).

The responsibility belongs to all stakeholders, because it is in their interest to ensure a good quality training framework for new employees, which meets certain conditions such as mentoring, a career prospect, and an efficient training quality scheme. Apprenticeships can play a relevant role as well, and IndustriAll Europe has welcomed the recent adoption in March of a *Recommendation on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships*, which has been developed in consultation with social partners, but there are still challenges to face such as the recognition of skills that an apprenticeship should have, because they are not the same from country to country.

To the question: “According to your experience/knowledge, what are the main problems/difficulties that companies usually face in the trainee’s integration/retention?”, there are two points to be considered.

- Companies should have a plan before taking a trainee on board and consider it as a preparation period for future employment. However, sometimes, companies just take trainees as an opportunity for cheap low-skilled work to be done.
- Companies need to find the balance of the tasks given to the trainee, which will also influence the retention. The trainee should perform a meaningful and interesting task, otherwise the trainee will feel frustrated and will not learn anything. The training purpose of the stay will not be fulfilled, and the company will not be able to retain the trainee. On the other hand, companies cannot risk assigning tasks which could have major negative consequences for the company if the trainee fails to perform adequately.



## Conclusion

The document gathers the feedback, the experiences and the main results of the Learn2work project in each country of the partnership.

The realities are different in each country, from country to county we face cultural, education and legal differences, which influence the way a new project and methodology is implemented, adapted and/or accepted. These differences were taken into account by the partners while establish the approach in their own country. The strategies put in place were the ones that best fitted the reality of each Learn2work partner and country and best contributes for the scale-up LEARN2WORK methodology across regions.

## Annexes

Testimonials from the Italian stakeholders:

### **Marina Nebuloni - IFTS Project Coordinator - ISIS Bernocchi**

*“The course, strongly required and followed by all the partners, thanks to the great organizational effort spent, proved to be a real success.*

*The approach of the students, at the beginning very shy, has resulted in a growing appreciation especially towards the educational workshop in ARSUTORIA and the moments of contact with companies in the sector that, thanks to company visits, have introduced the youngsters in the different working realities existing in the world of footwear production; sometimes opening up unknown scenarios to them and raising their curiosity and interest.*

*Despite some initial difficulties related to the identification of the companies available for internships, the phase that represents the strongest point of the whole project, all companies and students have been generally satisfied and everything proceeded in the best way”*

### **Daniela Dondena - Training and Fashion - Assocalzaturifici**

*“I can state that the IFTS project has been very satisfactory both from the point of view of the placement of the youngsters and from the point of view of the involvement of the companies that have proved to be very open to host the students and have expressed full satisfaction for the results obtained.*

*From the point of view of Assocalzaturifici the project is considered a success; it has been an experiment that involved different stakeholders who cooperated together for the good result of the initiative (and this is not happen very often). This shows that collaboration always leads to unexpected results.*

*The course was engaging for the guys who were able to get closer to the world of shoe production and understand its charm: something not always easy to implement because both students and families have an idea of factory production still linked to an old concept. Surely it is a virtuous pilot project whose format could be replicated on other territories”*

### **Gloria Castiglioni - Training - Confindustria Alto Milanese ALI**

*“Since the footwear industry has been suffering for many years from the constant shortage of trained and motivated technicians, despite the possibility of making a career, with an interesting*

*remuneration, it was decided to activate, thanks to Regional calls, the IFTS project for the footwear industry, strongly required by the companies of the footwear districts of the Alto Milanese and Vigevano, the most important districts of Lombardia, with the aim of training highly specialized figures, ready to be included in the production departments of shoe factories.*

*The training plan was implemented through a Syndicate Association (Associazione Temporanea di Scopo- ATS) composed of: Arsutoria School, Confindustria Alto Milanese, Confindustria Pavia, Assocalzaturifici, ISIS Bernocchi, IS Marcora of Inveruno, Eurolavoro, Fondazione Istituto D'arte e Mestieri Roncalli, ATOM Lab of Vigevano and the University of Pavia.*

*Certainly the 22 young people who participated in this first edition have shown a great interest in the training program made by about 1.000 hours and half of them spent in companies of the sector as apprentices.*

*Even the companies that have welcomed the students for their internships have provided positive feedback both regarding student's training background and commitment they demonstrated in learning. Considering the good results achieved with this first session, a new edition has been proposed in April."*

#### **MASSIMILIANO BOCCANERA - Relations - Confindustria Pavia**

*"The contents and the training methods of the IFTS course represent a first concrete answer to the growing need to find professional figures already formed to be included in the production context of the entire production chain of the footwear District of Vigevano, a need that the territory as a whole has been expressing for many years and for which the IFTS course can be considered as a valid support for further actions aimed at consolidating and developing the production base"*

#### **VALENTINA CASIRAGHI - IFTS Student**

*"My name is Valentina and I took the opportunity to follow this IFTS course because I love shoes and I was also very interested in their construction. This course includes both theoretical lessons, general and specific knowledge of the footwear industry, and practical lessons in the laboratories and I think this is the main strength of the entire course. I, like most of my classmates, have learned more thanks to the practical lessons held in the laboratories Arsutoria in Milan and the Atom in Vigevano.*

*During the months in Milan, each of us have realized four different pairs of prototypes; thanks to all the teachers who have followed and supported us during the several steps of construction, we have been able to fully understand each step. I considered the trainers real points of reference as they helped us to face each situation in the best way, helping us to reach our goals at our best.*

*Besides the teachers, was also very important the mutual help among the various students who took part in the course; they were able, thanks to the various training and work experiences, to give good advices that helped to understand some steps in the construction phases of the prototype.*

*After completing the realization of the different prototypes, we have done a mutual quality control between all the students and this has helped us to understand even better possible defects of a shoe; I considered very helpful also the portfolio, made by each participant, in group or individually. It helped us in fixing each step of making a shoe using representative photos taken by us during the realization of prototypes.*

*Another very important aspect of this course is the possibility to follow a final internship in a shoe factory situated in the area and put into practice all the various know-how learned so far and learn more about this sector”*