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Supranational Manual

Erasmus+ Project:

Indicators of Good VET Practice for Refugees

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Project Team

Prof. Michele Brunelli (Italy)
 Prof. Christian Helms Jorgensen (Denmark)
 Prof. Annette Ostendorf (Austria)
 Prof. Matthias Pilz (Germany)
 Dr. Laura Galeotti (Italy)
 Dr. Junmin Li (Germany)
 Hannes Hautz (Austria)
 Katrin J. Posch (Germany)
 Simone Rabl (Austria)
 Michele Tallarini (Italy)

Critical Friends

Klaus Ronsdorf
 Dieter Wlcek

Graphic Design and Layout

Christian Gronowski

Project Information

Information on the project is available on the national and international project websites:

International: <https://www.goodvet.uni-koeln.de/en/>
 Germany: <https://www.goodvet.uni-koeln.de/>
 Italy: <https://dlfc.unibg.it/it/ricerca/attivita-ricerca/progetti>
 Austria: <https://www.uibk.ac.at/iol/goodvet/>
 Danish: <https://forskning.ruc.dk/da/projects/indikatorer-for-god-praksis-i-erhvervsuddannelse-for-flygtninge-e>



Supranational Manual Project

Indicators of Good VET Practice for Refugees

According to the European Commission, the European Union is experiencing a high migration rate in the last years, and many of these migrants are refugees. A main target of European and international refugee policies is to integrate refugees into the societies of their host countries. Vocational education and training (VET) can have significant impacts on the integration of refugees. Many measures and projects have been undertaken to integrate refugees through VET, but there has been little exchange of information and experiences. Practitioners often face similar challenges but act independently, so they have difficulty sharing knowledge and learning from each other's experiences.

The aim of the two-year Erasmus+ project Indicators of Good VET Practice for Refugees (GoodVET) is to make the experiences of practitioners accessible. For this purpose, this project analyses and aggregates experiences gained at a practical level in four European countries: Austria, Denmark, Germany and Italy. Drawing on this analysis, the four partner institutions have developed quality indicators for successful VET for refugees. This application-oriented handbook on the high-quality design of VET activities for refugees is based on those indicators. The target group that directly benefits from these results is the actors involved on a practical level in the organisation and implementation of VET measures. This handbook is especially designed for this target group of practitioners.

To design good VET activities and support providers, this handbook first provides quality indicators for similar challenges throughout Europe. To offer a complete package for the practitioners, an individual web-based analysis tool has been created based on the quality indicators presented below. This tool is available on all the national and international project websites to help practitioners analyse the quality of their vocational integration measures.

Practitioners have helped improve this analysis tool and demonstrated its application using 20 'best practice' examples from 120 programmes for integrating refugees through VET in these four countries. The 'best practice' examples can be downloaded on the national websites and presented to interested members of the public and practitioners working in the field.

The activities in the project serve the primary goal of optimising the planning of VET activities for refugees while avoiding repeating mistakes. Many of those activities contribute to sustainable, long-term integration.

After a short introduction to the theoretical foundations and the structure of this handbook, each identified quality indicator is explained briefly in a reader-friendly way. This document is produced by four European countries with four different approaches to VET and refugee integration, so it can be seen as a supranational handbook. To ensure that each of the four countries presents its own individual views on the lessons learned in this project, the handbook concludes with a national reflection from each country.

All the products from this project are available on the project website free of charge. For more information, please visit our website:

<http://www.goodvet.uni-koeln.de/home/>

<https://www.uibk.ac.at/iol/goodvet/index.html.de>

<https://dlfc.unibg.it/it/ricerca/attivita-ricerca/progetti>

<https://forskning.ruc.dk/en/projects/indikatorer-for-god-praksis-i-erhvervsuddannelse-for-flygtninge-e>

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*These additional indicators depend on programme-specific details or other requirements. They should not be neglected as they are still important to the quality of VET programmes.

1. QUALITY MODEL

A well-proven quality model, the input–process–output (I/P/O) model developed by Dubs (1998), served as the basic framework to generate the quality indicators. Dubs (1998) used this model to describe the central quality indicators for schools and emphasised that both internal and external factors should be taken into account as the quality characteristics of an institution.

For the purpose of this project, the IPO model was extended with additional dimensions representing the organisational structure and responsibilities within vocational education and training (VET) institutions:

1. **Institutions**
2. **Teachers and trainers**
3. **Learners**
4. **Interactions with the environment**

The dimension of institutions refers to the entire management level of VET programmes. At this level, decisions can be made to define the framework and improve programmes.

It is essential to distinguish between the roles of teachers and trainers and of learners, although they interact with each other in some areas, as reflected in the related indicators. *Teachers* and *trainers* refer to all persons, who are instructing learners or introducing them to new skills or knowledge regardless the location of learning. *Learners* has the obvious meaning of the persons receiving instruction in programmes.

Finally, the dimension of interactions with the environment is very important for the context of refugees as they are subject to many influences in their environments that should also be involved and considered in programmes.

Based on the dimensions of the IPO model and the additional four dimensions, a 3x4 matrix that can be used as a framework for the quality indicators was created. A deep, intensive literature review identified 27 quality indicators.

The identified quality indicators are presented in the following matrix.

	Institutions	Teachers and Trainers	Learners	Interactions with the Environment
Input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning goals and content • Support system and coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special training for trainers* • Joint preparation of all teachers* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual demands* • Access and entrance requirements • Class composition* • Contact with learners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable demand for training programmes • Cooperation between schools and workplaces* • Validation and recognition of learning and certifications*
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance and funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selecting teaching methods • Transfer orientation* • Formative and summative feedback* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom situation* • Learning language and culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target group oriented towards the mass media and social media* • Matching of governmental goals and refugees' goals*
Output		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of teaching methods* • Assessment of learning progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absences and dropout rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measurement of the attainment of learning objectives* • Certifications and their recognition in the labour market • Employability* • Bildung, empowerment and the feeling of being an active member of society* • Follow-up courses*

Based on a review of the indicators for 120 programmes in four countries and discussions with practitioners who are key stakeholders, the quality indicators can be divided into core and elective indicators.

Core indicators can be seen as the minimum quality standards for a good VET programme for refugees regardless of the programme's focus.

Other identified indicators should be seen as additional indicators that depend on programme-specific details or other requirements but are still important and should not be neglected. Those elective indicators are marked with asterisks (*) throughout this document.

* These additional indicators depend on programme-specific details or other requirements. They should not be neglected as they are still important to the quality of VET programmes.

2. INPUT INDICATORS

2.1 INSTITUTIONS

2.1.1 Learning Goals and Content

All learning processes and progress have to be defined in advance, for example, through a learning plan or curriculum. A learning plan should specify the learning content and goals in concrete terms. The plan provides a basis for all further didactic and pedagogical decisions and should take into account learners' needs.

In particular, a learning plan may be understood to be:

- ✓ A description of a body of knowledge or of a set of skills
- ✓ A plan of teaching and learning
- ✓ An agreed-upon standard or contract—a binding or normative standard that authorises and regulates teaching and learning
- ✓ Learners' experiences over time

- The contents might be dynamic and should be developed taking into account changing social and economic requirements. The curriculum should be changed to reflect shifting trends in education, training and the labour market.
- The learning content and goals can be described in a normative document that sets the framework for planning learning experiences.
- A written curriculum can be structured chronologically with clear descriptions and timeframes for content, or it can be structured with several flexible modules that can be extended over time.

It is also important that education systems and training providers are able to react quickly and flexibly to changes in external conditions. Modular learning can offer a high degree of individualisation for students and flexibility to meet the changing requirements of the labour market.

Clear **oversight of learning goals and content** is one of the **key items** to achieve **successful integration** and implementation of vocational training programmes.

It is evident that procedures used for regular students might not be appropriate for vocational education of refugees. It should be noted that other aspects such as the contents, schedule and

methodical and didactic regulations also require consideration. Another important point is that the learning goals and content should be decided based on the conditions faced by refugee groups, such as high fluctuation rates in the classroom, high heterogeneity and discriminatory living environments.

Adding specific learning aims, such as certain country-specific contents to vocational training curricula, can help appropriately address the target group. Nevertheless, especially for the target group of refugees, it can be important to be able to easily improve the curriculum without too heavily bureaucratic processes.

It should be taken into account that refugee students often have different practical and theoretical competences in specific areas they learned and gained in their countries of origin. Here, a modular curriculum can be helpful to recognise existing competences in the form of certificates.



Especially in training for refugees, clear added value can be achieved with a flexible curriculum design.

European and national strategies and measures can be changed rapidly at the system level to achieve the integration of refugees. Training providers need to react flexibly to these political decisions.

Modularisation makes it possible to be more attuned to refugees' existing abilities and experiences, which, in turn, might shorten the duration of their education and allow them to enter the labour market more quickly while not undermining the quality of the training.

At the moment, we can observe that in most cases, there is no learning plan available for this target group. We can find several relevant recommendations and guidelines, but the target competences and learning outcomes are not sufficiently clear and individualised.

2.1.2 Support System and Coordination

The purpose of good support systems and networks of contact persons is to prevent problems that can interfere with refugees' participation in VET. Such issues can be related to finances, housing, family and health.

The success of VET providers depends on the design of further dimensions relevant to the refugees' integration process. Contact with relevant institutions, therefore, is necessary.

