



SAVE

Self Awareness, evaluation and motivation system Enhancing learning and integration and contrast ELS and NEET

SAVE

RECOMMENDATIONS

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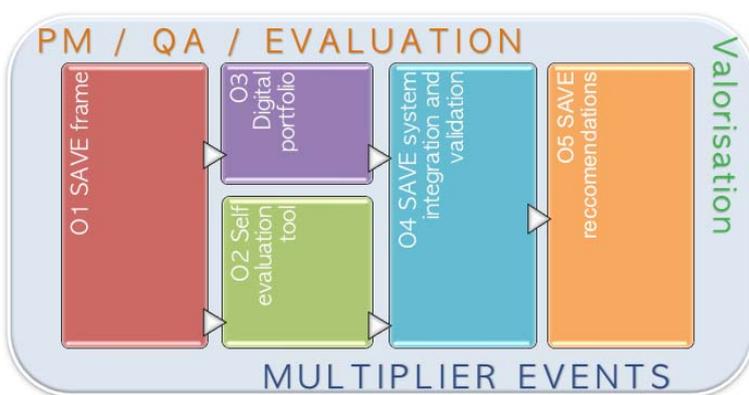
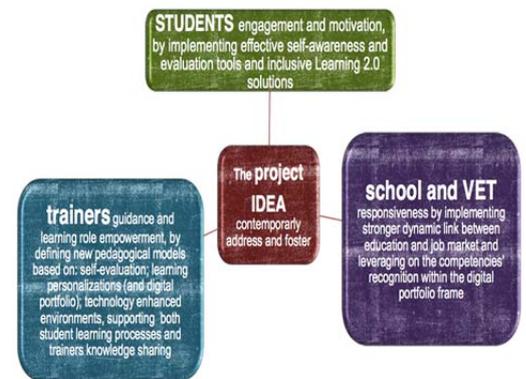
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 SAVE OVERVIEW

The **project SAVE** (*Self Awareness, evaluation and motiVation system Enhancing learning and Integration to prevent and contrast ESL and NEET*) is aimed at define and validate innovative self-awareness, evaluation and motivation models, approaches and tools, in order to prevent and contrast Early school leaving and NEET phenomenon.

The SAVE system has been designed in order to valorise and enhance the emotional and experiential learning dimensions by implementing multimedia solutions, social tools, personalized tools, also in terms of connecting external communication and (informal) learning resources. More specifically, the overall SAVE methodological and technological framework and resources are aimed at realizing and validating an innovative system, contemporaneously addressing:

- **Students' engagement and motivation:** by implementing effective self-awareness and evaluation tools and inclusive learning solutions
- **Trainers guidance and learning role empowerment:** by defining new pedagogical models based on: self-evaluation; learning personalization (and digital portfolio); technology enhanced environments, supporting both student learning processes and trainers knowledge sharing
- **School and iVET responsiveness:** by implementing stronger dynamic link between education and job market and leveraging on the competencies' recognition within the digital portfolio framework.



and is supported by robust communication, dissemination and project management actions and processes.

education and job market and leveraging on the competencies' recognition within the digital portfolio framework.

SAVE design has been strongly grounded to fulfil the double supporting goal, targeting the two actors of the orientating, motivation, learning processes: trainers and youths.

In order to achieve its aims, the project is articulated in 5 intellectual outputs, 8 multiplier events and 3 final conferences

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1.2 FROM SAVE VALIDATION & EVALUATION TO RECOMMENDATIONS BUILDING

The SAVE system, its components and supporting (trainers and youths) resources will be:

- ⇒ realized, starting from the sharing and valorisation of partners complementary competences and existing resources, practices and experiences;
- ⇒ validated within a wide piloting framework, both at national (IT) and partners countries level (ES; UK; CZ).

According to the project aims, scope and approaches, as well as to the complexity of the NEET/ESL prevention (and underpinning issues related to the active youth engagement, employability enhancement and education/work effective transitions) the **SAVE system and resources design, integration and validation** has been aimed at:

- promoting the widest participation of main targets (youths, trainers, guidance, social system and counselling professionals,) within the design & development process of both system and supporting resources;
- supporting an iterative design & development & fine tuning approach along almost the all project timeline (research in-field action in IO1 and IO2 pre-validation started at the early project stages);
- enhancing, based on the first two, the SAVE system and resources potentials and further valorisation in different contexts (of educational levels; geographically; of guidance and placement scopes and so on) although sharing a common (SAVE) learning and guidance personalization, participative and reflective processes.

The evidences collected during the piloting activities has confirmed SAVE effectiveness on:

- Activating engaging and motivated youth behaviors stimulating development processes, based on personalized and self-aware behaviours (supported and guided by trainers, counsellors, and so on);
- Reinforcing the trainers (guidance and social operators, mentors and placement..) role in promoting, guiding and supporting positive and personalized guidance and learning processes, preventing youth exclusion and attaining youths (also with reference to the less skilled and/or at major risk ones);
- Leveraging the overall system capability in preventing ESL and NEETs and improving its own "attractiveness" an active dialogue with the companies and job market.

Evaluation and follow up activities has allowed to draw the main SAVE valorisation processes as well the bases for developing SAVE Recommendations (IO5) both in terms of identifying improvement drivers, defining valorization paths at all levels

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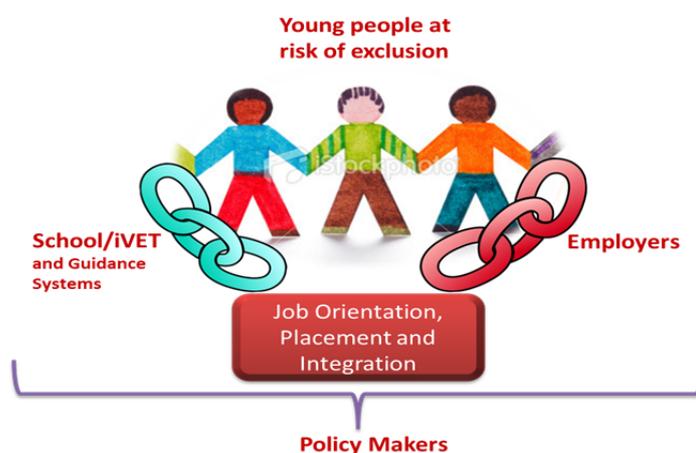
(system, VET, professionals) and their integrated action and development over time; realizing customized SAVE Toolkit (for VET/Schools/trainers; for companies/placement).

1.3 SAVE RECOMMENDATIONS OVERVIEW

Employability comes with the promise of advantages both for young people seeking work and employers. However in reality, employers appear to have far more power in the work relationship as the primary gatekeepers of employment, assessors of individuals' employability, and providers of development opportunities. Consequently, the SAVE project sought to investigate employer perspectives on youth employability and also the links between the education system, training and the labour market with the aim of making suggestions about how these relationships could be improved.

It was particularly important to understand both the policy framework for supporting young people into work and employer perspectives on work integration, in order to develop stronger, more dynamic links between education, young people and the job market in order to improve the responsiveness of schools and iVET to the world of work.

In each of the SAVE partner countries, national policies relating to the integration of young people into the job market have been reviewed. The SAVE focus was to make recommendations to these policy makers and develop practical tools to support all three groups of players in the implementation of good practices.



Our approach has been based on:

- Analysis of the relevant scenarios on some specific dimensions and aimed at building system recommendations. These, integrating the main evidences drawn within the first project output, allow to underline the main drivers of a positive system impact;
- Examination of national policies, particularly in relation to School/Work Alternance

or Apprenticeships, Internships/Workplacement and other forms of work integration aimed at young people. Comparing and contrasting approaches across the partner countries.

- Interviews and workshops with a number of vocational trainers, young people, institutional actors, companies and job market actors to examine the SAVE system and best practice approaches to job orientation, placement and integration. Activities integrating the evidences of SAVE evaluation and follow-up and its impact.

The in-field activities have been carried out in synergy with the follow-up process, with 2 special focus:

- 1) the evaluation of the validation processes carried out in IT, CZ and ES have allowed to deepen SAVE potentials to support VET/school system responsive, capable of preventing ESL and NEET, activating (and evaluating) effective alternance systems (in turn, proved to be powerful in preventing ESL and NEET);
- 2) the evidences from the UK piloting, specifically aimed at validate the SAVE potentials in supporting E&T/job transition, with special reference to the employers engagement.

Follow-up evidences has been then integrated with special focus, sessions and interviews to deepen the key SAVE recommendation drivers with special references to its 3 main levels and scopes:

- system level, as described in the first part of the present document;
- the trainers, schools and VET organizations, in the second part of the present document;
- the job system, with both focus on employer engagement and workplacement improvement.

A first summary of draft recommendation of SAVE have circulated to support the national in-field "debate" (Annex 6.1), distributed during the 3 sessions of the final conference, sent by email, available in the project website.

1.4 DOCUMENT GOALS AND STRUCTURE

According to the SAVE recommendation aims and framework just draft, the document is articulated in four main parts:

- 1) the **first part**, addressing, the **relevant scenarios** focusing on the improvement of students' engagement and participation in VET to prevent ESL and NEET issues, including the promotion of a student-center approach and the relevance of soft skills, motivation and self evaluation in the school/Vet as well as in the guidance systems.

These evidences will allow developing specific "**policy**" level recommendation, including the implementation of an open forum as well as building the relevant

frame. Two special foci has been given to two main dimensions, addressed from targets and stakeholders involved in the different activities: the weakness of the E&T/job transition; the need of building common statistical and evaluation frameworks on youth inclusions (and related phenomena of ESL and NEET).

- 2) the **second part**, addressing specifically the constrains and opportunities of the **apprenticeship and alternance system**, nowadays at the cornerstone of the Italian and EU political agenda, both at national and compared perspective, and integrated by the European initiatives (European Alliance Apprenticeship), recommendations (10 guiding principle) and studies (Cedefop and ETF). The second section doesn't build specific target-customised recommendations and guidelines.

It represents, indeed, a programmatic and methodological bridge between the system level and the two main challenges for the educational, VET and job systems: the promotion of sustainable personalised personal development processes, improving employability and preventing ESL and NEET; the improvement of the E&T/Job transitions and the workplacement.

- 3) the **third part** of the document, starting from the above mentioned scenarios and frame, address the SAVE potentials on the first of the two challenges above quotes. It briefly recall the main evidences emerging from the evaluation and follow up activities and realise a customised resources for an effective transfer and utilisation of the **SAVE system, model and resources**. A comprehensive toolkit for **trainers, schools and VET** organization has been so realised (Annex 6.2 and 6.3, available both in EN and IT);
- 4) the **fourth chapters** address the second challenge that has arised in terms of transitions (as also emerged in the first system level analysis as a key driver) and analyse the critical (positive and negative) dimensions of the **employers engagement** and of the companies **work-placement improvement**. A comprehensive toolkit for trainers, schools and VET organization has been so realised (Annex 6.4).

2 SYSTEM RECOMMENDATIONS: BUILDING COMMON EVALUATION PROGRAM DESIGN AND EVALUATION FRAMES / MULTIACTORIAL/ PROCESS

As above reported, this section is aimed at addressing the relevant "recommendations scenarios". After **recalling the main scenarios evidences and policy indications draft in the scenario realised in the first project output**, with both desk and in field activities, the section focus on the improvement of students' engagement and participation in VET to prevent ESL and NEET issues, including the promotion of a student-center approach and the relevance of soft skills, motivation and self evaluation in the school/Vet as well as in the guidance systems.

Specific "**policy**" **level recommendation** are then described, including the proposal of an Open forum, responding to the need of building common statistical and evaluation frameworks on youth inclusions (and related phenomena of ESL and NEET) and, in turn,

enhances the multiactor and multidrivers perspective, that also relates to the needs of building a stronger cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders; a common and more robust policy evaluation framework (in terms of both statistics and assessment framework), that is currently lacking.

2.1 Recalling SAVE Scenarios

In order to build an integrated system level SAVE framework, here are recalled the main evidences of the "SAVE scenarios, needs and resources" (IO1, also available in the project website and in the dissemination platform, including its multilanguage summaries).

Due to great heterogeneity (in terms of segments, drivers and causes) of the NEET and ESL phenomena **effective policies, projects and interventions** should address the diverse causes **BUT AT THE SAME TIME EMPLOY A COMMON APPROACH** that:

⇒ Truly enhances the **multiactor and multidrivers** perspective, that also relates to the needs of building a stronger cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders; a common and more robust policy evaluation framework (in terms of both statistics and assessment framework), that is currently lacking;

⇒ Distinguish **structural and contingent** drivers and interventions. Lesson learnt in many countries have highlighted, in fact, the weak results on reducing/preventing NEET/ESL utilising "contingent" resources (such as incentives of the youth guarantees) to deal with structural dimension (guidance system effectiveness, education & job market alignment). This is also confirmed by the fact that the global economic crisis have not had the same impact on all countries and targets in terms of NEETS and ESL.

"Misplacing" the policies levels might even lead to the same "problem misplacing" (the problem are the NEETS themselves and not the causing drivers to be addressed). This is why the SAVE team have not realised a student/youth level recommendations or toolkit. Although youths – and especially the "weakest" segments - represent SAVE main target, they are intended to be the first "beneficiary" of improved social inclusion, employability and, mostly, better policies, more engaging and responsive E&T systems, more effective (and learning) work-placements.

