



**CEDEFOP**

European Centre for the Development  
of Vocational Training



Education and Culture DG  
Lifelong Learning Programme

## Study visit group report



**Group No** 31

**Title of the visit** “Understanding the local context and building network to identify skill needs”

**Topic** Cooperation between education and training institutions, enterprises and local communities

**City, country** Cento, Italy

**Type of visit** VET

**Dates of visit** 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> November 2012

**Group reporter** James O’Kane

### I FINDINGS

This section summarises the findings of the group while visiting host institutions, discussing issues with the hosts and within the group. You will be reflecting on what you learnt every day. But to put them together and give an overall picture, you need to devote a special session to prepare the final report on the last day of the visit.

In this section, it is important that you describe not only things you learnt about the host country but also what you learnt about the countries represented by group members.

1. One of the objectives of the study visits programme is to exchange examples of good practice among hosts and participants. Cedefop will select well-described projects/programmes/initiatives and disseminate them to former participants and a wider public, including potential partners for future projects. Therefore it is important that you identify and describe all aspects that, in your view, make these projects/programmes/initiatives successful and worth exploring.

The study visit focussed on the depth and breadth of Vocational Education and Training (VET) with a particular emphasis of the relationships between different stakeholders such as Schools, Universities, Vocational Training organisations and Enterprises. The group studied in depth the different approaches adopted in Italy to VET with a focus on the Emilia-Romagna region and compared and contrasted this to experiences and cultures in the UK, Hungary, Romania, Poland and Turkey.

The group felt the Italian VET Schools were excellent example of 'VET in action' in that young students are able to gain competences/skills and qualifications that enables them to be highly employable in a range of enterprises. Many of these enterprises have close working links with the VET Schools, training agencies, Universities and most importantly Industrial Associations. This depth of integration in Italy between key stakeholders is a good business model for cooperation and it is one that should be mirrored/copied in other European countries.

Describe each of the good practices you learnt about during the visit (both from the hosts and from one another) indicating the following:

title of the project/programme /initiative	country	name of the institution that implements it (if possible, provide a website)	contact person (if possible) who presented the programme to the group	whom the project/ programme/ initiative addresses	what features of the project/programme/initiative make it an example of good practice
Fondi Paritetici Interprofessionali per la Formazione Continua - 'InterProfessional Funds'	Italy	Vocational Training Centres such as Centoform  www.centoform.it	Chiara Pancaldi, Managing Director Centoform	It supports workers in companies to be trained/re-trained/upskilled and the companies benefit from an investment in human resource/labour market capacity.	The fund supports the desire for continuous training for workers and is endorsed by a large number of employers.  There are currently a wide range of interprofessional training funds across Italy. Some of these funds are specialised at sector level, whereas others are specialised in professional categories (managers/executives), enterprises size categories (SMEs) etc.
Education Vouchers	Italy	Vocational Training Centres such as Centoform  www.centoform.it	Chiara Pancaldi, Managing Director Centoform Stefano Maccaferri Chairman of Centoform	Training for mainly employed people, but can be unemployed, self-employed and those who aspire to study for HE qualifications up to Doctoral level	Impact of vouchers in terms of increasing lifelong learning (LLL) and participation of learners in Emilia Romagna region and across Italy. Vouchers available for VET, HE and LLL. Vouchers help to reduce levels of unemployment in regions.
Confindustria and the Industrial Association of Ferrara	Italy	Confindustria (Confederation of Italian industry)  www.confindustria.it	Loris Graffiedi info@unindustria.fe.it	Training for young employed and training for employed. Looking at the training needs of companies.	The close links between the activities of the industrial Associations of Ferrara and Education/VET, particularly the role of Industrial Associations in education choices for learners/employees.
Technical Qualifications: ITS	Italy	Formindustria <a href="http://www.formindustria.it">www.formindustria.it</a> <a href="mailto:info@formindustria.it">info@formindustria.it</a>	<a href="http://www.formindustria.it">www.formindustria.it</a> Rossana Rinaldi	Training programmes for unemployed and	These programmes concentrate on special VET programmes for youth. The

Foundations (National post diploma Schools) and IFTS (Higher Technical Training)		<p>Some specific examples from the agrofood industries in Parma of how these awards function can be found at: CISTA PARMA, <a href="http://www.cista.parma.it">www.cista.parma.it</a> Maria Guerra</p> <p>More specific mechanical sector IFTS examples see CENTEC (<a href="http://www.unife.it/tecnopole/cento">www.unife.it/tecnopole/cento</a>)</p>		<p>employed people delivered by 7 regional training agencies. Specific study areas include mechanical engineering and technology in Emilia Romagna region and agrofood in other Italian regions such as Parma.</p>	<p>programmes offer a ITS National post diploma Schools course of approx. 1800-2000 hrs and are targeted at national sectors such as energy, efficiency, new technologies etc. An IFTS (Higher Technical Education/Post Graduate) is managed by the Italian regions to meet regional needs. The key feature of these awards is that they integrate across four stakeholders, Schools, Universities, Vocational Training organisation and private enterprises.</p>
Accreditation agencies	Italy	e.g. <a href="http://www.formazione.lavoro.regione.umbria.it">www.formazione.lavoro.regione.umbria.it</a> /		Regional accreditation of training undertaken by Vocational; Training agencies/companies	Professional staff working inside companies to recognise and support the design and delivery of high quality professional training. Assures the levels of quality, organisational models and sets of competences for lower and higher training courses
VET collaboration between Enterprises and Education, use and design of technical job profiles	Italy	Enterprises/Universities such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CENTEC</li> <li>2. Fava</li> <li>3. Baltur</li> </ul>	Dott. Pinelli	Enterprises, Individual learners, researchers in Universities	The levels and depth of collaboration between enterprises and education and the structured approach taken to support individual learners whether they are in enterprises, VET Schools or Universities.
Inclusion project for school drop outs	Italy	Vocational training facility		Vocational training for school drop outs to further their social inclusion, ensuring	The project successfully engages young people of fewer opportunities in an effective way, enabling them to learn a trade opposed to other countries that can

				they can compete in the job market	overlook such an effective tool to ensure social inclusion of those marginalised.
Voluntary Labour Corps	Poland				Voluntary labour corps are targeted at youths between 15 and 18 years old, who have completed primary school and who are experiencing problems: going through difficult economic, family or personal circumstances; experiencing difficulties at school or school dropouts; coming from dysfunctional, broken or jobless families; or from orphanages
School staff specialised in working with non English speaking students	UK	Stoke Damarel Community College	Rita McNally	Specialised lessons for migrant students ensuring they have the command of the English language and can integrate in general school life	The initiative works with migrant students not only on their English language skills, but also works as an inclusive approach to offer extensive support for a culturally diverse group of young people.
Foundation Years/Level 3 qualifications	UK	Most Higher Education institutions		A bridging course at UK level 3 that prepares students for the transition to level 4 (University)	Courses at Level 3 are designed to support the notion of lifelong learning and provide a stepping stone to those who aspire to a University education. There are many other credit-based courses at level 1-3 that support the vocational needs of different types of learners
14-19 Diploma	UK	Schools, FE Colleges, Academies		It bridges the divide between general education and vocational education, provides hand-on practical learning	The Diploma is available in a wide range of industrial sectors at levels 1,2,3 of UK qualifications framework.
Vocational training	Romania			Training for students and adults, employees Benefit for companies / human resources	The agreement between companies, school and parents for practice in enterprises. For the adults the employment contract for 3-5 years with companies

				qualified	
PRAI/ PLAI/PAS	Romania			Regional and local actors in vocational training/COMPANIES	PRAI give to all the training institution the surveys and statistics on the regional labour market PLAI give the information about the local labour market PAS (School Action Plan) is based on SWOT linked to the PRAI/PLAI
Bridge Program	Hungary			This programme attempts to re-enforce basic skills	In Hungary each year 3500-4000 students finish their education at aged 16, the Bridge programme gives them the opportunity to complete their education by participating in vocational education.
Dual Training	Hungary	Mercedes-Benz Manufacturing, Hungary in cooperation with College of Kecskemet			There is a tendency in Hungary that students prefer to go to secondary grammar school rather than participate in vocational education. The government introduced 'dual' training which combines theoretical education with practical training within a company. 3 year long vocational training started in 2011 in 3 professions. Altogether 70 students being trained
Strengthening Vocational Education and Training Project (SVET)	Turkey	Ministry of National Education, <a href="http://www.meb.gov.tr">http://www.meb.gov.tr</a>		It implemented in a total of 145 pilot institutions in 30 provinces in Turkey and it aims to establish a more qualified vocational education and training (VET) system that is up to the EU standards.	SVET, implemented with the financial and technical support of the European Commission, brings the Turkish VET system up to the EU standards. Various activities were conducted ranging from developing training standards and VET modules to training school principals, teachers as well as students and establishing VET Information Centres.