Strong social networks around individuals are crucial for successful integration. Refugees have left not only their home countries but also most of their social networks and resources on which they could draw. In their new host countries, they face multiple challenges related to the various requirements of everyday life, including

- Housing
- Income
- Family reunification
- Health care
- Childcare
- Transport
- Identity papers
- Means of communication
- Interactions with authorities in foreign languages

Refugees' situations are characterised by temporariness and insecurity. They often also struggle with personal and psychosocial problems related to the events that made them flee their home country, such as separation from family. These problems can result in different types of stress: migration stress, acculturative stress and traumatic stress. All these challenges can hinder refugees' stable participation and progression in education programmes.



VET providers, therefore, should identify contact persons and resource persons in other organisations and systems that can help refugees manage challenges that impede their full participation in vocational education.

The aim to support the development of every student indicates a need for multiprofessional support. In addition to teachers and instructors, the needed professionals can include care workers, family support workers, social workers, psychologists, doctors and nurses. When integrated, multiprofessional support is provided, students and their families are collaborators, and students are empowered to learn and perform to their best.

Targeted actions are crucial to address refugees' situations in educational settings and their disadvantages due to their life circumstances. Refugees are an extremely heterogeneous group

with very different educational careers, and they are at risk of having minimal or disrupted education due to forced displacement or other situations in their countries of origin. Some refugees have been 'placeless' for long periods of time. If no support is given, the settling and schooling and, moreover, the social and economic development of these new citizens is compromised. The particular needs of refugees and forced migrants in educational systems have long not been seen as different from those of other migrants.

In the context of refugees, VET providers have a lot to pay attention to and consider.

Relevant issues are

- Trauma and psychological issues
- Linguistic needs
- Family background
- Post-migration experiences such as poverty
- Social isolation
- Racism and discrimination
- Uncertain legal status
- Housing

Topics that need to be addressed to enable proper learning can include social, psychological, linguistic, legal (residency), housing and financial issues. A successful, holistic approach to VET also includes admission support. It, therefore, is important that refugees' own resources and initiatives are engaged, they play active roles in their resettlement and reintegration processes, they are not victimised, and the focus of all support is their strengths and possibilities.

Educational institutions play important roles in building access and participation in society and addressing resettlement issues. Learning, general well-being and welfare are always linked with these issues.

Support and welfare provisions for refugees (and other vulnerable groups) typically are divided among various professionals, institutions, private organisations and public authorities. VET providers are only one of many institutions involved in the integration of refugees. It can be a challenge for students to find out what kinds of support are available and how to access them. For refugees, as for other vulnerable students, the main reasons for non-completion of VET are problems outside the training. The aim of creating networks of contact persons is to prevent problems related to other dimensions of refugees' lives from impeding their educational progress.



VET providers are not responsible for solving problems related to other dimensions of integration, but they must be prepared to assist refugee students by informing and activating other authorities and resource persons.

Support from family—if possible—is crucial for students' engagement and success in education. VET providers can contact, inform and involve people close to young refugee students to improve their chances of completion. Refugee students should be informed about and give their consent to making such contacts.

2.2 TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

2.2.1 Special Training for Trainers *

VET teachers and work-based mentors require intercultural competence to support learners and apprentices across origins and cultural backgrounds. This competence is especially important when working with refugees. To foster intercultural competence and sensitivity, teachers need professional development in the domain of intercultural education, for example, through formal training in diversity, intercultural pedagogy and language training. Through such intercultural training, they should gain an understanding of ethnic diversity as an educational resource and develop a perspective viewing learners' cultural backgrounds and intercultural groups as resources, not hindrances to learning. Through such intercultural training, they should gain an understanding of ethnic diversity as an educational resource and develop a perspective, such as strategies, that considers the cultural backgrounds and intercultural groups of learners as resources and not as obstacles to learning, but in which cultural belonging is not seen essentialistically, but in which other ways of life are recognised and opportunities for self-reflection are offered.

Educators with intercultural competence seek to encourage effective cross-cultural interactions, counteract prejudice and racism and offer all learners equal opportunities for education and training.

The effective professional development of teachers working with refugees includes some intercultural core competencies teachers should attain.

These competencies are

- Skills to teach in multilingual, culturally diverse classrooms
- Empathy for culturally diverse and traumatised students
- Versatility in the notions of inclusion and integration

* These additional indicators depend on programme-specific details or other requirements. They should not be neglected as they are still important to the quality of VET programmes.

2.2.2 Joint Preparation of All Teachers*

VET courses for refugees require teachers ready to face the challenges associated with multicultural learning environments. Such challenges are related to not only learning difficulties and various backgrounds but most often to cultural issues. Indeed, cultural differences can lead to conflicts, and managers and teachers have to be ready to deal with these possible matters, understanding refugees' situation and personal needs.

A multicultural approach clearly requires robust, continuous training for teachers that delivers more interdisciplinary teaching methods. This goal is vital as it gives teachers more diverse and versatile expertise to focus on and better address refugees' situations. Interdisciplinary teaching should also help handle conflicts in the classroom as it emphasises different perspectives on social issues and encourages tolerance and respect for others' perspectives.

In general, multicultural teacher preparation is important to reinforce an intercultural approach to

- Reduce stereotype attitudes
- Design relationships of mutual respect and trust between teachers and refugee students
- Create teamwork
- Establish fruitful relationships in the classroom and provide solid advice on how to manage the class and classroom interactions

In addition, VET providers should involve teachers in setting up VET programmes and, to make teachers' training effective, should consider differences of learners in age, social-cultural backgrounds, working careers, hierarchical levels, perceptions and learning needs.

* These additional indicators depend on programme-specific details or other requirements. They should not be neglected as they are still important to the quality of VET programmes.

2.3 LEARNERS

2.3.1 Access and Entrance Requirements

All types of education have certain requirements that must be fulfilled to access them (e.g. general university entrance qualifications). These requirements are needed to select more homogeneous groups more likely to complete particular education courses. Nevertheless, certain requirements are also questioned as informal knowledge is given little weight. Other kinds of education that grant certificates have many different requirements; for instance, language courses require a certain level of knowledge of the language. European countries have quite similar entrance requirements for several types of educational training that all select who has access to education.

Depending on the focus of the learning outcomes and goals, the emphasis is placed on different prerequisites.

However, for VET providers it is difficult and sometimes even not useful to establish strict entrance requirements as refugees' educational backgrounds can differ overtime.

It is important to ensure that students are aware of the necessary entrance requirements before applying for a VET programme.

Adequate promotion of programmes and **clearly communicated requirements** are the key factors to achieve access to suitable persons.

Some refugees have completed training in their home countries, while others have acquired qualifications through informal learning. To be able to use such existing competencies, it is necessary to be aware of them in advance and to respond accordingly. The language skills already available at the start of training are also to be taken into account by the VET provider. Here, it is crucial that students already have a level of language skills that makes communication or at least explanations possible depending on the set learning goals. Training-specific terms are usually taught on the job.

An essential aspect of this indicator is that refugees (due to their flight or the conditions of their home country) might have had little or no access to any kind of education. Consequently, regardless of age, they might be at any education level, even in basic skills such as reading, writing and calculating. Other refugees may have different kinds of education but no formal certifications either as they simply did not bring the documentation with them during their escape, or they had only informal education.

The **fewer entrance requirements** VET programmes have, the more they increase the possibility that learners will be more **heterogeneous** and, therefore, need more individual training and resources (especially trainers).



Stricter entrance requirements can lead to more **homogenous** groups without much need for additional support.

Among all the entrance requirements for VET or any other education, the legal requirements (e.g. refugee status) have to be fulfilled but should not be the focus of this indicator.

2.3.2 Contact with Learners

This indicator is aimed at improving the quality of the different kinds of contacts between training systems and refugee students.

A well-structured introduction process is crucial not only for personal and pedagogical reasons (e.g. to meet new students, create mutual trust and set up an adequate training path) but also to advise students about their specific training paths and to create effective links between students' former experiences and their future expectations in order to facilitate their educational path and increase their labour market-entrance.

The introduction process occurs before refugee students start their training programme, preferably before the specific course and class composition have been conclusively determined. The process should be carried out by the official responsible for the school, such as the coordinating teacher or the school manager.

In general, the introduction process, which can be formal interview or informal presentations and meetings, has three main objectives:

1. To ensure that refugees understand the aims, content, organisation and requirements of the educational and training programme well enough to make informed choices about their education
2. To ensure that the educational course matches students' expectations, interests and capabilities regarding academic level, class composition, curriculum and didactics to direct students to the best training choice
3. To create mutual trust and engagement between new students and the educational institution



These three points are crucial to minimise the dropout risk due to disengagement or inability to fulfil the requirements. A holistic approach that takes into consideration students' expectations, needs and former competencies can maximise their knowledge and skills acquisition and labour market entry.

The first contact of VET teachers and trainers with new students is vital for the preliminary work to establish the training path and the classroom. This work also has implications that must be monitored and managed throughout the educational process.

One of the most important aspects is the institution's capacity to bridge students' experiences and future expectations during the school year.

In the first contact with new students, school staff should collect all the information regarding their previous training paths, hopes, ideas and expectations to set up and adapt individual educational processes to students' personal needs.

Overall, finding a match among **former experiences, education** and **future expectations** is the main means for students to shape their own identity in this especially important phase of life. Adolescence is widely recognised to be the stage in the life cycle when people redefine their individuality by reshaping their self-image, creating new interpersonal relationships and gaining new competencies.

Education and training has a key role in students' identity formation.



People in learning processes spend much of their time in classrooms where they build strong and varied relationships with peers and teachers, starting to create networks of contacts that will characterise their adult life. Moreover, competence and knowledge acquisition are crucial determinants not only of students' labour market entry but also and primarily of their strong self-determination process.

