

## Best practice guide

# Training and the Socio-economic Integration of the Low-Skilled



Guide to best practice  
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### Training and the Socio-economic Integration of the Low-Skilled

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# PREFACE

The intention of this guide is to present 21 examples of best practice developed across 12 European countries.

According to the definition given by the European Commission within the Territorial Pacts for Employment, a best practice is “a practice that redresses the balance between the supply of jobs and the demand for jobs in such a way that it translates into the effective and lasting hiring of unemployed people”. In this definition, the accent is placed on results.

For us, within the framework of this project, a best practice is not just one that has yielded best qualitative or quantitative results, but is especially one that is demonstrates innovativeness in its field of action, in its approach, or in the tools that it develops. Using the analysis of these 21 best practices, this project aims to set out successful experiences in the field of training and social and occupational integration for low-skilled people.

The richness of these local experiences and the diversity in approaches enables us to highlight elements that could be advanced by public policies.

Creating the conditions whereby all can participate actively in society is a societal challenge and it involves the acquisition of competences that enable one not just to find employment, but to fully flourish in society. It is important to ensure that all individuals can take part, and that low-skilled people are no less citizens than the others. The role of policy is to guarantee a framework that enables the development and wellbeing of all.

Investment in education and training is an essential component of sustaining long-term growth. The fact is that the capacity for evolution of Member States’ economic structure is heavily dependent on having a population that is better trained and able to adapt to innovations.

If the European Union wishes to remain competitive, it must, as a priority, invest in the education and training of all its citizens. The EU must be able to develop a new economic model that strengthens the capacity for growth of European economic actors, centred on innovation, energy efficiency and a recovery in investments. This requires investing in quality education and training.

The transfer of the vocational training component to DG Employment and Social Affairs will ensure greater coherence and the development of policies and initiatives that foster a better transition between training and employment. This is something we can only welcome.

I wish you good reading.

Jean Degimbe  
**Chairman of the Comité Européen  
de Coordination (CEC)**

# INTRODUCTION

As part of the Europe 2020 vision, the Education and Training 2020 strategic framework sets out five benchmarks that reflect the EU's concerns in the field of education, but these are confronted with the realities of their scope and impact.

In particular, the training effort will have to be all the more sustained in that deficiencies in education persist in all countries of the Union, alongside a great need to increase the skills levels of the active population. Meeting this need includes initial education, but also participation in lifelong training, alongside personal and professional experience. In addition to transforming lives, skills are a vector of prosperity and social inclusion. Without relevant skills, individuals remain on the margins of society, technological progress does not translate into economic growth and, as a result, businesses and countries lose competitiveness. It is essential not just to have to hand relevant information on the required and available skills on the labour market, but also to implement policies that foster the acquisition of skills with a view to creating better jobs and, thus, better lives.

While the demand for skills gets ever more sophisticated, jobs require ever more analysis and transmission of information, and technology becomes ever more omnipresent, those with low skill levels find themselves ever more threatened. A poor grasp of basic competences prevents access to a large number of services, as well as to the chance of receiving training, an essential factor for developing and sustaining skills throughout one's working and personal life.

On average, when an individual's skills level increases, their chances of being active and employed increase. Mastering skills also correlates positively with other aspects of wellbeing.

According to the OECD's Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC), a higher degree of inequality in terms of basic skills<sup>1</sup> leads to a higher level of inequality in the distribution of income, whatever the actual causal link. The least skilled individuals also tend to have poorer health indicators, a lower level of citizen participation and a lower degree of trust in others. Skills have an impact that goes well beyond remuneration and employment. In every country, those with a low level of basic skills are more likely to be in poor health, to believe that they have little or no influence on the political process and not to take part in a range of activities.

The effectiveness of policies for skills is everybody's concern, and the countries have a delicate question to address: who should be responsible for what, when and how, particularly in the case of lifelong learning. Employers can do more to create conditions that are favourable to, and foster investment in, lifelong learning; and public authorities can design more rigorous standards, propose financial incentives and create a safety net in order for quality training to be available to all. Designing effective policies for skills is not limited to coordinating different departments of the public administration and the harmonisation of the activities at different levels within the executive. The fact is that a vast range of non-governmental actors, notably the employers, professional associations, chambers of commerce, trade unions, educational and training establishments and, of course, the non-profit sector need to be involved.

<sup>1</sup> The study talks about literacy and numeracy

# PROJECT PRESENTATION

Taking into account the guidelines contained in the preface and the introduction of this guide, the CEC, as a European network, decided to gather its members around a major project.

## **Project goals**

- › Strengthen the European networks that are working to develop teaching and training policies that foster the social and occupational integration of vulnerable groups in Europe.
- › Inform the relevant stakeholders about European projects in the fields of education and training and strengthen their participation.
- › Strengthen the CEC internally through the organisation of joint seminars and promote the networks activities externally to ensure they have maximum visibility.
- › Develop a series of policy recommendations from the best practices of the network

The project also led to the development and strengthening of partnerships with other European networks, such as CSR Europe, EVTA and ENSIE.

## **Project activities**

The project's activities mainly took place between June and December 2014.

They were as follows:

- › Organising three working groups for CEC members, in Barcelona, Brussels and Venice respectively, in order to gather, select and present at least 21 good practices in the field of training and social and employment integration for poorly qualified groups that were particularly in tune with the needs of the labour market.
- › On the basis of those good practice, establishing common guidelines for CEC members and stakeholders (CSR EUROPE, EVTA...) and the setting out of policy recommendations in the form of a memorandum for the improvement of teaching and vocational training systems in Europe, in particular for vulnerable groups.
- › Organising three European meetings/seminars relating to the setting up of teaching, training and social and occupational integration pathways for low-skilled people at the European level.

# METHODOLOGY

The aim of this project is to present best practices and, from those experiences in the field, to determine what works best in training people with low skill levels, adults as well as young people, and help them access the labour market. We have chosen to favour a **bottom-up** approach. Starting from the observation of practice in the field, we have drawn out the ideas that were then translated into policy recommendations.

This guide is made up from 21 good practices developed in 12 European countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and the United Kingdom. These countries are very diverse, whether in terms of geography, political and economic circumstances, or in terms of the education and training systems in operation. The organisations that developed the good practices we have chosen to present are all members of the Comité Européen de Coordination (CEC) network. The selection of good practices was made on the basis of the following two criteria:

- › Innovating nature
- › Thematic relevance

As far as the innovating nature is concerned, good practices can distinguish themselves in terms of the training provided, the approach they develop or the tools they put in place.

As for thematic relevance, the good practices selected had to aim to promote one or more of the following goals:

- 1.** The acquisition of learner-centred key transversal skills and competencies;
- 2.** The implementation of reforms to reduce early school leaving, foster social inclusion and raise the professional profile of teachers and trainers;
- 3.** Promote EU transparency and recognition tools for skills and qualifications, as well as the retraining and updating of training for low-skilled adults; the development of quality teaching and training systems that involve an apprenticeship in a working environment;

4. Developing partnerships between educational service providers, businesses and the social partners;
5. The setting up of new qualification pathways in potential growth areas, or areas where skills are lacking.

