Skills4Smart TCLF Industries 2030

Learn how VET providers in the TCLF sectors can build a strong network promoting excellence. Discover why education and vocational training are the perfect bridge to the beginning of an occupational career. Find out about the courses given to learn new skills to identify the best way to reach targeted customers within the TCLF industries.

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1. IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON VET PROVIDERS IN THE TCLF SECTORS

Christian Baio - SPIN 360

The S4TCLF partnership has implemented an analysis and intelligence process on the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on VET providers and how, over the last few months, they are reacting to the crisis by trying to solve the problem.

The first fact is represented by Figure 1 showing the number of learners enrolled at pre-primary, primary, lower-secondary, and upper-secondary levels of education (ISCED levels 0 to 3), as well as at tertiary education levels (ISCED levels 5 to 8) on May 19th, 2020 in the world. The severity of the problem is obvious: practically all schools were closed (or partially closed).
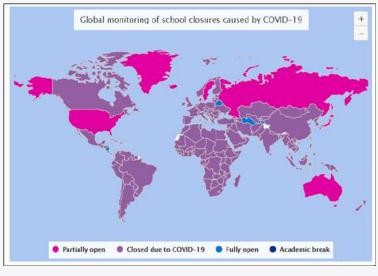

Figure 1: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, data on May 19th, 2020

Through the analysis of the existing literature regarding the implications of COVID-19 on education and training around the world, we evidenced and grouped 5 main key challenges:

1. Enhance digital teaching:

The COVID-19 emergency has revolutionized the teaching and learning modalities: education has deeply changed, and the distinctive rise of e-learning, with the deployment and use of digital platforms brought its benefits together with its challenges. A lot of efforts have been made to set up new tools to teach professors, students, and parents on how to embrace digital learning, using it properly, and supporting online collaboration.

2. Keep students and apprentices engaged:

The sudden shift to a different educational paradigm can leave some students disinterested and disengaged, especially considering such new restrictive learning conditions.

3. Support the most vulnerable learners:

Digitalisation, apart from creating great opportunities, also involves significant challenges and more vulnerable students – such as for instance those from less advantaged backgrounds are especially likely to fall behind during this emergency period.

4. Grade and assess students:

There is the potential risk that the current situation does not allow students to be given fair opportunities in terms of assessment procedures and exams and consequently, grades might be less valid and reliable, a detrimental effect in any education system.

5. Deliver on-the-job training in the distance:

The impossibility or the drastic limitation of on-the-job training, in cases such as apprenticeship and dual education is a major element when it comes to allowing students to apply their understanding through direct and practical work.

Several practices and mechanisms have been put in place by VET providers across Europe (and the rest of the world) at the national, regional, and sectoral levels to face the consequences of COVID-19, following some of them with specific VET provider's human and digital resources, its level of autonomy, the flexibility of national regulations and authorities' support, and the collaboration with the regional stakeholders.

Figure 2: 5 main key challenges emerged during the analysis

Generally speaking, a specific VET centre's best practice could not be suitable for others therefore it is important to leverage all the possible aspects (as outlined in Figure 2) in order to put into practice a holistic and all-encompassing strategy such time of crisis.

To this end, the analysis has highlighted 3 important general steps to support VET providers in the creation of a set of good practices adequate for their needs:

1. To make VET systems fast responsive to adapt to the crisis
2. To accelerate the digital transformation in education
3. To facilitate the exchange of knowledge and best practices

The S4TCLF project has also highlighted the necessity to strengthen the collaboration among VET providers and to establish a solid partnership at regional national and international level.

2. RESULTS FROM THE WORKSHOP OF SPIN 360

Christian Baio - SPIN 360

Outcomes of the European workshops

One of the main objectives of the S4TCLF Project is to interact with its stakeholders to collect information and above all to validate what the project itself is producing.

