



# Applying research methodology: national researcher perspective

Insights from Italy and Latvia

**Daniele Morselli**, national researcher Italy,  
Free University of Bozen-Bolzano

**Līga Peiseniece**, national research Latvia, BA  
School of Business and Finance

**Entrepreneurship competence  
in vocational education and training**

17 and 18 February 2022

virtual workshop

#KeyCompetences



CEDEFOP

European Centre for the Development  
of Vocational Training



# What we liked about the methodology

- The fact that field research is carried out after document analysis
- The **in depth-approach at 6 VET providers'** premises that allow to understand how practices are enacted:
  - Focus group with learners, they like to tell what they have learnt. Mutually beneficial - they reflect on their learning process
  - Interview with teachers – very rich details and insights
- Good to collect **best practices** and show that developing an entrepreneurship competence is not a “mission impossible”

HOWEVER

- **Difficult to generalize** from 6 VET providers to the whole reality of Italy and Latvia


# What surprised us of the field research - ITALY

- The extremely **different realities** we could find
- Variety on how the **organisation of the visits** actually happens: sometimes organized months in advance, sometimes organized on the spot
- Not always easy to **obtain good data** from school directors, they tend to speak of topics of their interest
- Difficulty in **putting** together so many **qualitative data into a broad picture** that renders the diverse points of view and meanings of the participants
- **Observations** of entrepreneurship related activities not so useful if not over months of participant observations - an instant picture cannot tell much about the teaching and learning activities of a school year

# What surprised us of the field research - LATVIA

- **Planning the field research** visits took more time as initially envisaged, especially to coordinate with the availability of school management
- **Hybrid mode due to covid restrictions** in Latvia worked well: physical visits were possible to agree (to see the premises and, when was possible, conduct the observations)
- Extra effort was needed to explain the scope of the study and **to keep interviews focused**
- Difficult to address all questions of interest within each interview; need **to be flexible and to adjust the questions** corresponding to each profile of the respondent
- Selected VET providers have very **modern equipment and environment**, but this might not be the case at all VET providers. VET providers are keen to show the best they have, but it's not always linked with building the entrepreneurship competence
- Field visits **provides only a snapshot** of how the entrepreneurship learning activities are organised; most important part are in-depth interviews

# Methodological advice for the other 6 countries

- **Desk research** is important – always keep addressing the research questions central
- Importance of briefing properly the VET provider; **preparatory work is essential** on both sides
- Plan time in the beginning of the visit to **allow VET provider to present its school's strategy** and latest developments, **but keep it focused** on building entrepreneurship competence
- Focus on the **authenticity of the interviews** – research questions are answered only when interviewees are genuine in what they say
- Report interview notes as soon as you can (excel file/template for reporting the main data is provided)
- **Listening recordings** is of help:
  - to improve subsequent interviews and focus group facilitation
  - to complement the essential information on the excel file and being loyal to  **CEDEFOP** the participants' meanings (correct interpretation within the study context)

# Potential of applying this methodology in researching other key competences

Certainly exploring **how key competences are nurtured** requires a **qualitative approach** that takes into consideration several points of view – interviews, focus groups, observations, documents analysis without taking a reductionist approach

Quantitative approach with **surveys and multiple choice questionnaires would not be enough** to help untangle complex, relatively unknown, enacted in many different ways, and embedded in specific contexts such as key competences

Citizenship competence

Entrepreneurship competence

Cultural awareness and expression competence

Personal, social and learning to learn competence

# Thank you

[www.cedefop.europa.eu](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu)

Follow us on social media



**CEDEFOP**

European Centre for the Development  
of Vocational Training