School, due to its importance, must be a **bridge between** students' former **experiences** and their **expectations** to ensure the full realisation of these aspirations. To do so, European school systems generally are highly diverse (different educational levels and tracks) and have developed elaborate evaluation methods (ongoing evaluation and final exams). This high diversity allows students to choose their path considering their

- Attitudes
- Aspirations
- Previous experiences
- Dreams

Vocational education, in particular, is intended to prepare students for the job market by equipping them with work-related skills and strong practical and occupational competences.

Regarding experiences, native students in VET have definite, easily estimable levels of knowledge from their earlier school path through a curriculum of progressive grades and competences. Refugee students, however, often have experienced uneven formation processes.

- They have come from different countries with diverse school systems.
- They might have experienced non-schooling.
- They have achieved competencies that are hard to evaluate.

Nevertheless, a clear view of students' competencies and level of knowledge is vital to plan the best possible training programmes.

Future expectations not only predict educational achievement but also reflect self-perceptions and influence attitudes towards school that, if unsatisfied, result in frustration. Numerous factors including age, gender, social class and ethnic group influence expectations. In particular, research has shown that birthplace, social background, generational status and length of residence in the host country have huge impacts on non-native students' ambitions and expectations.

The first contact with new students must be well structured and designed to gain complete, concrete understanding of their needs and aspirations while identifying their existing competencies and how they can fit in the host country's educational system.

By giving special attention to maximising refugees' competencies and making refugees aware of their expectations, VET providers can realise in-class integration, stimulate new competences acquisition, promote self-consciousness and facilitate students' labour market entry.

Creating links between refugee students' experiences and future expectations is vital to make the competence acquisition process effective and to promote their labour market entry.

Regarding refugees' former experiences and the evaluation of their existing competences, VET providers should consider that refugees have experienced different situations.

- They come from different countries with diverse school systems.
- They have attended school systems with different methods and competence acquisition processes.
- They have had different levels of formal education.
- They have had much informal education.
- They often have largely practical work experience.

Although considering all these variables is hard, a strong focus on past experiences serves as one way to bridge the gap between new students and native students, increasing refugees' motivation and their possibilities of completing training and entering the labour market.

Moreover, individually evaluating students' future expectations is very important to choose adequate school paths. Personal expectations are crucial because if refugee students' plans for the future are linked to a related training and educational process, they more efficiently achieve their personal goals. Furthermore, self-realisation is linked to self-perceptions and personal well-being. If training acquisition matches refugees' expectations and aspirations, successful integrated into the labour market and the wider society becomes more easily possible.

Such awareness of refugee students' careers, expectations and personal growth can be achieved with **full knowledge of newcomers**, which is gained through the best possible introduction process.



By making effective, well-structured first contacts with students that take into account all their individual and training needs, VET providers can set up holistic training paths that lead to realisation of refugees' expectations and possibly labour market

2.3.3 Individual Demand*

From management’s perspective, this indicator focuses on

- How much students’ individual demands can be understood
- Recognising whether there is a dynamic learning environment
- How VET providers can contribute to create and improve positive bilateral synergy
- Whether there is a focus on each student’s potential
- How VET providers can improve matching the needs of the student and the community to create direct contacts and stimulate mutual interests

From students’ perspective, this indicator examines

- Whether their expectations are realistic
- Why they have chosen to enrol in a VET course
- What the attractions of the VET course, the expected benefits, like future employability and their future plans are

This indicator clearly has a strong link with the initial first contact with new students. During the introduction process, teachers and managers have opportunities to get to know students individually and to recognise their personal needs, gaining deep knowledge of each refugee student. This awareness can lead to more individualised training programmes and more inclusive, effective learning experiences in general.

It is necessary to have a holistic view that takes into account students’

- Needs
- Expectations
- Prior experiences
- Potential and cultural differences

* These additional indicators depend on programme-specific details or other requirements. They should not be neglected as they are still important to the quality of VET programmes.

2.3.4 Class Composition*

To achieve a reasonable class composition, it is necessary to have initial information about students' influencing factors, such as

- Linguistic proficiency
- Nationality
- School background
- Culture
- Gender
- Religion

It might also be important for schools to provide training for school leaders and teachers on

- Diversity
- Intercultural pedagogy
- Language development

A thoughtful class composition makes it possible to convey certain values, so individual performance is more important than origin, religion, gender or other individual characteristics. Management should think about how to put together classes in advance.

* These additional indicators depend on programme-specific details or other requirements. They should not be neglected as they are still important to the quality of VET programmes.

2.4 INTERACTIONS WITH THE ENVIRONMENT

2.4.1 Sustainable Demand for Training Programmes

As in any market in general, there is a supply side and a demand side in the training market. If supply and demand do not agree, the problem of mismatch arises in fitting applicants with vacant training places. The intensity of mismatch can vary depending on the training system (e.g. full-time school and dual training).

In general, four types of matches can be identified.

		Number of Unsuccessful Applicants	
		Low	High
Number of Unsuccessful Vacant Training Places	Low	Minor problems	Supply problems
	High	Staffing problems	Fitting problems/mismatch

Programmes which are state subsidised or financed are not part of the market system and therefore are not influenced by the number of applicants, or any other factors.

It can be assumed that in future, demand for training places among refugees will increase after they complete general education, and family reunification is accomplished.

On one hand, for VET providers that organise workplace-based training, demand to recruit refugees might increase as companies want to be socially responsible or perhaps invest in young refugees to recruit them as future full-time employees. On the other hand, certain industry sectors have fewer applicants (staffing problems). In the medium or long term, these problems will lead to a lack of specialists.

Demand in particular industries and subjects may change across time. Only when high demand in a sector meets high supply is the market saturated.



To not to be completely subject to such market fluctuations, VET programmes should be constructed to guarantee a sufficiently high degree of sustainability.

Across all types of programmes, it is important that the main target on both sides is sustainable demand: sustainable for the survival and content of the programme and sustainable for the working lives of the refugees who have been or will be trained in the programme.

For companies, it is quite simple to measure demand by vacant apprenticeship positions and full-time positions. Some companies, though, may employ many refugees to meet state regulations or to demonstrate social responsibility. The demand for school-based VET programmes thus often depends on school and project regulations.

2.4.2 Cooperation between Schools and Workplaces*

The integration of learning and teaching across different learning sites and the collaboration between schools and workplaces constitute important tasks for all VET systems. Connections between schools and workplaces and the integration of pedagogical arrangements are highly relevant to refugees who participate in VET programmes, which include all types of programmes that involve learning scenarios in schools and workplaces (e.g. apprenticeships, preparation courses, training workshops and full-time vocational schools with mandatory internships).

Communication between schools and workplaces about refugees' legal status, living situations and existing skills and competences is important to educate and train them according to their qualifications and mental condition.

Coordination in the approaches, concepts and teaching materials applied in refugee-sensitive schooling and support is necessary to the bridge refugees' different learning sites and processes. Refugees are often vulnerable individuals who need more attention and care in school-work transitions. They might not be familiar with the working contexts in the host country and need specific forms of preparation (at school) and introduction (at the workplace) that should be connected.



If schools and workplaces cooperate and act jointly to foster the integration of refugees, they help refugees orient themselves in their new learning environments and more easily transition into the labour market. Connectivity can be achieved, for example, by holding meetings of students, teachers and workplace trainers and using e-portfolios to increase reflection and shared learning between schools and workplaces.

** These additional indicators depend on programme-specific details or other requirements. They should not be neglected as they are still important to the quality of VET programmes.*

2.4.3 Validation and Recognition of Learning and Certifications*

The core idea of the recognition of prior learning and certifications is to make full use of the scope of learning and experience persons have gained throughout their lives, no matter where, when and how their learning took place. *Prior learning* is understood as an umbrella term for any kind of learning within various settings (formal, non-formal and informal). The validation of prior learning has become an important topic as it can facilitate social cohesion, equality and inclusion in education, and greater flexibility in the labour market.

One issue is to differentiate between official validation, which is a state-wide or EU-wide legal question, and validation by educational institutions. For the cause of this project, the focus should be on validation that can be done through educational organisations. Validation of refugees' learning is needed so that they can access appropriate training and the labour market. The difficulties in access to the labour and training market as well as the recognition of prior learning is aggravated by the circumstances of displacement. When students come from different countries and education systems and have different prior learning experiences and certifications, the question of validating these factors becomes even more relevant than when dealing with groups that have gone through the same or similar systems.

Even small groups of refugees can be extremely heterogeneous; it, therefore, is important to determine, validate and acknowledge existing competences.

** These additional indicators depend on programme-specific details or other requirements. They should not be neglected as they are still important to the quality of VET programmes.*

3. PROCESS INDICATORS

3.1 INSTITUTIONS: FINANCE AND FUNDING

Finances refer to all the money, assets, services and economic resources dedicated to a project. For a training project, it is crucial to have enough resources to set up the class and to develop a detailed fund-raising plan.

In particular, this indicator measures the financial capital available and its development to

- Establish new funds
- Check economic movement (e.g. expenses or revenues)
- Raise capital
- Create a financial security network
- Generate new economic movements
- Create new funding opportunities

Moreover, this indicator examines ways in which economic capital can be invested, transferred and mobilised to understand how VET providers handle capital, in which fields they prefer to invest and what their future projects and goals are.

This aspect also involves management to identify the financial dynamics (e.g. how managers handle the economic capital) and study how providers can develop and promote new opportunities.

In this perspective, an important dimension of finance is economic efficiency.