⇒ Moreover, due to the fact that **NEET and ESL phenomena are reciprocally reinforcing**, within a negative 'double loop' grounded on a progressive lowering of **expectations** of young people entering the labour market and the diminution of the incentives for take up studies (in turn, less competences and basic skills). This call for:

- joint efforts between the **labour market system and the educational one** (and the transitions among them), as it will be recalled and deepen in the next sections of the document and that calls for structural interventions. On this level, it also important to recall the need of employing a "process" focus that valorise the impact on the overall "pathway to employment" (Eurofund, 2012), integrating the single measures (to prevent ES and/or to support school to work policies) and focus

on the transversal need of improving the school, guidance and placement system;

- reinforcement of the **“personal”** dimensions in terms of both active and empowered engagement of the targets and of higher degree of personalization of the guidance, training and placement systems, models and services. This aspect, strongly reinforced also in the follow-up activities by many actors, put again the **employability** (and its transversal competences bases and not the vertical ones) at the centre. ,



These considerations have allowed the consortium to deepen the three main SAVE-relevant dimensions employed in developing its model, system and resources. Here allow to define the main

recommendations scope and levels, as confirmed in the SAVE validation and further deepen in the next section.

Starting from the:

- **central role of the guidance and orienting systems, methodologies and practices** in order to both prevent NEET/ESL and deal with most vulnerable targets;
- **need of reinforcement of students motivation and engagement**, cornerstone of true and sustainable personal development and employability processes **based on self-evaluation and awareness grounding the personal realization process**
- relevance of **transversal competences** both for improving youth employability and for supporting and active, participative personal development processes

the next paragraphs deals, based on desk and in-field evidences, with the main drivers and dimensions.

2.2 Deepening relevant scenarios key drivers

In Italy the number of people aged between 15 and 34 who do not study and do not work and no training is expanding: according to ISTAT (Italian Statistic Institute) has gone from 20.9% in 2005 to 27.3% in 2015. Looking at the data of young people between 18 and 29 years, the percentage of NEET comes to 31.1%. It means that in Italy approximately one in three Youth lives his life without working and training. Throughout Italy the phenomenon affects more on women because of the difficult reconciliation of work and family: those data also includes women, who by choice or obligation, devote themselves exclusively to the family (and this partly explains why between 25 and 34 years the percentage of women "inactive" rose to 55.1 %).

Among the most affected are young people in possession of only a secondary school education, at risk of exclusion from the labor market, due to the double consequence arising out of inadequate academic preparation and a lack of a job, even if the participation in education post-secondary and tertiary education has had little effect in limiting the increase of NEET young people. According to the OECD data (2015) the prospect of a return of relatively low and uncertain investment, after a long period

spent in the education system, could explain the limited interest of Italian youth to undertake graduate studies. About 35% of 20-24 year olds do not have jobs, they do not study, or follow a training course, the second highest percentage of OECD countries. In this regard for 25-34 year olds tertiary graduates is very difficult to find a job. In 2014, only 62% of graduates between 25 and 34 years was engaged in Italy, 5 percentage points lower than the employment rate in 2010. This is a level comparable to that of Greece and is the lowest among the countries of OECD (the OECD average is 82%). Italy and the Czech Republic are the only OECD countries where the employment rate between 25 and 34 years is the lowest among graduates than people who have achieved, as higher level of education, an education degree upper secondary (or non-tertiary post-secondary). In Italy, students who enrol in tertiary education may have a long wait for a return on investment in the labor market. In 2014, only 62% of graduates between 25 and 34 years was busy in Italy, 5 percentage points lower than the employment rate in 2010. This is a level comparable to that of Greece and is the lowest among the countries of OECD (the OECD average is 82%). Italy and the Czech Republic are the only OECD countries where the employment rate between 25 and 34 years is the lowest among graduates than people who have achieved, as higher level of education, an education degree upper secondary (or non-tertiary post-secondary). In Italy, students who enrol in tertiary education may have a long wait for a return on investment in the labor market. Although they are few in number, graduates in Italy earn relatively less in the labor market. On average, in Italy as elsewhere, graduates have higher labor income than workers with a lower educational level. However, Italy stands out compared to the countries that record equally small share of graduates. In OECD countries and partner countries, in general, a smaller number of graduates are higher wage benefits. In 2014, in Italy, only 17% of adults (25-64 year-olds) was the holder of a degree. Then in Italy the respective incomes they are lower: 143% compared to the OECD average of 160%. It means that for young people who have difficulty finding a job, the prospect of continuing their studies is rarely seen as an investment that could improve their chances of success on the labor market! Of course the difficulty in finding employment is reflected in the number of inactive Neet because discouraged. Added to this is the black job, positively correlated to the rate of Neet.

On the side of public services for employment is the "mismatch" between supply and demand of labor also linked to the so-called decent work, because sometime this mismatch produce good workers (overeducated with high skills and qualifications)engaged in bad jobs (requiring low abilities and offering low salaries).

Family disadvantage: Given the low social mobility in Italy, children of parents with low levels of education are more likely to become Neets.

Lack of support: at a European level, the countries with the highest rates of Neets are also those where young people stay longer in the parental home, including Italy. In this regard, Italia Lavoro finds that a high percentage of inactive Neets don't seek a job for family reasons (26.9% according to ISTAT, 2009). But we must also recognize that it is the lack of support by the state welfare to promote the role of substitution by the family of origin. In the past, much of the "blame" was placed onto the institutional

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school system; they were ostensibly too selective and calibrated towards students from the middle and upper classes. However, in recent years, the economic boom in some regions of the country (as in the Northeast) increased the number of NEETs. Since finding well-paid jobs was easy, even without specific qualifications, it was common for young people to leave school at early stages. However, in the times of crises, these young people were the first to lose their jobs and now, although they are still young, they do not know how to reconvert and become attractive on the labor market.

In brief the difficulty in accessing the labor market are related to:

- Lack of efficiency and low performances of PES both for job seekers and companies offering jobs;
- Too many informal channels to find job;
- Low social mobility: own networks (where available) are more relevant than skills and/or qualification to get a job able to improve own social condition;
- Companies are taxed too much to hire new workers;
- Internships paid by the public service used by the companies as free labor force;
- The skills are not related to the labor market (skill mismatch);
- Difficulties for people who interrupted school in obtain qualifications and have better chances to enter in the labour market.

2.2.1 How to improve students' engagement and participation in VET to prevent ESL and NEET issues

The rate of early school leavers and NEET always corresponds, in that they appear to rise or fall in tandem (they are positively correlated, for example in Southern Italy, where the drop-out rate has always been high).

First of all we should consider that in Italy the teaching staff is older than that of any other OECD countries. Moreover, teacher salaries are mainly linked to seniority (years of experience) and do not enhance performance excellence.

According to what collected in previous EU projects involving NEETs, Youth, public and private stakeholders we can assume the following issues about ESL and NEET phenomenon:

Weakness of the Italian school and academic system

- Lacking of communication between teachers and students;
- Higher education and skills far and not related to the labor market;
- Most requested and useful path are not for free and limited to a small number of candidates, internships should be more used to bring young people to the labour market;
- Post degree training expensive and not so useful to find a job, too much theoretical

studies for the labor market.

How to improve the existing situation

- Favouring the link school-labour market: the alternating school-work programme is a tool aimed to this: thanks to the new law "The good school" (n. 107, approved by the Government on 9th July 2015) all the students in secondary schools in the last three years before the diploma must spend at least 200 hours (for humanistic and focused on sciences schools) or 400 hours (for technical or professional schools) in stage in companies or public bodies.
- Reinforcing the internships as tool in order to have an experience on the job. Internships should be more promoted by many public institutions as training tool to access to labour market, but they are not a job experience and cannot substitute a job contract;
- Alternating school-work programme could fill in the gap of between school skills and labour market requests;
- Enhancing guidance (path of growing accompanied by a coach) as central process towards the labor market;
- Empowering the demand/supply service in the Job Centres and PES;
- Reinforcing the link between school and labor market (e.g. promoting internship in the companies since the high school);
- Reinforcing the link between institutions and companies, in order they can trust - better on each other;
- Persuading young people that also accepting a low profile job they can start working with a contract;
- Favouring self-employment by young people supporting them with facilitated loans, counselling, tax break ;
- Empowering young people with soft skills (self-confidence, knowledge and trust on their rights, ability to self-determination and to be proactive, etc.).

How to empower the intensity of already ongoing policies to fight against NEET?

- strengthen the Job Centres: at national level there are only 8.000 employees in Job Centres (a small percentage related to unemployed people, they are not able to satisfy all the people looking for job), the Government has planned to reinforce them. An important reformation is ongoing related to the tasks of employment: a central agency for employment to manage all the questions related to labour market will be set up according to the new law just in force (Jobs Act, April 2015) but probably also a regional agencies for employment will be created with local tasks. Some key services as the guidance and the demand and supply will be put at the centre of the offer for unemployed and especially young people
- reinforcing the internships: as a tool to have an experience on the job internships are promoted by many public institutions. The Tuscany Region, which has the tasks to implement it on its area, is positive example of this, because paid 21.141 internships from the starting of the law. To be underlined that caused by the crisis many young people approach internships as mean to enter in a company, hoping to have a contract at the end of the paid tool. But internships are occasion to have a training

experience, also if many companies try to use them to have human resource for free, so young people easily think so.

- favouring the link school-labour market: the alternating school-work programme is a tool aimed to this: the Government thanks to the new draft of law "The good school" (at the moment is course of discussion within the Chambers) approved the measures to let the young people have a direct experience of the labour market (obligation for the third year of high school). This is a measure already provided by the previous law on the school but as a piloting for last two years for students of technical high schools, that the law could extend to all the high schools. It provides that schools make agreements with companies in order the students can have a training path inside them during the school years and acquire the skills they request for job.

How to contribute to figure out the challenges?

- The **Job Centres**, if reinforced also with skilled professionals, could provide more guidance and strengthen the demand/supply services, a key to access to labour market;
- The alternating school-work programme could fill in the gap of between school skills and labour market requests;
- Internships are a training tool to access to labour market, but they are not a job experience and can't substitute a job contract: it's right to promote them but young people and companies should be well informed on their aims and right nature;
- Companies don't ask for skilled people for the basic qualifications, but only for specific tasks or profile, so if a young person want to access to labour market could start from below;
- Enhancing guidance (path of growing accompanied by a coach) as a central process towards the labour market;
- Enhancing and update counsellors' competences for guidance;
- Empowering the demand/supply service in the Job Centres;
- Well link the school to the labour market (e.g. promoting internship in the companies since the high school);
- Favouring the access to labour market for young people by internships;
- Reinforcing the link between institutions and companies, in order they can trust better on each other;
- Persuading young people that also accepting, at the beginning of their career, a low profile job they can start working with a contract;
- Favouring self-employment by young people;
- Empowering young people with soft skills (self-confidence, knowledge and trust on their rights, ability to self-determination and to be proactive, etc.).

2.2.2 How to provide student-centred training

Student-centred training is strictly linked to the engagement of Youth in

designing and/or having their say in own education paths where possible. It means catering for different pathways, for example, from mainstream learning to tailored, supported learning. In this regard the strong involvement of NEET people in re-thinking and proposing new perspectives for measures, approaches and services targeted NEET people, according to their expectations and needs. In fact their direct involvement (as proved also in other previous projects and good practices) can provide suggestions and new ideas to improve and renew the training offer (in terms of methods and tools) taking into account needs and features of final beneficiaries, and re-thinking and proposing new perspectives for measures, approaches and services targeted Youth people, according to their expectations. If so Youth can be more motivated to continue their VET path, avoiding drop-out and educational failures.

In this regard the education system, and especially VET, should change their teaching, didactics (including ICT and social media) and learning principles to include and re-motivate NEET youth, according to the Commission therefore calls for a dramatic re-thinking of learning, especially for NEET youth sectors, and promote such new pathways and methodologies as media based learning, entrepreneurship in all educations and project and problem based learning. In fact Youth digital native at risk of drop-out, not particularly attracted by the common idea of school, could be more interested to be involved in a digital educational paths tailored on their cognitive maps, designed exploiting social media and ICT channels. If those Youth are not able to keep in touch with the classical schools because of different languages, those personalizes VET paths could be able to speak Youth language. The information and communication technologies (ICT) are not often used in school.

In Italy, in 2013, approximately 31% of the lower secondary school teachers said they use "often" or ICTs "during all or nearly all the lessons" for projects with students or teaching activities in class - compared to an average of 40% across OECD countries. In addition, in 2012, most of the students olds (57%) said they did not use the Internet at school during a school day (the average OECD was 36%). A lack of preparation among teachers has perhaps contributed to these levels of ICT use substandard. In fact, even though 53% of teachers of lower secondary education said in 2013 that he had participated in the previous 12 months in professional development activities to improve skills in the use of ICT for educational activities, about 36% of teachers - the second highest percentage among the countries that participated in the Survey international teaching and learning (TALIS) - still reported a high level of need for professional development in ICT skills.

