CEDEFOP `S VET TOOLKIT FOR TACKLING EARLY LEAVING

20 KEY INTERVENTION APPROACHES

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1. IDENTIFICATION OF LEARNERS AT RISK

- SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO IDENTIFY LEARNERS AT RISK OF EARLY LEAVING

- CHOOSE RELEVANT INDICATORS (FAMILY BACKGROUND, SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, HEALTH ISSUES)

- PROTECT CONFIDENTIALITY AND PERSONAL DATA

- INVOLVE PRACTITIONERS AND PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR VET PROVIDERS WHO MONITOR AT-RISK LEARNERS

- SYSTEMATIC INFORMATION SHARING AND INCREASED COOPERATION BETWEEN VET PRACTITIONERS
- TIMELY AND TAILORED INTERVENTIONS

EARLY WARNING SYSTEM
2. Monitoring Early Leavers

- Define purposes
- Monitor early leaving at a local, regional and national level
- Assess the effectiveness of measures to tackle early leaving
- Referral and responsibility system
- Enlarge research on early leaving
- Decide a type of monitoring system
- Protect confidentiality and personal data

- Understanding of the processes and of the factors leading to early leaving will improve
- Data can be used for evidence-based policy
3. BUILDING MOTIVATION TO LEARN

BUILD TRUSTFUL RELATIONSHIPS AMONG STAFF AND LEARNERS

- STRENGTHENED SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-CONFIDENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL SKILLS
- DISCIPLINE AND ABILITY TO COPE WITH CHALLENGES WILL INCREASE

RE-ENGAGE LEARNERS THROUGH MOTIVATIONAL ACTIVITIES

GROUP ACTIVITIES

ART, SPORT AND NATURE RELATED ACTIVITIES

INTERACTION WITH PEERS AND TEACHERS IN NON-FORMAL ENVIRONMENTS
4. Community Involvement

Whole School Approach

- Comprehensive Response Involving the Entire VET Environment
- Listen to Student’s Voice
- Promote School-Family Partnerships
- Create an Inclusive Learning Environment
- Establish Links with the Wider Community (NGOs, Employers)
- Multi-Disciplinary Approach to Support All Learner Needs

- VET community shares an inclusive, learner-centred vision of education for all
- Common approach to tackling early leaving from education and training
5. Comprehensive Support to Tackle Complex Needs

- Establish an efficient referral system
- Establish cooperation channels with other relevant services and measures (health services, social services, legal advisers, youth services, public employment services, education and training providers)
- Support provided by ‘case managers’ who act as intermediaries and liaise with other services
- Build a trusting relationship between the young person and the keyworker
- Provide tailor-made and comprehensive response to young people with complex needs

- Social, health, psychological and economic challenges tackled by multifaceted support
- Improvement in well-being and learner’s self-esteem and confidence
- Positive attitude towards learning and development of trusting relationship
6. COUNSELLING TO ADDRESS BARRIERS TO LEARNING

- Offer professional counselling through trained counsellors and psychologists
- Organize group counselling sessions
- Provide tailored and long-term support
- Establish clear referral mechanisms and promote awareness of counselling services

- Improvement in emotional psychological support can be a means of building self-confidence, trust and motivation towards learning
- Understand and overcome complex needs and circumstances can remove barriers to participation
7. DEVELOPING EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

- Support learners' transition from education to employment
- Introduce business/enterprise studies into the curriculum
- Practical training/work placements with employers to experience the world of work
- Taster sessions (opportunities to try different orientations based on learners' interests and capacities)
- Provide measures to support young people develop their employability skills
- Job search, CV preparation, interview techniques
- Conflict resolution, leadership skills, communication skills, problem solving

- Learners will develop positive attitudes and behaviours towards the world of work and improve their sense of attachment to an organisation
- Learners will be able to make informed decisions about their future career prospects
# 8. Guidance: Supporting Youth to Manage Their Careers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>What is it?</strong></th>
<th><strong>Why is it useful?</strong></th>
<th><strong>How to provide it?</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IT is a range of activities aiming at supporting individuals to manage their careers and make educational, training and occupational choices match their personal characteristics.</td>
<td>To put the focus on personal skills, strength and interests and avoid usual biases about learning pathways.</td>
<td>Guidance activities can be delivered by professional and engaged career guidance practitioners.</td>
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<tr>
<td>It includes: education, training and work opportunities; career counselling.</td>
<td>To help students navigate through many VET options and understand application procedures.</td>
<td>Ensure coordination between guidance providers.</td>
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<td>To help students understand their learning needs and career preferences.</td>
<td>Offer a variety of guidance activities (work simulations or ‘Discovery Workshops’).</td>
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- Early and persistent career guidance is important to support young people in choosing VET as a positive option.
- Young people will have a more active and engaged attitude to education and learning in general.
- Students will be supported at transition points - to other levels and pathways of education and training, to work, or to a related occupation.
- Support should be offered before and during education and training and in transition phases.
- Integrate labour market information into guidance.
9. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR INCLUSIVE TEACHING AND TRAINING

**COOPERATION**
Among teachers and trainers, VET institutions and companies

**FOCUS ON INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGIES AND LEARNER-CENTRED APPROACHES**

**INCENTIVES**
Facilitate access to learning (e.g. financial support, career progression)

**PROMOTE TEACHERS’ SELF-EVALUATION AND REFLECTION TO ENHANCE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**NEEDS ANALYSIS**
Designed and customised on teachers’ and trainers’ needs

**CREATE AN INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

**PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ON PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT**

**QUALITY OF VET PROGRAMMES WILL IMPROVE**
**TEACHERS’ AND TRAINERS’ JOB SATISFACTION WILL INCREASE**
**VET PROVIDERS WILL GAIN SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE**
10. Improving VET image and attractiveness

**Problem**

Oftentimes VET is underestimated and seen as a "second choice". Students following VET learning routes may feel devalued and disengaged from education.

**Action**

**Structural reforms to improve VET quality**
- Improve VET curricula
- Use innovative methods and modern technologies
- Align VET programmes with the skills required in the labour market
- Offer new relevant VET or apprenticeship schemes

**Targeted measures to improve VET image**
- Provide more and better quality information about VET programmes
- Promote VET through marketing and promotional campaigns
- Provide role models to show young people what they can achieve through VET
- Offer remuneration of apprenticeships and incentives for employers

**Outcomes**
- VET will be seen as a positive choice by young people but also by families, employers and the wider public
- Learners will be supported to make the right choice according to their abilities and interests and thus the risk of drop out will be reduced
- Much better!
11. INCLUSIVE WORK-BASED LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

**Problem**

LEARNERS MAY STRUGGLE IN THEIR WORKPLACE BECAUSE OF:

- DIFFICULT WORKING CONDITIONS (LONG WORKING HOURS, HIGH STRESS)
- LOW MOTIVATING TASKS
- CONFLICTUAL RELATIONSHIP WITH TRAINERS OR WORKERS
- BEING VICTIM OF DISCRIMINATION AND BULLYING

**Action**

ENSURE A COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF THE ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS OF THE LEARNER

- ESTABLISH QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS, FEEDBACK MECHANISMS AND TUTORING ACTIVITY
- ESTABLISH PROCESSES FOR MEDIATING CONFLICTS
- AVOID DISCRIMINATION AND PROMOTE INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS
- FACILITATE FLEXIBLE ARRANGEMENTS TO COMBINE SCHOOL-BASED AND WORK-BASED TRAINING
- PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND SUPPORT TO IN-COMPANY TRAINERS

**Outcomes**

- POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS AT THE WORKPLACE WILL HELP STUDENTS DEVELOP A PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND GOOD WORK HABITS AS WELL AS SOCIAL SKILLS
12. One-to-one Support Through Coaching or Mentoring

One-to-one support is particularly useful during the first year of a new programme, at transition points or for reintegration from drop-out status to vet.

### Mentoring
- Deals with evolving goals/objectives and can help empower students to improve their learning habits and formulate goals for the future.
- Choose the right coach/mentors:
  - Professionals
  - Volunteers
  - Students or peers
- Build a relationship based on trust
- Learners will be provided with positive role models and will be supported in their learning, through one-to-one discussions and individualised response to meet their needs.

### Coaching
- Has clearly defined goals and objectives. Once these are achieved, it comes to an end. Coaching can lead to the development of a project or plan for the future.
- Offer long-term support
- Train the mentors and coaches
- Mentoring and coaching may increase the young person’s chances of continuing and completing their education.
13. DIGITAL INCLUSION

RISKS

- Acknowledge technology’s risks and address them (e.g. cost of equipment, overuse of ICT, digital gap among learners, safe navigation, learners with special educational needs)

CONDITIONS

- Schools need to be provided with adequate equipment

- A digital strategy should be promoted at national and local level

- Training on digital skills should be made available for teachers and learners must be educated on how to use digital tools in a safe and proactive way

HOW TO BE IMPLEMENTED?

- Develop a monitoring and evaluation system concerning the use of digital tools

- Offer a variety of guidance activities (work simulations or ‘discovery workshops’)

- Prioritise overcoming language barriers to access digital tools and content

- Develop blended learning approaches

- Provide equal accessibility to digital tools to all teachers and learners

- Teachers and learners will acquire key competences and transversal skills

- Vulnerable learners will receive further support and be included in the learning environment (e.g. special educational needs, non-native speakers)
14. FLEXIBLE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEMS

- Programmes are reorganised to better respond to learners’ needs
- Positive attitude towards the education and training system will increase

**CREATE FLEXIBILITY IN EDUCATION SYSTEMS**

**ALLOW FLEXIBILITY IN ENROLMENT AND REGISTRATION**

**PROMOTE ALTERNATIVES TO GRADE RETENTION AND AVOID SUSPENSIONS AND EXPULSION FROM SCHOOL**

**ADAPT LEARNING PATHS TO STUDENTS’ NEEDS**

**MAKE IT EASIER FOR LEARNERS TO CHANGE PATHWAYS**

**PROVIDE INDIVIDUALISED TEACHING METHODS**

**OFFER FLEXIBILITY IN PROGRAMME DELIVERY**
- Part Time
- Blended Learning
- Evening Classes

**BREAK DOWN PROGRAMMES INTO UNITS OR MODULES TO ENABLE MOVEMENT ACROSS THE SYSTEM**

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15. PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THEORETICAL COURSES

Understanding the practical application of theoretical courses helps keep students motivated. However, making the links between theory and practice can be a complex process and many learners need support to reflect on it.