Economic efficiency is part of financial management and a crucial element in educational projects. Proper governance of economic resources is vital to bring stability to refugee students' training and integration and, in general, the overall refugee assistance system. Which means how financial capital is managed during projects, how new sources are found and how economic activity is accounted for. Thus, in this case, finance gains a planning dimension.

Accurate economic planning is crucial not only at the beginning but also throughout and especially at the end of projects. From this point of view, this indicator evaluates how start-up capital is invested, raised and employed. Furthermore, this indicator assesses whether funds have been deployed properly, stakeholders have been involved in the decision-making process and the initial goals have been reached.

Such evaluation must be performed constantly following a definite roadmap with precise intermediate objectives. It must also be shared and endorsed by both internal and external stakeholders, sponsors and enterprises involved in the training process.

From a general perspective, finance and funding has several dimensions.

- First, this dimension is economic and assesses whether economic resources ensure the performance of certain activities. For instance, VET providers must consider operating, administrative and infrastructure costs, along with the costs of material purchases, possible external activities, external partnerships and other expenditures. This evaluation, of course, must be linked to the initial economic and educational plan, but managers should also consider the ongoing activity. To do this, they must continually assess the situation, using a precise roadmap that allows for ongoing adjustments. If, for example, there have been unbudgeted costs, VET providers must be able to manage the remaining capital or raise funds by finding new sources, sponsors or external collaborators. It, therefore, is vital to create a financial security net to ensure the project's stability. This net must be set up early but has to also be changeable to respond to the needs of the moment. To do this, programme managers have to attend to external relationships. With strong, continuous connections with institutions, enterprises and other stakeholders and funding channels, educational projects can be effective, stable and resilient.
- Second, finance and funding are closely related to accountability. Resources come from public and private external providers, so project management must see transparency as important. VET providers have to find proper ways to report how they spend and invest money. To do so, they must follow national legislation regarding accountability and financial reporting and, moreover, should capitalise on these legal obligations to strengthen their links with external sponsors, promote a positive image to external stakeholders and make self-assessment more effective.

In concrete terms, transparent management of resources can attract new investors and ensure good relationships with existing investors. Moreover, proper accountability, for example, through social responsibility reports, should make VET providers aware of the state of their activities, achievement of their objectives and the ways to face potential problems.

- Finally, finance and funding involve the educational sphere, which is certainly linked to the economic dimension but is wider, including educational issues. When considering educational and training processes, VET providers must look not only to economic goals but also to educational goals. VET providers have to consider that in training paths closely related to the integration process, economic stability should not be the most important matter; it is certainly relevant to the continuation of the VET programme but should not

take precedence over the educational and human dimensions. In concrete terms, managers have to find assets based on educational goals and not establish the programme based only on economic resources: the key objectives must be defined, and VET providers have to be flexible as they seek money, partnerships and sponsors that allow the project to continue.

As described, proper management of economic resources is vital in an integration and training programme. Such administration involves the initial economic planning (e.g. available resources, budget and allocation plan) but also the ongoing management of capital to strengthen the project.

Economic stability allows continuing the programme and dealing with possible problems and difficulties.

Before starting a project, it is crucial to have

- A precise budget
- A strong network of investors and funding

Without question, planning how to find sponsors, funds, investors and facilities is essential.

To set up the VET programme, reasonable economic resources and facilities are needed. In addition, VET providers must be able to conduct ongoing assessment of financial stability, find different ways to raise and handle capital, and involve stakeholders, investors and providers. VET providers also have to constantly check the economic goals (established at the beginning of the activity) and, at the end of the programme, assess whether efficiency was achieved.

On a practical level, efficiency means having a positive balance sheet, a clear, secure net of investors and a capital stock that enables overcoming possible difficulties.

To check if economic goals have been met, VET providers must create a robust control process.

This monitoring must be both internal and external and should involve managers, institutions, stakeholders and investors. To do so, VET providers have to take into account not only established economic goals but also training and educational goals.

Ongoing difficulties, such as non-attainment of a specific educational objective, could force VET providers to invest additional funds to solve the situation. VET providers, therefore, should continuously engage teachers to know whether educational goals have been reached and there are specific needs.

Moreover, managers must be resilient.

They have to constantly work with stakeholders to stress the importance of their contributions and, at the same time, find new sponsors, resources and strategies that make the programme efficient and effective.



To do so, VET providers must set up regular meetings to monitor and discuss the ongoing situation and highlight troubles.

Another concrete, meaningful means to control the economic situation is to ensure strong, clear accountability.

In addition to accurate economic reports, VET providers should issue social responsibility reports explaining and describing the VET programme and the social and educational goals. By doing so, VET providers can stay aware of the project's overall situation and investment of the money. VET providers also gain an effective tool to attract new investors and demonstrate the transparency of the project.



At the end of the project, VET providers must meet with institutions, teachers and stakeholder to produce a global assessment of the activities, highlight problems and collect ideas for future plans.

From stakeholders' perspectives, investors have to be strongly involved in the programme's educational aims. Both public and private investors must share VET providers' values, such as awareness of the importance of an intercultural society and professional training in students' labour market entry and personal development.

If public investors provide mostly liquid assets, private sponsors can provide facilities, materials and human resources. For example, an enterprise might make its space, equipment and trainers available to a school to create strong links between school training and the labour market (e.g. traineeships for refugee students). Moreover, stakeholders must cooperate with training, helping in the economic evaluation process and sharing not only material resources but also competencies and ideas. Teachers should cooperate with VET providers to make them aware of classroom needs, so the managers could set concrete strategies and effective investment plans.

3.2 TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

3.2.1 Selecting Teaching Methods

To be successful, the teaching methods used in VET for refugees must connect to the interests and prior learning of individual students and encourage their motivation to learn.

While specific teaching methods vary greatly by subjects, learning goals and learning environments, some general guidelines for choosing teaching methods should be observed.



Teaching should help make students feel accepted and recognised by teachers, trainers and other students. Students can learn more easily when they feel safe making mistakes in their learning environment and when the learning objectives are clear and meaningful to them. In that situation, students can realise meaning in the learning process and take responsibility within the setting.

To select the most adequate teaching methods, the specific situations of refugee students should be considered. Before starting VET programmes, they have often spent a long time in transition between different countries and refugee centres in unstructured and uncertain life situations.

- **VET can offer a well-structured everyday life** with responsibilities and activities that have a wider purpose and meaning for refugees. Participation in vocational education can be the first step to leaving the refugee identity and becoming a student looking forward to a potentially new life course and citizenship.
- **VET offers a practical learning environment** where students have opportunities to demonstrate and develop their skills in managing hands-on, meaningful activities, which can reduce their stress and uncertainty. It can be easier for students to learn theory and a new language when the learning is related to work practices in VET. Relating teaching to students' personal interests is more effective than attempting to motivate them from outside, for example, with rewards or punishments.
- **Activating teaching–learning arrangements** are helpful to create learning environments that support students' intrinsic motivations. An activating teaching style refers to teaching methods that activate students and invite them to engage actively with the learning objects and other students. VET offers many opportunities to use activating teaching methods and to develop students' social skills through cooperation in workshops, workplaces and classrooms. Refugees can become included in a community with other students through training and with other employees during internships. They thus can build new social networks that can be vital for their future opportunities, health and life satisfaction.

These wider benefits of VET should be considered when organising VET for refugees and identifying the most adequate teaching methods. Teachers can become important adult ‘significant others’ for refugee students and have the potential to shape their future life courses. Alternatively, appointed mentors for all refugee students can provide significant support that vocational teachers might not be able to offer.

Teachers in VET programmes for refugee students can improve their teaching by considering some general guidelines for teaching methods.

1. Teachers should adopt methods to identify and develop students’ resources for learning, including their personal interests, prior learning and future aspirations. Compared to native students, refugee students can often appear to have deficient language skills and access to the labour market. Labelling people as deficient, however, becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Instead, refugee students should be recognised as capable and knowledgeable. Teachers should have high expectations for their learning potential as this will encourage them to perform their best. Students should be encouraged to demonstrate their competencies and to build stories that counter the negative image of refugees as deficient.
2. An activating teaching style is advantageous and can offer many potential opportunities for refugees. Activating learning–teaching arrangements are mostly based on interactions and teamwork in collaborative forms of learning (e.g., think–pair–share and jigsaw puzzles). They can support refugees’ social integration, allow them to fit into a group and thus feel more secure. To create equal learning opportunities, certain settings are necessary, such as an open learning environment and the freedom to ask questions, make mistakes and be unfocused. An activating teaching style should involve all participants, help refugee students loosen up and brainstorm, stimulate creativity and problem solving, and offer them opportunities to get involved and actively participate in the learning process. Consequently, refugees may feel more comfortable and secure in their educational context, become used to country-specific social contexts, have higher self-esteem and achieve greater success. Consultations and interactions with other students can mitigate their inhibitions and fears. Uncertainties in social structures can also be reduced or eliminated by forming heterogeneous groups to allow students to get know each other and to facilitate cooperation among individuals of different backgrounds, religions and genders.
3. Teaching should be organised to meet learners’ individual requirements. Diversity is often higher in classes of refugee students than mainstream classes. Smaller classes with lower student–teacher ratios, therefore, are recommended to enable individual differentiation in teaching. In the teaching of classes with only refugee students, there is a risk that individual differences are overlooked as students are categorised by ethnic groups, which can be reinforced by students’ own ethnic grouping in the classroom, making them appear

to be similar. However, teachers should be aware of students' individual qualities and requirements in addition to those pertaining to being refugees and belonging to ethnic or national groups.