Insurance charges	Turkey	National Social Security Institution, <a href="http://www.sgk.gov.tr">www.sgk.gov.tr</a>		Students benefit from insurance charges given by National Social Security Institution during internship and apprenticeship education.	There is a direct support and incentive mechanisms to VET.
Modular programs	Turkey	Ministry of National Education, <a href="http://www.meb.gov.tr/">http://www.meb.gov.tr/</a>		Schools of Technical and vocational education in secondary level	All programs in formal technical and vocational education are modular.
Vocational Education Board	Turkey			This board consists of the representatives of the organizations such as MEB, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Public Works and Settlement, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Ministry of Tourism, State Planning Organization, Turkey Confederation of Tradesmen and Artisan, Chambers of Commerce Employer's Unions Confederation, Turkish Confederation of Labour, Banks Association, etc.	The board takes the role of planning, developing and evaluating national level vocational and technical education (including non-formal education). Determining the needs of vocational education, forming opinion on the curriculum and duration of vocational programmes, preparing regulation proposal related to the examinations and examination commissions and offering them to MEB (Ministry of National Education) may be listed among the duties of the board.

\* You can describe as many good practices as you find necessary. You can add rows to the table.





2. The study visits programme aims to promote and support policy development and cooperation in lifelong learning. That is why it is important to know what you learnt about such policies and their implementation during your visit. You are invited to describe your findings concerning the following:

**2.1 APPROACHES TAKEN BY PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES (BOTH HOST AND PARTICIPANTS') REGARDING THE THEME OF THE VISIT. ARE THERE ANY SIMILAR APPROACHES/MEASURES IN PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES? WHAT ASPECTS ARE SIMILAR AND WHY? WHAT ASPECTS ARE DIFFERENT AND WHY?**

The study visit has demonstrated the particular ability of Italian culture of communication between local authorities, educational facilities, organisations, trade unions and so on. This is a very different approach to British culture in which the communication is not as highly facilitated between varying bodies. Some approaches taken include -the role of industrialists association and higher training-Individual vouchers (Italy).

The Italian scheme called 'Interprofessional' is similar in many respects to the UK notion of 'Work-Based Learning' in that the role of employers/enterprises is key. The main difference is that the Italian scheme has a 30% wage contribution from the employer to support the project. The Italian 'Education Voucher' idea is novel and it would be appropriate for other European countries to adopt this approach as it offers learners/students developmental opportunities and more encouragement to undertake training and personal development.

The group agreed that the Italian Industrial Associations are very similar to Associations in other countries, however they seems to play a larger and more intimate role in bringing together different regional stakeholders.

It was felt that Romanian VET has many similar aspects with Italian VET (state vocational school) and different aspects regarding regional vocation training.

Vocational Training Centres like 'CentoForm' have very strong links with key stakeholders in the Emilia-Romagna region and play a crucial part in providing relevant vocational courses. Whilst many other VET providers do this, what sets 'CentoForm' apart is their knowledge and reputation for working closely with industry to help them with training needs analysis and apprenticeships and helping enterprises to maximise the labour market potential for the region.

**2.2 CHALLENGES FACED BY PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES (INCLUDING HOST) IN THEIR EFFORTS TO IMPLEMENT POLICIES RELATED TO THE THEME OF THE VISIT. WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES? ARE THEY COMMON CHALLENGES? IF SO, WHY? IF NOT, WHY NOT?**

Participants have come from a wide range of backgrounds, nonetheless there were shared interests within the study visit for all. This was due to the flexible nature of the host. Due to the diverse group the challenges were as diverse as the group.

Challenges in Britain may be the top down approach of policy making, often missing the real needs of people in society. This experience was shared by many participants, struggling in their profession due to policy being put in place from the top down in their countries, challenging professionals to successfully meet real needs of the people they work with.

In Hungary one of the main challenges is also that education and vocational training does not refer to the needs of the labour market. Concerning adult training centres outside state education system another task is how to exercise pressure on these institutions to control the training of certain “fashionable” professions in the school system, they continue to over-train and those individuals acquiring these qualifications will not be able to find jobs.