Home training and counselling

Another student-centred training activity, to be developed to prevent drop-out and NEET issues, is the home training and counselling, which could be very useful in rural, depressed and/or peripheral areas, targeted Youth from families having low cultural background and at risk of social marginalization. This activity can allow involving youth families as well, avoiding the risk to drop-out VET paths

because of cultural and/or family barriers. These kind of activities are not still implemented in Italy, but they can offer a strong contribution also to:

- tackling the gender gap in unemployment and NEET issues, taking into account that often young women who become NEET are “victim” of family and cultural influences which push them to leave their professional career for giving care within own family. This phenomenon involves both migrant and Italian people, particularly from Southern, rural and depressed areas;
- reaching people who don't use to turn to social or institutional services, because of lack of knowledge and information, prejudices or cultural gaps, even if they are strongly in need;
- avoiding drop-out for the reasons above described;
- involving Youth families in order reinforce Youth self-esteems about their employment paths.

Flexible education

Another way to address the problems with mainstream education that lead young people to leave school early is to create alternative learning environments and use innovative teaching methods within the exciting public educational system (Eurofound, 2012).

One way of creating an environment for more flexible learning is to use different and innovative teaching methods in a **non-classroom environment** to increase the motivation of young people to learn.

There are a number of ways in which the school curriculum can become more varied, stimulating and relevant to the lives of young people. It can mean that the school has to introduce new teaching methods, updating and thus making the curriculum more relevant, measures to increase the teachers' engagement, improving standards and/or having smaller classes with more one-to-one training sessions, involvement and feedback (Eurofound, 2012). Further, a combination of vocational and work-based learning can also be offered as an alternative environment for pupils at risk of leaving school early.

Young people (especially NEET) should be offered alternative educational paths and the freedom to decide between different alternatives. Further a flexible VET system can only be designed through the close cooperation and efforts of different stakeholders and policymakers. These stakeholders are for example ministries of education, labour and social affairs as well as representatives from the labour market.

These considerations also call for the relevance, for youth employability and inclusion, with special reference to the weaker segments, of the dual system, the promotion of alternance, apprenticeship and, more generally, positive E&T/job transitions. Themes dealt in the next chapter of the document.

Second chance opportunities

To leave school and no longer pursue ones education should not be the end of a young person's path to employment. Another way of bringing young people

back into the educational system is by offer them a second chance to acquire the skills and qualifications needed for sustainable employment (Eurofound, 2012). These reintegrating measures should be flexible instead of rigid and thus tailored according to the needs of the young persons. This can be achieved by creating a more motivating environment through activities that are more practically orientated rather than theoretical and include elements of non-formal learning (Eurofound, 2012). When planning second chance opportunities, it is important to keep in mind that the young person for whom the activities are developed may have problems with mainstream education, teaching formats and methods. Second chance opportunities must thus take an alternative approach to learning in line with the specific situation and need of the participants. Further, creating learning environments with small groups of students enables more individual attention from the teachers (Eurofound, 2012).

For some young persons the reasons to why they have left the educational system is due to more complex personal issues and not only based upon their direct problems with mainstream education. For them, reintegration measures and second chance opportunities should be combined with support from educational, social and health professionals. These measures should start at a basic level by helping the young person to re-discover an interest in learning and give structure to their lives by introducing boundaries and routines (Eurofound, 2012).

The Role and Importance of adults

The acknowledgement from adults as an important factor in preventing early school leaving. This is essentially about giving young people good role models with whom they can identify as well as getting acknowledgement and recognition on their achievements. Through this, positive contact with adults can work as a motivating factor that helps prevent early school-leaving.

One important preventing measure is to involve the parents in their children's education. This can be done by strengthening the communication between schools and parents through greater parental involvement and including parents in activities. A closer parental involvement can be used to reduce school failure by establishing partnerships between parents and teachers in the interest of the children's learning. Another measure is to educate parents in the importance of education by involving them in local programmes and activities (Eurofound, 2012).

Establishing a good relationship between teachers and other personnel who work closely with the young person and their parents, is also very important. This can be especially important in relation to young people who are at risk of dropping out of school. The relationship between the teacher/personnel and the parents needs to be one of mutual trust and respect. A social bond can be created through organised social activities. Bridging activities should be created at an early stage for supporting children and their parents.

Further, the project also recognised the need of parental education and

counselling for those parents who are struggling to motivate their children to attend school.

The project acknowledges that in some cases the young individuals do not have parents who offer them acknowledgement and encouragement to pursue their education. For these youngsters it becomes more important that the schools or other organisations can through their personnel offer the acknowledgement and encouragement that is needed for them to continue with their education.

2.2.3 The relevance of soft-skills within VET

Young people should be empowered with soft skills, as self-confidence, knowledge and trust on their rights, ability to self determination and to be proactive, but also communication, public relations, interpersonal skills, problem solving, time management, team work, leadership, taking responsibility on your own, and so on. In fact “Soft skills” mean different things in different countries and social settings. In this document they encompass the ability to communicate, relationships, interpersonal skills, problem solving, time management, team work, leadership, taking responsibility and working individually. All these skills are often included in what is called general employability on the labour market. They are often seen as essential and inherent whereby employees are required to at least embody some if not all of them.

This is central theme in the SAVE model and system, has guided its design & development processes and represents a key driver of its impact and future valorisation, also in the “job market” perspective, as it will be addressed in the fourth chapter.

Soft skills are rarely included in a normal educational curriculum, but many young people do gain soft skills by attending school and other activities. They are thus a part of the socialisation process in society, often learnt outside of schools, within the family, at sports clubs, youth clubs or other informal settings.

They are closely connected with the life experiences of young people. Therefore, attention must be paid to ensure that the experience, relationships and environment for young people in schools are positive.

Since soft skills are not taught officially, in school or by other institutions, not all young people learn them, as many of the teachers do not have themselves these skills. Thus, soft skills should be included in the basic education of teachers, as it already happens in some countries. In this regard many young people categorised as NEET lack these soft skills, and in some cases it can be the reason as to why a young person is not in education, employment or training. In fact in some cases soft skills can be a successful key to find or get a job, not less crucial than hard skills.

Soft skills are closely connected with the life experiences (as in sports situations, youth clubs, peer group, within the family, etc.), so attention should be paid to the quality of experiences, relationships, environment of students in schools. But it also happens that these skills are not learned at all, being also one of the reasons

why young people end up in the situation of being NEET. Informal learning, including mobility projects, also plays a vital role. Informal learning situations can be the means by which soft skills can increase among NEETs. Some stakeholders integrate soft skills in personal development modules that are offered to young people who do not want to attend school. However, the ideal would be that soft skills are integrated into the educational curriculum and thus transversal in all school subjects rather than as courses only offered to unemployed youth who do not attend school. In fact employability skills seem to be targeted at people outside the job market, while they would be very useful also within schools.

A "special" key competence: the citizenship and the youth inclusion

Caused by the still ongoing crisis the labour market is a field where the social conflicts became more deepen in Italy in last years. As democracy labour based (Art. 1 of the Constitution) Italy is facing this problem among the rights of its citizens. The work is the most important, as a key challenge for the future and in particular for the next generations.

Young people should be properly informed and persuaded that the opportunity to express their personality and skills is not only a key tool for the development of their country and of all Europe, but is a right of their citizenship.

Stress the concept of citizenship is an important objective to not loose next generations and young people in general, not only in the labour market. The weakness of the social ground that the crisis favoured will be fight. Building a more inclusive society means to give young people tools to be citizens: knowledge of institutions, direct contact and trust on the bodies with charge on the education, justice, labour market, and on the private one, such as the employers' associations, etc., in order they can feel part of an integrated society.

Policy makers and stakeholders should pay attention to people and maintain a direct contact with them as much as possible, not only as a duty (they are representative of people by elections) but to listen the needs of persons. Every occasion to meet directly people and young people in particular, favouring their participation, is very important to the well working of a democratic country, and to reinforce the social ground.

After this the tools of education and training could be effective and better linked to the labour market. A good guidance after the school or during last years of it will be needed, and if necessary an empowerment of personal skills could be provided to young people to face the labour market.

We can't ignore that the crisis caused a reduction of the workplaces and a dramatic increasing of the unemployed people (from 2008 the unemployed rate at the national level increase of 25%), and these are the most relevant data.

So the opportunity to enhance the quality of school and of the employment services became an urgent need in Italy as in many European countries. The Italian Government is facing these challenges in both the fields, in order to cause a drastic change, hoping they have positive results.

How to measure/assess soft skills is also an important issue. In this regard validation of soft skills acquired informally would be helpful for NEET young people.

The Self-awareness SAVE tool and the overall SAVE model & system has been developed ha started from this point that also represent a future improvement driver, in terms of integrating its evidences within formal digital portfolio and/or integrated guidance system, re-defined in terms of personalization and employability. In this sense, at the national level, have been undertaken an active dialogue with the ISFOL team developing the AVO model and with complementary research projects.

These considerations also lead to the deepening of the next driver: the good guidance paths.

2.2.4 “Good practices” for “good guidance paths”

Educational & vocational guidance is an increasingly important element of lifelong learning. Over the course of their working lives, individuals must navigate multiple transitions. Adequately trained career guidance practitioners are a prerequisite for making high quality guidance service provision a reality for every European citizen. The challenge is therefore to identify and develop the skills and competences which guidance practitioners need in order to work effectively with target groups who are a great distance from the labour market. Training methods are required which cross national boundaries and can be implemented in diverse cultural settings.

Guidance practitioners are in close contact with many groups that participate in the process of lifelong learning and vocational education: clients, the providers of vocational education, policy makers and social partners. Guidance practitioners are an interface between all these groups and know their needs and interests. Therefore it is very important to take guidance practitioners' perspectives into account when new services for low skilled people are planned or when new methods of guidance are proposed. Guidance practitioners can also have good ideas for the improvement of existing services as they know what methods are useful for less educated clients and how guidance services must be designed to reach and empower these clients. They can also take into account the specific conditions regarding their city or region. Therefore it is important for the policy makers to engage and communicate with guidance practitioners.

Guidance services should be client centred and it should empower clients. This is especially important for low-skilled people as they may have often experienced situations where their deficits were the focus and not their strengths. To put client needs into the center, guidance has to be independent. On the one hand, it has to be independent from providers of vocational education as they might focus on the courses they offer and that might be not appropriate for the person in question. On the other hand, guidance has to be independent from receiving social benefits. That means that a person enters voluntarily into the guidance process and is not penalized for rejecting job offers or training that they are not interested in and does not fit into their career plan. Furthermore Guidance should take place on a voluntary basis in order to positively impact and empower clients the client. One possible solution could be that clients are asked to visit the guidance service to hear about the services available but can then decide voluntarily if he or she will use the services offered.

Lifelong guidance is needed for lifelong learning. Guidance should take place at key transition points throughout one's life (e.g. from kindergarten to primary school, from primary school to secondary school, from secondary school to work or to university, from work to work, from work to unemployment and from

unemployment to work, back to work after maternity/paternity/family leave or illness, from work to pension) but also in the time between such transition points. Offering guidance at these key transition points is particularly important for low skilled people or people that are not used to formal learning environments. In these cases there might be a need for additional information, e.g. explaining the educational system if it is not known or understood. This additional information can enable the people to make the right choice. Furthermore, due to the changes in the world of work, low-skilled people are often more at risk of losing their jobs so they might need more guidance at the transition point from work to work. One focus here then should be improving their employability.

Coaching, guidance and counselling from early age

- Career guidance and counselling are very valuable for young people.
- Guidance services vary from country to country, from very consistent to non-existing. Thus, there should be a structured way for providing guidance at EU level.
- Early career guidance is extremely important, it's a crucial transition point for young people. Early intervention prevents young people from making wrong career choices and from being demotivated to engage in another service.
- Early intervention is also crucial – it should be provided as soon as the person has dropped out from school or from a training course, as the longer the disengagement, the bigger the demotivation. Thus, early and accessible career guidance should be provided.
 - To reach the expected impact, guidance should provide an individual service for each beneficiary, which requires time, while the practitioners do not always have the necessary time. Thus, investments should be made in the resources allocated to guidance services.
 - The counsellors should know to refer the young people to other professionals, when they are not able to help (e.g. to a psychologist), as young people may encounter different types of barriers in progressing.
 - An ideal quality career guidance service, able to prevent the NEET phenomenon, should have the following characteristics: personalized, professional, dedicated separate service (e.g. not performed by a teacher), accessible, less bureaucracy both for beneficiaries and for practitioners, early intervention, flexible, a transition point, provide enough time, focused on helping, holistic approach (recognizing the boundaries of the practitioners, e.g. availability of psychologists, career guidance practitioners, etc.), sensible to young people's needs, sustainable.
 - The use of EU projects for developing the career guidance services, like the Youth Guarantee Scheme, is also helpful.
 - Not least, it is important to assess the long term impact of the guidance programmes, not just the short term impact in terms of reduction of unemployment rate.

Flexible education, early guidance:

- Flexible education still remains difficult to define, but definitely NEET young people should be provided with alternative educational paths, as well as the freedom to decide.
- Students should learn at early ages about job market and should have early contact with the real labour market (e.g. visiting companies, work-based learning, etc.).
- Parental education and counselling parents is also very important, the same as the relations between teachers-family-child/student – a strong social bond should be created by organizing common activities. Bridging activities should be created at early stages for supporting children.
- A flexible VET system can only be designed through the cooperation and efforts of different stakeholders and policy makers (e.g. ministries of education, labour, social affairs, etc.).