4. The organisation of teaching should be flexible and responsive. Students' prior learning, experiences, learning strategies and abilities are not always very transparent to teachers at the start of courses, especially when students have diverse, foreign backgrounds and language skills. Teachers, therefore, require a high degree of flexibility to adjust their methods and levels during courses as they learn about individual students' interests, abilities and resources.
5. Educational requirements and expectations should be explicit and clear. Refugees generally are less acquainted with VET aims and learning cultures, so teachers should carefully explain what is expected of students and how their performance and progress are assessed. Detailed, extensive, understandable feedback to students is an important means to do so. It should also be noted that appreciative feedback continues to motivate students.
6. An inclusive learning environment should be created by encouraging the exchange of learners' diverse experiences and perspectives to make them feel recognised and included. Doing so can give students a sense of being heard and recognised and teachers the opportunity to gauge students' expectations for teaching.

3.2.2 Transfer Orientation*

A transfer orientation in learning means that students are enabled to apply their knowledge in varied contexts.

Transfer of learning highly influences students' learning motivation and includes affective, skill-based and behavioural outcomes.

Especially for this target group, it is highly significant that learning during VET programmes is oriented to the labour market and students' future lives.



To prevent high failure and dropout rates among refugees, motivation is a key factor influenced by the orientation of learning towards students' future lives.

Refugees often leave training educational programmes to earn money and enter these programmes with the short-term goal of succeeding in the labour market and finding paid work.



To enhance learners' transfer orientation, the curricula and learning environments should be designed to be outcome oriented.

Comprehensive determination of the learning outcomes of VET programmes provides learners with clear information about exactly what they will be able to achieve after successful completion of programmes. This information can help students choose their study programmes and can lead to more effective learning. Learning outcomes are commonly expressed in terms of competences. The concept of competences focuses on the development of abilities, skills and motivation necessary for working life, which fosters the transfer of learning. Vocational training for refugees, therefore, should focus on developing the necessary skills for the labour market through a competences and outcomes orientation.

** These additional indicators depend on programme-specific details or other requirements. They should not be neglected as they are still important to the quality of VET programmes.*

3.2.3 Formative and Summative Feedback*

Teachers' formative and summative feedback are important for refugees' success in education. The learning cultures of host countries are foreign to refugees, and they often find it difficult to understand the requirements and standards of education and training.

- Feedback makes students aware of their learning progress and supports them in developing learning strategies.
- Positive feedback from teachers and peers increases students' self-esteem, confidence and motivation to continue learning.
- Feedback also enhances trustful relationship between teachers and students, which are beneficial to students' sense of belonging and reduce the risk of absenteeism and dropout.

Dialogue with students about feedback is also important for teachers to adjust teaching to students' capacities and learning progress. Effective formative feedback should explain clearly to students the teaching aims and procedures (feed-up) and how students can improve and continue learning (feed forward). The primary purpose of summative feedback and assessment is to document and certify the qualifications and skills achieved during VET programmes.

** These additional indicators depend on programme-specific details or other requirements. They should not be neglected as they are still important to the quality of VET programmes.*

3.3 LEARNERS

3.3.1 Learning Language and Culture

Learning the language of the host country is vital to refugees' integration process, their learning in VET and their subsequent access to employment. Initial second language acquisition (SLA) during VET for refugees can be organised in different ways.

Separate language courses organised by professional providers independent of VET programmes can provide teaching at different levels to match the requirements of individual refugees.

However, it can be difficult to engage refugee students when SLA is not connected to their vocational training.

Language learning can be organised as **combined courses**, in which language lessons alternate with lessons on VET subjects. The language teaching thus can easily be related to the vocational subjects, for example, by including VET textbooks and instructions.

Language learning can also be organised as an **integrated part** of the teaching of the vocational curriculum, for example, through co-teaching by a vocational subject teacher and a second language teacher. Integrated language learning can be highly efficient, especially for refugees with low skill levels in their native languages. It is most relevant for a large number of students as it requires investments in developing an integrated curriculum and materials for integrated language learning.

Refugees can benefit from participation in VET with combined or integrated language learning as it often is more motivating. The focus is on applied language, rather than formal language, so learners can be trained in using language in real-life situations. This approach can encourage their self-confidence and their progression through learning by practising the language.

Once refugee students have attained a certain level of language skills, they can benefit from collaboration with native-speaking students in mainstream VET programmes.

Language and vocational learning also include cultural learning. Learning how to use a new language requires learning cultural sensitivity and codes. For instance, as students learn how to prepare food in a kitchen, they also learn about cultural norms of cooperation, gender relations, food culture, appearance and taste. Teachers need intercultural competence to understand students from other cultures and to mediate among different cultures in the classroom. Intercultural sensitivity is also a key competence that refugee students need to be able to decipher the 'school codes' (social norms and tacit expectations) in the host country, which often differ from those they have learned in their home country. These codes concern, for example,

interactions with teachers, self-directed learning and cooperation in group work with native students. For students and teachers alike, developing intercultural sensitivity involves questioning assumptions usually taken for granted based on acquired knowledge and experiences. **Developing intercultural sensitivity goes beyond recognising cultural diversity and involves exchanges across diverse cultural groups with the aim of finding shared grounds for social learning.**

Second language teaching for refugees must be tailored to students' requirements. Initially, learning applied and oral language may be more relevant for refugee students in VET than learning written and formal language (e.g. grammar, spelling and syntax). However, learning only applied language related to a specific occupational field can result in inadequate use of language.



Vocational language learning should be supplemented by broader language competencies to support refugees' wider social integration and further education.

Teachers and counsellors sometimes associate refugees' limited skills in the language of the host country with lower intellectual ability. To the authorities, 'practical' VET programmes can appear to be more appropriate for refugees, even if they have academic aspirations. It is important to consider refugees' own interests and ambitions when organising VET for them.



To avoid making VET for refugees an educational dead-end, it should include opportunities for language learning at higher levels and in combination with academic subjects.

Teachers can facilitate students' learning of intercultural sensitivity by making the rules of cultural practices explicit and explaining to students why these are valid practices. To be successfully taught, these practices must appear to be meaningful and understandable to students. To encourage refugee students' cultural learning, they must be offered opportunities to connect their own biographies and cultural life worlds with the VET curriculum and learning environment.



Teachers can do so by encouraging students to share their experiences from their countries of origin with other students.

Teachers' cultural sensitivity includes their awareness of practices that refugee students find offensive or exclusionary.



These practices can be, for example, humour and jokes that involve sexual and religious issues.

In addition, teachers must be able to intervene in practices of refugee students that other students find offensive, such as talking in their own language in the presence of other students. Cultural learning involves conflicts, and teachers must be prepared to intervene and mediate in these conflicts. While teachers should respect the right of everyone to disagree and to criticise others' points of view, they should oppose insulting, hateful and offensive speech among students.



Teachers should encourage students to engage in communication based on mutual recognition, respect and sound argumentation.

During apprenticeships and internships, cultural conflicts and misunderstandings in workplaces can cause students to drop out. Educational providers should be prepared to mediate in such conflicts, for example, by offering counselling from trainers and mentors. Some refugee students want to practice religious rituals (prayers) and attend religious institutions during school time and workplace training. Teachers and trainers should be prepared to find solutions that balance students' desires with their obligations to attend education and training.

3.3.2 Class Situation*

The classroom situation indicator highlights major social problems, particularly those arising from cultural clashes. Good relationships with peers and teachers are crucial markers to understand foreign students' level of integration. Moreover, a peaceful environment is the basis for all learning processes.

Understanding the issues in multicultural classrooms is essential to guarantee knowledge acquisition on multiple levels.

Monitoring the class situation is vital as training is a major context in which people from different cultures can come together, cooperate and build peaceful relationships. Furthermore, foreign students build their own identities within the classroom by mixing their native cultures with the host country's heritage and values in the best possible way.

To do so, students need the best possible learning environment. VET providers and teachers, therefore, have a duty to

- Create the conditions for a stimulating environment
- Engage students in healthy relationships
- Engage all parties in self reflection
- Stimulate mutual comprehension
- Highlight the potential of cultural differences

To do so, it is important to consider students' individual situations and to constantly assess the classroom situation and refugee students' conditions. Teachers and managers need to be ready to handle possible cultural-related conflicts, clashes and discomfort situations. Practical measures include, for example, setting up an in-class language course and a practical cooperative workshop.

** These additional indicators depend on programme-specific details or other requirements. They should not be neglected as they are still important to the quality of VET programmes.*

3.4 INTERACTIONS WITH THE ENVIRONMENT

3.4.1 Target Group Oriented towards the Mass Media and Social Media*

Traditional mass media and new media (the Internet and social media) play important roles in shaping ideas and behaviours. Today, new media also have more important roles in the education process.

- Teachers often use new media in classroom.
- Students experience more media-integrated teaching.
- Training not only includes learners in education plans but also equips classrooms with new devices (e.g. computers and digital whiteboards) to encourage interactive learning.

Moreover, the mass media often carry and amplify negative messages such as racism, discrimination and violence.



Especially in intercultural contexts, students must have accurate awareness of the extent of these phenomena and problems, understanding that they do not always have direct impacts on everyday life.

To achieve this aim, VET providers and teachers must provide students with strong instruments to analyse society and its representations and link learners to their specific personal situations.

With a strong understanding of the importance of differences, diverse cultures and dialogue, VET providers can create a peaceful environment in which students from different countries can coexist.

To do this, **teachers must equip students with deep knowledge of information technology and technological devices.**

The training programme must not demonise new media and means of communication but should train learners to knowingly use them and have awareness of the related-risks. Moreover, the training programme should have specific lessons to help students better understand mass media and new means of communication.

