



ACTION: ENHANCE SHORT-TERM EMPLOYABILITY OF IMMIGRANTS

Analysis of Existing Training Programmes for Immigrants' Employability

[Global Cross-Analysis Report]

Lead Partner:
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Rationale

AcTiOn project aims at promoting inclusion and labour market integration of immigrant learners, through the design and delivery of trainings to VET staff, teachers and stakeholders as well as to involve more VET education providers and experts, in immigrants' labour market integration. Consequently, with the aim of providing an overall glance of the major findings as well as finalizing a practical and relevant number of features to be covered by the project OERs, this report consolidates the national inputs of immigrants' prior learning, qualifications and labour market needs field and desk research. As a responsible for IO1, PRISM Impresa Sociale s.r.l. has worked alongside with Institute for Roma and Minorities, BK Consult, AKMI, ARSIS, ROMA YOUTH CENTRE and ZEWELEPE Consultants Limited – to develop each activity in their respective country.

This work has proved to be of much relevance and added value, for a number of reasons:

The richness of the partnership: This global report put into perspective countries with different migration patterns and temporalities. In this sense, the relevance of such a question aiming at understating VET system within migration dynamic is even stronger and original: professional needs, relevant skills and framework policies vary and with them our need to better understand and frame the core concepts of this project.

The complexity of global debate and policies about migration: During the last couple of decades, many countries have seen their migration profiles changing drastically. For instance, Greece has turned from a emigration to an immigration country, blending the humanitarian crisis with the need to set up professional careers and pathways. Global changes, environmental and conflict push factors take place more and more within contexts and policies going between humanitarian and development frameworks. This picture adds complexity of the scenario and the need to tackle the migration topic in a transnational and holistic frame, beyond the fast concepts and images often relayed in the public discourse and narrative.

These elements, to name just a few, need to be combined with the specific characteristics of each country, the migration patterns and generations, social welfare challenges and the transitory character of “people on the move”.

To gain deeper knowledge and access sources, reports and publications used as a reference for this report we encourage the reader to visit [AcTiOn Project Website](https://project-action.eu) where all the national reports, contributing to this one, are located and free to access.



A perspective: the Labour Market and Migrants, at a glance

ITALY

According to the Italian National Bureau of Statistics (ISTAT), as of 31 December 2019, a number of 5.039.637 foreigners legally reside in Italy, which equals to 8.45% of the total residing Italian population. Recent migration patterns in the country highlight a steady decrease in stock income in such a way that, the number of resident permits granted to Third Country Nationals (TCNs) is - 26.8% compared to 2018 and already -3% comparing to January 2020 (177.254 permits). Albeit with variations among regions, the flux of migrants was already decreasing before the Sars-Covid 19 outbreak.

Breaking the data down by nationalities, we find that the decreasing tendency spreads equally among them, the two extremes being the Nigerians, showing -66% income and Albanians 8%. Given that this difference seems to be due to a decrease for asylum request, the distinction between humanitarian reasons and citizenship permits allows us to contextualise the top ten immigrant nationalities in Italy, according to ISTAT¹:

Table 1. Report Non EU citizen 2018, ISTAT

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	VAR % 2018	ABSOLUTE VALUE up to first semester 2020_individuals
Albania	• 8.7%	21.437
Morocco	• 21.4%	16.032
India	• 16.3%	11.405
Pakistan	• 16.1 %	11.202
Bangladesh	• 24.7%	9.934
China	• 21.8%	8.889
USA	• 14.2%	7.837
Egypt	• 24.4 %	6.662
Ukraine	• 23.3 %	6.095
Nigeria	• 66.4%	5.211
Other Countries	• 31%	72.550
TOTAL	• 26.8%	177.254

At the onset of 2020, the unemployment rate of TCNs/ non-EU citizens is of 13.8 % compared with 9.2% of the labour force of Italian nationality. When considering this trend by gender, it is interesting to see that the decrease in employment rate for EU women (- 3.7% compared to the second quarter of 2018) is opposite the



significant increase in non-EU women employment (+7.5%). This point could be explained among other, by a growing request for care workers in Italian ageing society and, a fortiori, during and in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. Generally, when disaggregating the trends of the occupations held by TCNs, according to ISTAT we observe that the main sectors of employment are the Real Estate, Transport and Warehousing, Agriculture, Hunting, Fishing and Other Social Services as well as in the purely Industrial Sector and construction. It is certainly interesting to put these data in perspective with the increase of the number of apprenticeship contracts: this might be a suggestion that, despite the decrease in employment rate, there is a steady pattern to stabilization of labour force against informal labour market and employed force.

The target population of this research is aged 20-64 ; within this category, in 2019 seven (7) out of ten (10) people were employed in the Northern Italy, while in the South and the Islands the ratio decreased to five (5); in addition, almost all the Regions showed a decrease in the incidence of irregular employment (irregularity rate). The South and the Islands showed the highest incidence (18.6%) of informal labour market employment: this does not only show the irregular, although stable, patterns over the country but also confirms the information gathered out during focus group discussions with TCNs learners and trainers.

The bi-annual report "Foreigners in the Italian labour market" by the Italian labour ministry's General Directorate for Immigration and Integration Policy and the National Agency of Active Labour Policies (ANPAL) Services, showed that, as a general fact, the number of people looking for work decreased. 22.6% less Italians, 39.2% less EU citizens, and 40% less non-EU workers, searched a job in 2019 comparing to the previous report (2017).

GERMANY

According to the German Federal Agency for Civic Education (BDP), in 2019 there are 21.2 million people with a migrant background, out of 81.8 million citizens, i.e. 26% of total residing population. North-Rhine-Westphalia hosted the highest ratio (over 2.75 million) followed by Bavaria with more than 1.96 million and Baden-Württemberg (1.84 million). The most represented countries of origin are Turkey (13.3%) followed by Poland (10.5%), Russia (6.5%), Romania (4.8%) and Italy (4.1%). It is interesting to point that out of them, a little more than one-third is born in Germany and that 85% of Turks and 71.5% of Italians have lived in Germany for at least fifteen years.

In 2020, Sars-Covid 19 outbreak has affected the number of applications also in Germany, especially concerning asylum. As a result, there were 165,938 applications in 2019 and 122,170 in 2020. Breaking the data down by nationality, we found that Syria, Afghanistan, Turkey, Iraq, Iran are the most represented. The majority of migrants were male, although the share of women has increased recently, and almost a half of them (47.4%) were under 30 years of age.

Table 2. First-time asylum applicants of legal age from all countries of origin and the ten main countries of origin in 2020 and difference to the previous year, according to BAMF

Country of origin	Individuals 2020	% in 2020	% in 2019	Difference from 2019	%
Syria	13,011	27.5	14.1	- 13.4	
Afghanistan	4,459	9.4	4.8	- 4.6	
Turkey	4,097	8.7	8.6	- 0.1	



Iraq	3,996	8.5	6.8	- 1.7
Iran	2,062	4.4	7	- 2.7
Georgia	1,558	3.3	2.7	- 0.6
Nigeria	1,113	2.4	5.7	- 3.4
Algeria	1,064	2.3	1.1	- 1.2
Vietnam	1,011	2.1	0.9	- 1.3
Somalia	798	1.7	1.6	- 0.1
Other	14,075	29.8	45.2	-15.4
TOTAL	47,244	100	100	

In June 2020, 4.235.911 out of 33.322.952 active population (employees) were migrants while, in February 2021, 2.904.000 people were unemployed: according to Statista, the proportion of unemployed migrants is 14.4% in 2020.

The German Federal Employment Agency sets the classification of the professions into the four following skill levels: (i) semi and unskilled tasks (ii) skilled tasks (iii) complex specialist tasks and (iv) highly complex expert tasks.

The proportion of those involved in semi- and unskilled activities among migrants (especially refugees) is significantly higher than among those born in Germany, since only 13% of native peers are involved in semi- and unskilled activities. However, 32 % of the employed migrants (especially refugees) are performing tasks above the level of their professional qualifications: this can be explained by the fact that many refugees have acquired professional qualifications through “training on the job” in their home countries and not through formal vocational training as it is customary in Germany.