Integrated approach – multi-professional teams

- The likelihood that young people who find themselves in the situation of not being in education, employment or training, have had previous experiences with local administrations through teachers, social workers and other professionals is high. It is quite often the case that different institutions such as schools, social services and job centres to mention a few, have the charge to work with NEETs.

An integrated approach is the most successful one. This means that different stakeholders work together instead of separately. The benefits of collaboration are far greater than the disadvantages. One way of structuring the integrated approach is to create so called multi-functional teams. These teams consist of those professionals from each stakeholder that work with the young individual. The aim of the team is to share experiences and to have an integrated approach towards the young individual. This will ensure that repetitive activities are avoided and that there is no competitiveness among stakeholders.

An integrated approach will also lend greater trust for local administrations and its staff. Further, if the young individual gains more trust to some professionals and not others they can help as mediators and facilitate dialogue.

These considerations:

- further reinforce the multiactorial policy intervention need already underlined in the first intellectual output and confirmed in all the follow-up and recommendation development activities from all key actors;
- valorise the target/actors enlargement realised within the SAVE validation and valorisation (to social system to companies)
- call for the definition of common (of the multiactorial base, both at national and EU level) framework and bodies, such as the following proposal.

2.3 Promoting an *Open stakeholders permanent forum*

Taking into account that both data and activities focused on NEET issues are jeopardised, could be useful to develop an Observatory and Institutional technical committee (as a task-force) on NEET issues at National and European level (involving also other interested EU partners), based and starting on results and experiences collected in all previous projects and researches, involving experts, stakeholders, research organisations and public authorities, including Youth, NEETs and Youth organisations, integrated with entities already existing (if any). It could be a permanent forum where discuss evolutions and changes related to the phenomenon, and providing lobby activities to support policy makers and all key actors (of VET organisations, schools, PES, job centres, and so on) to better prevent and tackle ESL and NEET, taking in to account all needs, expectations and voices of people involved at different level within a participative approach.

AIMS	To better prevent and tackle ESL and NEET, taking in to account all needs, expectations and voices of people involved at different level.
ACTORS	Policy makers, VET organisations, schools, PES, job centres, counsellors, Youth, NEETs and Youth organisations.
METHODOLOGIES	Opens discussions in dedicated forum and biannual meetings, inviting also external experts.
ACTIONS	discussing evolutions and changes related to the phenomenon, and providing lobby activities to support policy makers and all key actors.

The Open forum is intended to address contemporarily to three policy recommendations drivers:

- 1) the definition of common framework, statistical bases and (policy/projects) evaluation criteria;
- 2) the support of truly mutiactorial policy definition. The “network” dimension is in fact nowadays at the bases of the job market and active labour policies (see the Jobs act in Italy and the definition of the National Network ex Decree 150/2015);
- 3) combining the two, the assumption of a truly process based effective system interventions.

3 FROM SYSTEM TO ORGANIZATION: SAVE FOR THE DUAL SYSTEM TO PREVENT ESL AND NEET

There is strong evidence that work-based learning helps to equip young people with the skills that can improve their employability and ease the transition from school to work. This is why the European Commission has called upon governments, social partners and education and training providers to promote apprenticeships and other forms of work-based learning. And this is why we are working to inspire and support stakeholders to make it happen.

The European Pact for Youth, launched in November 2015, is a concrete example of how stakeholders are responding to this call: a business-led initiative to create 10,000 business-education partnerships that over the next two years will lead to at least 100,000 good quality apprenticeships, traineeships or entry-level jobs and boost the chances of young people getting jobs.

Supporting quality opportunities for young people, including apprenticeships is core to the Youth Guarantee, supported by the Youth Employment Initiative, with targeted funding in EU regions worst affected by youth unemployment and the European Social Fund which operates in all regions.

Marianne Thyssen

European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility

This is the incipit of the recent EU publication on *High-performance apprenticeships & work-based learning: 20 guiding principles*¹. It highlights **three main (potential) key SAVE dimensions**:

- the potential of the WBL and the need of reinforcing both VET systems and companies competences
- the focus on employability and on the “transitions” governance
- the relevance of these challenges and needs for the weaker segments of the job market and educational system: the youth at risk of social exclusion/NEET and/or with lower basic skills (as confirmed by the same youth guarantee).

The above quoted recent EU publication (2015) on *High-performance apprenticeships & work-based learning: 20 guiding principles* clusters the guidance principles into to four policy challenges important to promote apprenticeships and other forms of work-based learning:

- national governance and social partners' involvement;
- support for companies, in particular SMEs, offering apprenticeships;
- attractiveness of apprenticeships and improved career guidance; and
- quality assurance in work-based learning.

¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1147>

This section is intended to **bridge the political/system analysis of the first part of the present Recommendations (and the first principle cluster) to the next ones**, focused of the potential role and contribution of “SAVE-related” models, tools, resources implementation on the E&T system (Chap.4) and on the companies and workplacement one (Chap.5), as in the latter guiding principles for WBL/apprenticeship.

Consistently, here following a compared analysis among partners countries aimed at building the relevant dimensions of the “*alternance scenario, context of utilization and potential contribution*” of SAVE. A deeper and more exhaustive analysis of each country system, challenges and regulamentary framework can be found at each national levels; many research, statistics and publication are nowadays available in all EU countries due to the central role in the political agenda both on the E&T system side and on the Job Market one². As already recalled, at the EU level, updated and richer analysis are carried on by Cedefop and ETF foundation. Many other periodical statistics and research are related to the Youth guarantee progressive application.

3.1 Youth unemployment and work based learning

Young people are at inherent disadvantage in labour markets. However, there is reason to believe the challenges facing young people are increasing and becoming particularly severe as changes in the world of work makes school-to-work transitions more fractured and unpredictable.

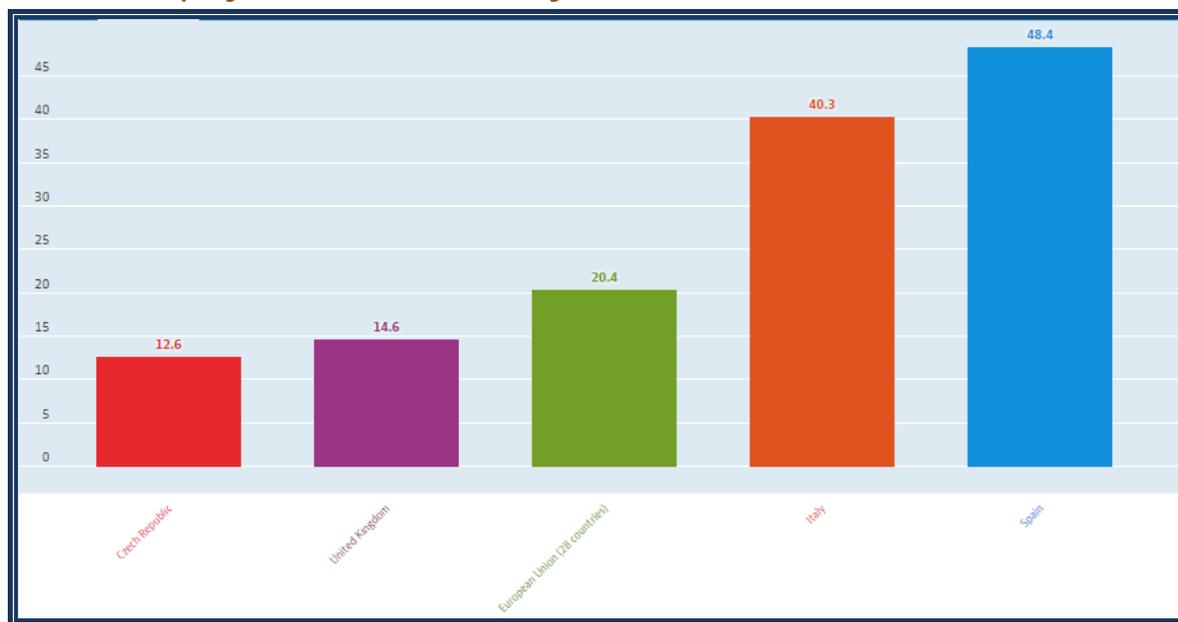
In nearly all the EU-28 countries, education systems are growing and diversifying, with more courses for different target groups. At the same time, jobs and careers are constantly evolving and job security is diminishing. While these changes are expanding opportunities, they also increase the complexity and difficulty of choices that young people need to make.

While lack of relevant experience, job-seeking insight and networks tend to work against young adults compared to older workers, such negative factors are not universally experienced within or between comparable nation states.

The extent to which young people disproportionately suffer in the competition for scarce jobs is far worse in Spain and Italy (with very high levels of youth unemployment) than it is in the UK and the Czech Republic, as in the following picture (in the middle, the European average).

² A very recent analysis of the Italian progressive implementation of the National plan to promote apprenticeship and related key driver has been presented by Crispolti (ISFOL) in the last conference of SAVE, at the Rome session held on the 30thSeptember. Materials are available in the project website.

Youth unemployment rate Total, % of youth labour force, 2015

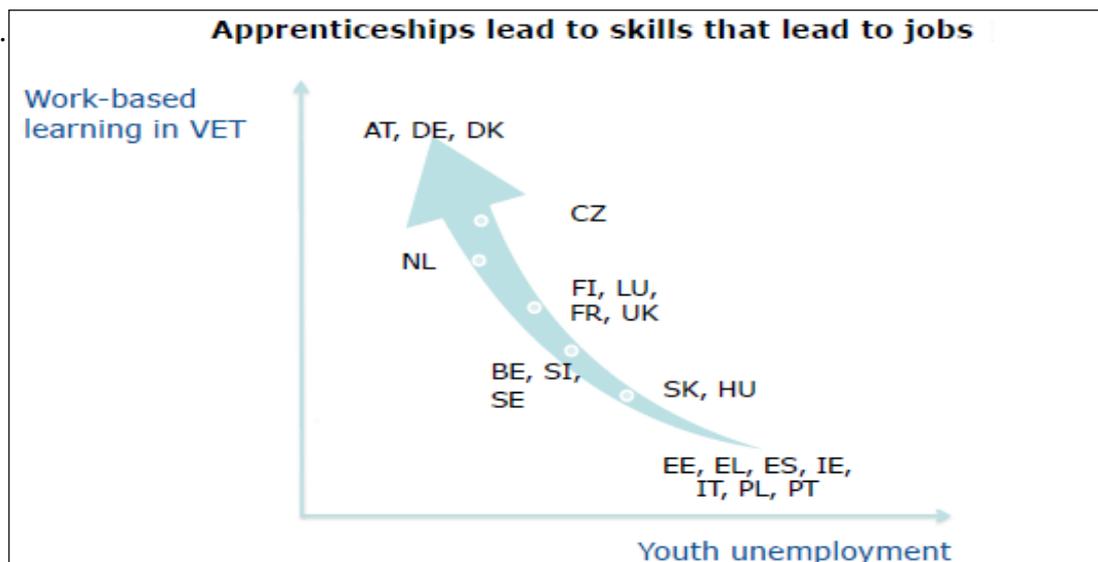


A lack of workplace experience and the related skills and competences is one of the factors contributing to the "skills gap" in the EU today. While 5.6 million young people in the EU suffer the consequences of unemployment, 36% of employers' report that they struggle to find new recruits with the skills they need. Something is clearly wrong. *The need to identify, adapt and adopt practices which can tackle this skills gap is urgent.*

Part of the solution can be found in high quality vocational education and training (VET) systems, in which the active participation of employers and a strong element of **work-based learning** facilitate young people's transition to work by providing the knowledge, skills and competences which they need for a successful first step into the labour market. Countries with strong and attractive VET systems, and notably those with well-established apprenticeship systems, tend overall to perform better in terms of youth employment.

It is noticeable that in those EU countries with strongest vocational pathways into employment, e.g. Germany, the youth 'penalty' in the job market appears to be lowest. Within such vocational provision, however, extensive employer engagement within education is also commonplace (see figure overleaf).

Youth unemployment and WBL



Creating opportunities for high-quality work-based learning thus lies at the heart of current **European education and training policies as well as job market, active labour policies and apprenticeship**. In February 2013, the European Council confirmed that the highest priority should be given to promoting youth employment and invited the Commission to establish a “**European Alliance for Apprenticeships**”. It also announced the creation of a dedicated **Youth Employment Initiative**, open to regions with high youth unemployment rates, with a financial support of EUR 6 billion. Despite these commitments, the supply of apprenticeship and traineeship places in the EU continues to be under-developed. The picture varies greatly by country. Those enrolled in apprenticeships in the strict sense, represent 33% of secondary VET students. 24 EU countries have schemes in place where learners spend more than 50% of their time learning in the workplace, but the scope of the schemes varies widely. In Austria, Denmark and Germany, work-based learning (typically apprenticeships) predominates, reaching more than 30% of students. In countries such as Spain and Portugal these programmes are less common. Efforts are needed to invest in expanding the offer of apprenticeships and traineeships in countries where opportunities for this type of learning remain very limited.

Work-based learning (WBL) is a fundamental aspect of vocational training – it is directly linked to the mission of VET **to help learners acquire knowledge, skills and competences which are essential in working life**.