It is also important to **directly involve refugee students' families if possible.**

A concrete, effective integration process is possible only if students share their newly acquired competencies with their families and social surroundings.

** These additional indicators depend on programme-specific details or other requirements. They should not be neglected as they are still important to the quality of VET programmes.*

3.4.2 Matching Governmental and Refugees' Goals*

Matching governments' migration politics and refugees' goals is crucial to make the integration process effective and guarantee the full protection of human rights. Despite international agreements (e.g. the Geneva Convention) giving full protection and rights to refugees and establishing a common approach that states should apply, migrants' position can vary among countries due to governments' political beliefs that result in different migration politics.

It, therefore, is important to create deep, real integration into the host country's social and economic structures.

With full integration that leads to labour market entry, newcomers can achieve economic independence and contribute to national growth. To create the conditions for doing so, the host country has to offer, especially for young refugees, a concrete, effective and stimulating training process that values their competencies, hopes and future projects.

A comprehensive integration process based on training and work inclusion needs strong government action and deep cooperation between the government and VET providers.

Policymakers must invest in a welcoming process that can support hopes and future projects, especially those of young refugees, to improve their desire to remain in the host country.

To match the government's goals and guarantee a deep, solid integration process, VET providers can set up specific training programmes that meet specific national economic and social needs.

For example, if a country has strong, growing industrial production, policymakers and VET providers can create an integration path with training action tailored to lead to quick, effective labour market entry, matching refugees' need for economic independence and the government's goal to develop a specific sector.

** These additional indicators depend on programme-specific details or other requirements. They should not be neglected as they are still important to the quality of VET programmes.*

4. OUTPUT INDICATORS

4.1 TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

4.1.1 Assessment of Learning Progress

The evaluation (assessment) of refugee students' learning progress has two main purposes.

- The first purpose is to inform teachers and trainers about the results of their teaching and training, so they can organise learning activities adapted to the requirements and capacities of individual students.
- The second purpose is to provide formative feedback to students about their attainment to help them focus their learning efforts and enhance their progress. Dialogical evaluation by teachers and students of learning progress can improve their ability to learn. In addition, teachers' evaluation and recognition of students' learning progress can encourage their engagement and strengthen their development of confident learning identities.

Beyond the immediate goal of attaining specific vocational skills, VET has the overall goal to **develop students into lifelong learners**, which means helping them learning to learn. Encouraging refugee students' ongoing assessment of their own attainment can help them become self-directed learners.

Evaluation of students' learning progress takes place in many different ways.

- Formal evaluations can take the form of oral or written tests that mainly evaluate students' acquisition of knowledge and ability to explain their own work procedures.
- Formal evaluations can also take the form of students' demonstrations of practical skills during work assignments. Especially for refugee students, practical work-based skills demonstrations have many advantages. During skills demonstrations, students can get immediate feedback on their work processes and the results or products of work assignments.
- Evaluations can provide students with instructions on how to improve their competencies (feed forward).

Informal evaluations are usually an integrated practice in work-based training as trainers, co-workers, customers and supervisors provide feedback to learners. Evaluation of learning progress is more effective when it emphasises the progress and improvements in students' learning instead of their errors and deficiencies.

Whether formal or informal, evaluation of learning must be

- Explicit, detailed and constructive to help students' learning progress
- Interactive and dialogical to improve students' ongoing reflection and self-evaluation of their own practices
- Encouraging of students to evaluate their own work and learning progress to help them become self-directed learners

While evaluation and feedback can encourage refugee students' engagement, there is a risk that evaluation can discourage students.



- This can happen if students interpret the evaluation as an assessment of themselves as persons, not their learning progress.
- Repeatedly being identified as low-performing learners can discourage students and contribute to a process of disengagement and withdrawal from training.

As refugee students develop new social identities in their host countries, they are in a phase of biographical transition, which can make them very sensitive to negative evaluations. **Teachers, therefore, should pay attention to refugee students' situations when evaluating their learning and should contribute to their sense of being recognised and included.**

Using student evaluations for hierarchically rating and ranking them, can have negative consequences for the learning environment. Encouraging using evaluations for ranking practices and competition among students can reduce their inclination to cooperate and help each other's learning.



Teachers and school managers should seek to develop an evaluation culture that regards errors as opportunities for learning and encourages students' open, ongoing collective reflection on their learning.

Evaluation of learning progress is more effective when it emphasises the progress and improvement of students' learning than the deficiencies.



Teachers should be aware of the risk of bias in the evaluation of refugee students' learning due to stereotypes and teachers' low expectations of these students' capacities. **Teachers should explain in detail to students the evaluation criteria and purpose.**

The evaluation criteria for learning are sometimes very vague to these students, so teachers should give explicit, detailed explanations of the evaluation standards and objectives. To support refugee students' learning, **teachers should also explicitly describe the cultural norms and social standards that are part of native students' tacit knowledge.**

4.1.2 Evaluation of Teaching Methods*

The evaluation of teaching methods is a practical way to reflect on and review teaching methods that might be known to be effective but might not be having the intended effects upon closer look.

Opinions differ on whether it is better to have informal evaluation activities throughout or at the end of a course.

If a teaching evaluation form is distributed only at the **end of a course**, the instructor cannot make useful modifications for enrolled students. Then again every kind of evaluation can help instructors identify the successful parts of their courses and the parts that need to be improved.

It still has to be kept in mind, that several factors can affect the results from evaluations by students, such as their abilities, interests and skills in subject areas. In this case, data collection from multiple sources (triangulation) and selection of the most qualified people to rate education-related activities are important.

** These additional indicators depend on programme-specific details or other requirements. They should not be neglected as they are still important to the quality of VET programmes.*

4.2 LEARNERS: ABSENCE AND DROPOUT RATE

Early leavers from education and training are placed at a disadvantage in the labour market and are at risk of long-term unemployment, social exclusion and poverty.

For these reasons, in the *Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training* (ET 2020), the European Union (EU) set a benchmark for the 28 EU countries to achieve by 2020:

Early school leavers from education and training should not be more than 10%.
(Early school leavers are defined as persons 18–24 years old who have no more than lower secondary education and are not in further education or training.)

Although figures show that 15 member-states, including Austria, Denmark and Italy, have already met their national targets for this indicator, ‘the situation in the sector of vocational education [and training] is still very critical’ (Linde & Linde-Leimer, 2018). In Austria, for example, secondary vocational schools have a dropout rate of up to 42%, and every third apprentice does not complete vocational education. Furthermore, a low absence rate among participants is decisive for successful completion of VET programmes. In general, 5%–10% of children in German schools do not have regular attendance. Practical competences are only learned through VET if training is attended regularly, and a high number of absences during VET can lead to refusal of permission to site the final examination.

The causes of early dropout and absence from VET are complex and multifaceted. Research has shown significant interplay between individualised explanations and system-oriented explanations of VET dropout.

On one hand, **individual factors** such as

- a lack of motivation
- underprivileged educational backgrounds
- membership in a minority group

can lead to dropping out of education and training.

On the other hand, **structural factors** at the institutional level including the

- learning atmosphere
- student–teacher ratio
- size of the organisation

play decisive roles.

Thus, dropout and absences are not only linked to individual characteristics but are also ‘created within an educational context and [are the] a result of a lack of the necessary educational resources, time and capacity for everyone’ (Tanggaard 2013, 435).

 **Across Europe, persons with migration backgrounds generally have fewer chances of progressing to VET programmes than native learners and, at the same time, face higher risks of dropping out.**

During education, **immigrant and refugee** youth are simultaneously **cop**ing with:

- Various migration pressures
- Resettlement
- Stresses
- Cultural and linguistic barriers that create challenges to sufficient mastery of schools and VET courses

Furthermore, **refugees** are often **confronted with**:

- Trauma
- Family separation
- Discrimination due to the interaction of gender, ethnicity and age
- Uncertain financial and housing conditions

Difficulties with transportation to the education and training institutions and conflicting obligations to authorities and controls might lead to many absences from VET programmes. Gaps in schooling and low language skills increase the odds of dropping out.

A lack of information about

- the VET system of the host country
- potential possibilities of VET programmes and
- requirements of the labour market

combined with

- difficult financial situations and
- low income during education and training

lead to a high absence rate and voluntary dropping out when refugees get better-paid job offers.

In addition, legal restrictions (e.g., for asylum seekers), work discrimination and structural barriers limit refugees' possibilities to choose their desired training.

 **Consequently, refugees often take what is offered and start VET programmes they initially do not want to enter.**

In addition to these structural and individual risk factors, institutional risk factors for early VET leaving and high absence rates among refugees come into play. In vocational schools and courses, **class composition** is another important dropout factor. Classes of refugees or groups with large

proportions of ethnic minorities often have lower average educational performance and language skills than mixed classes. Moreover, in these classes, students have access to fewer cultural resources from their peers who are also mostly from lower social backgrounds, which increases the risk of leaving the training or course early.

Negative school climates are another reason for high dropout rates. Linguistic barriers and ideological conditions, such as negative stereotypes, racism and discrimination, might cause refugees to experience social isolation and alienation. Refugees feel further disempowered and highly discouraged when the host country does not recognise their prior qualifications and educational achievements.

As shown, dropout and absences from VET do not result from one risk factor as many individual, structural and institutional factors interact and have simultaneous impacts.

At the institutional level, though, measures can be taken to reduce the dropout and absence rates among learners in VET programmes. A positive, welcoming culture and an inclusive ethos in the training and organisation, diversity in the programme curriculum and sensitivity to global events that affect refugees can be viewed as key protective factors that enhance the likelihood of VET programme completion.