CYPRUS

According to the Cyprus Statistical Service Report, as of first of January 2020, the permanent residents of foreign origin were estimated at 161.000 individuals, i.e. 18, 1% of the total population in the Government controlled area. Concerning the humanitarian sector, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports a steady rise in the number of refugees and asylum seekers over the years 2015-2020, with the three highest percentages belong to asylum applicants coming from Syria (25%), India (16%) and Cameroon (9%).

Traditionally, the core of migrants in Cyprus are women, who have been entering the country since the early 90's looking for job opportunities and are mostly hired as domestic and care workers. The main country of origin are Sri Lanka, Philippines, India, Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union countries. Other sectors, although lower in numbers, are male dominated: this is particularly the case for Syrians and Egyptians in building and construction but also in private households, hotels and restaurants, agriculture and forestry, manufacturing etc.

According to the Refugee Law and Ministerial Decree 308/2018, asylum seekers are allowed to access the labour market one month after the submission of an asylum application. The Refugee Law enables the Minister of Labour, Welfare, and Social Insurance - in consultation with the Minister of Interior - the power to place restrictions and conditions on the right to employment without hindering asylum seekers' effective



access to the labour market. It is worth noting that, employers recruiting asylum seekers must have an authorization issued by the Labour Department to employ third-country nationals.

In 2019, the Minister of Labour, Welfare, issued additional measures and Social Insurance, which added additional employment sectors to asylum seekers.

The permitted fields of employments for asylum seekers are mainly agriculture, animal husbandry, fishery, animal shelters and pet hotels, processing, waste management, trade-repairs, provision of services, food industry, restaurants and recreation centres as well as Laundromat services and dissemination of advertising material.

GREECE

As of mid-2016, 727.000 immigrants were living in Greece with a residence permit, accounting for 7% of the population ². This country is very peculiar since, despite its traditional emigration profile, it has turned into an immigration country in recent decades; in addition, the country has been, and still is, facing a complex humanitarian crisis, unprecedented for the country. In 2012, 23.200 new residence permits were issued to non-EU citizens, compared with 43 000 in 2008; as such, the economic crisis has had a profound effect on immigrant integration in the labour market. According to [UNHCR](#), in 2020 there were 15,700 arrivals to Greece.

Using the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)'s statistics, in 2020 the majority of Third Country National (TCNs) are men coming from Africa or Asia; they work in the manufacturing sector, construction field, wholesale, retailing and tourism.

Table 3. TCNs man occupations held in Greece, OECD data, 2020



With the same sources, TCN women are majorly employed in housekeeping and care jobs, followed by manufacturing, wholesale, retailing and real estate.

² <https://www.oecd.org/migration/greece-addressing-migration-challenges-beyond-the-current-humanitarian-crisis.pdf>



Table 4. TCNs women occupations held in Greece, OECD data, 2020

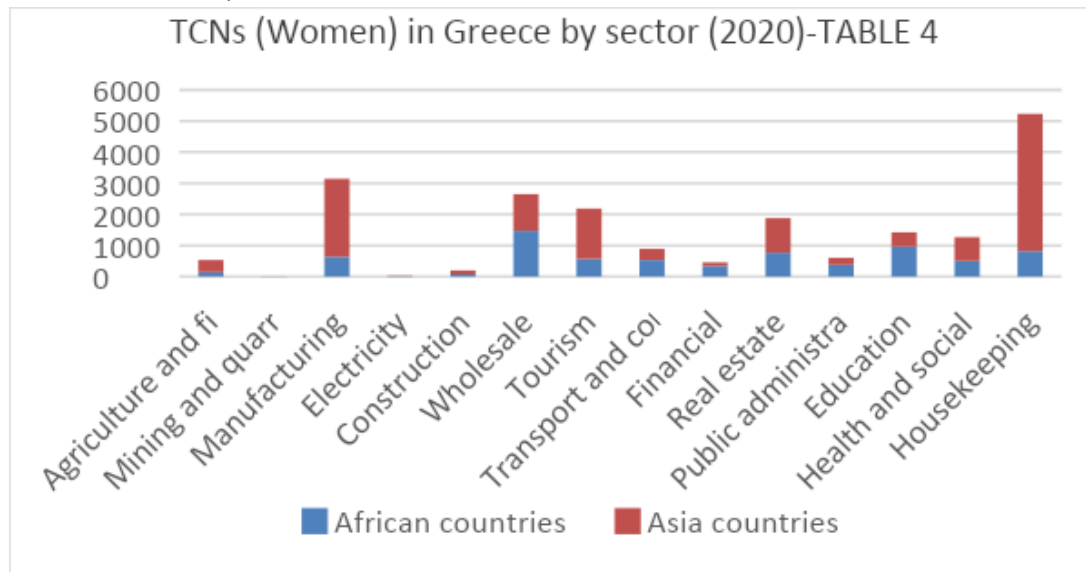
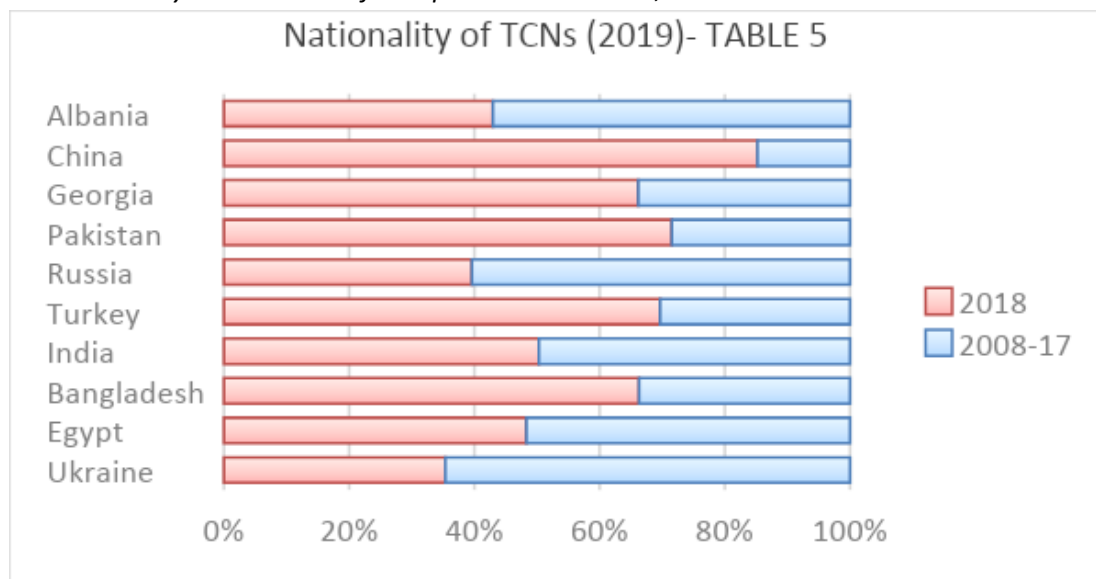


Table 5. Breakdown by nationalities of TCN presence in Greece, in 2019



NORTH MACEDONIA

According to the North Macedonia Migration report from the State Statistical Office, the last census, which took place in 2002, features 2.022.547 inhabitants in the country. In this multi-ethnic country, 64.17% is of Macedonian origin, 25.17% Albanian, 3.85% Turkish, 2.66% Roma etc. Following the period of visa liberalization in 2009, Macedonia has turned into a migration area with intensive population emigration. The Republic of North Macedonia, a land of transit and a small number of asylum seekers: The Republic of North Macedonia is part of the “Balkan migration route”, where hundreds of thousands of refugees and other migrants (mostly from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and North and sub-Saharan Africa) attempted to travel to Northern Europe.



In 2017, the number of foreigners with approved temporary stay in the Republic of Macedonia amounts at 2322, while the numbers of foreigners with approved permanent stay is of 1760 units.