Across EU countries, the terms **alternance and apprenticeship** are often used interchangeably. These models are characterised by a high intensity or frequency of work integration or real-life work situations. Cedefop defines alternance training as 'education or training combining periods in an educational institution or training centre and in the workplace. The alternance scheme can take place on a weekly, monthly or yearly basis. Depending on the country and applicable status, participants may be contractually linked to the employer and/or receive a remuneration.

3.1.1 Compared national analysis

The school/job alternance and the active labour policies in the ITA

The recent data on youth unemployment rates demonstrate a European polarization between Countries in the South of Europe and those in the North. In fact, the North Europe Countries which implement the dual education system since long time, have the lowest youth unemployment rates (IRPET, 2016; IMF, 2014).

By analyzing in Italy the nature of criticalities, the inefficacies in the educational system and/or in the labour market, has resulted either the vertical and the horizontal mismatches. Concerning the vertical mismatch, young people are engaged in a job for which no qualification is required, meanwhile for the horizontal mismatch they perform in a job for which there is not a match between the required qualification and the own qualification (IRPET, 2016).

The dual education system is a continuous and stable approach to dialogue between the education world and the labour/market world. It is not an extraordinary intervention as the Youth Guarantee initiative. It is a parallel or integrative system to the upper secondary school that allows students to get a formal qualification or a skills certification through the "on the job" learning methodology. The aim is to:

- Facilitate the transitions between the vocational and educational training (VET) system and the labour market;
- Prevent the ESL-Early School Leaving- phenomenon through school-work pathways (it points to reduce the ESL strengthening experiential learning methodology and to reduce the NEET-Not (engaged) in Education, Employment and Training- target through short training courses to reinforce their qualifications);
- Promote experiences in the workplace (IRPET, 2016; Italia Lavoro, 2016).

The theme is relevant deepening the nature of vocational training, which involve the education pathways and the business worlds, with their characteristics and criticalities. According to ISFOL (2016), it is an increasing phenomenon which foster the short-term youth employment of about the 50%, reaching even the 60% in the North Regions of Italy. During the vocational year 2014/15, 316599 youth were enrolled in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd year of study, of which 71308 got the qualification; the main figures are catering operators, wellness operators and electricians. Instead, 12788 youth were in the 4th year of study, of which 9825 got the professional degree; the main sectors are the same of whom got the qualification.

Most of youth are engaged in an integrative subsidiarity path (around 166605 youth. The pathway consists in getting the qualification to the 3rd year of study and then continue the educational program till the 5th year, and thus getting the professional degree, or not), followed by the upper high school pathway (about 133611 youth. The path consists in getting a professional degree after 5 years of study) and the complementary subsidiarity pathway (16383 youth. This educational path consists in getting the qualification or the professional degree according the Regional VET rules).

Through recent regulatory interventions, the Government (Jobs Act - Decree n. 81/2015 and La Buona Scuola - Law 107/2015) modified the rules of apprenticeship and the school-work alternance in order to facilitate their activation by entrepreneurs and promoting this form of contract as the preferred means of access to the labor market for young people. Simultaneously, government and Regions have defined a memorandum of understanding which aims to introduce in Italy the dual system by funding an experimentation that promotes the training in the work context.

Nowadays in Italy the dual system is articulated in three main families of interventions (Italia Lavoro, 2016):

School-job alternance

The school-job alternance is a teaching method that allows students who attend upper high education institutions (vocational schools, technical colleges, high schools) to undertake part of their training in a company or an institution. With reference to the “La Buona Scuola” (L.107/15) it has been made compulsory in every type of institution. In the technical and vocational schools, the school-job alternance has been promoted through at least 400 hours per years from the 3rd to the 5th school year. Meanwhile in the art/scientific/humanistic high schools it has been promoted through at least 200 hours per year from the 3rd to the 5th school year.

Simulated training company

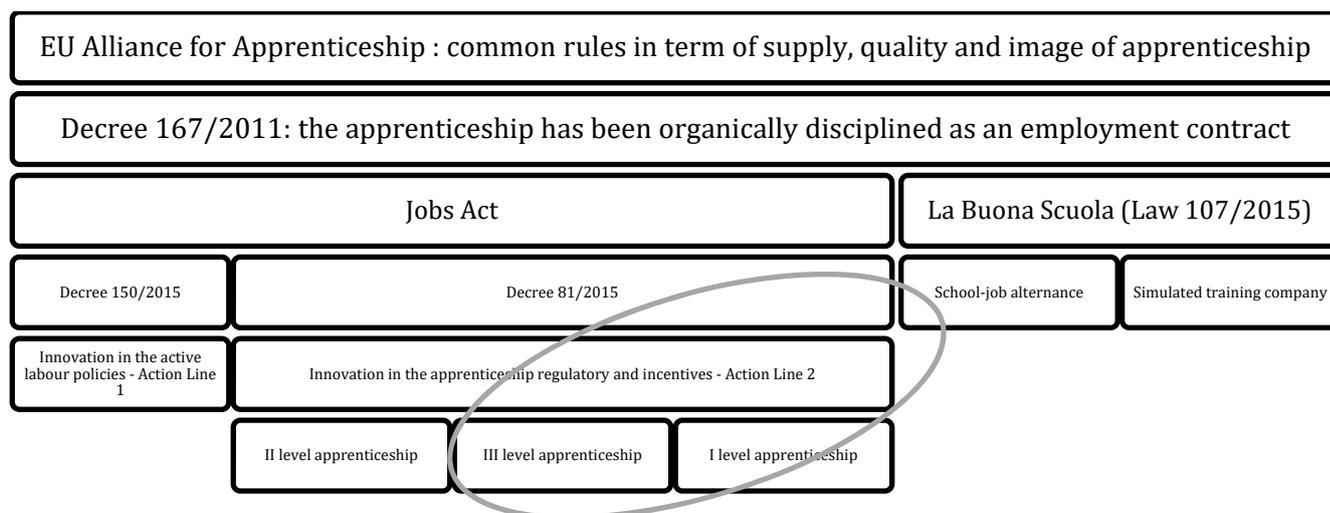
It is a teaching method that aims to reproduce a virtual business as part of the educational pathway, considering the business operative issues (organization, environment, relationships and work tools). With reference to the “La Buona Scuola” (L.107/15) it has been introduced through periods of practical application of at least 400 hours per year for 1st and 2nd year students as preparatory tool to the school-job alternance.

Apprenticeship

The new dual system aims to match the education and labour worlds. Thus, the main innovations concern the level and the III level apprenticeship. It regulates the training sessions per each year of study: at least the 40% during the 2nd year, and the 50% in the 3rd and 4th year of study. In other words, it is about 2 days of education session made by the vocational centers and 3 days of training session in the company.

We can also argue that the 1st and the 3rd level of apprenticeship are a wide extension of the school-job alternance framework.

Briefly the Italian VET system can be summarized in the below image (as also integrated within the scenarios in IO1).



3.2 The dual system in Italy: strength points

According to the Italia Lavoro (2016), ClicLavoro (2016), IRPET (2016) data, the dual education system positively involves different stakeholders, from students to the economic system as a whole. The strength points are:

For students

- it offers a highly skilled labor pathway which contribute to student personal and professional growth;
- students involved in the vocational training period are facilitated in the school-work transition.

For school/university

- the dual education system reduces the mismatch problems between demand and supply of skills on the labor market;
- The vocational education center has the opportunity to address new training offers according to the emergent business needs.

For businesses

- it offers a highly skilled labor which contribute to the businesses sustainable growth;
- the vocational training period contribute to increase the loyalty and knowledge between the actors and to create a better work environment.

For the economic system

- the dual system contributes to reinforce/establish a partnership among local actors;
- the businesses growth contributes to the national growth;
- the business masters/tutors role has a threefold aim: one side contribute for the business sustainable growth, in the other side contribute to the youth professional and personal growth reducing the recourse to social-economic interventions and in the last their satisfaction increase as well as the society recognition for their role.

3.3 The dual system in Italy: critical dimensions

The VET national regulatory fragmentation

Concerning the Italian Constitution - article 117, Regions have specific competence in theme of education and training, meanwhile the State regulates on the education general disciplines. With reference to VET pathways have been noticed differences in the offers (there are Regions which have no VET program) and in the VET standards to obtain the certification and/or qualification.

Emerge the need of an organic and uniform framework at national level (AdnKronos, 2016).

Intervention

With reference to the Jobs Act Decree 150/2015 – Action Line 1 it states to direct and reinforce the vocational training centers to be more resilient to the labour market challenges (Italia Lavoro, 2016).

Proposed/future intervention

The proposed Constitutional reform focus to re-assign the national competence to define the general and common educational criteria (AdnKronos, 2016).

Cultural

Apprenticeship has always been perceived as a 2nd class pathway. Businesses mainly enroll in the II level apprenticeship because they know mostly the professional one and also show greater resistance to the assumption of minors.

Employer requirements

It refers to the accommodating capacity of enterprises, in terms of: Size and numerical requirements; Available professional expertise (business mentors and "masters") and Dedicated spaces for learning and validation (Italia Lavoro, 2016).

In fact, according to the Italia Lavoro (2016) per each apprenticeship path has been commonly defined a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the company and the vocational education center. According to the Inter-Ministerial Decree of October 2015, 12th, eight points have to be clarified: object, typology and length of apprenticeship -minimum 6 months-, typology and modality to select apprentices, individual education plan, responsibilities respectively of VET center and employer, skill validation and certification, monitoring, starting date and duration of the MoU.

Intervention

With reference to the Jobs Act Decree 81/2015, incentives to foster apprenticeship have been introduced. They mainly refer to the fiscal and social security relief, the incentives for the tutoring activities and the apprentice pay-grade which is aligned to that of 2 levels lower respectively to the duties performed.

3.4 The school/job alternance and the active labour policies in the UK

In the UK, school/job alternance is referred to as Apprenticeship and Traineeships. Apprenticeships are full-time paid jobs which incorporate on and off the job training. A successful apprentice will receive a nationally recognised qualification on the

completion of their contract.

The Government has made a commitment of 3 million new apprenticeships starts *in England* between 2015 and 2020. (Additional targets are set for Scotland (1.3 million), Wales (0.5 million) and Northern Ireland (0.1 million).

Types of Apprenticeships

There are over 200 different types of apprenticeship frameworks currently available in England. Apprentices can receive qualifications ranging from those equivalent to 5 GCSE passes to those equivalent to a degree. New employer designed apprenticeship standards are being developed to replace the current apprenticeship frameworks.

Traineeships are available for unemployed people with little work experience who can be prepared for employment or an apprenticeship within six months.

Government support for apprenticeships

The Government contributes towards the training an apprentice depending on the apprentices age. A grant of £1,500 is also available to some small employers taking on an apprentice aged 16 to 24. Since April 2016 no employer pays national insurance contributions for apprentices under 25 earning up to the Upper Earning Limit.

Minimum Standards for Apprenticeships

Recognised apprenticeships are required to meet Government minimum standards, which include a minimum duration of 12 months, employed 30 hours, an English and math requirement and include off the job training. Apprentices have the same rights as other employees and are entitled to be paid at least the apprentice rate of the national minimum wage.

Policy Development

In the 2015 the Government set out its intention to create a duty to report on progress to meeting the target of 3 million new apprenticeships by 2020. Public sector bodies will be required to employ apprentices and be set targets to increase apprenticeship numbers. The Government also announced that it would give apprenticeships the same legal treatment as degrees and protect the term "apprenticeship".

New apprenticeship standards are being developed by employer led groups known as "trailblazers".

A new funding pilot is being trialed for these standards giving employers greater control over spending on training delivery. An Apprenticeship levy was announced autumn 2015. The levy will be rolled out in April 2017 and paid by 2% of UK employers. It will raise over £3 billion a year by 2019-20, £2.5 billion of which will be spent on apprenticeships in England only. This is the highest investment in real terms ever made for apprenticeships.

The Apprenticeship Levy

In spring 2017 the way the government funds apprenticeships in England is changing. Some employers will be required to contribute to a new apprenticeship levy, and there will be changes to the funding for apprenticeship training for all employers.

The apprenticeship levy requires all employers operating in the UK, with a pay bill over

£3 million each year, to make an investment in apprenticeships. You can benefit from this investment by training apprentices.

It is anticipated that the apprenticeship levy will shift incentives so that it is far more in employers' interests to take on apprentices. This builds on the experience of a large number of modern developed economies who have established levies and taxes for this purpose, such as Denmark and France. It will put investment in training, and apprenticeships specifically, on a long-term, sustainable footing and will secure new funds to support the reform and growth aims of the apprenticeships programme in England.

3.5 The school/job alternance and the active labour policies frame: School to work transitions among young people in Spain

The transition from school to work is a crucial moment in the life of a young person. Generally this is a complicated stage in life in which each young person is faced with many different options and important decisions to make: continuing to study or leaving school; pursuing higher education or doing vocational training; deciding on a career or occupational sector and acquiring the skills to take advantage of available employment opportunities.

The decisions young people make at this time in their lives are not only essential to their future employment and professional careers but will also have a major impact on other transitions, such as leaving the family home and forming a couple and a family.

Educational and work experiences are the result of individual decisions, but they are also determined by the opportunities and limitations inherent in the social context in which each young person lives. In Europe, school to work transitions have changed dramatically as a result of globalisation, the spread of new communication technologies, increased migration, the growing participation of women in the labour market and changes in the occupational structure (Blossfeld and Mills, 2010).