Most of the good practices included in this guide address several of these objectives at the same time. This is one of the elements that make them so rich. However, in order to simplify reading and the identification of information, we have decided to classify them according to one of the thematic goals listed above. This is simply a decision based on making the reading easier, as the readers will readily be able to identify the good practice that is of interest to them using the reading grid or the keyword index; they will then be able to read the executive summary, familiarise themselves with other good practices in the area and, if they so wish, read the note in the annex relating to the good practice, which contains all the useful information.

The target group is made up of adults who are poorly qualified and at some distance from the labour market, and young people who are dropping out of school or society. What they have in common are educational, employment and personal histories that are often chaotic, leaving them vulnerable and often the object of social stigma.

All the project partners filled in a questionnaire on good practice<sup>2</sup> that includes several questions designed to identify the aims, implementation methods, financial and human resources involved, as well as the results of their practices. In this way, we were able not just to gather all of the information required to present the 21 good practices, but to be able to present them all using the same format. We made up reading grids to facilitate the identification of elements that could be of interest to the reader. These grids are built on the basis of keywords that represent the “strengths” and “opportunities” of the good practice. In terms of the analysis of good practices, we did not carry out an evaluation. Our aim was to demonstrate

<sup>2</sup> The best practice forms can be found at: [www.cecasbl.org](http://www.cecasbl.org)

the strengths and opportunities of the good practices examined. We therefore chose to opt for a SWOT analysis (Strengths – Weaknesses – Opportunities – Threats), but limited to the study of the positive elements.

#### Box 1 – Elements of a SWOT analysis

	Positive	Negative
Internal	Strengths	Weaknesses
External	Opportunities	Threats

#### > Assessment of strengths

The strengths are the positive internal elements that the good practice controls and can be built on in the future.

#### > Assessment of opportunities

The opportunities are the positive external possibilities, which may be used to advantage, within the context of current strengths and weaknesses. They exist beyond, or at the margins of, the field of influence of the good practice.

#### Box 2: Examples of “Strengths and opportunities”

Strengths	Opportunities
Learner-centred training; Personalised follow-up; Financial and human resources.	European, national or local political will; Legal framework; Areas that are not covered by public services.

# PRESENTATION OF THE COMITÉ EUROPÉEN DE COORDINATION (CEC) NETWORK

The CEC aims to develop European partnerships and projects that have as a mission, particularly at a regional level, the social and occupational integration of low-skilled people into the labour market, by providing them with a series of skills (technical, behavioural...), training and work experience that are required by businesses and the labour market. The CEC brings together 22 members, representing around 850 organisations (vocational schools, training centres, on-the-job training enterprises, social cooperatives, integration enterprises...) in 14 EU Member States.

The CEC has more than 18 years of experience in the management, coordination and dissemination of European projects (Erasmus+, Progress, Daphne) and has become a benchmark network in establishing partnerships for carrying out activities to promote vocational training for young people and poorly qualified adults at the European level.

For more information, visit our website:

[www.ceciasbl.org](http://www.ceciasbl.org)

# PROJECT PARTNERS

## **ACFI-FIAS (BELGIUM, WALLONIE - BRUSSELS)**

Is a pluralist and militant network which gathers about forty training centres of social and professional insertion in Wallonia and in Brussels.

These associations offer to low qualified people, the opportunity to follow training with an aim of integrating or of reinstating the labour market. During the period of training people gets time to learn a trade and also makes it possible to the trainees to build their professional projects in an autonomous and responsible way.

More information: [www.acfi.be](http://www.acfi.be)

## **AID (BELGIUM, WALLONIE - BRUSSELS)**

« AID », for Integrated Actions of Development, it is initially a multitude of social and professional integration projects articulated around the education and/or employment.

Projects anchored in a local socio-economic and cultural environment, which want to be as experimentation of a levelling alternative development. The AID network is thus the gathering of these various initiatives around common values.

The centres federated by AID network aims to be an answer to the situations of inequalities, through concrete projects, carried by actors with and for the individuals who suffers exclusion at social, economic, political and cultural levels. The actions are carried out within the framework of socio-professional insertion through the formation and employment, but also by working with individuals at their individual and collective emancipation as active citizens.

More information: [www.aid-com.be](http://www.aid-com.be)

**Agentúra, RRI (POVAŽSKÁ, SLOVAKIA)**

Is a private organization created in May 2005.

Its objective is to propose to customers:

- market research and feasibility studies,
- council to enterprises,
- management, translation and translation/interpreting for European projects,
- training in communication, sale, marketing, staff management,
- decentralized co-operation and sustainable development projects,
- project evaluation

Agentúra already took part in various European projects.

More information : [www.2ri.sk](http://www.2ri.sk)

**Barka foundation (POZNAN, POLAND)**

Barka Foundation is a non-governmental organization.

Its mission is to offer support for social development of excluded groups, build conditions to enable them to rebuild their lives by creating a system of mutual help, education and entrepreneurship, in line with a citizens' society.

The objective is to create a system of support for the process of integration of excluded groups. This system includes about 5000 persons annually (gathering persons in life crises, informal groups of citizens, non-governmental organizations, representatives of the government at national and local levels).

The main task is to create a program for the development of this system in Poland, in other countries in transformation and in developing countries.

The development of the program consists on creation of Schools of Social Animation, based on experiences and knowledge of people who overcame extreme poverty and serious life difficulties, and today are able to transfer the knowledge on the mechanisms of creation and development of programs of fight against social exclusion to groups from diverse regions of Poland and Europe, in a professional way.

The new Law on Social Employment and the project of Law on Social Cooperatives enable to give legal and financial support for the development of these programs in Poland. More information: [www.barka.org.pl](http://www.barka.org.pl)

**Bürgerservice (GERMANY)**

Bürgerservice (BS) created in 1993 is a non-profit employment society whose aim is the reintegration of the marginalized people into the general labour market. To reach this goal, BS is on the one hand towards the general market job opportunities and offers participants various basic skills in the areas of the use of machinery in the building sector, the logging, firewood conditioning for individual, permit gear engineering, driving license, more learning achievements, computer courses, qualifying courses in the areas of wood, paint, metal, garden installation, building, photovoltaic, trade, urban or rural. In addition, BS is recognized as social enterprise since August 2001. BS is therefore required to occupy at least 25% of persons with disabilities. BS offers so a contribution to employment in the long term to public with difficulties to join the labour market.

BS employs currently about 300 employees in insertion, 34 trainees and 61 persons with disabilities in Trier but also in other places in the Trier-Saarburg district.

The association supports yearly 500 people with social and professional integration difficulties.