The majority of the foreigners with temporary stay mainly come from: Turkey (39,5%), Serbia (11,1%), Kosovo (9,6%) and Albania (7,1%)³.

Table 6. Immigrants stock by nationality, 2017



A foreigner who, due to various reasons, intends to stay in the Republic of North Macedonia up to three months (90 days) must regulate his/her temporary stay. Under the Law on Foreigners, the Sector for Border Affairs and Migration can issue a temporary residence permit to a foreigner on the following grounds:

- Employment or self-employment
- Enrolment in high school or university
- Participation in international exchange programmes
- Specialization, professional development or vocational training
- Scientific research
- Medical treatments
- Family reunification
- Real estate property
- Humanitarian reasons

Recently there has been an increase in the number of approved residence permits for employment reasons, following the governmental efforts to attract foreign investments but also for higher education attendance purposes. This increase is particularly influenced by the interest of Turkish citizens to study in North



Macedonia and is influencing to the adjustment of the curricula of several universities, with the aim of better adapt to foreign labour market needs in terms of skills.

Out of the 2.322 foreigner individuals who were granted temporary residence in 2017, 55% were men and 45% women; in addition, 38% of them are between 20-29 years old and 20% are between 30-39 years old.

In the Republic of North Macedonia, the residence permit is also granted based on the reported reasons for immigrating. In a time span 2009-2013, more than one quarter (3,694 out of 14.515 individuals) stayed due to employment activities, while more than one fifth reported to request due to family and education purposes (5.094 individuals).

A perspective by country:

The VET systems and their learning and employment outcomes

ITALY

The Italian VET system

The Technical and Vocational Training (VET) system features a number of specific patterns to highlight since there is a considerable, multilayer presence of institutional actors both at national and regional levels.

According to art. 117 of the Italian Constitution (Title V), a mechanism for cooperation among different institutions shall provide ownership based on the type of training offered. As a result, the State establishes general rules and standards and the regions have legislative applied power, since the educational sector falls under the scope of concomitant legislation.

Mandatory education starts at the age of six and ends at the age of sixteen years old. It covers the whole first cycle of education - primary and lower secondary - and the first two years of the second cycle. These, may be accomplished either in a upper secondary school or within the regional VET system, since this school offers both theoretical and practical/vocational programmes. It has a duration of five years at the end of which, a successful exam allows students to gain access to higher level (university, higher technical institutes...). In Italy, the following VET programmes exist, at the upper secondary school level:

- ✓ Five-year programmes (EQF level 4) at technical schools leading to technical education diplomas: these programmes generally combine education and VET, and can also be delivered in the form of alternance training; graduates have access to higher education
- ✓ Three-year programmes leading to a vocational qualification (EQF level 3)
- ✓ Four-year programmes leading to a technician professional diploma (EQF level 4)

At post-secondary level, VET is available as higher technical education for graduates of either five-year upper secondary programmes, or four-year vocational education and training pathway programmes, provided a successful entry exam.

The vast majority of immigrant learners align on compulsory law for studies; they are generally willing to study until the age of 16. The public educational institution apt to host newly arrived and/or adult migrants is called “Centro Provinciale Istruzione per Adulti” (CPIA), a territorial institution based on province as administrative unit. The CPIA is composed on three main levels, according to its main axis:

- ✓ Adult education in view of getting qualifications
- ✓ Educational offer with the aim of enriching adult educational paths and create synergies with VET institutions



- ✓ Research and laboratory activities in Adult education field

Its educational paths set up the following three typologies:

- ✓ First level educational path
- ✓ Second level education path
- ✓ Literacy level and Italian language L2

Literacy classes implemented by CPIA allow students (mostly immigrants but also adult native peers) to obtain a certification of Italian language proficiency not lower than L2 of the Common EU Framework for languages.

With reference to CPIA educational offer aiming at enriching adult educational paths and create synergies with VET institutions, the CPIA is also tasked with the promotion of integrated projects of education and training with public and/or private VET agencies and bodies, through the participation to public regional, national and EU programs.

The Italian VET context and the migrants

Concerning technical and vocational training for adults, VET programmes are available through various public and private providers, generally framed by Provincial Adult Education Centres (CPIA), under the coordination of the region and the general management of the national Ministry of Education and Labour. Within the purpose of this report, our research population has just achieved, or has recently attained, CPIA classes.

In putting into perspective Italian VET system with specific migration configuration in the country, it is useful to nuance generations as well as status of migrants, concerning qualification acquisition and level of studies attended. Generally, more integrated and rooted communities have larger access to upper studies - although with major challenges compared to their Italian counterparts.

Following the national policy, in order to avoid marginalisation, foreign youth and young adults are generally enrolled with native peers, upon arrival to Italy. Although this policy is intended to avoid marginalisation, recent migration dynamics of children and adolescents allow us to identify some challenges: the compulsory grades seem to be still far from being truly effective in migrants' economic integration.

In fact, immigrant learners are more exposed to educational poverty than their Italian counterparts; drop-out rates are higher for immigrants and young adults of foreign origins (36.5%) than Italians (11.3%) and it's more frequent when it comes to upper primary education (Scuola Media, CPIA).

In the case of immigrant learners, this is mainly due to social and economic inequalities, linguistic barriers, challenges and obstacles to their social integration, among which educational poverty and drop-out with the picture worsening in case of those without their families or a solid community network.

Finally, children of immigrants and young adults were in a position of increased vulnerability concerning school closures and distance learning measures, aiming at slowing the spread of COVID-19. In addition to the already fragile context, their parents tend to have fewer resources than native-born parents to help them in their homework; also, they are hit harder by the economic consequences of it. In addition, 40% of native-born children of immigrants do not speak the host-country language at home: as a result, these children are also less likely than peer native students to have access to a computer, an internet connection, or to a quiet place for study, at home.



General overview of learning and employment outcomes

As exposed above, the CPIA only certifies Italian language proficiency and literacy not inferior to L2 of the European Common Frame for Language Knowledge, as stated by the European Council of Europe.

The Tenth Annual Report issued by the General Direction of Immigration and Integration policies provides us with a general overview of employment outcomes for immigrants in Italy. When defined working age population as 15 to 64, working population of migrants amounts to 4.033.000 individuals, at the end of 2019.

Among which:

- ✓ Employed population (15 and more) comprises 2.505.186 individuals
- ✓ Individuals looking for employment 401.960
- ✓ Inactive individuals 1.175.059

When comparing these data with the general trends of the previous year (2018), we can observe an increase of 95.000 individuals (+0.5%) of Italian workers, as well as EU citizens (+14.450 individuals, i.e. +1,8%) and TCNs (+35.734 individuals, i.e. +2,2%) for a grand total of + 144.917 individuals.

Regarding the main employment sectors when comparing data with the previous year (2018), all of them show an increase in immigrants' employment rate: Agriculture (+18.3%), Hotel and Restoration (+17.7%) and Constructions (+17.6%); the sector in which TCNs employment incidence is the highest is Personal and Collective Services (+36%).

It is also important to put these findings in perspective with the VET background of the population of this research: CPIA only provides migrants with a certification of Italian language literacy - surely useful to communicate and create community networks to foster integration – seemingly not enough to increase social mobility and labour market positive outcomes.

By the time this report is being written, a full and comprehensive analysis of the impact of Covid-19 on TCNs category is yet to be completed. What appears clear already is that immigrants are in increased vulnerable position due to their generally less stable living and employment conditions; also, discrimination strongly increases in times of a slack labour market, when networks of contacts become critical to find a job. This negative impact on immigrants' labour market outcomes is even harder because they are generally mostly employed in those sectors which have been heavily affected by the pandemic, such as the hospitality industry. What we know so far is that the available evidence on the initial impact shows a disproportionately negative toll on immigrants in the vast majority of countries for which data are currently available, especially in the Southern European countries.

Prior learning qualifications of immigrant learners

According to the International Organization for Migration in 2016, immigrants who arrive in Italy have already accomplished a number of years of study and working experiences - semi-qualified in some cases - especially in the fields of mechanics, construction, agriculture and fishing.