In this time of economic crisis, the study of school to work transitions of young people is of great importance as unemployment so adversely affects younger generations. European institutions and the various national and local governments are trying to develop educational and employment strategies that respond to the demands of young people and improve their economic and employment situation.

School to work transitions in Europe in the last ten years have been affected by an increase in labour market flexibility, temporary employment, low wages and an increasing gap between educational qualifications and employment. The gap between qualifications and employment is especially significant in Spain, where the percentage of young people who leave school without basic qualifications has increased.

At the same time unemployment is also on the rise among young people with secondary and higher education. It is interesting to look at the differences between countries in regard to the employment of young adults between the ages of 25 and 29 by education level and sex (Table 2.11). Spain, along with Greece and Italy, has

the lowest percentage of young people who are employed (both men and women). In Spain, differences by education level are particularly significant among women, where only 52.5% of young women with a primary school education (this group includes those who dropped out of school before completing compulsory secondary education) are employed, compared to 72.5% of women with tertiary education.

The data indirectly suggest that women who leave school with low education levels are likely to choose to form a family instead of getting a job (due to their lack of qualifications for finding employment), while the majority of university-educated women opt to enter the labour market, taking advantage of the opportunities offered by their level of education. These findings were already noted by López Blasco in the last Youth Report of Spain's Youth Institute.

Regarding the data with tertiary education, unemployment has increased since 2008 across Europe, but especially in Spain. As can be seen, unemployment has increased at all education levels, but above all, for those who have only completed primary school. Eurostat data reveal that in Spain the largest job losses are found among young people with the lowest level of education.

For example, in the 25 to 29 year old age group with only primary education completed, unemployment in 2000 was 17% and rose to 34% in 2010. The trend in unemployment was similar in all other age groups, meaning that it most severely affected young people without qualifications, which explain why many of them are returning to formal education. For women who only completed primary school, the trend has been similar to that of men, although unemployment has been lower among men. Young women with tertiary education have weathered the crisis better than men with the same education level. In fact, the percentage of unemployed women with tertiary education in the age group 25 to 29 went from 20% in 2000 to 18% in 2010. In contrast, in the case of men in the same age group, the percentage of unemployment increased from 14% to 19%.

Regarding young people with tertiary education, unemployment has mainly affected those between 25 and 29 years of age and its impact has been different in each European country. Spain, Italy and Greece are the countries that had the highest unemployment rate in this age group in 2010, with unemployment among men significantly higher than among women at these ages. In the 30 to 34 year old group, unemployment was higher among women in Spain, Greece and Italy.

This can be attributed to the fact that women at that age are in the process of raising children, and with little public assistance for balancing family and work – a fact noted in many studies – they dropped out of the labour market or delay their job search.

The effects of the economic crisis on unemployment among young people are also seen in the expectations many have of leaving the country to seek employment.

According to the Eurobarometer Youth on the Move, carried out in February of 2011 among 15 to 35 year old youth and young adults in the 27 states of the European Union, 68% of the Spanish are willing or would like to work in another European country, either temporarily (36%), or indefinitely (32%) .

The high percentage of young people willing to leave the country reveals the lack of job opportunities due to unemployment and the despair that has spread among young people. Of the selected countries, Spain is at the head of the list in terms of percentage of young people who wish to leave the country, followed by Denmark and the UK.

For Spain, however, the very high percentage of young people who wish to leave the country to work represents a potential loss of talent and human capital, which in the long run will undoubtedly have a negative impact on Spain's productive structure and economic development.

A final indicator that reflects the failure of school to work transitions of Spanish young people is the high percentage of those under 24 who leave the formal education system without a diploma or certificate qualifying them to enter the labour market. In 2010, 28.4% of young people under the age of 24 in Spain dropped out of school before finishing the ESO (compulsory secondary education). Hence, in 2010 Spain had an early dropout rate twice the average of the EU-27 (14.1%). This phenomenon has been studied by Fernandez Enguita) and explained as the result of the combination, on the one hand, of expectations of employment generated by the economic system in a time of growth and, on the other, frustration with the lack of expectations generated by the education system itself.

The peak period when students drop out of school is when they approach the end of compulsory schooling, both due to the flawed educational experiences they have had and potential opportunities to work. Regarding the motivation to remain in school or not, it should be noted that the findings have varied considerably. The latest data available Survey on the Transition from Education/Training to Labour Market Insertion of the National Statistics Institute (INE) indicate that most of these young people left compulsory secondary education (ESO) without obtaining the certificate because they did not want to continue studying (70%) and to a lesser extent for other reasons such as to pursue other studies, find a job or for economic reasons.

However, among the reasons for leaving school after ESO, more do so because they have work or want to look for work (24.3% found a job and 26.9% reported leaving school to look for a job) than because they explicitly do not want to continue studying (23%). Regarding those who fail to complete post-compulsory education, there are important differences in the reasons for leaving school between those who opted for the baccalaureate and those who chose vocational studies.

For the former, the reasons included dissatisfaction with the baccalaureate programme (25%) and inability to complete the programme (30.4); while for vocational training, the reasons were job-related (31.3% found a job and 19.9% declared they had attained the desired level of education or were looking for a job). The data also enable us to verify that there has been a slight decrease in the rate of drop-outs, from 31.9% in 2008 to 28.4% in 2010, which could be interpreted as an effect of the economic crisis, which has caused young people to go back to school in order to pursue new opportunities.

The data also show that boys are more likely to drop out of school than girls, probably a sign of differences in expectations about education. The increase in the percentage

of young people who are students is an indication of the impact of the economic crisis.

This job insecurity increases the likelihood of young people leaving the country in search of opportunity, which would be an irreparable loss of human capital for the economy and knowledge society. In short, this chapter has revealed that the transitions of young people in Spain differ substantially from those of their European peers, as structural factors such as unemployment, family culture and education in Spain significantly affect attitudes and expectations toward emancipation.

The priority of Spanish young people is to get a job so that they can become independent and have their own home. Moreover, phenomena such as over- and under-qualification within a context of high unemployment determine attitudes toward transitions, especially among young people with university education.

3.6 Focusing on the key drivers of transition improvement

The considerations here briefly reported confirm the need of reinforcing the focus to the effective transition from E&T and job, and their alternance, based on robust WBL models in order to support more effective and long-term impacts policies and practices preventing ESL and NEETs, also with refer to the weaker segments of youths.

The active participation of the SAVE team to many events on this scope, the dialogue with the key actors of both E&T system, companies and institutions carried out within SAVE follow up activities at each national level has allowed to draw the most relevant dimensions to be addressed (and/or the weaker points) to improve the links between educational system, training and the labour market and suggestions to tackle any weaknesses. At national level, particularly relevant has been:

- the **follow-up** carried out on the SAVE validation;
- the opportunity to deepen these issues and dialogue with all relevant key actors (VET, institutions, researcher, companies and job intermediates) at the **European Seminar** held in September in Florence. Many and rich materials can be found at <http://www.ciofs-fp.org/seminario-europa/materiali/>;
- the round table with key actors segments representative and the dedicated session on these key drivers realised within each **SAVE final event**, held in Rome, Bari and Alessandria between 30 September and 11 October 2016. Materials and learning resources of both can be found in the project website (www.saveproject.it).

Here following a table summarising the “5 recommendation points” identified by sharing among partners the most relevant dimensions emerging by national desk and in field analysis.

The 5 SAVE recommendations points on E&T/job transition

	SCHOOL & VET	PES	COMPANY PLACEMENT	LABOUR ACTIVE POLICY	EDUCATION POLICY
1	Providing Flexible education, early guidance	Promoting integrated approach with multi-professional high skilled teams	Providing decent work (avoiding under payed or no payed job)	Favouring self-employment by young people supporting them with facilitated loans, counselling, tax break	Taking into the specific needs and different features of NEET subgroups account YOUTH and NEETs point of view using participative approach for tailored policy interventions
2	Enhancing soft-skills and empowering young people with soft skills	Providing client-centred services	Improving worplacement	Supporting decent work (tackling precarious, under payed or no payed job)	Introducing ICT and new tools of training in education without trivializing culture and knowledge to be taught
3	Involving directly students in training (programs, tools and methodologies)	Reinforcing own professional team and improving services engaging higher skills and competences within own staff	<i>Employing WBL outcomes validation and evaluation model</i>	Tackling corruption in job placement reinforcing formal and transparent channels of recruitment	Evaluating and updating frequently teachers'/trainers' skills and competences
4	Providing student-centred training	Evaluating the effectiveness of own performance in term of Youth occupability more than the efficiency of the process	<i>Improving "training" and mentorship competences</i>		
5					

3.7 Building SAVE recommendations and guidelines

The 5 analysis of the 5 recommendation points, together with the EU High-performance apprenticeships & work-based learning: 20 guiding principles and the insights gathered within the desk and in-field analysis on apprenticeship and the alternance systems here developed, together with the scenario framework developed in the first section allowed to developed specific recommendations and guidelines related to the potential of implementing SAVE:

- Within the **VET/school system** in order to foster VET responsiveness in supporting , validating and (self-guided)evaluating competences acquired within job experiences, enhancing employability dimensions related to the transversal skills (as also underlined in the first intellectual output and guiding the design and development of the SAVE self evaluation tool and the overall system and model);
- Supporting the **E&T/Job transitions**, with refer to the enhancement of two main dimensions and processes: the **employer** engagement and the improvement of the work-placement.

The following chapters address these two recommendation area and furnish customised SAVE resources (toolkit).

4 SAVE RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOURCES FOR THE E&T SYSTEMS AND PROFESSIONALS

As already underlined in the SAVE Piloting (and evaluation) report, the evidences collected in its validation and evaluation has strongly confirmed the SAVE effectiveness and potentials on:

- ⇒ **Activating engaging and motivated youth behaviors** “moving” them from the “distant”, passive and potentially exclusive behaviors to active personal realization processes, based on personalized and self-aware processes (supported and guided by trainers, counsellors, and so on);
- ⇒ **Reinforcing the trainers** (guidance and social operators, mentors and placement..) **role** in promoting, guiding and supporting positive and personalized guidance and learning processes, preventing youth exclusion and attaining youths (also with reference to the less skilled and/or at major risk ones)
- ⇒ **Leveraging the overall system capability** in preventing ESL and NEETs phenomena by improving the “attractiveness” of the system, its effectiveness in designing and implementing processes enhancing youth attainment and employability as well as alternance and dual system (in turn, proved to prevent long term youth unemployment and reduce ESL) and an active dialogue with the companies and job market.

The main evidences have allowed to implement on going fine tuning actions on the SAVE system and in its related resources and discussed the further fine tuning actions. The evaluation report conclusions (please refer to “SAVE Italian piloting”) and its sharing with main actors has also allowed to drawn other relevant valorization drivers (and, consequently, the SAVE utilization and improvement guidelines for the E&T system):

- 1) the relevance of the “evaluation” and “self-evaluation” culture, supporting the activation of a positive circle of motivation, self realization, employability that represent
 - a. the stronger dimension, both in a short and long term perspective, in preventing NEET and ESL and, at the same time
 - b. the underpinning approach to effectively implement the other system intervention (alternance, E&T transition, social inclusion and so on)
- 2) the potential in integrating - by employing systematically SAVE related models and resources – to the one-to-one tutorship actions “peer mentoring models”;

- 3) further enhancing the technology enhanced solutions, preferred communication channel with youths;
- 4) the key relevance of implementing WBL approaches and alternance systems and the SAVE “capability” in supporting, promoting and enhancing it within an integrated and (both self and guide) personalized development process, special reference of its first Area “My Job Experience” and its integration within the “My Skills” and “MY Save portfolio” ones;
- 5) The high potential of the SAVE system, model and resources in supporting effective (training and professional) guidance services and processes (with special reference of its first Area “MY skills” (and the self-awareness tool) and its integration within the “MY Save portfolio” one.

Last, but not least, the SAVE focus on fostering and (potentially) evaluating employability. As already stated, transversal competences and employability has represented for SAVE both an input and a future improvement driver, in terms of integrating its evidences within formal digital portfolio and/or integrated guidance system, re-defined in terms of personalization and employability (in this reference, also the interest in valorising synergies with the ISFOL model of AVO).

4.1 THE SAVE TOOLKIT FOR TRAINERS AND E&T

The present toolkit is intended to furnish all the relevant information and (guiding, supporting and learning) resources to implement and utilise the SAVE system within the guidance and training processes. It is composed by:

- ⇒ **SAVE system detailed description** of its technological choices and overall architecture as well as the composition (in terms of tools and resources) of each Area of the system itself both for the trainers and the students' sections/profile.
- ⇒ **SAVE system presentation**, furnishing a synthetic view of the overall SAVE system process model, areas, tools and resources. It can be used to:
 - Acquire the basic knowledge on the system and its component and resources
 - Support the communication when presenting and sharing SAVE implementation
- ⇒ **SAVE digital portfolio presentation**, describing the methodological framework and the relevant steps of the self-realization process as related, then, to the system architecture.
- ⇒ **SAVE project overall presentation**, describing the main aims, activities and result of the SAVE project, that can be used as communication resource when presenting and sharing SAVE implementation opportunities.

The Toolkit is in **Annex 7.2** and available both in the project website and in the dissemination platform.