More information: [www.bues-trier.de](http://www.bues-trier.de)

### General directorate of social assistance child protection (DGASPC) (ROMANIA)

DGASPC is a public institution subordinated to Local Council 1st District of Bucharest, with juridical personality, formed by the union of Public Social Assistance and Public Specialized Child Protection Services from 1st District.

They have a few directorates working in different fields:

- Child protection directorate
- Person and family protection directorate: lonely people, people with handicap, seniors, homeless and other people in needs.
- Economic directorate and patrimony administration.

More information: [www.dgaspc-sectorul1.ro](http://www.dgaspc-sectorul1.ro)

### FÉDÉRATION DES INSTITUTIONS ET SERVICES SPÉCIALISÉS D'AIDE AUX ADULTES ET AUX JEUNES (FISSAAJ) (BELGIUM)

FISSAAJ is a federation of social services. While respecting the diversity of its members, FISSAAJ promotes supports and defends the interests of services for the most vulnerable groups: disabled people, socially disadvantaged people and young people.

FISSAAJ is the most important French-speaking employers' federation in the field of services to children and young people (in the francophone community) and disabled people (in Wallonia). FISSAAJ has more than 300 members.

In the field of services to young people, FISSAAJ has 82 members which are certified by the government of the francophone Community and situated in Wallonia, and which employ about 1.100 workers. In the field of assistance to children, it has 5 members (certified by the government of the francophone community and by the Walloon Region, and situated in Wallonia), which employ about 160 workers.

One of the priorities of our federation is to promote the exchange of good practice, collaboration between federations and other institutions, as well as the creation of innovative projects related to the evolution of our society.

More information: [www.fissaaj.be](http://www.fissaaj.be)

### Fondazione Luigi Clerici (FLC) (LOMBARDIA - ITALY)

Founded in 1972, the Foundation Luigi Clerici is an organization working in the field of vocational training, assistance to find a job, continuous training for workers, and training for groups in difficulty. These activities are carried out through 15 centres operating in Lombardy Region.

To develop its activities FLC counts on the collaboration of local organizations, enterprises, associations and craft enterprises operating in Lombardy.

The Foundation proposes in particular training activities helping the industrial reconversion process.

The training offer of the Foundation is more than a simple offer of training. The Foundation takes care of the individual and social realization of the concerned person. Work is considered like a central dimension in life and as a factor of personal growth.

Trainers from various centers propose to provide the skills for personal evolution. The activities are divided into three sectors: assistance to find a job for young people (young graduates), continuing training for workers, and training for groups in difficulty (disadvantaged, immigrants...)

The activities carried out in the centres are mainly in the following sectors: new technologies (web language, web designer...), industry/production (mechanical, electrical and metallurgical industry), and administration (general secretariat, of direction, production and accounting). And also: deepening of foreign languages, aesthetics courses, hairdressing, health assistance, collective catering, pastry, photography, safety on work...

More information: [www.clerici.lombardia.it](http://www.clerici.lombardia.it)

**Hope in the community (HITC) (U.K.)**

Hope In The Community is a non-profit company established to provide an umbrella of support for faith and community groups wishing to engage in community regeneration projects. Our assistance ranges from consultancy to project management, from organisational to administrative advice and from funding information to funding application. Our aim is to eliminate the need for our clients to re-invent the wheel and to enable them to establish sustainable projects using best practice.

More information: [www.hitc.org.uk](http://www.hitc.org.uk)

**Institut pour le développement et la formation - IDF (CORSICA)**

Training centre created in 1985 having for general object to ensure professional, social and cultural promotion in whole Corsica.

The association proposes in particular:

- To implement trainings for the companies, the trade unions, the employees, the chiefs of enterprises and the local authorities carrying initiatives,
- To disseminate and promote by training activities, new technologies,
- To organize training courses for the creators of enterprises,
- To set up specific actions to promote female employment and to support professional and social integration of young people.

More information: [www.idf-corse.eu](http://www.idf-corse.eu)

**Integrity consulting (BULGARIA)**

Integrity Consulting is registered in 2003 and is one of the leading and most recognizable in the field of consulting companies in Bulgaria.

Through its subsidiary and related companies Integrity Consulting operates at the local consulting markets in Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia & Herzegovina and Montenegro as well.

The main consulting provided services are:

- Development, implementation and supporting management of projects under programs, financed by structural funds of the European Union;
- Development, adoption and reengineering of Management systems in compliance with international standards ISO, OHSAS, BS, GMP, IFS, etc.;
- Organization of specialized trainings, seminars and other training and information activities;
- Specialized researches, analysis, strategies, surveys and assessments on given subjects.

The project experience of Integrity Consulting is of wide range. Over the last 10 years, we have taken part in the development, realization and management of hundreds of project initiatives in practically all structural funds of the EU, (PHARE, IPA), INTERREG, LEONARDO DA VINCI...

The company also works successfully with Bulgarian municipalities and enterprises, public administration and NGOS for the development and management of their project initiatives.

More information: [www.integritybg.com](http://www.integritybg.com)

### Médialys (France)

Medialys is an association law 1901, created in April 2006, for the practical implementation of the process "Presence, tranquillity", strengthening the human presence and the fight against fraud on the Lyon public transport network. Medialys contributes to the socio-professional integration of unemployed young people, job seekers and beneficiaries of social minimum through their activity on the public transport network as "AMIS" (Welcome, Mediation, Information, Service).

The Medialys project contributes to the professional insertion of public in difficulty, improves safety in public transport and decreases fraud on the network.

They are therefore three activities that will create:

- An accompaniment at the front door;
- The preventive checking of the transport tickets on bus, metro, tram;
- Welcome and monitoring, assistance to persons with reduced mobility.

The association has for mission to mobilize the actors, their means and their skills to detect the targeted public. To help them to find an appropriate job, to prepare and to organize their path back to employment, by missions contributing to the strengthening of the social link either to the public transport network, either in the economic and social environment directly or not linked to this network.

More information: [www.medialys.asso.fr](http://www.medialys.asso.fr)

### Mesogeiko (GREECE)

Established in 2000 MESOGEIAKO MEK SA is a company offering counselling and vocational training services to individuals who are: Unemployed, threatened by Social Exclusion, employed but in search of better prospects through training and professional development, in transition with respect to their education and career

They offers a wide range of training programs often implemented in co-operation with education and labor

authorities in Greece, such as the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labor and their agencies, OAED - Manpower Employment Organization (the Hellenic National Agency for Employment) and Local Administration authorities in all thirteen administrative regions in the country.

They have centres in Athens, Thessaloniki, Serres, Heraklion-Crete, Ioannina, Samos, Lesvos and Limnos. MESOGEIAKO develops education and training programs on an on-going basis and updates its methodologies, teaching materials and educational tools to best respond to the training needs of the learners. It has formed partnerships with VET centres in Cyprus, Bulgaria and Romania.

MESOGEIAKO is very active in education and training for entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs.

More information: [www.mesogeiko.gr](http://www.mesogeiko.gr)

### Provocatie (ROMANIA)

PRO VOCATIE is a successfully nongovernmental organization, created in 2002 that created the first Assessment Centre of Competences for Occupations in Romanian social field.