According to the report, in a sample going from 0 to 22 years old, the average number of years of education completed by migrants, is 7.5. Out of it, 10.3 % received 0 years of education and 20.1% completed no educational cycle, 29.4% of migrants completed primary school, 24.7 % completed lower secondary schooling, and 15.7% finished higher secondary education. Only 3.2 % of the population has a university degree. Not surprisingly educational patterns and data vary, based on a gender lens; in fact, if the average



number of years of education for men is 7.6, for women it is 6.9. Moreover, 87.6% of women did not go beyond lower secondary school compared to 72.7% of men.

In addition, in terms of learning skills and qualification, it is worth mentioning that immigrants, due to colonization, are often multilingual, with a minimum number of two languages, in addition to their mother tongue. This is mainly because migrants' native languages are local and only spoken with the closest circle of the community of origin, while at school they learn other country's official languages. Because of lower levels of education, women generally speak fewer languages than men do.

In assessing prior qualifications, It is also interesting to briefly mention occupational patterns in addition to the educational ones. It seems that the wider occupational cluster is skill manual labour (25% of interviewed individuals had previously worked in this category). Out of the sample construction-related jobs amount at (14.5%), carpenters (11.9%), tailors (6.7%), and agricultural sector (22%) - primarily farmers (80.6%), but also shepherds (10.1%), and fishers (5.9%). Then, what happens to these prior educational and professional qualifications?

In Italy, the decree establishing the National System of Certification of Competences - D. 13/2013 - entered into force in 2013. Afterwards, in June 2015, a second decree defined the operational framework for their recognition: the governmental instance in charge of certification, validation, differentiation in tools and approach for VET, is the Region. As a result, standardisation of procedures and advancement of policies and practices are not yet heavenly distributed over the national territory.

The Regional Certification System (Sistema Regionale di Certificazione - SRC) is responsible for the identification, validation and certification of competences acquired both in formal and non-formal contexts.

GERMANY

The German VET system

The German VET system is based on the so-called "Dual Training", a system of vocational training, which takes place at two learning locations: the company, and the vocational school. In 2005, with the entry into force of the Immigrants Act, the State set up the minimum framework for integration. All migrants can start an in-company training or a course of study after completing the integration courses.

According to the BBiG Vocational Training Act, the focus of the training are:

- ✓ Transfer of professional skills, knowledge, and the so-called "professional ability to act"
- ✓ Enable first work experience
- ✓ Promotion of personal character
- ✓ Avoidance of hazards, e.g. avoid physical hazards by complying with the accident prevention regulations

The part of the training that takes place in the vocational school is under the supervision of the authorities of the *Bundesländer* and related applicable curricula, which in turn are based on the framework curriculum. Unlike the training framework plans contained therein, the framework curricula are not nationwide, since they are released by the overarching KMK (Permanent Conference of the Ministers of Education of the Federal States). However, the relevant Federal Land may adapt the framework curriculum individually, according to specific, given circumstances.

Three phases compose the vocational qualification path, with the related activities:



1. Before vocational training
 - ✓ Language support
 - ✓ Integration courses
 - ✓ Profiling
 - ✓ Guidance
 - ✓ Competence assessment
 - ✓ Training preparation (entry-level qualification)
2. Vocational training
 - ✓ Creation of state training opportunities
 - ✓ New ways into vocational training
 - ✓ Career entry support
 - ✓ Mentoring
3. Transition to employment: elements of the integration course
 - ✓ Perspective for young refugees in the craft sector (duration: 4-6 months)
 - ✓ Similar measures such as integration classes in vocational schools
 - ✓ Career orientation for refugees (13-26 weeks) or entry-level qualification
 - ✓ training-related assistance

The German VET context and the migrants

Overall, people with a migrant background are less qualified and less integrated into the labour market compared to the non-immigrant population. In 2016, 13.6% of people with a migrant background had no general education and 39.3% did not have a vocational qualification. The drop-out rate for German trainees rose from 27.6% in 2010 to 29.5% in 2018. The drop-out rate for foreign trainees rose from 35.6% in 2010 to 48.2% in 2018.

If we take a closer look at the detailed data from 2016, we find:

1. The proportion of those with A-levels is relatively higher among migrants (27.5% than for non-migrants) at 23.5%
2. Secondary school leaving certificate is 21.3% (migrants) and 24.3% (non-migrants)
3. Qualifications as masters or technicians gain almost half (5.6%) compared to non-migrants with 10.7%

Several reasons may explain this higher dropout rates among migrants; the main reasons of dropout exposed by VET institutions, are:

- ✓ Low completion rates among migrants are largely due to lack of academic proficiency or relevant skills. The survey Beicht, Granato and Ulrich (2011) shows that when controlling for migrant students' generally less advantageous starting positions (such as lower grades and lower likelihood to do VET in their preferred occupation), the likelihood of obtaining a VET degree are comparable with native peers.
- ✓ Difficulty in securing training placements during VET: securing an apprenticeship is an issue for VET entry in Germany. The majority of young people who enrol in such programmes do not have a training contract beforehand; hence, they face challenges in securing a training place during the



school-based part of their programmes. The difficulty in securing a training place during VET may result in drop-out in VET.

Discrepancy between workplace and school seems to be more evident among newly arrived migrants, since they often experience the weak interaction between VET schools and the enterprise employing the apprentice.

When putting into perspective the most frequent qualifications and outcomes there is a need to differentiate between individuals with migrant background and native peers. According to the Federal Employment Agency in 2017, one (1) out of ten (10) employees is a person with migrant background and, over 32.7 million working placements, 3.5 million were carried by individuals with a different citizenship than the German one.

General overview of learning and employment outcomes

In order to attend to the orientation course – which is open to all person willing to participate, regardless the status - immigrants must obtain a certain level of German language proficiency.

In 2016, the Federal Employment Agency also set up the so-called "introductory courses" of basic German language, as a preparatory course to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees alphabetisation course; this course aims at fostering integration and comprises 1,200 hours of written German classes, following the national alphabetisation curriculum, up to level A2 CEFR certification.

In case access to work opportunities or vocational training A2 CEFR level is not enough because - starting from A1/A2 and B1/B2 – the Common European Reference Framework for Languages C level, is required.

Upon completion, participants are required to attend an additional 100-hour orientation course, to finally attend the test "Living in Germany", which assesses the basics of topics like German political system, religious diversity or equal rights for men and women.

When looking at employment outcomes in the labour market, entering into it seems to take longer for TCNs than EU migrants. Among TCNs, the two most common nationalities in the German labour market are Turkish and Syrians, with Turkish clearly leading.

It is interesting to look at the extent to which the education level acquired in the country of origin influences the labour market integration of individuals with migrant background. As an example, in 2019 out of 60.146 asylum seekers who provided information about their schooling level, 24.0% stated they had attended a high education institution; 19.9% had attended high school; the intermediate school level was cited most frequently (29.8%), while 17.0% stated they had attended primary school and 9.2% had no formal education. On the other hand, it seems complex for qualifications acquired outside the European Union to be fully recognized. The recognition of the foreign qualifications improved following the "*Berufsqualifizierungsfeststellungsgesetz*" (The act on professional Qualifications Assessments, BWFG), which sets a legal entitlement and basic principles to link foreign qualifications to German equivalents; however, the procedure to assess the equivalence remained complicated due to the involvement of a high number of various stakeholders.

CYPRUS

The Cypriot VET system



According to CEDEFOP's Skills Forecast report on Cyprus for the years 2015-2019, the proportion of upper secondary students, who enrolled in vocational education and training (VET) programmes in Cyprus was far below the EU average.