A key challenge is the Involvement of local authorities in building networks to identify skill needs. Some common challenges are:

- Orientation for students of secondary school.
- Support of students to be entrepreneurs (training).

In Poland there is the challenge of rising migration coupled with the government’s decision to raise the retirement age to 67.

One of the biggest challenges across Europe is that there are different approaches and different qualification frameworks for VET. Whilst there are some similarities in terms of types of learners, the range of support mechanisms are quite different and the funding from regional and national governments towards VET differs dramatically in each country.

**2.3 NAME AND DESCRIBE EFFECTIVE AND INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS YOU HAVE IDENTIFIED THAT PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES (BOTH HOST AND PARTICIPANTS) APPLY TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES MENTIONED IN QUESTION 2.2. PLEASE MENTION SPECIFIC COUNTRY EXAMPLES.**

Italy has demonstrated effective and innovative methods by offering vocational training to school drop outs which was able through excellent co-operation between varying local institutions and organisations. There are many examples put in place, through local projects to ensure inclusion

For School orientation with reference to Romania, the creation of 'special services', or 'centres for school orientation' would assist education policy and implementation.

In Hungary as a response this year part of the education reform the number of state-subsidized places in higher education has been decreased in order to have a special scholarship for those students who learn a rare profession.

The group visited a vocational training centre in Ferrara Citta del Ragazzo. The all-inclusive approach of the centre was very impressive. School drop outs, homeless young people, impaired people, people with need for further training within their profession and so on are all accommodated here. The centre has experience with Leonardo and Grundtvig programmes. Trainees are given real tasks to produce real produce in order to learn effectively in a real work environment.

The group also learnt about 'Europen' which is the simulation training of actual workings of a business. Partners in Romania and the UK were particularly interested in this and shall make efforts to learn more about 'Europen' and the opportunities it offers.

The varied training methods required for the diverse students requires the centre to use different sources for funding from the European commission, local authorities and other income sources to fund the varying training programmes. For instance local authorities fund the housing and training for the group of young people that have to live on site due to social issues within the family or them being homeless.

We also visited the oldest vocational training institute in North Italy, the Cappelari VET Institute, located in Ferrara's Jewish Ghetto. This training centre was comparatively small to the one visited in the morning that day. However the training opportunities they offered appeared to be of high quality and could be customised to the needs of the industry, i.e. training could be set up on short notice when required by an organisation that needed a particular training seminar for staff.

The institute was founded by the Cappellari family for three generations. It all begun with the founding Cappellari coming up with an innovative method to teach touch typing. The Cappellari family has from then on made innovative methods the pillars of their institute.

All participants involved agreed that the relevant pointers of this study visit day were the communal and inclusive spirit of Cittadel Ragazzo and the entrepreneurial and innovative methodology of the Cappellari Institute. VET Schools/Institutes in Italy are models of best practice for VET.

## 2.4 ASSESSMENT OF THE TRANSFERABILITY OF POLICIES AND PRACTICES. COULD ANY EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE PRESENTED IN THIS REPORT BE APPLIED AND TRANSFERRED TO OTHER COUNTRIES? IF SO, WHY? IF NOT, WHY NOT?

The study visit has offered inspiration to challenge the less inclusive approaches in other participating countries. It would be very beneficial to adapt to Italy's example of co-operation and communication as there is somewhat of a tradition of this in Italy it may be challenging to transfer this due to cultural differences.

The use of the 'Interprofessional' scheme and the 'Education Voucher' are two clear examples of good practice that could be replicated in other European countries.

'Bus orientamento' in Emilia-Romagna region is similar to the 'Mobile Vocational Information Centres' in Poland and these could be adopted and implemented in other countries.

## 3. Creating networks of experts, building partnerships for future projects is another important objective of the study visit programme.

Please state whether and which ideas for future cooperation have evolved during meetings and discussions.

From the discussions a number of ideas for possible future collaborations have emerged.