Mission: Facilitating the access at the certification of personnel's competences, obtained on other ways than the formal ones, personnel that activates in social field, in order to diversify the opportunities in their professional career.

Objective: After the candidates' assessment, C.R.F.P.S. PRO VOCATIE issues graduation or qualification certificates that certify the competences according to the occupational standards.

More information: [www.provocatie.ro](http://www.provocatie.ro)

### Scuola Centrale formazione, SCF (ITALY)

SCF is a national no-profit training organization, recognized by the Italian Ministry of Labour 40 years ago. SCF brings together 45 members based in 10 regions for about 100 vocational training centers and 1,600 employees providing over 13.5 million hours of training per year.

Its aim is to create a favorable environment for the exchange of best practices between its increasing members; this allows proposing effective responses to social and professional issues.

To pursue this goal, it organizes and supports counselling, training and support measures towards the job market. SCF also offers services to make its associates' training offer increasingly competitive in line with the needs of beneficiaries.

This offer includes initial, continuous and/or long-life learning training that specifically target:

- Training of young people;
- Training and integration into the labor market of adults who lose their jobs, as well as disadvantaged people or the disabled.

More information: [www.scformazione.org](http://www.scformazione.org)

### Fundacio Privada Trinijove (TRINIJOVE) (SPAIN)

Trinijove began its activities in the field of training and job placement in 1985. During this time we they have worked actively in the design and implementation of innovative programs and measures in order to overcome the situations of exclusion social

Our action is based on the following key principles:

- Ensure the gratuity of all the services and resources
- Take a holistic approach combining information, education, professional integration and leisure time.
- Support the territorial perspective which implies working to meet the needs of each specific territory in terms of social and professional inclusion of socially marginalized groups

- Manage joint projects through our networks in Catalonia, Spain and Europe.

Trinijove Foundation's work is based on the following two elements:

1. The joint collaboration with people, institutions and companies sensitive to social problems, including:
  - Government of Catalonia (Departments of Enterprise and Employment, Justice, Social Welfare and Family of Planning and Sustainability and the general secretary of Youth),
  - City of Barcelona (Barcelona Activa and the Municipal Council of the District of St. Andrew),
  - Obra Social "la Caixa".
2. The belief that social and professional integration of young people, women and long-term unemployed will be effective only if it includes economic integration. Trinijove don't want to give aid, training or employment from a cyclical view, but from a view of process tending to empower people.

Trinijove currently extends its social object, in developing the solidarity economy as a company of insertion in Catalonia, offering a range of services for the sole purpose of providing employment to the more disadvantaged people. In order to give employment to the more socially disadvantaged people, including people suffering from mental, physical and/or sensory disabilities Trinijove has created in 2004 a "Centre for labour".

In accordance with the requirements of organizational functioning and management of projects, Trinijove is certified EMAS (Eco-Management and Audit Scheme). Since September 2009, Trinijove launched jointly with the Ministry of labor, the "plan of work for Equal Opportunities between men and women" who promotes equality of opportunity in employment.

More information: [www.trinijove.org](http://www.trinijove.org)

### Uni-Est (FRANCE)

UNI-EST is an associative structure of 42 employees, created in 1992, at the initiative of the communes of Lyon East. It led numerous actions, in relying on a partner network, in order to allow access to employment of youth and adults publics of the greater Lyon. It thus accompanies each year near 5100 people enrolled in the "Plan Local pour l'Insertion et l'Emploi" (PLIE) and helps them building their professional pathways by offering them targeted training, work situations, activities promoting the mobility and facilitating childcare.

To this end, it seeks to ensure that its action is articulated with that of economic actors. UNI-EST so offers a large range of services to enterprises from recruitment to human resources, strategy consulting, management training.

More information: [www.plie-uni-est.org](http://www.plie-uni-est.org)

### The Association for social mediation EQUA

located in Cadiz, Andalusia founded in 1997 is a not-for-profit organization that works in the integration on the labour market of persons with intellectual disabilities.

EQUA support equal opportunities and therefore aims to integrate its public in standard work environments. EQUA is helping the disabled persons to plan and develop their own lives independently with equal opportunities with the rest of the population and improve their living conditions. EQUA uses social integration strategy with an active and independent participation of this group of people. To achieve these objectives, EQUA uses methods such as social and community mediation, actions focused on the person, employment support.

EQUA attempts to cover all the needs of people with disabilities, both in the field of labour, overall support of the project of life, leisure...

### The Centre for education and professional training of Larnaca in Cyprus,

"T.T. Center of Education and Vocational Training of Larnaca Ltd", international brand named TECHNICAL TRAINING CYPRUS LTD, has as its foundation purpose the organization, coordination, execution, management of any kind of professional training, educational training (including research and study of relevant activities). The Centre of Education and Vocational Training of Larnaca has as its purpose to ensure the highest quality and maximum efficiency in the services it provides. The Center of Education and Vocational Training of Larnaca, is in a position to contribute substantially to the socio-economic development, promoting employment, activation of human resources, improving the quality of life across the island of Cyprus and lastly to contribute to the environmental awareness of citizens.

# ADULT TRAINING: HOW TO BRIDGE THE GAP?

A quarter of the working age population in Europe has low levels of qualifications or only has basic skills for which demand is declining. In each Member State, the highest rates of long-term unemployment are found among the categories of the population with the lowest levels of education.

The studies carried out by the OECD and the European Union highlight a lack of basic skills among adults in several European countries. Their conclusions converge with those of the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment for 15-year-old school pupils) study. This is the case for the following studies:

## 1. The OECD's PIAAC:

### 1. Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competences

This assesses the level and distribution of adult competences in different countries. It deals with essential cognitive abilities and workplace skills that are needed to participate in the society and economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The conclusions of the 2013 report are as follows:

**Literacy** (ability to understand, evaluate, use and engage with written texts to participate in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential).

The top three countries are Japan, Finland and the Netherlands. France comes 22<sup>nd</sup> out of 24, followed by Spain and Italy.

**Numeracy** (Ability to access, use, interpret and communicate mathematical information and ideas in order to engage in and manage the mathematical demands of a range of situations in adult life). The top three countries are Japan, Finland and the Netherlands. France comes 20<sup>th</sup> out of 23. Spain and Italy come 23<sup>rd</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> respectively<sup>3</sup>.

In Finland and Japan, around one adult in five reads at high levels (Level 4 or 5 on the Survey of Adult Skills).

However, in other countries large proportions of young

<sup>3</sup> Source: [oecd.org](http://oecd.org)

people leave school with poor skills in literacy, numeracy and problem solving, and significant numbers of adults have low levels of proficiency in the information-processing skills increasingly needed in the information societies of today. In Italy and Spain, for example, only one in twenty adults is proficient at the highest level of literacy (Level 4 or 5). Nearly three out of ten adults in these countries perform at or below the lowest level of proficiency (Level 1) in both literacy and numeracy.