The central government is responsible for the following:

- Overall legislative and policy competences in the field of vocational training
- Setting a flexible, comprehensive and high-quality system of vocational and technical training
- Offering vocational training to public assistance beneficiaries in order to enter/re-enter the labour market, thus achieving social inclusion
- Adminstrating the Apprenticeship Scheme, in collaboration of the Ministry of Education and Culture and Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance
- Providing training programmes for the unemployed
- Organising one and three-year programs of professional education and training
- Managing of the post-high school institutes of VET

The Republic of Cyprus currently implements vocational training programmes for specialised manual labour (welding, plumbing, car repairs, automation and others) through the Cyprus Productivity Centre (CPC). The vocational training programmes are state-provided and open also to recognised refugees. The training programmes are held in Greek. Nevertheless, vocational training in English is sometimes offered through NGO's and local municipalities. Apprenticeship programmes are linked with evening technical school education to make it easier for apprenticeship graduates to gain formal qualifications.

The VET system in Cyprus faced the challenges of involving employers on a larger scale to expand the workplace-learning component of programmes. As a result, VET curricula were revised in cooperation with industry, to reduce skill mismatches to the labour market and to make apprenticeships more attractive to employers. Selected measures to promote adult learning are ongoing.

The Cypriot VET context and the migrants

Considering the VET context for migrants, it needs to be highlighted the transitional character of the presence of immigrants in Cyprus. Since the country is mostly a transit one, waiting to move to other EU countries, immigrants seem to be not interested in enrolling in such programs despite the efforts made at local level to integrate them. In addition, the literature review documents the disadvantages in outcomes of education and employment due to the absence of recognized qualifications.

To cope with this, the National Action Plan of Cyprus (2018) identified the framework within which the Mechanism for validation of NFIL (non-formal and informal learning) will operate. This plan aims to benefit especially disadvantaged groups, including the unemployed and those at risk of unemployment, as validation can encourage their participation in lifelong learning and contribute to their mobility or access to the labour market.

Generally, TCNs tend to be in a lower education level. Compared with immigrant men, women have a slightly more advantageous education level: they are on average more likely to be higher educated than their male counterparts. According to the Refugee Law, asylum seekers are permitted to take part in vocational trainings linked to employment contracts, relevant to the permitted sectors of employment for asylum seekers. In order to deal with the language barrier, the Ministry of Education has developed transitional classes for non-Greek speakers in secondary education. In the context of primary education, two additional books for



learning Greek as a second language were disseminated by the Ministry of Education in 2019 to all enrolled children with a migration background

General overview of learning and employment outcomes

The most interesting findings that arose from the field research is that immigrant learners strongly believe that the linguistic background, basic social skills and the knowledge on how to react and negotiate an employment (knowledge of their rights, duties, procedures) are crucial factors for their successful employment and integration in the labour market. All immigrants are in fact requested to speak proper Greek language in order to work.

Desk research shows that most job openings are about skilled occupations such as sales workers, personal service workers and customer service clerks, consistent with the forecast increase in sectors such as accommodation and catering, wholesale and retail trade. Other sectors providing new jobs are technicians and associate professionals. On the contrary, skilled agricultural and fishery workers, craft and related trade workers, plant, machine operators and assemblers, are expected to provide a marginal contribution in terms of new jobs. Some skilled manual occupations such as building and related trade workers are foreseen to provide a significant number of job openings, mostly because of the growth of the construction sector, as well as occupations like labourers in mining, construction, manufacturing and transport.

On the field, migrant women face persistent disadvantage in the labour market, sometimes referred to as a “double disadvantage” based on being a women and being a migrant; migrant women in the EU are strongly overrepresented in household services. Also the outbreak of the pandemic has had severe implications on the economy, resulting in a sharp decline of offered positions, as well as termination of employment for many persons. Given the lengthy procedures required for being hired and the inability of many to receive referrals from Labour Department, asylum seekers’ access to employment has been particularly impacted.

GREECE

The Greek VET system

According to Cedefop’s analysis, the VET system is regulated by the Ministry of Education in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and is based on a school-work learning (WBL) and provided at upper secondary and post-secondary levels.

Compulsory schooling lasts until the age of 15, upon successful achievement of lower secondary education programmes (*Gymnasio*). At this point two options are available: general education (*Geniko Lykeio*) and Technical Education (*Epaggelmatiko Lykeio*); they both lead to an equivalent upper secondary school leaving certificate at EQF level 4.

After the completion of the first year, learners are allowed to change direction from general to vocational education and viceversa. The most used VET path comprised three years of *Epaggelmatiko Lykeio* school (EPAL), which includes over 25% of work-based learning and grants a specialisation degree. EPAL graduates can participate to national examinations for admission to tertiary education.

Recent legislation reinforced VET permeability and its equivalence to general education; as a result, EPAL graduates in higher education programmes have increased. EPAL programmes are also provided at evening classes for adults and employed students, below 18 years old, with lower secondary education. General upper secondary education graduates are entitled to enrol at the second year of EPAL.



The VET national program, at post-secondary level, is available in two formats:

1. One-year apprenticeship programmes (EQF level five, WBL 100%) offered by EPAL schools in cooperation with Manpower Employment Organisation. These programmes are provided only to those who hold an upper secondary school leaving certificate and an EPAL specialisation degree
2. Two-and-a-half-year VET programmes (WBL > 60%) offered by public and private training providers (IEK) to upper secondary graduates. These programmes only allow learners to obtain a certificate of programme completion.

The main non-formal education providers for immigrants are the following:

- ✓ METAdrasi: METAdrasi is a key non-governmental organisation which plays a major role in supporting refugees across multiple sectors, such as education
- ✓ Arsis – Association for the Social Support of Youth: it operates in a number of sectors including education, protection, legal aid, and accommodation
- ✓ PRAKSIS: PRAKSIS is a Greek NGO that offers humanitarian and development support to vulnerable groups of both Greek and migrant backgrounds

The Greek VET system and the migrants

The majority of TCNs aged 25-54 years, has an educational attainment of lower secondary education level (44.4%). In comparison with other EU countries' figures, the tertiary education attainment of TCNs in Greece is at low rate, almost 12.1% whereas in EU it is at averagely 28%.

In 2019, Eurostat highlighted that, as a result of the economic assistance program put in practice from 2015 to 2019, Greek students showed a very low rate of school drop-out; the same does not seem to apply to immigrants. Among the main reasons for dropping out of school, it has been reported that immigrants face integration challenges in educational environments.

Moreover, OECD's work emphasized that in Greece many educational gaps and challenges exist for TCNs. For example, the wide majority of job providers ask for a pre-lower level (B1 for service working and A2 for elementary jobs) of Greek proficiency. During the field research, the majority of interviewed migrants have also confirmed that there is a lack of WBL in the working facilities, as well as on job-language training, for TCNs.

General overview of learning and employment outcomes

According to Cedefop's analysis, the labour sectors most available to TCNs are:

- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Sales
- Tourism

The gap between immigrants and the native peers is high in Greece, with a high overall risk of over qualification, especially for immigrants; in addition, at equal educational level, immigrant women are slightly more likely than TCN men, to work in low-skilled occupations.



NORTH MACEDONIA

The North Macedonian VET system

The VET system is under the regulation of the Ministry of Education and Science while the Centre for Vocational Education and the Centre for Adult Education has advisory roles and ensure the wide national range of public stakeholders' involvement and consultation. Courses are available for all citizens of North Macedonia as well as immigrants with regulated residence and Macedonian social security number. The main provider institutions in formal education are vocational schools, while in non-formal education these are training centres, companies, non-governmental organisations, various associations, etc.

The formal adult education is divided into three main categories:

1. Primary level – elementary school for adults;
2. Secondary level – High-school for adults; vocational training; vocational education for certain occupations (crafts); technical education and post-secondary education for adults; retraining and additional training. Depending the type of education/training the duration of the education may last up to two, three or four years.
3. Tertiary level – University studies

The VET Centre in coordination with the other listed institutions is responsible each year to design the annual VET curriculum, tailored on the most required professions in the labour market. The curriculum is then implemented at local levels through the VET schools, in association with local companies. According the current annual VET program of the national VET Centre, the main sectors are:

- Geology, mining and metallurgy
- Construction and geodesy
- Graphic design
- Economics law and commerce
- Electrical engineering
- Health and social protection
- Agriculture, fisheries and veterinary medicine
- Personal services (cosmetic care and beauty, hairdresser, hand and foot care)
- Mechanical engineering
- Traffic, transport and storage
- Textiles, leather and similar products
- Gastronomy and tourism
- Chemistry and technology
- Forestry and wood processing;
- Sports high school
- Other optional classes (career planning, basics of entrepreneurship, preparation for employment).

