



Developing employability skills

Problem statement

Addressed problem: Helping young people prepare for working life

Basic skills training and opportunities to experience the work place can help young people prepare for working life and support their transition from education to employment. It can help young people develop the types of behaviours, attitudes and skills that employers require from day one. These include basic literacy, maths and IT skills as well as essential life skills such as time-management, problem solving, good communication skills, and understanding the requirements and culture of the workplace.

In order to become 'employable', young people also need a set of behaviours and attitudes - these include being flexible, adaptable, pro-active, positive and motivated. Without these basic skills, behaviours and attitudes, young people may struggle to integrate into a company. They may be at risk of disengagement, early leaving or contract termination (in the case of apprentices).

Beneficiaries

Early leavers from education and training	Secondary education students	Young people	VET students (school based)
VET students (in work based learning schemes)	Unemployed youth	Unemployed adults	Vulnerable groups
			Migrants / refugees

All young people can benefit from activities that focus on developing basic skills, behaviours and attitudes in preparation for the workplace. These activities might be particularly helpful for young people who are at risk of early leaving due to performance issues, and for those learners who are uncertain about their career aspirations.

Addressing the problem

What makes work-readiness measures effective?

The following tips are offered to policy makers and practitioners involved in the design and delivery of such measures. The information is based on Cedefop research into successful measures.

Tip 1: Provide a range of measures to support young people develop their 'work-readiness' skills

There are a range of activities that can be developed with the aim of preparing young people for working life and supporting their transition from education to employment. In practice, this means introducing a range of opportunities for young people to experience the workplace. Such initiatives can be organised and delivered in different ways and in different settings. For example:

- Taster sessions (opportunities to try different orientations based on learners' interests and capacities)
- Practical training/work placements with employers to experience the world of work
- Introducing business/enterprise studies into the curriculum
- School-based VET programmes to provide real opportunities and support for learners interested in starting up a business

Measures can be integrated into existing programmes or designed as a stand-alone measures offered over different durations (e.g. one year, one term, after school).

Tip 2: Develop and adapt measures to meet the needs of learners

Measures to develop 'work-readiness' may include a combination of basic skills and activities that focus on developing behaviours and attitudes employers expect from young people when they enter the workplace.

Therefore, it is important to tailor measures to meet the needs of the individual. Some individuals may require measures that primarily focus on developing emotional skills before focusing on social skills (behaviours and attitudes) and/or employability skills. Certain measures may be useful to address motivational issues or sharing experiences of learning and study techniques, etc.

Some learners may benefit from diversified support measures. These may require input from specialist professionals or via outreach. Case management and/or individualised pathways can ensure measures are tailored to the specific needs of the individual learner.

Tip 3: Enhancing employability skills should be at the heart of work-readiness measures

All measures to develop 'work-readiness' should include enhancing employability skills in their overall aims. They should also contain a focus on motivation, building self-confidence and self-esteem to help build a range of skills, and personal qualities to support learners in their overall integration to the workplace. Such interventions could relate to:

- Job search, CV preparation, interview techniques
- Getting to know the workplace
- Relationship building
- Conflict resolution
- Leadership skills
- Communications skills
- Citizenship
- Health and well-being
- Problem-solving and self-regulation




Tip 4: Keep work-readiness flexible enough to meet different learner needs

Initiatives may be unique to the individual or there may be a requirement for group-cohort type initiatives (for instance, for young people with disabilities, young unemployed, disadvantaged young people). These can be delivered in small groups; or a one-to-one basis. They may involve input from specialist support staff and/or community based agencies/stakeholders.

Expected outcomes

Activities to develop work-readiness will support learners in their overall integration to the workplace. It will help them build positive attitudes and behaviours towards the world of work. It will improve their sense of attachment to an organisation and help them develop employment relationships and to understand what it is like to be in the workplace and how to behave. It will also help them to make informed decisions about their future career prospects.

The following outcomes can be expected at different levels:

		
INDIVIDUAL	INSTITUTIONAL	SYSTEM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved skills in literacy, numeracy and IT • Contribute to the improvement of social skills and emotional skills • Stimulate the development of young people's interests and curiosity • Improved social skills and emotional well-being • Improved work habits • Developing a positive attitude to learning and education and training • Gaining a better understanding of career options • Gaining a better understanding of job roles • Making informed choices • Improving self-awareness - understanding of own abilities, aptitudes and interests • Improved 'work readiness' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced risk of early leaving due to lack of work readiness • Increased satisfaction among learners during in-company training (apprenticeships or other) • Better results of learners during in-company training (apprenticeships or other) • Increased satisfaction of trainers and companies receiving learners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced rates of learners dropping out during apprenticeships or in-company training periods within school-based VET programmes

Related protective factors



Related resources

Good practices



Ready for Education and Training

Produktionsschule (formerly known as 'AusbildungsFIT)

In Austria, the 'Produktionsschule' initiative offers training modules for practical training and work. Through coaching, workshops and sports, young people develop cultural and social skills needed to take part in education or enter the labour market.



BOP: Vocational orientation programme, offered at vocational training centres

Special focus on BFZ: vocational training centres of the educational institute of the Bavarian Industry and Trade

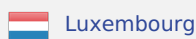
The German Vocational Orientation Programme, 'BOP', aims to give students an insight into a wide range of professions. It also aims to inform students about their potential to develop an idea as to which professions might suit them better than others.



Guidance and professional initiation courses and professional initiation courses to diverse professions

Cours d'orientation et d'initiation professionnelles - COIP) et cours d'initiation professionnelle à divers métiers - IPDM)

In Luxembourg, Guidance and professional initiation courses (COIP) include a traineeship of one week or a longer period in a company, and practical classes provided by teachers in a workshop format.



Training for Success (TfS)

In Northern Ireland, the 'Training for Success' initiative offers training to help young people develop personal and social skills, employability skills, essential skills in Communications, Application of Number and Information Communication Technology whilst working towards nationally recognised qualifications.



Tools



Need for all Youngsters

Brug for alle Unge, (BFAU)

The Danish initiative 'Need for all Youngsters' included national initiatives to raise awareness of the educational system, in particular VET, amongst parents from ethnic minorities.



Denmark



CodeRed Curriculum and learning material

The Code RED Curriculum and learning material supports young people develop their employability skills. A Tutor Handbook also provides information on supporting young people re-engage in education and training.



United Kingdom



Greece



Italy



Cyprus



Guide and lesson plan examples with suggested activities and resources - promoting social skills among students.

The 'Guide and Lesson Plans' toolkit provides practitioners with concrete activities and resources when developing strategies to promote social skills among learners.



Italy



Bulgaria



United Kingdom



Poland



Denmark

Publications



Ready for Work: The capabilities young people need to find and keep work - and the programmes proven to help develop these

Do you have the answers to the question: how can we help young people be ready for work? This report explores the capabilities young people need to find and keep work - and the programmes proven to help develop these.

Download the report [here](#).



Learning to grow: what employers need from education and skills

What do employers need from education and skills? An employer survey in the UK explores employer investment in skills, their commitment to schools and colleges and how employers can help prepare young people for the world of work.

Download the report [here](#).



Quick wins



Taster opportunities

Taster opportunities - giving young people the chance to try out different vocational areas before they choose a VET programme - help to tackle misconceptions around VET.



Source URL: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/lv/toolkits/vet-toolkit-tackling-early-leaving/intervention-approaches/developing-employability-skills>