## 2. EUROPEAN UNION EDUCATION AND TRAINING MONITOR

The European Commission follows the evolution of education and training systems across according to a certain set of indicators. The conclusions of the latest report on 31/10/2013 are as follows:

The participation rate in formal and non-formal education and training (last four weeks) of 25 to 64 year-olds<sup>4</sup>:

- Denmark: 31.4%
- Finland: 24.9%
- France: 17.7%
- United Kingdom: 16.1%
- European average: 10.4%
- Belgium: 6.7%
- Italy: 6.2%
- Poland: 4.3%
- Romania: 2%
- Bulgaria: 1.7%

In several countries, there is a mismatch between the need for qualifications and the means deployed in terms of initial training and continuous training.

<sup>4</sup> Source : [http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/progress\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/progress_en.htm)

Tackling unemployment requires an improvement in the relationship between training, qualifications and employment. Improving employment for young people depends foremost on a better articulation between the education system and the economic world. In order to deal with these mismatches, it is important to identify the skills and knowledge expected in each sector, taking account of technological, economic and social developments; to look into the issues of guidance and placement for adults, as well as young people; to encourage alternation and strengthen cooperation between schools and businesses. Satisfying the need for qualifications also involves lifelong learning. However, there is a huge disparity to be found between European countries in terms of lifelong learning. It is therefore urgent to act to fill this gap. The European Union could give more support to the Member States by providing more European funding for lifelong learning, either through the European Social Fund, or through specific funding.

# FIVE THEMES, ONE LINK: INVESTING IN SKILLS

Supporting public investment in education and vocational training is not an easy task in the current economic context. Public expenditure on education is essential to growth and employment because a more skilled and educated workforce will lead to gains in productivity, innovation and wealth. As explained above, low-skilled workers, to the contrary, face an increased risk of being unemployed when faced with a labour market that is ever more demanding in terms of skills and qualifications..

In this section, we will deal with five themes connected with training and the acquisition of skills and provide an insight into the main elements of good practice for each theme. Firstly, we will analyse early school leaving as a European priority. Then, in section 5.2, we will deal with the acquisition of basic skills. Section 5.3 shows how transparency and the recognition of skills and qualifications acquired in different ways can be encouraged by the implementation and coordination of the instruments of European policy, such as qualifications frameworks, quality control frameworks, credit systems and tools for the validation of non-formal and informal learning, opening the way for a future European area of skills and qualifications. We will then look at the setting up of constructive partnerships to foster training and social and occupational integration for low-skilled people. In the final part, we will examine new pathways to qualifications and the setting up of quality vocational training systems involving workplace training in particular.

## 5.1 Tackling early school leaving

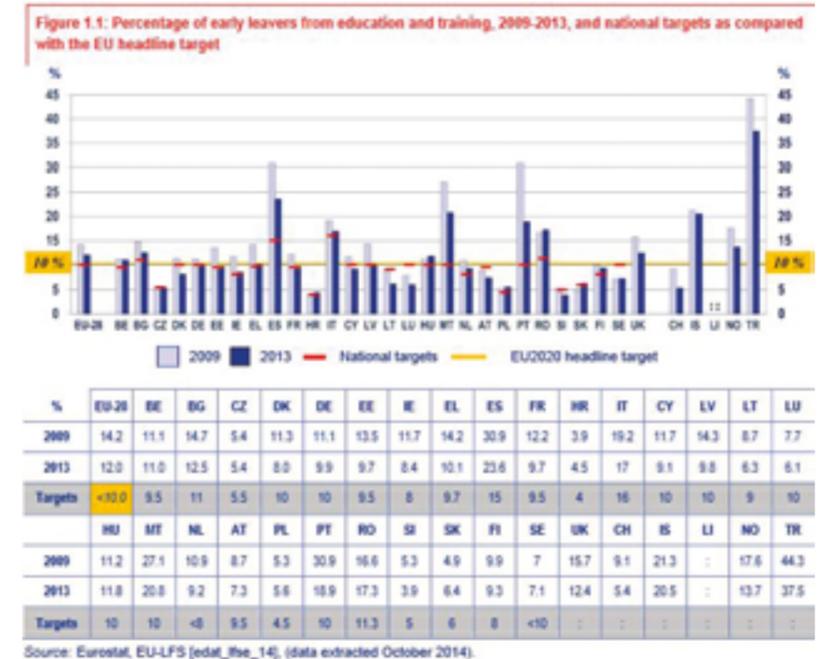
The issue of early school leaving has become the subject of public debate, as well as a priority area for policies designed to combat inequality. This is why bringing early school leaving rates down to below 10% is one of the major goals of the Europe 2020 strategy. Early school leaving is generally characterised by a gradual distancing of the pupil from the educational establishment. It also links back to the issues surrounding young people who are failing or are socially marginalised.

There is ample evidence that young people who leave education prematurely are more likely to suffer unemployment and social exclusion, leading to greater financial and non-financial costs, both for them and, in the longer term, for society<sup>5</sup>. This issue of early school leaving is actually a subject that can no longer be dealt with at a national level alone. The fact is that it now affects every Member State in the European Union. It therefore becomes essential to develop a genuinely transnational approach to dealing with the issue. At present, however, there are no common tools for tackling early school leaving in the European Union, and the approaches remain different, particularly in terms of compulsory school age (16 or 18, depending on Member State). Given this situation, the European Union, through the European Commission, can only play a supporting role for policies carried out to tackle early school leaving. New data for 2012 shows that the majority of Member States have made some progress towards achieving these goals.

Unemployment for early school leavers are almost double those for young people in general

<sup>5</sup> Reducing Early School Leaving in the EU, GHK, 2011.

**Figure 1.**  
Early school leaving (2012)



In 2012, close to 5.5 million young people aged 18 to 24 across the EU had not completed senior secondary education and were no longer in education or training (formal or non-formal). The EU average for young people prematurely was 12.7% for 2012; a fall of 0.7% compared to 2011. However, wide disparities remain between Member States, which obviously leads to wide differences in approach in terms of working programmes.

Vocational training: a tool for tackling early school leaving?

Some best practices adopted across Europe can help combat early school leaving. They include measures aimed at providing social, educational and pedagogical help, as well as support for the family environment (Belgium, Services d'Accrochage Scolaire [SAS]); personalised support services that include an interview and a skills assessment aimed at bringing the young person back into the education and training system and out of the dropout situation they find

themselves in (Italy, Ritorno in formazione, Fondazione Luigi Clerici); and measures to improve vocational education and training (VET). Those measures include, among other things, the improvement of support systems (Belgium, Jobcoaching, Acfi-Fias) and easing the transition into employment (Spain, Social Insertion through insertion enterprises, Trinijove).

Early school leavers are, by definition, no longer in formal or non-formal education. However, non-formal education can function as a second chance for those who leave formal education very early. There is an untapped potential here to help people with little schooling to improve their chances on the labour market.