The Ministry of Education and Science covers most of the financing costs in vocational education, based on work programmes and annual budget approved by the government. As vocational schools operate under the responsibility of municipalities, the latter get grants from the government to cover running costs; the main criteria for allocating funds to municipalities is the number of students. However, it has to be said that, perhaps because VTE schools also get weak promotion, do not seem fully attractive and due to that, the



whole VET system organized by the State, is losing its value and importance. As a result, in the past ten years, the VET system has mostly shifted to NGO projects with the involvement of business companies.

The North Macedonian VET context and the migrants

The Employment service agency in North Macedonia considers eligible only immigrants who are in the country for working purposes and apply to work permit through this agency; thus, it was not possible to find data through the country institutions of TCNs with legal residence in The Republic of North Macedonia. Through the NGO sector and the field research, it was possible to find few Roma refugees from Kosovo; however, they did not enrol in official VET school but were included in a UNHCR project to work in private companies and, upon successful completion of it, they were hired.

In addition, for the purpose of the field research, it was found that none of the VET schools had any enrolled TCNs in their school.

Within the Reception Centre for asylum seekers, as part of the program for early integration, different trainings are offered to asylum seekers, such as language, sport activities, sewing course, gardening etc. Unfortunately, the director reports that in general there is a lack of interest and motivation from the asylum seekers to enrol in these courses and activities. The Red Cross occasionally supports through VET courses but also in this case, numbers are quite low and limited at few units.

General overview of learning and employment outcomes

As mentioned above, the case of TCNs enrolled in formal VET is not fully applicable in North Macedonia for the time being. Consequently, refugees and emergency programs constitute the framework within which such cases are supported, mostly through work-based trainings.

A group of three refugees from Kosovo involved in the UNHCR project 2012-2013, has successfully completed a work-based training on furniture construction; they all acquired certificates and were employed in the factory, upon completion the training.

Another group of three refugee women from Kosovo attended a work-based three-month training in a laundry service company, Netopija, upon completion of which, they were hired. During this training they learned how to do dry cleaning, ironing and other laundry services. Mediator of this process was the Regional Enterprise Support Center Skopje.



A perspective: the VET system according to the teachers, trainers and educators: skill-building and mismatches

ITALY

In 2006, the Institute for the Development of Vocational Training of Workers (ex ISFOL – now INAPP) began to carry research activities to map and analyse existing professions and provided a detailed description of capacity and needs, in the short (next 12 months) and medium-term (next five years). Investigation methods used were interviews to entrepreneurs, corporate human resources managers or industry experts who could outline trends in key sectors of the economy. It is worth highlighting that such information is crucial to those stakeholders, including VET providers, that are involved in planning and implementing professional training, re-skilling training programs (refresher pathways) as much coherent as possible with the needs of the labour market. A platform which contains not only the reports on foreseen needs and numbers but also datasets has also been created; unfortunately so far, available data go up to 2016 and, as a consequence, do not take into consideration the deep and multidimensional changes occurred with the Covid-19 pandemic.

To complement this picture, some technical committees are periodically tasked with reviewing and updating standards for professional profiles closely linked to the most vocational training supply chains and the professional needs expressed by participating companies, the last of which took place in July 2020.

Skill gaps and mismatches of VET trainers and the sector

The last decades have brought significant changes in the labour market, particularly in the production of technology and digitalization, increasing the need for people to constantly gain new and more efficient skills. The information coming from European Skills and Job Survey (ESJS) and Cedefop's latest analysis (Cedefop, 2017) of skills mismatches, show that not all difficulties arise due to skill gaps and mismatches in one sector. It seems that the most suitable candidates are those who not only possess the skills required for a job but also mix them with healthy cognitive (problem-solving, creativity, learning to learn) and socio-emotional (communication, collaboration) skills. This point is very relevant to our research, particularly when we look at skill gaps and mismatches of trainers in the VET sector in Italy. During focus group discussions held with the trainers of CPIA in Palermo, this mix of hard, soft and personal attitude skills emerged as crucial in order to tackle Technical and Vocational trainings and teachings with TCNs students. In fact, they strongly highlighted that many difficulties come from them not being ready in dealing with the specific and different cultural patterns coming together in one classroom. However, reports and data show that we cannot seize skill mismatch as something immutable; on the contrary, mismatches are an inherently dynamic phenomenon that change with seniority, over time. In Italy, the process of addressing mismatches seems to be three-folded: at a first level, it is necessary to enrich the professional practice, since teachers and trainers have to deal with a variety of cases and contexts constantly changing. A second level concerns the evolution of the role of the teacher in its new interconnection between inside and outside the classroom. A third and last one concerns the growing request of coordination skills with the creation of new roles and responsibilities many teachers assume. These profound and ongoing changes affecting the formal education are quite much felt by trainers working with immigrants, as it arose from the field research as well.

The interviewed trainers identify a gap between the institutional defined role of the CPIA and the reality on the field as well as the impact of their activities. More specifically:



- the lack of proper preparation activities and laboratories to pave the way for technical institutes attendance
- the weakness of the territorial network to complement the educational offer and curriculum.

Most of the times, for young adults who generally arrive in Italy, there is no other choice than attending CPIAs units, because they are minors - thus not eligible for proper VET institutes - nor have financial and social means and networks to afford them. In addition, newly arrived immigrants are often “in transit” and accordingly perceives educational paths and objectives. On the other hand, Covid-19 pandemic has created a scenario in which youth learners perceive themselves to be “stuck” and are currently shifting their educational perspectives. In so doing, they are confronted with a system in which they can only afford CPIA - which is not a proper technical and vocational institute - after which they mostly drop-out from school, looking for jobs.

The topic of whether the CPIA trainers and teachers work at is responding and adapting to the new challenges and changes the society is facing as a whole, generated a positive answer. Yet, the main point seems to be that proper technical and vocational institutes are often too long, complex and, in case of immigrant learners, unaffordable.

Interviewed teachers also spoke about a current and growing request from adults and young adult learners, especially immigrants, to acquire marketable skills and competences fast, and to receive more teaching hours of technology and maths; unfortunately training opportunities and classes seem not to be effective, published or disseminated among interested and involved stakeholders.

The question to know what trainer competences are crucial in order to improve employability of immigrant learners gave room for interesting debates; in fact, when teachers were asked to name them, they all referred to soft skills. In particular, they mention flexibility, team player, capacity to work in autonomy and adequate and sound ability to teach Italian as L2. Reportedly, the CPIA in which they work does not train or develop teacher's soft and interdisciplinary skills.

The CPIA only certifies Italian L2 proficiency but immigrant learners are constantly increasing their request to participate in workshops, especially in Kitchen/Food and Mechanics related subjects. Although the CPIA is not mandated to teach such subjects directly, it could build on its space of autonomy, acting like a bridge to ease links with appropriate private and public entities, creating networks.