Moreover, supportive teachers and trainers familiar with the challenges commonly experienced by refugees are important. Teachers and trainers should develop their competences in working with refugees ‘to detect potential dropouts and the special characteristics of learners’ groups, provide support adjusted to individual needs, and thereby improve the quality of their vocational education systems’ (Linde & Linde-Leimer, 2018). The question of intercultural training for trainers is dealt with more closely in the indicator on special training for trainers.

4.3 INTERACTIONS WITH THE ENVIRONMENT

4.3.1 Certifications and Their Recognition in the Labour Market

The development of knowledge, skills and competencies is crucial for personal growth and provides the basis for labour market entry. Job-related skills can be acquired through in-class training, internships and work experiences.

However, the labour market requires precise certifications that demonstrate the level of applicants' personal skills, competencies and knowledge.

These certifications generally are awarded at the end of the school path and demonstrate specific knowledge and competencies. School systems grant students following precise guidelines to ensure students' preparation and to facilitate their labour market entry. Other attestations that certify specific competencies are approved by the EU and national governments (e.g. linguistic competencies and the European computer driving licence). Moreover, competencies can be certified by lifelong learning, defined as any activity that leads to new knowledge, skills and abilities in personal, social and occupational perspective. These competencies can be acquired through

- **Formal learning:** a training path that leads to a specific diploma
- **Non-formal learning:** a learning process outside the school system personally chosen by the individual (e.g. through an enterprise, volunteering and community service)
- **Informal learning:** the interpersonal interactions that characterise everyday life

Competencies acquired through lifelong learning, in particular through non-formal and informal learning, must be validated and compared with specific professional standards to identify the corresponding training credit units.

Moreover, these competencies must be certified through specific tests to be publicly recognised.

The certification of skills acquired through non-formal and informal training is an important opportunity to give students (and, in a wider perspective, candidates) more opportunities to find jobs and to make their work experience more effective. Furthermore, certification of experience and competencies can protect workers in unstable, volatile labour markets by guaranteeing their expertise and proficiency. Such certifications also offer opportunities to continue to gain experience and competencies through constant training.

In this perspective, skills are not only linked to educational levels and school degrees but can also be acquired in different ways and in different environment. Students thus have opportunities to fit

into the labour market, and workers have opportunities to increase their skill levels and to capitalise on their competencies in their national framework and the European context.

In general, the EU seeks to unify national certification systems to have a common scale.

In 2008, the European Parliament and the European Council introduced the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), an eight-level scale that describes learning outcomes acquired by candidates, focusing on the competencies gained and not only on learning inputs (e.g. education type and duration). However, on the national scale, there is a lack of evaluation and certification processes for competencies, particularly for skills acquired through non-formal and informal learning. For example, in some countries, competencies validation is still linked to formal education, and it is hard to highlight and capitalise on skills gained in different ways.

As seen, in some countries, competencies validation can be linked to formal and school learning, which can be unfavourable to refugee students.

They might have had no opportunities for formal learning and have no official diplomas to certify their competencies.

Nevertheless, refugees could have acquired specific skills in their native countries, for example, by working or engaging in informal learning. Finding a way to certify these competencies is crucial to establish specific school paths, bridge students' experiences to expectations and promote their labour market entry.

Moreover, depending on the conditions in their home countries, refugee students sometimes have not have enough time to complete an entire school cycle.

They often have had only one or two years of training not leading to official diplomas.

It is crucial to certify the competencies acquired during the training process, in particular, to demonstrate specific practical skills that can provide direct access to the labour market.

It is vital to take into account not only in-class training but also direct work experiences such as internships and practical classes.

Furthermore, training should be capable of highlighting competencies that are not directly linked to the training process but are relevant to the wider educational path, such as language and ICT skills. To do so, training must consider both experiences acquired in native country and new competencies developed in the host country. In addition, training should evaluate and recognise other skills and capabilities (e.g. social skills) that refugee students can develop through interacting with each other and with teachers, native students, school personnel and people outside training.

From **VET providers' perspective**:

- They have to facilitate refugee students' technical and personal growth and increase the connections between training and wider society, particularly the labour market. VET providers must develop an internal competencies certification system, perhaps through attestations certifying refugee students' achievement of learning objectives.
- VET providers need to promote this practice outside schools, for example, among companies that host refugee students during internships. A programme based on the constant certification of the competencies achieved could stimulate refugee students to engage in preparation and make their training path more attractive.
- These certificates, although not formally recognised, could create links between students' training experience and the labour market, showing students' technical, social and relational skills to potential employers.
- Such evaluations and certifications could be crucial to permanently establish refugees in their host countries. Attestations that demonstrate refugees' engagement and skills and acquired social competences could be evidence of their broad, effective integration into their host country.

From **teachers' perspective**, it is vital to encourage refugee students to improve their skills and explain to them the importance of certification of the competencies necessary for labour market entry. On a more practical level, teachers can show refugee students how to prepare a European curriculum vitae that includes their certifications and highlights their skills, experiences and strengths.

4.3.2 Measurement of the Attainment of Learning Objectives*

The purpose of assessing students' attainment of learning objectives is **to certify qualifications that provide access to skilled employment**. When learning objectives are standardised (national or EQF standards), they can more easily be recognised in national and international labour markets.



To ensure the quality of assessment, an external examiner can be involved.

Another purpose of assessment is to **support students' learning process by testing their educational progress**. When students are encouraged to assess their own attainment, they can become better self-directed learners. In oral and written tests, refugees' poor language skills can be interpreted as poor professional skills. In practical skills demonstrations, students have opportunities to show the work tasks they can perform independent of their language skills. Various tools are available for assessment and validation of refugees' skills, including visual tools such as the EU Skills Profile Tool.



Assessment of vocational skills often involves dialogue, so examiners and assessors should be informed about students' language proficiency before the examination.

Assessors should be aware that assessment of refugees' attainment involves the risk of bias and differential treatment due to misunderstandings, stereotypes and prejudice. This risk is especially high in the measurement of social and personal competencies, which are important in human services work.

** These additional indicators depend on programme-specific details or other requirements. They should not be neglected as they are still important to the quality of VET programmes.*

4.3.3 Employability*

Employability refers to the ability to gain employment and the willingness to consistently seek to acquire the skills and competences required in changing labour markets. Employability entails not only flexibility, which is taken for granted, but also key social skills and, to some extent, a kind of entrepreneurial thinking to remain employable in the labour market. For employability, not only is specialised knowledge is important, but so is the ability to adapt to new situations, deal with problems, take responsibility and exercise social skills, such as teamwork and communication.

** These additional indicators depend on programme-specific details or other requirements. They should not be neglected as they are still important to the quality of VET programmes.*

4.3.4 Bildung, Empowerment and the Feeling of Being an Active Member of Society*

The German term *bildung* is not easily translated into the English language. It means more than *education* and implies the cultivation of self and a profound intellectual culture.

The concept of bildung—different from education—provides a holistic view encompassing the generation of technical and theoretical knowledge and practical wisdom. The concept is often used to criticise instrumentalist ways of creating useful knowledge. Bildung is a continuous process without an objective or end. Consequently, this concept is not easily defined, implemented or measured. It can be seen as the empowerment of being cultured rather than being changed.

The concept of empowerment can be defined as ‘a multidimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters power [...] in people for use in their own lives, their communities and in their society’ (Page & Czuba, 1999, p. 1) Empowerment is a multidimensional social process, with societal, psychological, economic and other dimensions.

The combination of empowerment and bildung should enable students to be critical thinkers who find their own places in society and actively create their lives and the society in which they live.

Especially for oppressed groups—and refugees can be counted as such for various reasons—empowerment through education and training is an important concern. Through empowerment, refugees can present themselves as active subjects, associated with self-help, participation and involvement. It is important to not cast refugees in the role of victims but, instead, to help them help themselves and take charge of their situation as far as possible.

One way that education and training can empower refugees is by giving them a voice through language learning. The goal is for them to develop deserving, active identities rather than to be seen as demanding, dependent refugees. Being employable after a VET programme can give much empowerment.

In general, refugees’ personal living conditions and legal, institutional and political circumstances can hinder empowerment and bildung. Empowerment and being part of society are nearly impossible as long as their legal status remains unclear, they face the perpetual threat of having to leave the country, and they are not even legally part of the host country. Nevertheless, empowerment and *bildung* should be supported by educational measures as much as possible.

** These additional indicators depend on programme-specific details or other requirements. They should not be neglected as they are still important to the quality of VET programmes.*

4.3.5 Follow-up Courses*

As well employability, follow-up courses, internships, further education and the transfer of learning into the future are of interest when considering what comes after educational programmes. Many educational programmes are not designed to directly lead to employment, making internships necessary for the transition to work. Educational programmes might be designed to prepare students for follow-up VET measures. In any VET programme, it is important to predefine the goals and then structure the course accordingly. The programme aims should always be transparent to all parties involved, and the follow-up possibilities should be presented to students.

Refugees recently arrived in the host country can have poorly developed networks and often lack accurate information about the educational system and follow-up options. Consequently, even more than other students, they need support to obtain information about their post-course possibilities. The accessibility of continuing VET courses, internships and other educational measures is an important indicator of quality and strongly influences students' long-term employability.

** These additional indicators depend on programme-specific details or other requirements. They should not be neglected as they are still important to the quality of VET programmes.*

5. LESSONS LEARNED—NATIONAL REFLECTIONS

This chapter describes the key lessons from each member of the Indicators of Good VET Practice for Refugees project. This chapter can be understood to be a written record and systematic collection, evaluation and consolidation of their experiences, developments, suggestions, mistakes and risks in the project. These lessons might be useful for future projects.

