

Reform of upper-secondary education project

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE



SLOVENIA

Timeline



ID number 28548

Background

Due to the economic crisis, SME capacity to provide work-based learning had been very limited in previous years, while enrolment in vocational upper secondary education decreased in the period 2005-13. In the reporting period, Slovenia assigned a high priority to the work related to work-based learning and apprenticeship. Reintroducing an apprenticeship system (including by adapting the legislation and related programmes) alongside the work-based learning system already in place was considered. Guidelines for upper secondary VET programmes and HE programmes were revised in 2016. A new Act on Apprenticeship was published in 2017 defining the roles and responsibilities of chambers, coordinating the scheme, of companies providing training as well as the status, rights and obligations of apprentices.

Objectives

The main objectives are twofold: to reform school-based VET and to reintroduce apprenticeship in Slovenia.

Description

A 5-year project Reform of upper-secondary vocational education, funded by the European Social Fund (ESF), started in November 2016.

The project includes the following activities:

- (a) test and identify the tools and methods to create a sustainable system to match the needs of the labour market;
- (b) develop flexible and individualised teaching methods and learning pathways;
- (c) support companies to engage in work-based learning;
- (d) test and evaluate the apprenticeship system;
- (e) define learning outcomes for work-based learning;
- (f) improve the training of mentors in companies.

A pilot started in school year 2017/18. At the beginning of the 2018/19 school year, there

were approximately 126 apprentices enrolled in their first year in eight programmes compared to the 50 apprentices in four programmes in the previous academic year.

The second part of the project is to develop and test the individualisation model of pedagogical processes that will include effective approaches, actions and activities to support the selected five school development teams for flexible VET forms and learning environments to support each student's development. Meeting the diverse needs of the learners enables better collaboration between the school staff (especially teachers, trainers and guidance counsellors) and the support of the school management. The activities include:

- (a) develop, pilot and implement the individualisation model of pedagogical processes;
- (b) upgrade curriculum materials, support professional development of professional workers and develop teaching materials to support the individualisation model;
- (c) support school teams to prepare an individual learning plan for each student;
- (d) develop and test learning environments to support student progress;
- (e) prepare dissemination materials.

In 2018, the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for VET (CPI) conducted the first evaluation of the 2017-18 pilot phase, indicating positive feedback from apprentices and participating companies and identifying some areas of improvement:

- (a) the need for more support mechanisms for companies as well as adjusting the content and organisation of training in the companies;
- (b) further develop the partnership between the schools and the companies, where the company is an active partner and not simply a passive receiver of apprentices;
- (c) more active involvement of apprentices in their training paths;
- (d) improving the assessment of apprentices based on examples of good practices from other countries;
- (e) in cooperation with chambers, developing methods of verifying learning places in the companies.

The first evaluation resulted in the planning, developing and implementing of an individualisation model. CPI drafted various recommendations for teachers. Criteria and indicators of individualisation have been established; the task now is to detect which are already present in the selected school organisations and in teachers' pedagogical work. Defining learning outcomes of modules, developing learning and training standards for school and work-based learning, motivate teachers and other professional workers to think and rethink (self-evaluate) their existing teaching practice; this is the main starting point in improving their future work.

As a result of the evaluation, the CPI drafted the Framework model of further development of modern apprenticeship and will prepare, with relevant stakeholders, practical guidelines on the following areas:

- (a) planning the apprenticeship path;
- (b) implementation of apprenticeships;
- (c) monitoring and assessment of apprentice's competences, as well as evaluation of the process;
- (d) training of in company trainers.

The CPI will continuously evaluate and monitor the reform activities and report annually to the national expert council for VET. Financial incentives for companies to offer practical training in apprenticeship-type schemes or in school-based VET programmes are available from national and EU sources. The Public Scholarship, Development, Disability and Maintenance Fund of the Republic of Slovenia manages these incentives.

2016 Implementation

The project started in November 2016.

2017 Implementation

2018 Implementation

At the end of 2018, instructions for the implementation of interim exams were adopted. The interim examination is organised by the relevant chamber and takes place in the companies. Once during the apprenticeship, typically at the end of the second year, the knowledge and skills of an apprentice are checked to be in compliance with the individual apprenticeship plan. If necessary, the chamber's supervisor prepares corrective actions for the company.