GERMANY

In Germany, the Framework Material Plan for the Training of Trainers (ADA) is at the heart of the qualification programme for trainers and trainers. It contains:

- Check training requirements and plan training (15 units)
- Represent and justify the benefits and benefits of in-company training
- Participate in planning and decision-making regarding in-company training needs
- Sets the structures of the vocational education and training system and its interfaces
- Select and justify training occupations for the company
- Check the suitability of the company for training in the desired training occupation
- Examine whether and to what extent training content can be conveyed by measures outside the training centre, e.g. through training in a network, intercompany and non-company training
- Assess the use of measures that prepare for vocational training in the company, it coordinate the tasks of those involved in the training



- Prepare training and participate in the recruitment of trainees (20 units of training)
- Create an in-company training plan based on a training system based on work and business processes that are typical of the profession
- Take into account the possibilities of participation and participation of company interest groups in vocational education and training
- Identify the need for cooperation and coordinate with the cooperation partners, in particular the vocational school, in terms of content and organisation
- Apply criteria and procedures for the selection of trainees, also taking into account their diversity
- Prepare the vocational training contract and arrange for the contract to be registered with the competent body
- Examine the possibilities of whether parts of vocational training can be carried out abroad
- Conduct training (45 units)
- Create learning-promoting conditions and a motivating learning culture, give and receive feedback
- Organize, design and evaluate the probationary period
- Develop and design company learning and work tasks from the company training plan and the typical work and business processes
- Select training methods and media according to target groups and use them in a situation-specific manner
- Support trainees with learning difficulties, use training support if necessary and examine the possibility of extending the training period
- Provide additional training opportunities for trainees, e.g. additional qualifications, and examine the possibility of shortening the duration of training and early admission to the final examination
- Promote the social and personal development of trainees, identify problems and conflicts in good time and work towards a solution
- Identify and evaluate performance, evaluate third-party performance assessments and exam results, conduct assessment interviews, draw conclusions for the further course of training
- Promoting intercultural skills
- Completion of training (10 units)
- Prepare trainees for the final examination and lead the training to a successful conclusion
- Ensure the examination registration of the trainees at the competent body and point out specificities relevant to implementation
- Participate in the preparation of a written certificate on the basis of performance assessments
- Inform and advise trainees on company development pathways and continuing vocational training opportunities

In addition, there are a large number of further training courses. Of great importance is the qualification initiative Digital Change, which was founded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research in Berlin for teachers and trainers. The aim is to develop training concepts for vocational training staff in order to prepare for the requirements of dual training associated with digitalisation.

According to the written German Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK), intermediate and final exams are standardized nationwide. They are carried out concomitantly and with identical task sets for the respective profession.



However, dual vocational training in Germany is currently facing two major problems: on the one hand, the economy complains about a threatening shortage of skilled workers. On the other hand, the social challenge of almost 500.000 so-called "unsupplied" young people, who cannot find a training place and are housed in hopeless queues.

The company part of the dual vocational training in Germany does not have an uniform but a highly heterogeneous structure, each with different roles and tasks of the trainers, which are also currently changing profoundly. These structures are mainly influenced by the size of the training company and also have strong sector-specific characteristics.

Skill gaps and mismatches of VET trainers and the sector

In-company training actually takes place in the company and thus "close to work", sometimes even "work-integrated" and non-work forms of training generally have only a complementary character. This is particularly the case of small enterprises, especially in the craft sector, where the apprentice learns above all "informally" by "running along" with the work load. There is usually no trace of systematic training here, because the unpredictability of the orders and the work that is involved hardly permits such a thing. Only the duration of the training increases the chance to meet all the essential learning challenges over time. At the same time, however, the apprentices get to know the company's reality from day one.

The trainer who takes care of his apprentices full-time has also become rather rare in industrial enterprises. Instead, "work-integrated" is trained in "real work" and the training task is carried out by the so-called "training specialists", i.e. the company employees who work at these jobs and introduce "part-time" trainees into their tasks and train them.

Given the growing importance of learning in the workplace, the fact that training professionals do not receive vocational training is worrisome. The same applies to training in small enterprises where trainees need vocational guidance and support.

The German dual VET system includes practical and theoretical knowledge acquired at the workplace and at vocational schools. In contrast with statistical data showing a high percent of the VET graduates are practically employed in the companies they are trained, two of the interviewers doubted that they would have this opportunity quickly. The fear was stemming from restriction measures applied during Covid-19 outbreak.

Finally, digitalization is putting under pressure the companies; in fact, not all companies say they have adapted training content that prepare their trainees specifically for the digital requirements. However, two-thirds of them say that in their company, the trainees actively contribute with their ideas and experience in the design of digitalization. This finding shows that the understanding of the role of the trainers is also changing concerning digitalization: the more digital a company designs its training, the more likely trainers are to perceive themselves as learning companions.

In addition, interviewed trainers have pointed out the crosscut challenges that also other countries' researches are referring to:

- ✓ The necessity for German language teaching support.
- ✓ The need to raise the intercultural and social competences of the trainers

VET trainers also pointed out that migrants frequently ask to gain immediate and useful skills. In order to keep up with new technologies, new working practices and future trends in professions, they need to be aware of what is going on in the labour market and in the enterprises.



The VET trainers interviewed generally confirmed that establishing and maintaining networks is seen as a crucial element. Networking not only with the companies but also in the range of their colleagues and among similar institutions in order to share good practice and didactic materials.

CYPRUS

Cyprus has established a legal basis for teacher and trainer Continuing Professional Development and Teacher Training Institutes; according to this, VET schools provide continuing professional development programmes to VET teachers, trainers and mentors.

Training programs are organised in ad-hoc equipped laboratories by qualified tutors. Training Programs are offered in various vocations: mechanical installations, machining, welding, plumbing, central heating and hydraulics, facility maintenance, building construction, carpentry and cabinetmaking, car mechanics, electrical installations, design and production of clothes, telecommunications, automation, car body repairing, refrigeration and air conditioning and constructions with aluminium.

The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) shows that the proportion of teachers (48.5%) who feel well or very well prepared to teach in multicultural and/or multilingual settings is the highest in the EU (EU average 23.8%). However, Cypriot teachers also report a greater need for CPD (Continuing Professional Development) in this area (19.6%) than the EU average (13.4%).

Based on the team fieldwork and VET trainers' interviews, gaps identified are related to the challenges in communication with immigrants and language learning; some interviewees also referred to these trainings as not fully in line with basic requirements for up-skilling of knowledge and competences. Several scholars believe that the absence of a comprehensive and cohesive state policy on adult migrant education reflects the lack of a well-organised and functioning adult education field in itself. There is a need for the development of a coherent, national framework for monitoring adult learning and education but also a legal framework to ensure the correct planning, organization, design and implementation of adult education activities.

Skill gaps and mismatches of VET trainers and the sector

The VET trainers and teachers interviewed mentioned that a number of challenges exist while working with migrants. First, the communication problem, cultural differences etc. The most important competences that VET trainers must have, according to them, refer to soft and intercultural skills, acceptance, understanding, patience and knowledge regarding the policies about migrants. Moreover, VET trainers should be liberal, open-minded, tolerant and receptive persons and be able to know their limits regarding the assistance that they can provide as a trainer.

GREECE

In 2015, based on CEDEFOP findings, "Apprenticeship Quality framework" mandates VET providers of adult training to organise self-assessment based on a set of indicators. The Ministry of Education has a national programme to ensure professional development of teachers and trainers in view of attracting more young people to professional classes. However, Covid-19 virus highlighted the need for increasing digital skills of VET trainers. VET development Strategy 2030 is currently under development, within this context.



In 2017, the same analysis highlights the need for the creation of a register of certified in-company trainers, requiring them to attend training programmes designed by the national employment service and education institutions.

In this light, the following skill mismatches have been identified:

- ✓ Lifelong learning of VET teachers is perceived as an urgent need
- ✓ The need for digital up-skilling

Skill gaps and mismatches of VET trainers and the sector

Adult educators face various challenges in intercultural education. Firstly, they face communication and language barriers; this element is believed to be the cause to the relatively high drop-out of immigrant learners from VET programs. According to VET trainers, the main reported reasons for drop-out are:

- linguistic barriers
- previously acquired weak education level
- sub-standard living conditions
- complexity arising from their legal status (refugee status, asylum seekers, residence permit, undocumented immigrants)
- cultural and religious background
- undeclared labour and casual employment
- limited access to the labour market

The same VET trainers, when asked about how to fill mismatches through the strengthening of which skills, they mentioned the following soft skills:

- tolerance
- communication skills
- experience to adult education
- empathy
- intercultural communication
- flexibility

While the totality of the interviewed VET trainers stated they would participate in future up-skilling training course, there is no effective follow-up strategy for professional development for the trainers currently ongoing.