5 PROMOTING EFFECTIVE PLACEMENT: THE EMPLOYERS ENGAGEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT

5.1 Self evaluation and awareness for the job orientation, placement and integration

All four countries represented in the SAVE project have national policies targeting job orientation, placement and integration into the labour market for young people (see 2.2.2 above). There are also a range of policies and initiatives that particularly target young people at risk of exclusion from the labour market (Early School Leavers and NEETs).

The SAVE System, which encourages and motivates self awareness and self-evaluation is a valuable tool in helping young people to understand their work-role preference and soft skills. This self awareness, along with effective careers guidance, goes a long way to supporting the development of employability skills. However, it is clear that developing these skills is only one element to effective workplace integration – having an understanding of the world of work, and some experience of work, are now considered essential elements of employability in addition to appropriate vocational and soft skills.

Young people and workless: understanding the youth penalty in the competition for jobs

Analysis of variation in youth unemployment has tended to focus on demand- and supply-side issues. Technological innovation and globalisation since the 1970s, for example, have been seen as driving up the skills levels required by employers.

The International Labour Organisation gives three key practical reasons to help explain why young people have long been disadvantaged when it comes to finding work...:

- they have less work experience;
- they have less knowledge about how and where to look for work; and,
- they have fewer contacts upon which to call

In keeping with this assessment, across the EU, much of the state remedial activity with the young unemployed (and more recently all young people still in education), has focused on giving them access to work experience (through subsidised jobs), help in job searching and applications (as through job clubs) and brokering access to job opportunities with employers (through job centres).

To overcome these three disadvantages, a young person's needs the opportunity to engage with the workplace before transitioning to post-education employment. This can take the form of part-time work combined with study, work experience, employer involvement in the education system, vocational and educational training (VET) programmes.

Policy makers should consider how to provide greater access to such experience, job-

related information and networks prior to entry into the labour market as these can positively influence employment outcomes and how such interventions could be most effectively, efficiently and equitably delivered.

Schools and careers guidance, both informal and formal, must play a major part in developing an understanding of the world of work, along with a young person's experience of work prior to a post-education job.

There is potentially considerable benefit to be gained in increasing access to job-related information and networks within education system, however at present this is poorly developed within the SAVE partner countries. For example, in the UK, the curriculum up to the age of 16 has historically provided little space for development of workplace experience, and co-ordinated apprenticeship pathways leading directly from classroom to workplace have been poorly developed.

The question is, can schools, iVET and colleges help provide young people with access to resources, on top of their educational attainment, supports more effective progression towards sustained employment? And if so, how can these organisations successfully provide resource to those young people whose personal circumstances make it hardest to access the experience, knowledge and contacts which might allow them to enter the labour market on a more even footing?

The OECD report *Learning for Jobs* found that countries supporting the most effective school-to-work transitions enabled and encouraged young people **to combine study with work** in later years of secondary schooling. In particular, it highlighted the effectiveness of vocational education systems which link education with labour market needs and include substantial learning in the workplace.

Insights from this study suggest that employer engagement alone serves to ease the transition of young people from school to work regardless of the vocational design of learning programme. As the reviewers who undertook the *Learning for Jobs* study concluded that all schools:

“should encourage an understanding of the world of work from the earliest years, backed by visits to workplaces and workplace experience. ...Research studies suggest that young people particularly value information on jobs and careers if obtained in a real workplace and through contacts with working people. Through such experience young people can be introduced to some of the choices they will face in their professional and learning pathways”

Most of the young people in the SAVE UK pilot, for example, were anticipating a move into work and, whilst aware of limited local job opportunities, remained positive about obtaining employment. They felt they possessed reasonable levels of awareness of the soft skills (e.g. enthusiasm, communication and problem solving skills) desired by employers, and in some cases, felt that they possessed these attributes. However, all of them perceived work experience (or a lack of it) as the main enabler (or barrier) to obtaining work!

[In comparison, the employers expressed mixed opinions about whether or not the young people had the kind of soft skills they were looking for. The majority employers

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we spoke to were of the view that many young people lacked essential soft skills.]

Whilst the young people were aware of the importance of soft skills, and/or felt that they possessed them, they still said that they felt vulnerable, unprepared or lacking confidence when starting work. They reported finding the early days of their first jobs/work experience intimidating, daunting and anxiety-provoking and felt that employers held unrealistic expectations of their skills and abilities given their lack of experience. Some reported difficulties adjusting to the work lifestyle, in particular the long hours and level of responsibility involved in their job (the view of one of the employed young people).

A. Job orientation, placement and integration from the perspective of young people

1. Young People's engagement with workplaces

Many young people have a very limited experience of the workplace. They feel that Careers Guidance concentrates mainly on different types of jobs/occupation rather than what it is actually like to work. Most young people see value in work experience as part of becoming work-ready. This could take the form of part-time work combined with study, work experience, employer involvement in the curriculum, and through VET programmes.

2. Before starting work: means of improving young people's work-readiness

Workplace engagement prior to post-study employment offers a range of benefits for young people, not least because employers increasingly seek employees with some form of prior work experience.

Workplace engagement whilst still in education enables young people to:

- develop employability skills and confidence;
- identify with the benefits associated with employment;
- avoid the 'culture shock' that occurs when beginning work;
- improve their job prospects via networking and CV-building opportunities; and
- help them refine decisions regarding career options and pathways.

3. Young people starting work: employer support at the workplace

Support strategies should be offered by employers to deal with the anxieties young people face when entering work. Targeted and robust induction processes, close managerial or supervisory support, buddying and mentoring schemes, and strategies for "socialising" young workers within the workplace culture are all important strategies.

There appears to be a disjunction between the needs of young people entering work or work placement and the induction processes provided by employers. Induction tends to be generic in nature, and not tailored to address the difficulties encountered when starting work. This results in the young workers feeling

unsupported in the workplace.

Ongoing support from workplace buddies, mentors and family members is important. Relatively simple socialisation strategies can help build confidence and make young people feel more at ease in the workplace. Overall, it is the nature of the day to day interactions between young people and their peers and supervisors within the context of the workplace that is most important in helping ease young people's transition to work.

- ⇒ We advocate that educators should provide guidance for young people anticipating work, to help them to understand and deal with the anxiety they may experience on entering work, and that employers make an effort to "socialise" young people entering workplaces for the first time.
- ⇒ In addition, it is clear that much needs to be done to improve liaison between schools/colleges and employers, both in terms of a more work-relevant curriculum and in order to support young people better as they move from education to the workplace.

B. Job orientation, placement and integration from the perspective of Schools and VET Organisations

If employer engagement in education had a snappier hashtag, without doubt it would be trending! As nations around the world grapple with youth unemployment, skills shortages and stalled social mobility, new attention has been devoted to finding ways for schools and colleges to better work with employers across a range of activities such as work experience placements, careers events, enterprise activities, mentoring and mock interviews.

Whilst various EU government motivations have been broad, what has most driven interest is an ambition to better support the transitions of young people into the world of work, primarily by enabling more informed decision-making about work and careers.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is clear in its advice:

"More complex careers, with more options in both work and learning, are opening up new opportunities for many people. But they are also making decisions harder as young people face a sequence of complex choices over a lifetime of learning and work. Helping young people make these decisions is the task of careers guidance..... Strong links between schools and local employers are very important means of introducing young people to the world of work. Individual career guidance should be a part of a comprehensive career guidance framework, including a systematic career education programme to inform students about the world of work and career opportunities. This means that schools should encourage an understanding of the world of work from the earliest years, backed by visits to workplaces and workplace experience. Partnerships between schools and local firms allow both teachers and students to spend time in workplaces." (OECD, Learning for Jobs, 2010).

Employer engagement within Schools, Vocational Education and Training organisations, Careers Guidance and Colleges is a crucial ingredient of future success in preparing young people for further learning and employment.

Approaches to the development of Skills for Work through Employer Engagement

There are currently a number of ways young people can develop skills for work/employability skills whilst still in education or training. The following list identifies some of these opportunities:

- Learning in simulated work environments
- Enterprise activities
- Mock interviews
- Careers events
- Research tasks
- Employer presentations
- Site visits
- Personal skills analysis activities
- Apprenticeships
- Work placements and internships
- Mentoring

Effective Employer Engagement for the development of employability skills needs to be a whole organisation approach. It needs to be strategically and tactically planned by the organisation and should be embedded into all vocational skills development activities.

For effective careers advice and an understanding of the world of work a wide range of tactics can be employed (see chart overleaf).

Tactics for effective school-employer engagement

	Employers participating in delivery	Employers advising on the curriculum	Work-based learning including Apprenticeships	Work-related learning	Mentoring	Employability modules	Accreditation	Sponsorship
Student Opportunities								
Supporting individual students (one-to-one)					✓			
Obtaining sponsorship for students		✓	✓				✓	✓
Fostering job offers for students			✓		✓		✓	✓
Providing workplacements and internships			✓				✓	✓
Developing students' confidence/social skills	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
Improving student employability	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Evidence of working for CV			✓					
Curriculum Enhancement								
Supporting students to understand the real work relevance of academic learning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Generating ideas and gaining access to resources for programme development	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Using expertise from other subject areas				✓		✓		
Including realistic learning experiences (eg. problem-based learning)	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Reflecting employment sector developments in the curriculum	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Stakeholder Support								
Gaining external input/endorsement	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Finding funds for 'added value' activities		✓					✓	✓
Offering professional qualifications		✓					✓	
Building alumni links	✓				✓	✓		

Employer Engagement with SMEs

Despite the existence of websites that aim to provide a platform for businesses to engage with educators, there was clear evidence that they were generally perceived as being fairly limited in terms of helping initiate and develop these relationships. Rather, the evidence suggests the importance of the 'sell' to businesses; the more informed and involved employers are, the more they realise that schools and colleges cannot produce a 'work-ready' young person alone, and that their input is crucial to the better preparation of young people for the workplace. A dedicated careers coordinator plays an important role in brokering meaningful long term connections. Overall, the main facilitators to effective engagement include:

- A single line of communication (face-to-face where possible) to help SMEs understand the importance of their role; smooth out queries; break down barriers; and instil confidence in the employer, with the ultimate goal of sustaining relationships.
- Once a relationship is established, there is scope for websites and portals to provide a place for SMEs to access information in a flexible and timely way.

- Discussing together the content of careers information. This will assist buy-in from employers. In addition, providing employers with updates on students' progress on courses, for example, helps maintain communication channels.

Ensuring flexible methods of engagement, and the value of any commitment, however small, are understood. Providing case study examples of how employers can engage with educational institutions may help broaden the offer to allow employers to examine various strategies that can fit into their business calendars. This could vary from full-time apprenticeships, to offering half-day supervised placements.

Work placements

Work placements should enable young people to experience a relevant, challenging, enjoyable and appropriate learning experience within the contemporary workplace. A placement should help the young person to make informed decisions about their future careers.

Work placements should adhere to a set of clear expectations for young people, employers, parents/carers and schools on what work placements should deliver.

All work placements for young people should support them to reflect on, and choose, future career pathways. A wide variety of models need to be considered in order to ensure a more individualised approach. This ranges from providing a number of bite-size placements through to extended placements. These may sit within the conventional school week or outs it as appropriate.

Examples of work placement models include:

- multiple introductory work placements (half day or single day experiences potentially increasing the exposure to the workplace over time);
- timetabled opportunities to undertake work placements at an agreed time each week within the school week, for a mutually agreed period of time;
- an introductory week-long experience to the workplace followed by additional opportunities; and
- placements undertaken outside the school day (during term holidays e.g. internship model).

Mentoring Relationships

Long term relationship between a more experienced person (in employment) and a student, to help the latter develop in their understanding of the world of work.

Benefits for students:

- Individual personal attention
- In-depth insight into a particular organisation, its culture and area of work
- Role model and encouragement
- Networking opportunity that may assist with finding a job
- Helps students understand what employers are looking for

- Advice on knowledge and skills employers require and how to demonstrate them
- Benefits for school
- Powerful means of building links with alumni and involving them in the life of the school
- Offers alumni a non-financial way of contributing to the school
- Mentoring can run alongside normal timetable commitments
- A flexible and time efficient way of linking students to the workplace that does not require days or weeks of off-campus attendance

Points to consider

A mentoring relationship is a supportive and confidential one. Mentoring can be offered to a whole student group, or through a selective process to allow for targeting at vulnerable groups such as Early School Leavers or NEETS.

The level of commitment expected from the mentor can vary widely, for example the number of times they will meet the mentee, the duration and the scope of the relationship.

A school's alumni are an excellent source of volunteers who are likely to understand the challenges facing current students and have a natural affinity to their old institution/school. Establishing systems to maintain active links with alumni can be highly advantageous. Many larger companies also encourage employees to have 'educational liaison roles' as part of their staff development, so regionally based employers can also be a useful source of mentors. Both mentors and mentees will require careful briefing on their respective roles and their expectations from such a relationship.

Consideration should also be given to the extent to which matching the background of the mentor to the aspirations and interests of the mentee can result in productive outcomes.

5.2 Building the SAVE frame and toolkit for company and public/private job market intermediates/placement

As explained *above*, creating opportunities for high-quality work-based learning lies at the heart of current European education and training policies. To this end the Commission has established a "European Alliance for Apprenticeships" and a dedicated Youth Employment Initiative which is open to regions with high youth unemployment rates, with a financial support of EUR 6 billion.