**HOW?**

- Periodically review VET programmes to check their alignment with labour market skills needs.
- Keep VET teachers’ knowledge of the workplace up to date.
- Ensure consistency between school-based and work-based learning.
- To establish links between school-based and work-based learning requires cooperation between training providers and employers.
- Integrate theoretical content into the vocational context.
- Evenly distribute work-based learning throughout the programme.
- Alternating practical training with theoretical instruction.
- Promote active learning to make teaching of the theoretical content more engaging.

- Understanding the link between the theoretical content and its practical application will keep students more interested in learning and they will consider academic achievement more meaningful.
16. PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

- Many factors can cause distress for students (e.g., bullying, discrimination, behaviour issues, psychosocial problems, trauma)
- Schools are places where these signs of distress can be early detected and promptly addressed with the intervention of the teaching staff and other professionals
- Schools must function as zones of protection. Provide a welcoming, nurturing, safe and responsive environment for all learners, learners’ psychosocial well-being must be considered a collective whole-school responsibility
- Psychosocial support helps tackle social, health and psychological challenges faced by young people
- This type of support should lead to an improvement of well-being and trust among students, teachers and trainers, and stimulate a positive attitude towards learning

Design a systemic multi-layered approach

- Involving different community actors in providing support
- Offer specific support for refugee and displaced learners
- Use art and creative approaches
- Use art and creative approaches
- Ensure teachers and trainers’ self-care

Provide continuous professional development on psychosocial support
17. **Work-Based Learning and Simulations**

- **Build direct partnerships with employers and community-based organisations**
- **Provide different models of work-based learning and close-to-real simulations**
- **Ensure regular communication between the school tutor and the company tutor**
- **Apprenticeships (that formally combine/alternate company-based training with school-based education)**
- **School-based VET with on-the-job training periods in companies (internships, work placements, traineeships)**

The provision of work-based learning and close-to-real simulations provide opportunities to experience the everyday reality of the workplace and are suitable for all young people.

Providing work-based learning and close-to-real simulations opportunities to young people enables them to develop their employability skills and their understanding of the world of work.

It helps learners develop their awareness of job demands and employer expectations, and ultimately supports their effective transition and integration to the labour market.
18. TAILORED LEARNING PATHWAYS

AN INDIVIDUALISED APPROACH CAN BE ACHIEVED AS FOLLOWS:

1. Assess the individual’s existing skills and knowledge base

2. Develop an individual learning or career plan: A learning plan should meet the needs of the individual in terms of content and learning styles

3. Utilise the process to empower the young person

4. Conduct regular progress reviews related to the plan, and revise the plan in line with this progress

5. Address other learning support needs through a case management approach

- Learners who are given the opportunity to plan their individual learning and career pathway will have clear objectives and will be more engaged and motivated throughout their learning process.

- It also helps them to feel a sense of ownership over their future plans and it provides them with the skills to continue to plan and manage their careers in the future.
19. VALIDATION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

Validation is a process that can be carried out by different stakeholders within the education and training sector, labour market and third sector.

Train practitioners involved in validation processes to provide information, advice, guidance.

Validation procedures and materials should be responsive to all different needs.

Education providers and employers might use the formal outcome of a validation (e.g. certificate).

The different stages of validation, in particular the identification stage, allows a young person to reflect on the competences gained and how they could be used in the future.

Four different stages to validation:
- Identification
- Documentation
- Assessment
- Certification

Select the right validation tools (e.g. portfolio, examination, report, CV, observation, etc.)

Recognise skills and competences acquired in a variety of settings.

Placing the learner at the centre of the validation process.

Involving different stakeholders in the validation process to ensure the quality and coherence of the validation experience.

Ensure the credibility of validation by education providers and employers.

Follow-up after validation: keep track of the progress and mobility of individuals following completion of a validation procedure.
Classroom-based approach to learning is not appropriate for all young people. Second chance opportunities tend to use a different methodology, often inspired by VET pedagogies (e.g. more hands-on, more tailored to the interests of the learner) which can be more appealing.

Second chance measures can also take a holistic approach and provide support to tackle learning barriers through a multi-professional case management approach.

- Reach out to young people through local support
- Start with an assessment of the learners’ existing knowledge, skills and interests
- Engage and develop the ‘whole person’
- Create an alternative to mainstream education which is flexible and adapts school to student’s abilities and needs
- Include motivational activities
- Use appropriate teaching and learning methods
- Link second chance measures with formal education

20. Second chance measures provide learners with an opportunity to gain a formal qualification they did not obtain whilst in mainstream school.

These soft outcomes can help to prepare them for a return to formal learning or to enter employment. Second chance opportunities might also lead to positive outcomes for young people facing complex barriers to learning.