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<p align="center">3rd Workshop: TTnet training of trainers network</p>

The Community dimension to the training of trainers

<p align="center">(Venice, 16, 17 and 18 November 1998)</p>

<p align="center">*Final Report*</p>

The Venice workshop was the last of the three workshops held during 1998.

Following examination of the factors affecting the evolution of training and innovation as a transferable practice at Faro, and study of work-related training systems and the specifics of tutoring at Berlin, the Venice workshop was devoted entirely to a study of the Community dimension to the training of trainers, the Community dimension being understood as a basis for and the objectives of joint work, and as the search for common solutions.

The identification of the Community dimension was thus the *leitmotiv* of the workshop, in its quest for a common definition and forms of cooperation. The workshop was organised as a series of four thematic presentations designed to address the issue of the Community dimension from different angles:

- the evolution of a training system
- European integration and the role of dialogue between the social players
- the development of the factors affecting training
- group work aimed at the collective adoption of the Community dimension by the networks represented in Venice and leading to cooperation proposals.

We shall not report in detail on the workshop here but shall restrict ourselves to three issues:

1. **The evolution of training systems and the professionalisation of trainers : the case of Italy.**
2. **Community issues and factors in the training of trainers.**
3. **The Community dimension: a matter for definition and cooperation.**

Summary

I. The evolution of training systems and the professionalisation of trainers: the case of Italy

In his presentation, the representative of ISFOL, Silvio Penner, said that the Italian vocational education system is undergoing a crucial period innovation.

The system is in fact moving from bi-polarity (centralised public education managed by the Ministry of Public Education, and decentralised vocational education managed by the Regions) towards an integrated system conceived of and managed as a single unit. The extent of the changes is made clear in two legislative texts: the 'labour agreement' (Accordo per il lavoro) of September 1996, intended to improve the quality of educational provision based on structured policies, and Law No 196/1997, which set up a new system of links between schools, the labour market and scientific and technological research.

It should be noted here that the reform of the Italian vocational education system is being carried out from a two-fold perspective, recognising both the specific peculiarities of Italy and the requirements of European integration.

Changes in the responsibilities of institutions, the questioning of the gulf between centralisation and regionalisation, and the establishment of a system for the accreditation of training centres and for the certification of skills and qualifications, are in fact a reflection of the desire to strengthen the coherence of a national system that will fulfil the objectives laid down at a national level within a European context. The establishment of the 'free market' in training should thus make it possible to remedy the deficiencies of the previous system by strengthening links between vocational training and the needs of enterprises, and between vocational training and local development policies, while increasing overall cohesion.

Against this background, the professionalisation of trainers becomes a 'keystone' of the quality of the training system which, if it is to function properly, must be underpinned by a body of trainers whose skills and qualifications are recognised at national level. A comparative study conducted in five European countries (Italy, Germany, France, Spain and Belgium)[1] has led to a number of significant results, and notably the development of a national standard model of trainers' skills divided into three areas of professional activity: organisational development, pedagogy and didactics, and the link between supply and demand on the labour market in local development.

Other initiatives relating to the professionalisation of trainers are being developed in Italy:

- a programme of initial training arranged in the form of an online distance training network (FADOL network);
- a programme of continuing training arranged in the form of a master's for training system managers;
- training models for emerging trainers' occupational profiles (distance training tutor, professional guidance expert).

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[1] Cf. ISFOL, *Standard Formatori. Per un modello nazionale di competenze verso l'accreditamento professionale*, Rome, 1998.

The decisions made by Italy in relation to the training of trainers demonstrate the quest for a complementarity between the national and Community dimensions:

- a national dimension in the training of a corps of trainers with homogeneous skills, and the training of middle-ranking system managers;
- a Community dimension in the choice of a European approach to the setting of professional standards;
- and lastly, an innovative dimension in the recognition of the fact that the quality of the system depends on the quality of its trainers and the overall approach adopted.

II. Community issues and factors in the training of trainers

Any discussion of the training of trainers from a European angle calls first of all for an understanding of the role of a 'Europe of Knowledge' – within the meaning of the Agenda 2000 directives – in the process of European integration.

The successive stages of this process of integration – Common Market, European Monetary Union, Social and Economic Europe, Europe of Knowledge – do indeed seem to point towards convergence. At the present stage of this ongoing endeavour, access to learning, understood as the capacity to acquire knowledge, is becoming a major factor in competitiveness, alongside access to new technologies and European citizenship.

Education should therefore play a part in the development of European competitiveness, provided always that the parameters within which education takes place are radically changed. On this point, Community experience and an overview of research findings led to the formulation of the main features of 'the new paradigm of education and training':

Training as a spatial and temporal continuum:
- a shift towards education seen as a continual process throughout life, which eventually calls into question the break between initial and continuing vocational education and has repercussions for training;

The focus on the individual in training:
- a shift from pedagogical models and methods towards the development of tailor-made pathways. The single model should give way to made to measure strategies;

The mobilisation of learning in action:
- knowledge is acquired in order to develop the capacity for reflection about action and for capitalisation.

Teresa Ambrosio visualised this change of paradigm and its consequences for the act of learning and the act of teaching as a shift from the triangle of school pedagogy to the training strategy triangle..
In the first case, it is the teacher who acts as the intermediary in the relationship between the pupil/student and knowledge.

In the training strategy triangle, knowledge acts as the intermediary between the learner and the occupation by bringing together three different approaches: a socio-vocational approach, a didactic approach, and a personal and vocational development approach.

Training marked by the dominant figure of the trainer as mediator of knowledge is gradually replaced by a vaguer function that is more closely integrated into learners' personal and occupational development strategies.

At this point the argument came back to the discussion that had begun in the earlier workshops on the evolution of training profiles. In several national contexts, this evolution is reflected in a diversification, an explosion even, of profiles of trainers and of related provision.

The evolution towards a conception of education and training processes that focuses on training strategies leads to an integrated skills model for trainers as:

- reflexive actors in their relationship with knowledge, and
- institutional actors in the exercise of multiple functions, also giving guidance and support to learners.

In order to be able to keep pace with these developments, the training of trainers must at the European level become a specific field of investment, research, evaluation and cooperation. While the aim is in fact to meet the challenges of competitiveness through access to knowledge, the professionalisation of those involved in training becomes of strategic importance for the creation of a true European framework.

III. The Community dimension: a matter for definition and cooperation

The discussion on the Community dimension necessarily played a large part in the activities of the workshop, moving from theoretical discussion with the aim of defining the idea, to identification of the preconditions for development of the Community dimension through the TTnet network. Without covering the full breadth of the debate, we shall give a summary here which focuses on the purpose of the TTnet network.

1. *A consensus is needed, but it is premature to envisage a definition of the Community dimension even though a number of Community documents mention it.*

    The Community dimension is not a label, and cannot be reduced to the number of partners engaged in a European project, nor to generalisations. There is not one Community dimension but a multitude of phenomena that play a part in defining the Community dimensions.

    Moreover, in order to define a Community dimension we must first define a common field where analysis can be conducted uncontaminated by cultural contexts.

    At the same time, the Community dimension must be seen as the outcome of a process of synthesis incorporating conflicting parameters (array of contexts, value of local and cultural diversity, the geo-strategic factor, variety of actors involved in training) and common trends (towards integration of training systems).

2. *The Community dimension is defined more as an evolving 'process',* a 'positive and dynamic attitude' which is part of the logic of European integration, in the words of D. Guerra.

Seeing the Community dimension as a process means both identifying the key features and stages of that process, laying down objectives for the TTnet network, and finding ways in which it should act in sympathy with the intended changes.

a) The key features and stages of the process:

- Seeing the Community dimension as a process means combining the parameters of capitalisation (of information that may amount to common experience) and of transference (the twin directions of contextualising practice and questioning the elements transferred). On this point again, in-depth investigation is required since what is transferable cannot be reduced to what is common.
- The Community dimension presupposes cooperation defined as the process of the coming together of partners for the joint production of results.
- But it is also a method seen as:

  ∗ a way of analysing projects that can enquire into both the origin, the process and the results of the project (have joint approaches been developed, is the result contextualised, what are the aspects of comparability, and what are the associated developments that have arisen out of the project?).
  ∗ a way of working: the Community dimension will demand time-scales, forms and degrees of involvement that vary according to the individuals and institutions concerned. It operates in stages, from discovering and learning about one another to collaborating on joint operations.

In conclusion, the Community dimension must be seen as a process and a dynamic of change, enabling every actor, starting from his/her own questions, to arrive at the construction of a common objective that will satisfy his/her interests and form part of the collective effort.

b) The TTnet network as an agent of Community change

b.1.   a network producing information

The network puts forward lines of action (work on innovation and the development of training, and a platform for information) which correspond to the directions laid down for Leonardo 2 within the framework of the Commission's communication to the Council: « Towards a Europe of Knowledge, the European dimension of training, innovation and quality ».

The representative of the Commission, Fernanda Reis, also stressed convergence with Community objectives:
- support for the mobility of specialists in training
- access to new educational technologies
- development of networks for cooperation and exchange of good practice.

In this respect the network had interesting potential for the Commission.

Fernanda Reis confirmed that an important aspect of the role of the TTnet network in this context was the capitalisation and dissemination of information. Alongside provision for exchange, the establishment of information platforms, and information itself, will contribute to common experience and will be an essential task for the network that must precede any subsequent construction.

b.2. <u>a network activating cooperation</u>

The TTnet network is therefore called on to occupy the position of intermediary, in the way in which it is designed and operates, setting out both to respond to the needs and problems specific to Member States, and to define areas of transversal work and to disseminate the results of this work throughout the Community. In the process of building up the network, the second stage will therefore consist of designing common objectives and ways of working.

The theme of innovation in the training of trainers may represent the first of these. Cedefop chose this theme for three reasons:

- It is a direction laid down by the Commission with the aim of capitalising and transferring innovative experience (innovation, the key to European integration).
- The introduction of new technologies into training requires particular vigilance so that their impact or non-impact on the training process can be assessed (are new technologies factors in innovation?).
- Lastly, innovative practices are excellent places in which to observe the evolution of practice and of the profiles of trainers.

The most recent studies carried out by Cedefop all confirmed the difficulty of capturing the concept of innovation outside actual experience: it is a relative notion, a response to a need in a specific context, so that it is difficult to transfer.

In order to make progress on the issue of innovation from the point of view of the criteria of transferability, which is an interesting question in the interests of Community change, it will be necessary to redirect work so as to shift from a cumulative search for non-operational definitions to a tool that can be used jointly by more than one network for the analysis of innovative practices. It is to this end that the French network will at the Paris conference propose an analytical grid that is directly inspired by the recent work of Cedefop. This analytical grid is intended both to be subjected to joint enhancement, revision and modification, and to provide a common method of analysing innovative experiences in the search for their particularities and their points of convergence and transference.