#### Examples of best practices to combat early school leaving:

##### Communities against early education leaving (ToMS), SCF, Italie

The Bologna province and CEFAL Emilia Romagna (vocational training organisation) joined with FISSAAJ and 15 other organisations from three European countries (Belgium, France, Italy) to set up a partnership. The aim of the LLP "Communities against early education leaving" is to develop, over two years, the exchange of experiences and best practice on the theme of early school leaving.

The initial idea came from the Bologna territorial network, which has for many years been involved in the struggle to counter early school leaving and to improve education for young people. The project partners undertook transnational visits involving public and shared their different approaches compared best practices.

› **The dynamic of mutual learning through school visits, exchanges and various meetings is the strong point of this good practice.**

Non-formal learning:  
a second chance?



##### The ATOMS project, Fissaaj, Belgium

This project aims to offer a transfer of innovation for a method to counter early school leaving as an attempt to reduce the rate of young early leavers' in the partner countries.

The partner countries making up the consortium all have an early school leaving rate that is higher than the European average. During the first Leonardo partnership, (involving Belgium, Italy and France), the partners were able to identify existing mechanisms in terms of countering early school leaving, but acknowledged the need to deepen an innovative methodology, such as the 'SAS method' (Services d'Accrochage Scolaire [SAS] - School Retention Services), as a possible response to early school leaving.

The goals of this project are:

- To create a compendium/reference guide of data on the causes/factors of early school leaving, of already existing mechanisms in partner countries and the characteristics of at-risk groups. This survey will make it possible to identify a country's needs in terms of responses and solutions to the problem of early leaving, but also to act preventatively on the first 'symptoms' of young people dropping out.
- Transferring the SAS method to target groups: youths and young adults with social, personal, behavioural or family problems who are displaying episodes of deep rupture from their schooling or training.
- Training of partner trainers: the SAS experts will demonstrate to European trainers a theoretical and practical learning module of their tools and methods for mentoring young people in order to enable their reintegration into an educational establishment under the best possible conditions.

- Testing the SAS method on target groups in the partner countries: this testing will enable a comparative analysis to be made of the results of the implementation of the new mechanism in their regional contexts.

› **The strength of this best practice resides in its approach. It involves testing a methodology that has already proved its effectiveness in Belgium, whilst adapting it to new national contexts. However, as the project is still on-going, we cannot yet draw any conclusions from it.**

#### **Return to training: guidance and training projects against early leaving, Fondazione Luigi Clerici, Italy**

This programme seeks to enable the reintegration of young early leavers into an educational or training pathway. The target public is young people below the age of 18 who no longer go to school or have never registered with a high school. For the most part, they are young people whose family background is difficult, from a social or economic point of view.

› **The strength of this project is in the range of services it offers:**

- Interview
- Skills assessment
- Defining a vocational goal
- Insertion into an educational, vocational training or internship scheme

#### **Actions against early school leaving and for adult retraining, Fondazione Luigi Clerici, Italy**

This project includes two components: combating early school leaving and encouragement to enter the labour market.

The first component, combating early school leaving is based on the following elements:

- Evaluation of results
- Partnership between all stakeholders: families, schools...
- Sharing and coordination between the different actors
- The approach is based on basic skills

This component is also aimed at enabling young early school leavers to rediscover a taste for learning, to help them develop self-confidence and to facilitate social promotion through inclusion in cultural, sporting and recreational activities.

The second component, the DOTE instrument, includes the following elements:

- Evaluation of skills
- Help in job searching (interview preparation, help in writing CVs...)
- Training
- Tutoring for career guidance

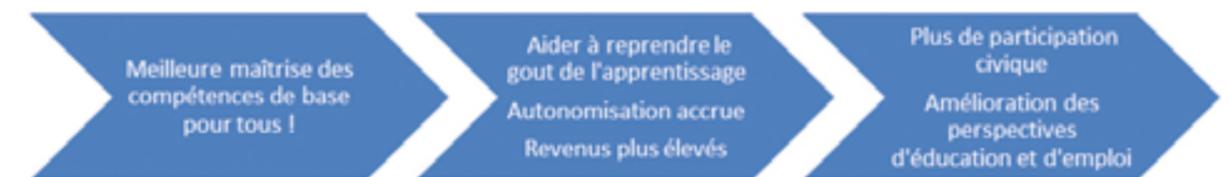
› **It is the set of tools deployed in this best practice that makes its strength. It is about enabling the social and vocational (re) integration of young early leavers and poorly qualified adults using both components of a single framework.**

An analysis of the best practices gathered as part of this project enables us to highlight certain elements:

- › Improving detection of early leavers from initial education and training;
  - involving the families in the activities;
  - promoting the importance of an encouraging, positive and supportive school environment in order to reduce the risk of early leaving.
- › Build better local coordination to support young people leaving initial training without qualifications, on the basis of a territorial diagnosis.
- › Support local experiments in the prevention and treatment of early leaving of initial training. As part of their education policy, local authorities are developing European projects that can mobilise players from different sectors concerned with early school leaving.

## 5.2 The acquisition of key and transversal skills

Full proficiency in the basic competences is essential to improving people's lives and to stimulate strong and sustainable economic growth in Europe. It enables the individual to develop their capacities for reflection and critical thinking. It is at the heart of personal wellbeing. Reading, numeracy, the sciences and technologies make up the basis of learning and are a determining factor in finding employment and integrating into society.



The fact is that the social, economic and demographic challenges facing Europe cannot be met without a strengthening of the different competences and productivity of the working-age population. An insufficient grasp of basic competences is not irretrievable; indeed, some countries that have adopted various approaches to increase the level have observed positive and cost-effective results. Nonetheless, much remains to be done. A surprising number of Europeans do not have a sufficient grasp of basic competences. National and international studies show that close to one adult in five and one 15-year old youth in five do not have the reading skills necessary to be fully autonomous in a modern society.

*'Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope.'*

**KOFI ANNAN,**  
FORMER UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

In 2010, the ministers of the EU countries established a programme for cooperation on basic competences at the European level. In this context, a working group on Mathematics, Science and Technology was set up to help policy-makers implement measures aimed at raising the levels of competences and change attitudes, particularly among struggling pupils.

The report by this high-level group highlights the importance of proficiency in reading in the 21st Century, as well as the need for commitment and cooperation at the political level to achieve a genuine improvement and ensure the continuation of economic growth. By 2020, the proportion of 15 year olds having an insufficient grasp of basic competences, according to PISA tests, should fall below the 15% mark. The PISA study published in 2012 reveals that 22.1% of European pupils have an insufficient grasp of mathematics. For reading, the proportion is 17.8%, and for sciences, 16.6%. In February 2014, the European Commission set up a European Network of National Literacy Organisations. This network raises awareness, gathers and analyses policy information, and exchanges policy approaches, good practices, and initiatives promote reading and to reduce the number of children, young people and adults with low literacy skills by 2020.