When confronted with the needs reported by immigrants' learners – strengthening of Greek language class, labour market networking, digital and English language skills – they are aware that no vocational training centre or institute provide those social services. However, it would be possible to collaborate with local NGOs to support immigrant trainees. Finally, the VET trainers mentioned that other important factors influencing the integration of immigrants and refugees into the labour market are:

- xenophobia, stigma and discrimination
- weak integrating to the local community
- Greek high unemployment rate
- weak networking skills
- challenges linked to legal status



NORTH MACEDONIA

One of the major feature to highlight is the lack of a tailored program for immigrants. As a result, a legally entered migrant willing to take part in a VET activity, has to follow the official procedure (through the employment agency or directly to the VET schools). Thus, they apply to general, national programs, which do not take into consideration the interculturality, the diversity and the differences in language that might be present.

In addition, due to a declining interest of people for VET program and to economic constraints, VET schools barely have regularly employed trainers. They are cooperating with other institutions, especially enterprises, which are providing them labour force, upon request. Those employees, who are not certified trainers, may not have the pedagogical approach and other qualities, skills and experience of VET trainers.

If a person want to become a certified trainer with verified program, she/he needs first to attend a costly Training of Trainers (1000 euros) and after he/she needs to pay additional 200 euros to apply to the Ministry of Education to start the procedure of evaluation of her/his program. However, it could be pointed out that pools of certified VET trainers, with certified VET programs, could deliver their VET trainings as freelancers to enterprises, organizations, private and public companies, making it possible to train migrants as well.

Skill gaps and mismatches of VET trainers and the sector

The fast-technological developments brought substantial changes in relation to the labour market requirements for skills and competences in North Macedonia. The current profiles and occupations, as well as skills and competencies offered by education do not fully match the labour market needs. There are also reactions from the business community that profiles/qualifications produced by VET do not satisfy their needs, not only regarding necessary skills but also in respect to the types of qualifications. The interest for vocational education and training should be increased and vocational education and training should satisfy the needs and interests of different groups of beneficiaries. This could be achieved by introducing a high level of flexibility in the approach and provision of educational services, by integrating both formal and informal learning, for instance.

Stimulating short time programs and courses would make the VET system more flexible, leading to enhanced and improved opportunities for the unemployed population, including immigrants, to acquire knowledge and skills aligned with the labour market requirements.

Since we have seen that the VET training gathers mostly Macedonian citizens, trainers are less in contact with foreigners and may not be particularly sensitive to specific approach when the situation occurs. VET trainers should also be trained on interculturality in order for the VET program to be useful for learners.

On the part of required skills, necessary to better support immigrant learners, VET trainers listed the following:

- ✓ the possibility to assess each candidate individually and adjust the program towards his/her needs;
- ✓ to be able to keep the motivation and interest throughout the whole training;
- ✓ to foster empathy and sensitiveness to different cultural backgrounds;
- ✓ to be able to make language and cultural adjustment of trainings;
- ✓ communication skills, emotional intelligence, cultural sensitivity, team building, work in diverse groups.



Paving the way to relevant Open Educational Resources

The Riga conclusions (2015)⁴ has put renewed emphasis, calling for systematic approaches to and opportunities for, initial and continuing professional development (CPD) of VET teachers, trainers and mentors. In fact, in the totality of the countries of the project partnership, field researches highlighted that all VET trainers and teachers feel they should update their knowledge, skills and competences.

However, with the purpose of fostering migrants' employability, a number of challenges arise when looking at VET teachers and trainers need for skill fostering. This research shows that these challenges concern both the institutional and the cultural level.

In ITALY, the policy of enrolling migrants with their native peers intends to encourage social inclusion, acting on age proximity but it proves effective only if recent arrivals represent a small fraction of the class composition. When an important number of foreign students with low Italian language skills attend the same class, teachers cannot provide them with the necessary, ad-hoc teaching; as a result, these students need complementary support.

When asked about the immediate and concrete challenges and opportunities useful to enter the labour market, immigrants commonly refer to the need of creating a network within the hosting community, especially in rural areas. Networking is also useful since it would fill a complementary gap: the lack of a proper orientation service, where they could ideally find information and opportunities. According to them, this element needs to be coupled with their need to improve their technical skills: interviewed learners reported IT and digital skills, as well as driving licence, among those perceived as the most useful technical skills in order to enter the labour market.

According to VET trainers, in order to improve their skills and ultimately, immigrants' employability, the following features result as the most crucial ones:

- ✓ The need to provide teachers with audio-visual and digital supports, specifically pertaining to practical notions and knowledge of everyday life
- ✓ The need to improve soft, cross-cultural skills to be able to fully approach immigrants' learners as whole individuals. In Germany, digitalisation is changing dual education both in terms of its content and in terms of changing teaching and learning methods. This development is continuous, as dual training takes traditionally place in a permanent technical and organisational process of change. Training content and placement methods can thus be constantly adapted to the company and professional requirements, integrated into the respective business processes. Digitalization is also changing both the content of training and the way in which knowledge is conveyed. A recent survey shows which digital skills and knowledge are imparted in companies and with what intensity. The most commonly taught digital skill in training is the application of professional/specialist software, which is applied in the majority of German companies. The immigrant learners interviewed also mentioned that additional skills such as digitalisation and IT are very important. Many companies also require a driving license and the use of a smartphone.

Likewise found in Italy, it seems that for individuals who have not been in Germany for so long, help is required both for everyday practical matters and in terms of helping them to understand and find their way

⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=7915&furtherPubs=yes>



in the German training system. This could be achieved following two types of relevant measures: one towards the promotion of language acquisition and the second towards training orientation and specific preparation for dual vocational training.

Based on the findings of the field research and during the discussions with VET tutors and organizations in CYPRUS, the need for up-skilling and refreshing the existing knowledge is accepted by all. According to them, a relevant training program should cover the following topics:

- Awareness on legal aspects and welcoming policies
- Understanding the others
- Cooperation & communication with people coming from different ethnicities and cultural backgrounds.

The VET system in Cyprus has profound role in laying the foundations for the country's economic development and is an important pillar of the Cyprus lifelong learning strategy. Its structure has been constantly reviewed and transformed, and the main aim was to meet the trends and the current needs of the labour market.

In Greece, refugees and immigrants do not have many opportunities or certified qualifications for vocational training, mainly due to insufficient proficiency of Greek language. So far, only those programs specifically targeting them prove to be satisfying. Unfortunately, these programs usually belong to non-formal education and do not provide a recognized qualification. VET trainers have highlighted the need to improve their soft skills to better perform and promote immigrant access into labour market.

A number of features were also highlighted in the REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA, where a quite low interest characterizes the population towards VET programs. One solution could be a major attention and advertising of this professional development pathway. However, VET trainings are usually expensive for the learners, especially for those who are unemployed, a fortiori for immigrant learners. Moreover, it is reported that VET schools should be modernized and trainers should continuously seek for professional development, better promotion of the VET schools and existing programs. Soft skills were also highlighted as crucial in order to enhance immigrant employability.



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Identification of the most relevant features for the Open Educational Resources

Major identified skills useful in enhancing migrants' employability according to VET teachers, trainers and learners

According to the main findings of this report, which compiles desk and field research, the training programme should focus on enhancing VET staff skills on the following topics:

Cross-cultural skills

- intercultural and social competences
- linguistic barriers
- previous education-level poorer than the one in country of destination

ICT and Digital Skills

- Digital literacy
- How to write a CV, using e-mail etc.
- Social Media literacy

Ordinary life management

- How to tackle the complexity arising from their legal status (refugee status, asylum seekers, residence permit, undocumented immigrants)
- Ordinary needs for social integration (support on how to rent a house, look for a job...)

When looking at the main labour market intervention sectors, the training should look at the following thematic areas:

- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Sales
- Tourism
- Social / Third sector



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