Despite these commitments, the supply of school/work alternance, apprenticeship and traineeship places in the EU continues to be under-developed, as do other forms of work-based learning including internships and work placements.

24 EU countries now have schemes in place where learners spend more than 50% of their time learning in the workplace, but the scope of the schemes varies widely. Efforts are needed to invest in expanding the offer of apprenticeships and traineeships

in countries where opportunities for this type of learning remain very limited.

Here following some specific perspective on the Apprenticeship in the partners countries, recalling but integrating (constantly with this section aim and scope) the analysis carried out in the second section.

Perspectives on Apprenticeships: The UK

In the UK, the organisations that offered official Apprenticeships were more likely to report having hard-to-fill vacancies, demonstrating that they already recognise the value of Apprenticeships in ensuring that their organisation is developing the skills it needs. Overall, about 60% of the employers who offered Apprenticeships reported that they have hard-to-fill vacancies.

This theme came through in the interviews for the **SAVE** Pilot, with many employers regarding Apprenticeships as an important element of how they address skills shortages and as a means of attracting and developing young people.

The SAVE Pilot interviews also explored how the employers were planning to combat hard-to-fill vacancies and the extent to which Apprenticeship programmes are regarded as part of the solution. The most common approach to tackling hard-to-fill vacancies was through upskilling the existing workforce, with four of the eleven employers citing this. The next most frequently cited employer responses were providing pay rises for roles and occupations they are trying to fill (24%) and hiring more Apprentices (18%).

The findings show that employers that offer apprenticeships are also significantly more likely than other employers to be using a wide range of responses to address hard-to-fill vacancies. Employers that offer official apprenticeship schemes are more likely than employers that don't provide apprenticeships to upskill existing staff and hire more EU nationals, UK school-leavers and graduates.

This highlights that apprenticeships were not regarded by the employers as an alternative to other forms of resourcing and workforce development activities but as one element of a range of responses to recruitment and skills challenges.

The Apprenticeship Levy in the UK

The UK Government has put increasing the quality and quantity of apprenticeships at the heart of its ambition to improve employer investment in skills and to help address the UK's productivity deficit. To help achieve this it has set a target of creating 3 million apprenticeships by 2020, and in summer 2015 it unveiled the Apprenticeship Levy as a means to help achieve this.

UK employers with a pay bill of more than £3 million each year will have to pay the apprenticeship levy from April 2017 through the Pay as You Earn (PAYE) process. (More

details on the proposed rate of government support are expected to be confirmed in October 2016.)

The apprenticeship levy is being introduced against the backdrop of a number of recent reforms, including a requirement for a minimum duration of 12 months, more on- and off-the-job training and a stronger focus on involving employers in the design and delivery of apprenticeships through new employer-owned Trailblazer apprenticeship frameworks.

Unsurprisingly, the introduction of the levy is controversial. Research undertaken by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development with over 1,000 employers indicates a number of contraindications, e.g. Just 14% of employers believe the levy will have the effect of increasing the amount of training their organisation offers in terms of the number of staff receiving training, while 9% believe the levy will have the opposite effect. However, more than half of respondents believe the levy will make little difference, while a quarter don't know.

Perspectives on Apprenticeships: Spain

Spain committed to the European Alliance for Apprenticeships in December 2013 declaring measures to develop and implement a traineeship and apprenticeship contract as a tool for the development of the dual training system in Spain. The main objective of this initiative was to regulate the learning aspects of the training/apprenticeship contract so that it would translate into a valid instrument for the dual training system. Training will now lead to a formal qualification (the Intermediate VET Diploma and the Higher VET Diploma) on completion. Employers contribute at least 25% of the costs of the training.

Key targets for the scheme (set in 2013) are to reduce early school-leaving from 24.9% to 15% by 2020, to reduce the high youth unemployment rates (54.37% of total economically active population aged 16-25) and raise the number of individuals holding intermediate level qualifications (77% of registered unemployed do not have a certificate).

The most frequent applied modality is training shared by VET schools and companies. Alternance education is the second most widely implemented modality (training at an education centre combined with periods of practice in a company).

Perspectives on Apprenticeships: The Czech Republic

There is no formal apprenticeship programme along the lines of the dual system in the Czech Republic. Schools are exclusively responsible for education and training and the curriculum shows a high proportion of theory in comparison to practical training. However, practical work-based training and work-placements are integrated into IVET curricula as a mandatory part. A new final examination leading to a vocational certificate has been obligatory since 2015 (replacing assignments developed by schools) and a master craftsman examination is being discussed with the aim of increasing the social status of vocational qualifications.

The Czech Republic committed to the European Alliance for Apprenticeships in

October 2013 declaring measures to increase the involvement of employers in initial vocational education; increase the quantity and quality of workplace training; and develop standards of workplace training.

Perspectives on Apprenticeships: Italy

In Italy, Apprenticeship is designed as an instrument for promoting the work of young people. A number of initiatives are aimed at increasing the attractiveness of apprenticeship within the strategy for reinforcement of school-work alternance in the second cycle of Education and Training.

The national legal framework on apprenticeship provides apprenticeship as a job contract structured on three main schemes targeted at different target groups of young people:

- 1) Apprenticeship aimed at acquiring a diploma or a vocational qualification, targeted at young people aged 15-25, which allows also the fulfilment of the compulsory education.
- 2) Professional apprenticeship or Job contract, aimed at enabling young people (aged 18-29) to gain a vocational qualification on completion of a three years (or five years in craft) training pathway.
- 3) Apprenticeship for higher education and research, that enables apprentices to gain tertiary level diplomas (technical or academic) or a doctorate degree from the education system. The qualifications acquired also enable students to pursue their career through curricular traineeships required to access the regulated professions.

The implementation of a National Qualification Framework (NQF) will increase the quality training standards, especially for professional apprenticeships.

With regard to quality, the features of apprenticeship reform have been set with the aim of improving the “on the job training”, while assuring at the same time the right to education of apprentices.

The national framework is leading to a “dual system” in the 3 and 4 years vocational training (leFP) learning pathways and will provide training standards at the national level for work-based learning these learning pathways.

More specifically, the curriculum will provide at least 200 hours of work-based learning for the first year of attendance and will proportionally increase each year. The existence of training standards for national curricula will thus raise the quality of work-based learning and at the same time will foster employability of young people by giving them alternative means for accessing the labour market on completion of their studies.

Similarly, the government's school reform plans will increase the amount of work-based learning by introducing a minimum 400 hours school-work alternance period in all curricula of upper-secondary school in the technical and vocational area.

The 'added value' of these reforms relies on multiple elements:

- the enhancement of the quality of the training provided on the job, and a better integration of the skills acquired through education and formal learning with those acquired on the job;
- the improvement of school-work transition, shaped in the new "dual system" thus contributing to the reduction of the early school leavers on one hand, and to the increase of the education attainment level of the population on the other;
- the development of the vertical and horizontal mobility within education and training systems as well as in the professional settings to foster employability of young people, unemployed or low qualified people and to give citizens' the opportunity to exercise their right to a lifelong/lifewide learning;
- raising the attractiveness for learners and companies thanks to financial incentives and simplification measures for hiring young people, including unemployed or young NEET;

Perspectives on Work Placements

The employers in the **SAVE** Pilot and Validation process considered *work experience* to be vital to young people at school, college and as they enter the labour market. They were strongly of the opinion that it helped young people to make the transition from education into working life by giving them:

- first-hand experience of the workplace and an insight into jobs and sectors
- increased confidence and employability skills
- experience to build their CVs and access to networks
- an understanding of how recruitment works
- insight into how their skills and abilities translate to the workplace.

The majority professed to offer some sort of work experience (other than Apprenticeships) for young people aged 16-19 prior to them leaving school including:

- three week work placements
- work shadowing opportunities
- vacation work
- part-time work
- internship
- volunteering – community action activities run by a company
- 'Take Our Daughters And Sons To Work' day (under 16 year olds only)

One of the large companies had a budget and resources to offer and formally advertised internships and placements. None of the SMEs had this kind of formal arrangement in place (other than through part-time jobs); they responded to direct approaches only.

"Most people acknowledge that getting work experience alongside your qualifications is crucial for your career, whether it's a day or two shadowing or a longer placement, but don't always expect it to be handed to you on a plate," said the representative from the large construction company. "To give themselves a better chance of success, young people need to be proactive, organised and imaginative in their search and make some well thought out, targeted speculative applications. This should be encouraged and supported by the school or college as part of preparing young people for work."

It was agreed that this speculative approach is known to yield positive results as it opens up a whole host of 'hidden' opportunities.

The benefits to employers of offering work experience to young people

The employers felt that offering work experience is beneficial for a number of reasons:

- *Recruitment opportunities and building talent pipelines:* work experience placements enable employers to access a wider range of talent while also making a useful contribution to strategic talent management and workforce planning.
- *Fresh ideas:* young people offer new ideas and ways of thinking, reflecting the interests and needs of the next generation of customers and consumers.
- *Staff development:* offering work experience placements can provide opportunities for existing staff to supervise and mentor a young person, therefore helping to develop their management and other professional and personal skills.
- *More engaged workforce:* providing work experience sends a positive message to the wider workforce about the values of the organisation.
- *Engagement with the local community* helps boost local economic development and can also lead to increased brand loyalty and profile, and in turn to greater profits

Most employers are aware that young people are amongst the most disadvantaged groups in the labour market because they lack the experience of the workplace and the job-specific skills that employers ask for.

Work experience is something the employers appear to value highly, alongside attitude, and almost more than qualifications.

In summary:

Over the last generation there have been huge changes in the economies of Italy, Spain, the UK and the Czech Republic, with traditional jobs and industries disappearing and being replaced by a more varied and a much more varied and global economy. Many surveys and the output from our own contacts indicate that employers feel that young people are not sufficiently prepared for the new,

knowledge industry and service sector jobs that have emerged.

It is the general view of employers that this problem is exacerbated by a lack of (up to date) careers information in schools, particularly in schools in disadvantaged areas which may not have access to parental and alumni networks.

Employers agree that work experience can help to make young people better aware of the skills, attitudes and behaviours that are needed in the modern workforce.

Providing work placements also challenged employer perceptions of young people's skills and attitudes, giving young people access to networks and helping them to make more informed career choices.

The employers in the SAVE Pilot were convinced that "the more contact young people have with employers, the better their chances of finding themselves in employment".

This is a **win-win situation** for everyone:

- Employers get the skills they need.
- Young people gain access to the labour market.
- Society can avoid the negative consequences and long-term scarring of youth unemployment.

5.3 THE SAVE TOOLKIT FOR WORKPLACEMENT AND EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

As a result of these insights, the SAVE project developed a Toolkit to support schools, employers and young people in **effective employer engagement** and the **delivery of work placements for gaining real work experience**.

The toolkit is intended to furnish all the relevant information and (guiding, supporting and learning) resources to implement and utilise the SAVE system with special reference of the **utilization of SAVE areas, tools and resources aimed at enhancing the guidance and learning processes and the specific resources supporting the work placement**, in the double perspective of: effective employer engagement in schools and vet; improvement of work placement processes.

The toolkit is composed by:

⇒ **SAVE TOOLS FOR SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS AND VET.** The resources has been clustered according to the utilization target:

a) Recommendations for Schools&VET

Benchmarking Work Placement (self evaluation)

SAVE benchmarking-action

SAVE benchmarking-exercise

SAVE-Workplacement_Action List for VET

B) Working with Employers

Benchmarking Work Placement (self evaluation)

Case Study Template_Employers
SAVE benchmarking-actions
SAVE benchmarking-exercise
SAVE-Workplacement_Action List for VET
work-experience-placements-that-work

⇒ SAVE RESOURCES FOR EMPLOYERS – WORK PLACEMENT

- **Work placements that work** - a guide for employers providing information about the practical steps to take to set up high-quality work experience placements; best practice and case studies; advices on how support, supervise and mentor the young person in order to maximise the benefits of the placement.
- **Fact sheet on buddying**, as effective informal mentoring relationship between a new starter and a more experienced, established team member.
- **Bringing young people on board** - checklist of actions. The checklists provide suggestions for ways in which organisation can make a new starter feel welcome and prepared for starting work in their new team.
- ⇒ **SAVE system detailed description** of its technological choices and overall architecture as well as the composition (in terms of tools and resources) of each Area of the system itself both for the trainers and the students' sections/profile.
- ⇒ **SAVE system presentation**, furnishing a synthetic view of the overall SAVE system process model, areas, tools and resources. It can be used to:
 - Acquire the basic knowledge on the system and its component and resources
 - Support the communication when presenting and sharing SAVE implementation
- ⇒ **SAVE project overall presentation**, describing the main aims, activities and result of the SAVE project, that can be used as communication resource when presenting and sharing SAVE implementation opportunities

The Toolkit is in **Annex 6.3** and available both in the project website and in the dissemination platform.

6 ANNEX

6.1 DRAFT RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

6.2 TOOLKIT FOR TRAINERS AND E&T ORGANIZATIONS

6.3 EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT & WORKPLACEMENT TOOLKIT



SAVE RECOMMENDATIONS

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educommunity - Educational Community
Associazione per la professionalità docente



Navreme Boheme



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