Despite those multiple initiatives, the problem of insufficient grasp of basic competences remains an issue. How to tackle it? Everywhere across Europe, there are initiatives set up by the non-profit sector that deserve to be better known. They provide some interesting elements for addressing this key issue.

Now I can say to my daughter : «You can do it because your Mum can»  
Janet – participant

#### Definitions

**Formal learning:** Learning that occurs in an organised and structured environment (such as in an education or training institution or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources). It typically leads to certification.

**Non-formal learning:** learning embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). It may consist in programmes for the acquisition of vocational skills, adult literacy and basic training, on the job training in businesses whereby employers update and improve the skills of their employees and courses offered by civil society organisations.

**Informal learning:** Learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support.

Source: Adapted from the Cedefop glossary.

The meaning and usage of these terms can vary according to local and national contexts.

#### Examples of best practices for the acquisition of key transversal skills:

##### Basic Skills Provision for those with Barriers to Learning, HITC, United Kingdom

This project has a double aim: on the one hand, it seeks to encourage the acquisition of basic skills in an informal manner and, on the other, to increase self-confidence. The target group is essentially made up of adults with few or no competences, people who are economically or socially marginalised and jobseekers.

The public authorities are not involved in the project. There is no legal statute and the project depends on local charitable support. The training period lasts for between 6 and 12 months for each participant, and begins with an individual assessment. Group sizes are small, with a maximum of 10 people. Each group is mixed in terms of participants' abilities. This is an important element in the personal development of the learners. The small group sizes allow for this mixed nature and help foster a spirit of camaraderie.

› **The strength of this best practice comes from the fact that the training provided is designed to meet the learner's needs. It takes account of the learning difficulties that some may encounter, and responds to them through an appropriate methodology and by offering a way to strengthen their self-esteem.**

### Acquiring the basic skills to work in sectors where there are labour shortages, UNI-EST, France

The aim of this project is to dispense training modules that are tailored to jobseekers with no qualifications.

It offers short (12-60 hours) training modules that are highly operational and geared to the requirements of sectors where labour is in short supply (catering, family help, green spaces, cleaning...) and tailored to the needs and expectations of the learners.

These training courses aim to enable:

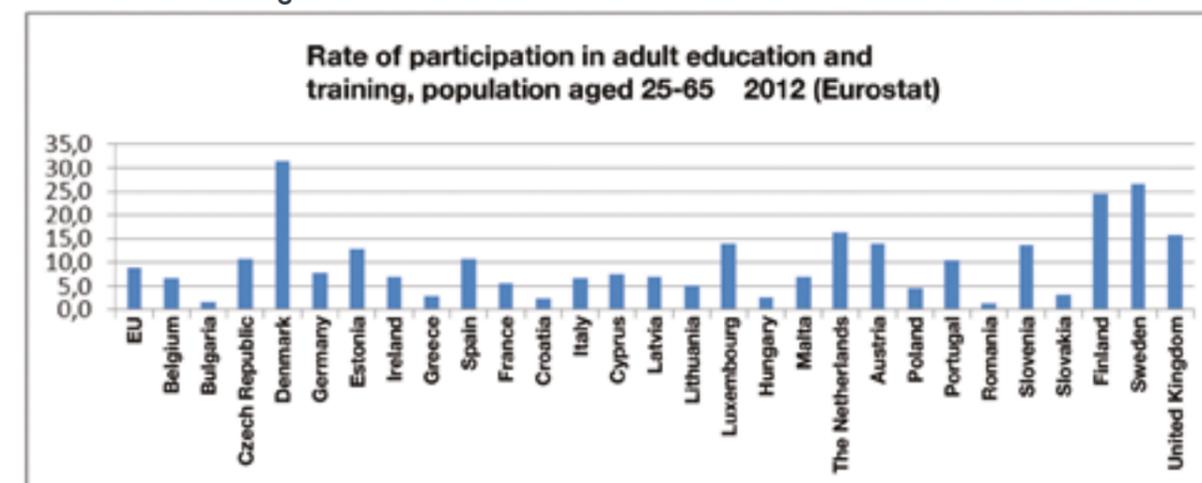
- The acquisition of basic
- Skills (professional attitude and technical skills)
- The development of an appetite for training using a pedagogy of success.

› One of the strengths of this best practice is that it incorporates the requirements of the labour market. The content of the training courses on offer has been developed and validated with the businesses and is very regularly updated according to changes in the sectors and the skills required.

### 5.3 Promoting new pathways to qualifications, upgrading the competence of poorly qualified adults and quality vocational education and training involving workplace learning

Vocational training increases workers' employability, and is an important element in our capacity for adaptation. As part of the Copenhagen Process, a goal was set of 12.5% of employees to be in receipt of training, the current figure being 9%, i.e. a period of training for each worker average once every 10 years. Vocational training is also a factor in maintaining older workers in employment, as demonstrated by the case of Sweden (with a vocational training rate of more than 30%). Adult participation in lifelong training or in training activities is at a fairly low level in a number of countries<sup>6</sup>. The European average (EU 27) was 9% in 2012 and, for a majority of countries, this indicator remains below 15% (the benchmark set by Education and Training 2020). Furthermore, other European statistical sources confirm the deficit in training intensity within businesses, particularly SMEs<sup>7</sup>.

Figure 2.



Source : Eurostat

With a background of rising unemployment, the persistent training deficit is all the more problematic as there is a greater need and demand for more secure vocational pathways and transitions, particularly for the least qualified.

<sup>6</sup> Eurostat, Workforce Survey. Close to 40% of 55-64 year-olds have no higher secondary education diploma (EU27). In nine of the 27 countries in the Union, this figure is actually higher than 50% (European Commission 2010).

<sup>7</sup> For example due to lack of funds, or due to the risk of an employee benefiting from training may leave the firm and use their newly-acquired skills elsewhere.

In the Rethinking Education Communication<sup>8</sup>, the European Commission calls on Member States to redouble their efforts to improve the quality of vocational education and training and in the promotion of workplace learning, including the quality of internships, apprenticeships and alternance training<sup>9</sup>. Workplace-based learning facilitates the transition into employment and plays a role in countering the shortage of skills, particularly in sectors with a high growth potential.

As part of the 2013 European Semester, the specific recommendations by country for 16 Member States focussed on learning and workplace-based learning, improving the employability of young people through the Youth Guarantee scheme and increasing the attractiveness of vocational employment and training<sup>10</sup>.

#### **Learning mainly takes place outside the framework of school-based education.**

After schooling, learning takes place in a number of different contexts, particularly those of the family and work. For skills to remain useful, they have to undergo a process of permanent development throughout one's life. Lifelong training opportunities are a matter for all workers, whether they perform highly skilled or low-skilled jobs.

Learning through work strengthens employment and should become a central pillar of vocational education and training systems throughout Europe

<sup>8</sup> Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes (COM(2012) 669 final).