In this regard, several (virtual) workshops have been organized in Europe to present the research concerning "the direct and long-term implications of COVID-19 on education". The workshops gathered more than 200 participants from 93 European TCLF VET providers in:

- Belgium
- France
- Italy
- Portugal
- Romania
- Spain
- United Kingdom

First of all, by applying an adaptation of the "change curve" from change management theories, we asked participants how they felt related to the COVID-19 crisis (whether they were shocked, frustrated, resigned, conscious or proactive). The results were encouraging: overall, VET providers confirmed the "consciousness" feeling related to the COVID-19 situation (as shown in Figure 3).
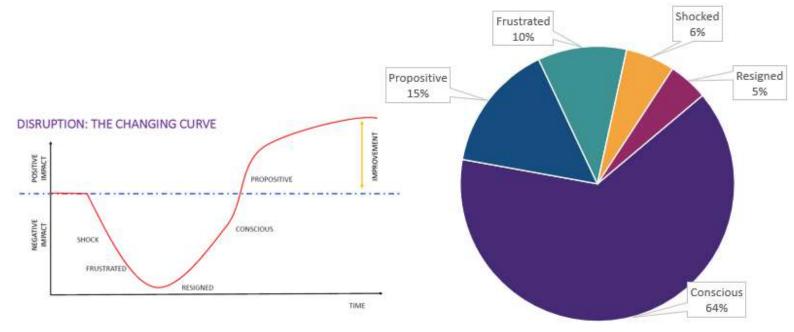

Figure 3: the "changing curve" and stakeholders' feelings related to COVID-19

Moreover, it is evident the shift to digital teaching if we consider the usage of the learning tools before and during/after the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 4).
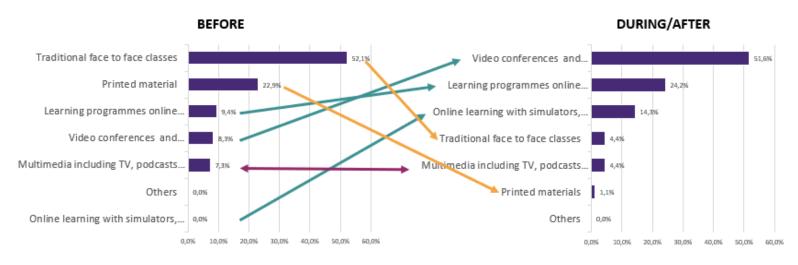

Figure 4: learning tools used before and during/after the COVID-19

Such changes in the delivery of teaching activities have created several challenges, which can be classified into three main groups according to the ranking (from 1 to 5) given by participants:

- The challenges which received the highest score are "delivering practical training" and "supporting the most vulnerable learners" respectively 4,02 and 3,86;
- The second group is composed of "infrastructure issues at home" (3,54), "limited digital literacy/skills of trainers and/or trainees" (3,30), "limited limitations" (3,29) and "difficulties in keeping students and apprentices engaged" (3,28);
- The third group is composed of "infrastructure issues in your centre" (3,02) and "extra costs for the protective equipment" (2,78).

The stakeholders involved in the Workshops also confirmed that during and after the pandemic staff and teachers received support and it has been reported that national/regional authorities and industry associations have generally offered some support measures.

Validating Figure 3 regarding the "change curve", almost all participants (91%) agreed that after this period the training approach will change compared to the past, with the VET sector into a more «proactive» stage, thus seizing the challenge by creating new opportunities for improvement of education and training.

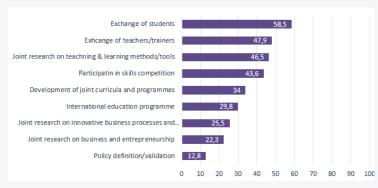## 3. COLLABORATION IN TCLF VET: RESULTS FROM AN EU WIDE SURVEY

Paul Lasserre – CEC

In 2020, the S4TCLF project launched a survey of European TCLF VET providers as a first step toward the establishment of a Network of EU VET providers promoting Excellence. The survey identifies the scope of TCLF VET providers' activities, how they function and are governed, their interests and their current collaboration patterns with other institutions. The survey, divided into 5 sections and containing more than 50 questions, has a very large scope. The results presented here concern mainly one key aspect of the survey: VET collaboration, which is necessary to successfully build-up the future Network.

A few words about our sample

The survey was administered through an online questionnaire sent to VET providers via e-mail. Because of the data collection method, our sampling was done through self-selection. The respondents of the survey are organisations with different heads and heads of training departments. The survey's respondents come from 94 different VET providers, including professional schools, higher education institutions, research and technology centres, public and private providers, and training centres or business associations offering training. The countries represented in the survey are Belgium, Czechia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, and Sweden.

How do EU VET providers currently collaborate?