2019 Implementation

In 2019/20, apprenticeship programmes increased to 12 and are now offered in 16 upper secondary schools: metal shaper-toolmaker (SC Škofja Loka, upper secondary VET school Bežigrad); stonemason (upper secondary construction, geodetic and environmental school Ljubljana); joiner (SC Slovenj Gradec, SC Novo mesto); gastronomy and the hotel services (upper secondary school Izola, secondary school of catering and tourism Radenci); painter/signpainter (ŠC Kranj); bricklayer (ŠC Kranj, SGGŠ Ljubljana), machine engineering mechanic (ŠC Škofja Loka, ŠC Novo Mesto, ŠC Velenje); industrial mechanic (ŠC Novo Mesto, STŠ Koper, SIC Ljubljana); electrician (ŠC Kranj, ŠC Velenje); paper maker (SIC Ljubljana); tinsmith/roofer (ŠC Ptuj); glassmaker (ŠC Rogaška Slatina).

According to February 2020 data on enrolment of apprentices, there were 150 students enrolled in the first year, 124 into the second year and 54 students will complete the 3-year programmes in 2020.

In 2019/20, a tender apprenticeship was offered in the following programmes and VET schools:

- joiner;
- mason;
- metal shaper/tool maker;
- gastronomy and hotel services;
- glassmaker;
- paper maker (the programme to be implemented only in apprenticeship form);
- painter/sign painter,
- machine engineering mechanic;
- bricklayer;
- electrician;
- industrial mechanic;
- roofer.

In 2019, the second evaluation of apprenticeship was prepared.

According to the first evaluation of individualisation in selected VET schools, individual learning plans for students have been prepared and learning outcomes and standards of modules have been defined. In 2019/20, school teams were supported to develop learning plans considering school curricula and students needs and prepare the final evaluation of individualisation model of pedagogical processes.

2020 Implementation

Since the 2017/18 school year, the reintroduction of apprenticeship, the number of VET programmes, schools and companies offering apprenticeship has been rising steadily. In 2020/21, apprenticeship is available within 12 programmes in 14 towns across the country (20 schools, four schools were added). Apprentices are trained at approximately 180 companies. All educational programmes but paper maker, available solely in the form of apprenticeship, are accessible also in the form of school-based VET.

According to November 2020 data on apprentice enrolment, there were 365 students enrolled. 108 students were enrolled in the first year, 138 into the second year and 119 students completed the 3-year programmes in 2021. In 2020/21, a call for

enrolment in apprenticeship was offered in two further VET programmes (vehicle body repairer and car mechatronic).

In December 2020, the training programme (32 hours) for in-company mentors was modernised and adopted by the Expert council for VET.

The third evaluation and the final evaluation of apprenticeship were conducted. The evaluations included schools (five), companies (approximately 30) and apprentices (approximately 50) of the so-called first generation. A great majority of actors were satisfied with the organisation and quality of apprenticeship and were willing to continue with the cooperation; 88% of apprentices stated that they would once again choose an apprenticeship to obtain a vocational education. Dedication of schools, chambers and companies were crucial to success. The CPI presented to the Expert council for VET some possible paths for further development: review of the process of verification of learning workplaces; the role and tasks of the work-based learning organiser; a methodology of VET programmes; and support documents and other activities aimed at improving the quality and sustainability of apprenticeship.

The evaluation showed that education sector has the most important role in development and implementation of apprenticeship. It also indicated that further development of apprenticeship must be based on common solutions of all stakeholders and requires greater cooperation with other sectors.

The following results were achieved with the individualisation model:

- (a) five videos were prepared on different topics, one at each school (selection of cases, preparation and coordination of script, recording and publication). Each video has a version without subtitles, with Slovenian and English subtitles;
- (b) video guides for preparing video content for distance education were prepared;
- (c) four training exercises for the school development teams and five counselling visits to schools were conducted;
- (d) a publication Individualisation in the vocational upper secondary programmes was prepared.

2021 Completed

The project was completed in 2021.

The Model of individualisation (MIND+) developed the following: a handbook for individualisation; a website connecting all results; guidelines for blended learning in VET; a final evaluation report of model testing in five schools; a MIND+ game; criteria and indicators of individualisation integrated into the promotional notebook; and an ABC of individualisation. The results were presented at the final conference for the project, at the seminar for school counsellors from VET schools and the association of headmasters of biotechnical schools.

Based on the experience derived from the apprenticeship pilot implementation, materials for employers and schools, young people and their parents were prepared: Guidelines for the implementation of apprenticeships; Guidelines for the preparation of apprenticeship implementation plan, and Specifics of in-company training with examples of apprenticeship training plans for employers; and Guidelines for the preparation of school implementation curricula on the assessment of knowledge in vocational education for schools.

Evaluations have shown that apprenticeship has the potential to be established as an additional form of education that closely connects the spheres of education and of work. It is significant that all key actors were satisfied with it: apprentices, employers and three of the six schools. The evaluation highlighted the following:

- (a) for the further development of apprenticeships in Slovenia, a common vision of all participating stakeholders is required. Another crucial condition is that apprenticeships, as a form of both employment and training of young people, are accepted and properly managed by employers. Effective social partnership is also very important, providing that the role of employees and employers is supported

- by institutions;
- (b) the apprenticeship form of education is advantageous for both the economy and education and should therefore be funded accordingly. Only clear agreements between the social partners will create a long-term sustainable form of funding. The current project financing method does not bring the stability required to support development;
- (c) support of mentoring development in companies is necessary, as is the creation of conditions for the receiving and support of young people. In addition to training standards developed with the help of companies, it is necessary to support companies in the development of learning methodology in the work process and the creation of an appropriate environment for the development of young people's careers;
- (d) the implementation of the apprenticeship form of education requires schools to show a great deal of flexibility in the organisation of lessons and the adaptation of work methods to individuals or smaller groups. Modern digital solutions can be of great help;
- (e) continuous support of institutions that provide development is necessary, as well as non-financial support to companies and schools. Ministries, chambers, employer associations and trade unions should be encouraged to invest in the further development of a common service that will take care of the development of new learning companies, to open new learning places, to organise initial and further training of mentors and human resources, to support mentoring and appropriate working methods with young people and young adults, to support the connections between the companies with each and the connection with schools, to advise companies and supervise them, to support the development of appropriate forms of intermediate tests and final exams.

Bodies responsible

- Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (CPI)

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Engaging VET stakeholders and strengthening partnerships in VET

Further developing national quality assurance systems

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Modernising VET standards, curricula, programmes and training courses

Using learning-outcome-based approaches and modularisation

Diversifying modes of learning: face-to-face, digital and/or blended learning; adaptable/flexible training formats

Developing and updating learning resources and materials

Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

Teachers, trainers and school leaders competences

Systematic approaches to and opportunities for initial and continuous professional development of school leaders, teachers and trainers

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Financial and non-financial incentives to learners, providers and companies

Subsystem

IVET

Further reading

[Interim exam](#)

[Second evaluation of apprenticeship](#)

[Apprenticeship website](#)

[Third evaluation](#)

[Final evaluation](#)

[School videos](#)

[Video guides](#)

[Publication](#)

[Mind+ website](#)

Related policy developments

2022 Discontinued

Response to the COVID-19 outbreak in Slovenia

From 16 March 2020, all education institutions in Slovenia were temporarily closed until further notice, by government order for the purpose of the COVID-19 infection control. All students, including VET, had to stop attending classes at schools and stop living in dormitories.

 SLOVENIA

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET

2025 Implementation

Promoting VET to learners

The 2016-20 ESF-funded project VET promotion, coordinated by the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for VET (CPI), promoted VET as an attractive education option and

supported the young and talented in moving forward in their career.

 SLOVENIA

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET

2017 Approved/Agreed

The 2017 Apprenticeship Act

The new Act on Apprenticeship, adopted and published in 2017, is the result of joint work and consultation with all main VET stakeholders: the ministries of education, labour and economy, the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for VET (CPI), schools and social partners (chambers and trade union)

 SLOVENIA

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2017 Completed

Thematic country review on apprenticeship 2015-17

A thematic country review (TCR) on apprenticeship was conducted in close cooperation with Cedefop in 2015-17. The aim was to carry out an in-depth analysis of the situation to support Slovenia on reintroducing apprenticeship.

 SLOVENIA

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

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