The chapter is structured by the lessons learned from each involved country:

- Lessons learned in Austria
- Lessons learned in Denmark
- Lessons learned in Germany
- Lessons learned in Italy

5.1 LESSONS LEARNED IN AUSTRIA

VET plays a vital role in the social and labour-market integration of refugees in Austria. It should be kept in mind that this country has two parallel forms of VET: apprenticeships and full-time VET schools. In the course of the GoodVET project, it became clear that refugees often face difficulties accessing VET. Only a small percentage of refugees can participate in VET. Restrictions on access, political and legal circumstances, and mechanisms of social and structural exclusion prevent all but a few refugees from successfully participating in VET measures. Before dealing with the question of the quality of VET measures for refugees, it must be noted that basic access to VET is fraught with many obstacles and often not possible for much of this target group.

In addition to apprenticeships and full-time VET schools, the vocational training measures examined within the framework of the GoodVET project include vocational adult education, further training programmes and preparatory qualification measures for VET. Due to the diversity of these offerings, it is almost impossible to generate quality indicators applicable to all of them. Furthermore, refugees themselves are a highly heterogeneous group, including diverse cultural, educational and economic backgrounds. The indicators examined, therefore, can only reflect part of what is needed for successful VET. The quality of VET measures always depends on whether they meet participants' individual needs. Learners' involvement as co-producers of education also needs to be taken into account. VET for refugees should always be considered on a larger scale, with many determining success factors outside the direct educational actors' sphere of influence.

In the GoodVET project, apprenticeships proved to be a good opportunity for comprehensive VET for refugees. Some companies, especially in sectors threatened by shortages of skilled workers, demonstrated great commitment to training refugees. The VET providers surveyed in GoodVET

emphasised the need for cooperation and collaboration among schools and workplaces. The respondents also mentioned the importance of inclusive institutional cultures, teachers' intercultural competences, guidance and counselling during training, and refugees' access to information about the VET system and general VET opportunities as central to successful completion of VET. Support services and legal security were also regarded as essential.

Political and legal uncertainties often stand in the way of successful VET. Political decision-making and its legal consequences are subject to great, dynamic changes. At present, during training, a high threat of deportation exists for refugees—not only refugees in asylum procedures but also those deprived of their previous residence status. VET dropout and non-participation by refugees have manifold reasons: insecure personal life situations, impending deportation, untreated trauma and psychological problems and insufficient knowledge of German and formal education. Many of these aspects are not within education providers' direct sphere of influence, but they all have to be taken into account to promote and support participation in and successful use of VET programmes for refugees.

5.2 LESSONS LEARNED IN DENMARK

The GoodVET project has identified three specific challenges to VET for refugees in Denmark. The first challenge is for refugees to access mainstream VET programmes. The second challenge is for vocational colleges to recruit sufficient numbers of refugee students to organise VET. The third challenge is the priority given to short-term job training over long-term education for refugees.

Pre-vocational programmes: The entrance requirements in the Danish VET system combined with refugees' low levels of Danish language skills make it difficult for them to access mainstream VET programmes. Before taking up a VET programme, refugees must improve their language skills and become ready to make a qualified decision to train in a specific occupation. They need knowledge and practical experiences of the affordances and requirements of the occupation to which they aspire. To access apprenticeships, refugees must be familiar with workplace social norms and cultures, including meeting the high standards of modern working life concerning time structures, quality, service, communication and self-management. To achieve this, most refugees have to go through extended pre-vocational programmes, which include language training and work placements. During internships, refugees can learn work cultures and the Danish language and test their capacities and interests in an occupation. Consequently, there is a need for improved pre-vocational programmes that combine work- and school-based training with language training. Good practices for these programmes include work tasks meaningful and appropriate to refugees' skills and interests, refugees' inclusion in social communities at work, and mentorship schemes and occupational guidance that prepare refugees for mainstream VET programmes.

Coordinating VET for refugees: It is a major challenge to recruit a sufficient number of refugees from a local area to fill a VET course in a specific vocational programme. To be financially and pedagogically viable, a class must have a minimum number of participants with approximately the same skill levels. Meeting this standard can be very difficult as responsibility for refugees is decentralised to municipalities. It, therefore, is a good practice to coordinate the organisation of VET for refugees across municipalities, employers and vocational colleges. Examples of good practices include regional coordination among job centres to offer all refugees VET at an appropriate level and establishment of regional networks of companies that share responsibility for training refugees. In addition, many municipalities appoint special refugee coordinators to coordinate companies, language training centres, vocational college and municipalities.

Job training with a long-term educational perspective: Since 2016, municipalities have given high priority to giving refugees job placements immediately after they acquire residence permits. Doing so can provide valuable job experiences and increase refugees' opportunities for ordinary employment. However, it risks them ending up in low-skill, dead-end jobs with few opportunities for skill development. Good practices, therefore, include initial validation of refugees' prior learning and long-term plans for their educational upgrading. These measures are important to ensure refugees' long-term employability and opportunities to improve their labour market positions. It is also important for refugees' motivation that they have opportunities to enhance their formal skill levels and acquire educational certifications, which are keys to stable, permanent employment.

5.3 LESSONS LEARNED GERMANY

The whole GoodVET project—the research on the quality indicators, the search and application of the analysis tool to different programmes and personal interviews on national five best practices—shows the status quo of German VET programmes for refugees. Germany offers many different programmes for refugees, but the number can make it confusing and complicated for this target group to find adequate programmes for their specific, individual purposes. The number of programmes of course also depends on the assigned location where the refugees are hosted. If the location has a good network of social welfare and employment offices, VET schools and employers that work hand in hand, then refugees may have very good chances of getting into VET programmes. Interactions with the environment, therefore, are an important dimension, where as well the politics should have more of a focus on.

The interviewees stressed how important it is for the success of VET programmes that refugees learn the language and the culture of their host country. Not only the language of everyday life but also the VET-specific language is important, as reflected in the indicator of learning language and

culture. VET programme providers should also realise that refugees may need to learn this specific vocabulary and, moreover, the working culture in Germany. Some interviewed programme representatives told that refugees did not know about punctuality. Sometimes these programmes were refugees' only contact with locals, so they inquired about many other problems, such as different public offices, insurance, applications and possible deportation—hence, the important need for additional support systems and coordination. In this project, though, most programme representatives complained that they had too little funding and consequently too little human capital to meet such needs. Overall, the need for support systems indicates the confusing system refugees face. They not only have to cope with life in a foreign country but also different legal rights, working and learning opportunities, and (government) support systems. Therefore it is important for refugees that programmes offer additional value — they should not only learn something and become more involved in society but should also gain an added value from programmes, such as support of going to different public offices.

For VET and the labour market, certifications are highly important, so the best programmes might increase refugees' motivation and personal development, while qualified certifications recognised in the labour market provide an essential foundation for their future careers. On the national level, more connections among VET providers for refugees could be helpful as the project found that such exchanges identify mistakes and optimise good VET practices for refugees.

5.4 LESSONS LEARNED IN ITALY

Interviews on local best practices identified the strengths and weaknesses of the Italian VET system for refugees. First, it is important to specify that in most cases, young-adult refugees do not join yearlong VET programmes. Instead, they are enrolled in short VET courses (60–120 hours), giving them specific competences to quickly enter the labour market. Companies that manage professional training provide these classes. They can be set up in collaboration with schools (or be performed in school facilities) but are completely separate from mainstream education. The classes can be specifically targeted at refugees or include mixed groups of Italian citizens, migrants and refugees. In refugee-related projects led by local public authorities, external companies with private trainers provide the training.

Due to the short course duration, Italian VET training is focused on fast competence acquisition to facilitate rapid entry into the labour market. Companies seek to equip attendees with a specific range of practical skills useful in workplaces, for example, an internship with a local enterprise and a career guidance service. Consequently, job-related indicators have high relevance in the Italian system. Core indicators such as certifications and their recognition in the labour market and

elective indicators such as validation and recognition of learning and certifications have been identified as crucial for successful VET course.

For the same reasons, VET providers do not consider indicators such as class situation and composition as they have little influence on the outcomes of short-term projects and training. Likewise, in private companies with mixed classes, management has difficulty planning structured systems for psychological, social, housing and other support. Such systems are provided only in specific cases by managers, teachers or tutors and do not follow standardised, common procedures. This support shortcoming is also attributed to the lack of funds, personnel and time.

Cooperation among schools and workplaces is considered to be central to the Italian VET and can be seen in different aspects of the courses and companies' organisational settings depending on their structures and aims: cooperation can occur during course planning, demand analysis, internships and the evaluation and certification process. Regardless of companies' specific strategies, all the managers interviewed agreed that the links with companies must be real, strong and persistent. Examples include direct involvement by company boards and tutors who act as bridges among students, management and enterprises, directly supervising internships and personally conducting external relationships with the companies. On this topic, another important aspect that must be underlined is cooperation between training companies and organisations managing the introduction and various forms of support given to refugees. Most of these organisations are local charities that offer specific courses to refugees. They conduct entrance procedures such as competencies and language tests, which speeds up evaluation of candidates' motivation, eases first contact with students and averts the risk of excessive loss of time, money and personnel resources.

It is also important to point out that companies adopt special strategies to overcome particular problems. For instance, to address linguistic barriers, they use special teaching materials (e.g. specifically designed smartphone applications and audio-visual equipment) and set up shared platforms for data exchange among companies and institutions. All these practices underline Italian companies' efforts to guarantee high-quality training, effectively overcome problems and successfully react to ever-changing economic, cultural, institutional and political situations.

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