

Crafts Square

Piazza dei Mestieri

Description

In Italy, 'Crafts Square' offers young people, unemployed young people and adults with an alternative educational offer with a good balance between practical and theoretical courses. The environment created by the 'Craft Square' aims to ensure learners feel understood, supported and valued.

Beneficiaries

 **Unemployed young people**  **VET students (school-based learning)**
 **VET students (work-based learning)**

- VET students (school-based – compulsory education[1])
- VET students (training – compulsory training[2])
- Unemployed young people and adults

[1] 'Obbligo d'istruzione': young people between 6 and 16 years old have an obligation to go to school and obtain a diploma or degree.

[2] 'Obbligo formativo': young people who left school without a degree/diploma must enrol in a VET institution and obtain a VET qualification.

Countries

 **Italy**

Education level and sector

 **Upper secondary vocational education and training (school-based)**
 **Upper secondary vocational education and training (work-based learning)**
 **Adult education**

Vocational Education and Training (VET) – the measure includes both school and workplace - Adult training

Type of policy/initiative

 **Prevention**  **Intervention**  **Compensation**

Level of implementation / Scope

 **Local level**

Local

Stage of implementation

 **On-going**

Ongoing since 2004

Aims of policy/initiative

The measure seeks to provide young people in compulsory education, as well as unemployed young people and adults, with an alternative educational opportunity.

Features and types of activities implemented

Piazza dei Mestieri is made up of 3 main branches, each with their own specific activities:

- **The Foundation** - VET project management and organisation, including social projects, alternating school and work, study support, integration, opening up to the world.
- **The Association** - organisation of cultural events taking place in the 'square' (school).
- **The Cooperative** - management of all production related activities (workplace).

Piazza dei Mestieri has also set up 2 projects specifically designed to tackle Early School Leaving (ESL): school-VET laboratories, which offer students the opportunity to experience VET for 2 days a week, and CO.D.S (Contro la Dispersione Scolastica - 'against scholastic dispersion'), which supports victims of bullying in a similar fashion to the previous project.

Resources

The measure relies on a solid network of stakeholders contributing financially to the activities undertaken. In 2013 it had a net added value of €1.2 million of which €150,149 was net added value for the measure (after redistribution of the total added value to partners, investors, personnel, etc.).

Evaluation of the measure

No external evaluation has been conducted, only an internal one to inform investors.

Evidence of effectiveness of the measure

Very high completion rates and an equally high number of applications to take part in the measure.

Teachers and tutors interviewed for the Cedefop study agree on the fact that the environment created by Piazza dei Mestieri really helps students to feel understood, supported and valued.

Success factors

The following success factors are based on the testimonies of participants in the measure interviewed for the Cedefop study:

1. Direct connection with the labour market: including the workplace in the students' curricular contributes to 'normalising' the labour market. Students no longer feel like the labour market is this daunting place they enter after their studies. Instead, they are used to it and naturally transition to a workplace outside of the school's framework after completing their studies.
2. A sense of community: the way classes are organised (and the school's format in general) allows students to bond with both their trainers and peers. It allows them to feel like they are part of a wider community and can open up and feel more confident about themselves and their labour/social skills. The fact that a number of the school's trainers are actually alumni is a great indicator of how much students feel like being part of something special. Many of these trainers pointed out that they came back to the school not only for the place itself, but because it had given them a chance to figure out what they wanted to do with their life and they now wanted to do the same for other students who may be feeling as lost as they once felt.
3. Personalised VET pathways: the VET pathway at the Piazza dei Mestieri gives students the possibility to personalise their own programme to ensure that they follow all the courses they want to, while keeping the right balance between work (within the school) and studies.
4. Benefits for the whole community: the school has shops, bars, and restaurants open to the public, as well as numerous cultural and recreational activities meant for both the students and the public. As a result, the school is well integrated into the community and offers a lot of activities, equally beneficial to the students and the general public.

Contact details for further information

Contact website

<http://www.piazzadeimestieri.it/en/>

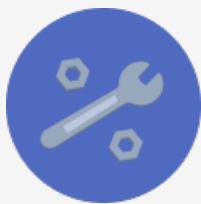
Related intervention approaches



Community involvement



Second chance measures



Work-based learning and simulations

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