Graph 1: Nature of collaboration with other parties (% of observations, N = 94)

Mobility-related activities are the most common form of collaboration

Mobility-related activities top the list of collaboration activities carried out by our sample of VET providers. Indeed, 59,5% of VET providers surveyed organise exchanges of students, and 47,9% offer the possibility to trainers/teachers to be trained and learn in other institutions.

The level of collaboration in research depends on the field

When it comes to joint research activities, 46,5% of surveyed VET providers declare doing so in the field of teaching & learning methodologies and tools. Joint research on innovative business development processes, products followed by joint research on entrepreneurship are less common areas for collaboration among our sampled VET providers.

A third of VET providers offer joint curricula or international programmes

Roughly a third of surveyed VET providers declared coordinating joint curricula and international education programmes. This is an interesting finding as such initiatives require a lot of effort and organisation to properly set up.

A small percentage of VET providers are involved in education policy definition and validation

Our research findings show that only 12% of VET providers from our sample play a role in either defining or validating education policy orientations.

Most TCLF VET providers engaging in collaboration activities do so within their regions or countries

Graph 2: Geographical scope of collaboration with public authorities (% of observations, N = 94)

68% of sampled VET providers declared that when collaborating, this was done at regional or national level. Half of VET providers collaborate with entities from the European Union, while collaboration with entities outside the EU accounts for 23,5%.

What's next?

The survey findings are currently being used to guide the establishment of the Network of European TCLF VET providers promoting Excellence. The Network will be a dynamic platform to strengthen collaboration between VET providers, exchange best practices, identify common goals and initiate joint initiatives. The project partners are currently exploring the expressions of interest from VET providers across Europe, which will lead to the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding officially launching the network.

4. S4TCLF RESOURCES ARE READY FOR YOU!

Alexandra Cardoso – CITEVE

Did you know that education and vocational training are the perfect bridge to the beginning of an occupational career?

Recent studies show that the most demanded occupations today did not exist 10 years ago, which means that there are major changes in the economy, assuring great mobility in the exercise of the occupations and qualifications required for professional performance.

A vocational course makes it possible to acquire personal and social skills that enable constant adaptation to the new needs of the labour world, such as creativity and innovation, as well as to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the challenges of a continuously changing society.

The S4TCLF consortium has embarked on a journey by the merged effort of carrying out exhaustive research connected to the mapping of qualification needs and skill gaps existing in the TCLF industry.

Changes in the labour market have brought new demands, both on work processes and raw materials and on skills and employment trends.

In order to answer in a dynamic and innovative way to the challenges of companies, workers in the sector, and young people in education and training, the partnership has created 6 qualification profiles.

Our Skills4Smart Academy offers 4 sectoral profiles and 4 transversal profiles:

Once the qualification profiles have been developed, it is time to test them with VET providers, trainees, companies and workers.

In sum, these are our results and they are already available.

- STEP 1: 6 SCIENTIFIC
- 1: SILOS
- 12: SETS OF MATERIALS AND ASSESSMENTS
- 6 LANGUAGE TRANSLATIONS OF UNITS OF LEARNING

We are beginning the pilot phase that is a test of our training materials on a small scale and limited in time, before introducing our materials more widely and on a permanent basis. This phase will allow us to analyse our results from the users' point of view.

So, we expect to answer the following questions: To what extent were the trainees satisfied with the piloting training? To what extent did the trainees learn from the piloting training? To what extent did the trainees change their behaviours based on what they acquired or developed through piloting training? To what extent did the transfer of the acquired to the actual working involved impact on the performance of the organization?

Over the next few months, the nine countries in the partnership (PT, ES, FR, IT, BE, BL, GR, RO, PL) will be implementing pilot actions in face-to-face, practical in the consortium, getting to know first-hand the usefulness of the innovative methodology and resources that were developed.

The national contact points are ready to support organizations and individuals that want to know more about how to take part in our pilot. We want to tailor our results side-by-side with you!

Skills4Smart TCLF 2030 project partners wish you a Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy, and prosperous 2021!

Click here to sign up for the project's newsletter and get the latest news and facts straight to your mailbox!

PROJECT COORDINATOR:

EURATEX

Project contact person: Iratxe Garcia-Bayona iratxe.garcia@euratex.eu

PROJECT PARTNERS: