

**BACKGROUND PAPER****Designing, implementing and supporting effective work-based learning
in continuing vocational education and training**

Workshop

21.-22.10.2014

Cedefop, Thessaloniki

This workshop is addressed to European and national policy-makers, including social partners, and other key stakeholders working in the field of continuing vocational education and training (CVET) such as human resources managers, training providers and researchers. The workshop will focus on the effective use of work-based learning (WBL) in CVET in firms, and how this can be supported through public policies and different modes of governance. It aims to share new knowledge and practical experience in WBL for adults, to discuss their implications for policy and practice and to inspire action.

Background

The importance of CVET is growing. This is due to several factors, for example trends towards an ageing society and longer working lives, which make it necessary that adults regularly update and broaden their skills through CVET. The more and more rapid technological and socio-economic developments and the need to respond to fast changing requirements are other factors that highlight the crucial role of CVET. Therefore, European policy-makers are turning their attention to CVET, especially its work-based forms. The Bruges Communiqué highlighted WBL as a foundation both of professional and personal development and of social cohesion, and included it in fields requiring more strategic action.¹ The renewed European agenda for adult learning calls for promoting WBL to support flexible provision of training and greater social inclusion.² WBL has a key role to play in contributing to reach the Education and Training 2020 (“ET 2020”) target of 15% average participation rate of adults in lifelong learning by 2020.

Despite this policy interest, the potential of WBL within CVET remains largely unfulfilled. How can WBL be used more effectively, i.e. which approaches can be used to foster high quality CVET and to accommodate the changing learning and skill needs of a wider range of adults and firms, and thus increase participation? Systematic knowledge of its uses in CVET in Europe is lacking and the knowledge we have is fragmented. Yet policy-makers and practitioners need a complete overview in order to make informed decisions.

1 European Commission (2010): The Bruges Communiqué on enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training for the period 2011-2020 (http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/vocational-policy/doc/brugescom_en.pdf).

2 Council of the European Union (2011). Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning. (<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/11/st16/st16743.en11.pdf>).

Cedefop is analysing WBL in CVET in order to fill knowledge gaps and thus provide a more solid ground for the design and implementation of WBL in CVET.³ Among Cedefop's current activities are the preparation of a policy handbook on CVET and the conduction of a stocktaking exercise on CVET, i.e. an integrated analysis of available data to provide a comprehensive evidence base that can support policy making. Further, Cedefop is carrying out a study on 'Work-based learning approaches in CVET in Europe: policies and practices'. Cedefop will present findings from the study at the workshop, while insights gained from the work on the CVET policy handbook and the stocktaking exercise will feed into the discussions.

Objectives

The workshop aims to inspire policy action and policy learning. It will do this by bringing together key stakeholders in the field to share their knowledge and experience on WBL in CVET, and to discuss the implications for policy-making. The workshop will contain presentations as well as interactive sessions. In particular, discussions will focus on

1. the effective use of WBL in CVET, and
2. how public policies and governance models can support effective WBL in CVET.

The following issues will be addressed, both from a policy and practical perspective:

1. WBL in CVET in firms: approaches, challenges and success factors

- **Types of WBL:**
 - Which approaches/trends of WBL in CVET exist in Europe and what are their key characteristics?
 - In how far do WBL in CVET approaches vary between different EU countries?
- **Barriers and challenges:**
 - What are main barriers and challenges for designing and implementing WBL in CVET?
 - Which barriers to employers' engagement exist?
 - What are key challenges in provision, for both training providers and clients?
- **Success factors, including examples of good practice/case studies:**
 - What are success factors for designing and implementing WBL in CVET?

2. Supporting the effective use of WBL in CVET in firms: The role of public policies and governance models

- **Types of policies and governance models:**
 - Which types of EU-level and/or national policies, programmes or other initiatives regulating or promoting WBL in CVET in enterprises exist in Europe?
 - Which types of governance models are applied, which stakeholders are involved in what role?

³ Previous Cedefop work in this field includes: Cedefop (2011). Learning while working: success stories on workplace learning in Europe (http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/3060_en.pdf); Cedefop (2012). Learning and innovation in enterprises (http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/5527_en.pdf) Cedefop (2013). Return to work: Work-based learning and the reintegration of unemployed adults into the labour market (http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/6121_en.pdf).

- What are current issues and trends in public policies and governance?
- **Success factors, including examples of good practice/case studies:**
 - What success factors can we identify for effective public policies and/or governance?

Workshop outcomes

The workshop will provide a learning platform and a forum for Member States, social partners, researchers and other VET stakeholders. In particular, it will

- lead to a deeper understanding of policies, governance models, types and practices of WBL in CVET in Europe;
- help to identify the conditions and strategies to be put in place for designing, implementing and supporting efficient and effective WBL-CVET;
- open perspectives on WBL-CVET approaches and works developed in the wider community of policy, practice and research on adult and WBL;
- offer opportunities to share examples of good practices and policies in WBL in CVET and to learn from them;
- inspire future action at enterprise and policy level, especially with a view of using the full potential of CVET to reaching the 15% target for adult participation in lifelong learning and, more generally, to address current socio-economic challenges (e.g. demographic trends, changing skill needs, labour shortages).