- There is a possibility for a Grundtvig project with Romanian Schools to explore VET in more detail and to consider a bid involving local regional stakeholders.
- There are clear opportunities to consider the wider involvement of VET in Romanian schools and to consider the vocational qualification levels related to different enterprise sectors.
- More work could be done to consider the issue of migrate people/students and educational opportunities at all levels. One of the UK partners is keen to contact the local youth worker in Cento to discuss ideas for possible collaboration.
- During the visit we met with University representatives who not only do excellent research but contribute to the regional Knowledge Transfer agenda with many organisations. There is scope for one of the UK partners to work with academic staff to share ideas and systems for working with enterprises and to look at the transition of VET from Schools/Further Education to Higher Education.
- The Turkish partner is keen to work with Italian academic partners to progress some potential projects related to Energy and Sustainability and to explore further how policy makers in Italy affects VET with respect to these project areas.

- During the visit the group learnt about the Italian accreditation system and the Polish partner is keen to compare this with Polish systems for accrediting training at different levels.
- The idea was formed that the host and the Hungarian partner organisation cooperate in further additional projects; the field visits in companies were also good opportunities to establish collaborations in the future

# TO SUM UP

**4. What is the most interesting/useful information that the group believes should be communicated to others? To whom, do you think, this information will be of most interest?**

The Italian VET/Educational framework that covers everything from School to VET to Apprenticeship mapped to a student/learner age group was very interesting. It enabled the group to grasp the depth and breadth of education possibilities at all levels from early primary year’s education right up to Doctoral level.

Throughout the visit the group were able to see how this framework is used and seen by the relevant stakeholders (Student, Schools, Vocational Training Centres, Universities, Enterprises, Employer Associations, regional and National Government). By referring to this framework, one is able to appreciate how VET is integrated into a seamless strategy and it makes it easier for the learner to plan their development with supporting mechanisms at each level and qualifications suited to all abilities.

## II Organisation of the visit

This part of the report will not be published but it will be made available to the organiser and will be used by national agencies and Cedefop to monitor and improve implementation of the study visits programme.

We recognise the value of ongoing feedback as a way of ensuring that the programme is at all times a responsive and dynamic initiative, meeting the needs of its various participants and target audiences. In this section you are invited to give us your feedback on several factors that, in our opinion, contribute to an effective visit.

**1. Discuss within the group and check if you agree or disagree with the following statements. Please mark only one box (☑) that expresses most closely the opinion of the entire group. Please use Question 2 of this section to elaborate on your responses, if needed.**

		All agree	Most agree	Most disagree	All disagree	Not applicable
e.g.	The size of the group was good.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.1.	The programme of the visit followed the description in the catalogue.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

		All agree	Most agree	Most disagree	All disagree	Not applicable
1.2.	There was a balance between theoretical and practical sessions.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.3.	Presentations and field visits were linked in a coherent and complementary manner.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4.	The topic was presented from the perspectives of the following actors of the education and training system in the host country:					
1.4.1.	government and policy-makers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4.2.	social partners	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4.3.	heads of institutions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4.4.	teachers and trainers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4.5.	students/trainees	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4.6.	users of services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.5.	There was enough time allocated to participants' presentations.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.6.	The background documentation on the theme provided before the visit helped to prepare for the visit.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.7.	Most of the group received a programme well in advance.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.8.	The information provided before the visit about transportation and accommodation was useful.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.9.	The organiser accompanied the group during the entire programme.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.10.	The size of the group was appropriate.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.11.	The group comprised a good mixture of participants with diverse professional backgrounds.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.12.	There were enough opportunities for	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

		All agree	Most agree	Most disagree	All disagree	Not applicable
	interaction with representatives of the host organisations.					
1.13.	There was enough time allocated for discussion within the group.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.14.	The Cedefop study visits website provided information that helped to prepare for the visit.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. If you have any comments on the items 1.1. - 1.14 above, please write them in the box below.

The group thought the whole programme was well organised and contained an excellent mix of activities. Some of the external speaker’s presentations were quite long and it would have been good for the group to have had a copy of the slides beforehand to read and then we would have had more time to discuss the information contained in the slides.

### III Summary

1. Having summarised all your reflections and impressions, please indicate how satisfied you are with your participation in the study visit. Indicate the number of participants for each category, e.g.

Very satisfied

Very satisfied  Satisfied  Somewhat satisfied  Not satisfied  Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

2. What elements and aspects of the study visits do you think could be changed or improved?

Nothing really

3. If there is anything else you would like to write about that is not included in the above questions, please feel free to write below or attach a separate sheet.

No



# THANK YOU!

Please submit the report to Cedefop ([studyvisits@cedefop.europa.eu](mailto:studyvisits@cedefop.europa.eu)) within one month of the visit.