<sup>9</sup> Combination of apprenticeships in a company and vocational education in an educational institution. 2011 CEDEFOP report on the benefits of vocational education and training: [http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/5510\\_en.pdf](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/5510_en.pdf).

#### **Examples of best practices:**

##### **Towards a national and European network of heritage sites for the training of heritage "enhancers", IDF, France**

The basic idea behind this project is utilization of heritage sites as a vector of local development and a source of local employment:

- To involve young people and those in a process of social and vocational integration in changing their relationship with their local area and to make them genuine actors in their localities;
- The creation of tools and methods to recognise formal and informal qualifications.

As part of this project, a new training course named "heritage maintenance and enhancement officer, level V" was developed. This 860-hour course is organised into five modules comprising:

1. Enhancing a heritage site by carrying out work that calls for traditional knowhow
2. Managing and organising a worksite/logistics
3. Adding value through local knowledge and networking
4. Enhancing a heritage site through organising activities and communication
5. Internship in a business

› **The strength of this practice rests in training leading to certification, that is adapted to a non-qualified target group. But it is also about motivating groups that are distant from the employment market to move towards the new occupation of "heritage maintenance and enhancement agent". Another objective is to involve them in an approach of personal improvement and an active dynamic.**

<sup>10</sup> The 2013 specific recommendations by country can be found here: [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/2013/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/2013/index_en.htm)

### Jobseeker participation in the renovation and conservation of built heritage, Agentura, Slovakia

The aim of this project is to enable the acquisition of basic skills in the crafts of renovation and conservation of the built heritage, including local history and memory of an area, which develops and enhances a sense of civic responsibility.

This project is a good way of enabling the renovation and conservation of ancient buildings whilst fostering local development and improving employment rates. Through worksite teaching, this best practice enables the acquisition of basic and vocational skills for trades in conservation and renovation of the built heritage for people who are disconnected from the labour market.

This project is the result of cooperation between the public authorities and the non-profit sector.

› **The strength of this practice is in using worksite methodology. The basic idea behind the project is to use the locality as a vector for integration. This enables young social dropouts to not only learn skills and thus find employment, but also to understand their history, to become more engaged with their environment, which, *in fine*, encourages them to take a positive path of individual and societal growth.**

### Local Actions for the Social Integration of Sensitive Social Groups, Mesogeiake-MEK, Greece

These are integrated programmes for the accompaniment and support of jobseekers, from the initial drafting of their career project all the way into employment. The programme therefore aims to redress the balance between supply and demand on the local labour market, notably by supporting the most vulnerable in their search for employment.

The specific goals of the “Local Action” are as follows:

- acquire skills that meet the identified needs of local businesses
- fill the vacant positions in existing businesses
- create new businesses that favour local specificities (culture, environment, ...)
- acquire the necessary experience to qualify for special subsidies through national and local investment programmes

The “Local Actions” also provide technical support participating businesses, notably with the hiring and employment process. The final goal is to strengthen job creation and to help the most vulnerable groups in society to find and keep a job.

› **One of the strengths of this best practice is the establishment of partnerships for development that include the public authorities and private actors. These partnerships put the accent on establishing networks between, on the one hand, unemployed people from socially sensitive groups and, on the other hand, local businesses. The partnerships for development carry out activities in support of jobseekers, such as short training programmes on specific matters, personal and personalised growth, vocational guidance, drafting business plans for those who want to start a business and networking activities with local firms.**

### Jobcoaching, ACFI-FIAS, Belgium

Jobcoaching is about providing jobseekers who are seeking to (re)enter the job market with support towards and in employment. The main aim of this practice is to increase the chances of social and occupational integration and thus to strengthen social cohesion.

The jobseeker is coached prior to hiring (defining their personal project, looking for jobs), during hiring (support during the selection process, help with contract negotiations...) and after hiring (averting early leaving, conflict mediation) for at least six months.

› **The strength of this best practice is in the methodology of support that has been developed to strengthen the jobseeker's autonomy and keep them in lasting employment. It is a personalised and tailored method of accompaniment.**

### Vocational integration itineraries in the cleaning sector, Asociacion Para la Mediacion social Equa, Spain

This project provides a genuine social and employment itinerary in the cleaning sector for people at risk of exclusion, from the acquisition of skills prior to employment up to integration in an ordinary business or a social enterprise.

The itinerary is made up of different training activities:

1. Workshops for acquiring basic competences "A bridge between education and the world of work". This training course, which lasts for six months, provides training in basic skills and the values necessary for taking one's place in a working environment and being able to access the further steps in this itinerary.

2. Personal training: this training course hinges around the occupational skills of the professional cleaner, and takes place at two levels:

- Initial occupational training: aimed at young people who do not have a secondary education diploma.

The participants are trained in level 1 occupational skills, according to the national register of vocational qualifications, in order to be able to access the labour market under the best possible conditions.

- Courses on the cleaning of surfaces and furniture in buildings and estates.

3. Transversal training:

- Job finding workshop: workshops on developing skills for finding employment. The workshop is intermittent over the course of the year, in groups of 6-8 participants, and the duration depends on their particular needs.

- Workshop for training in new technologies: 30 - 60 hour workshops aimed at learning to use IT tools, such as Word or other word-processing software, internet use, email and how to search for jobs online.

› **The strength of this practice is that it has been designed as an integrated pathway. It includes all the training necessary for finding employment in the target sector. This itinerary also fosters personal development and self-esteem. Its integrated nature, the numerous activities and the presence of a social and employment mediator are part of the added value of this good practice.**

### Horizont 2009, General Directorate of Social Work and Child Protection, District 1, Romania

This project had a dual aim: to introduce to Romania the function of the career guidance counsellor, and to create a social enterprise for people suffering from a disability. The idea for the project was born from the social context. Disabled people face enormous difficulties in their search for work. They often face rejection because of their lack of capacities and the numerous prejudices in existence. Through a partnership involving three public authorities, non-governmental organisations, one firm and a transnational partnership, the project was able to create a social enterprise with seven workshops for disabled people. It was also able to provide employment to 60 disabled people to look after the workshops. The second component of the project enabled the legal recognition of the function of career guidance counsellor and the setting up of specific training courses for career guidance.

› **The strength of this best practice is to have combined setting up a social enterprise with developing training modules for career guidance counsellors.**

### Seminars for fishermen, T.T Technical Training Center Larnaca LTD, Cyprus

The goal of this project was to enable fishermen to improve their vocational skills. The 30 participants, who were split into two groups, received 180 hours of training over the course of a year. The training modules covered eight different themes, including legislation, health and safety at work, sales techniques, Internet use, the history and development of fishing, environmental protection and first aid.

› **The strength of this best practice resides in its specificity: seminars for fishermen. It is quite unusual to find this type of training being provided by public bodies. Also, the seminars were aimed at bolstering skills that enabled them to add value to their work, rather than offering new skills to move towards other types of employment. This is a best practice that was conceived with an eye to the social, economic and geographical context, and the way in which the seminars were designed and implemented make this an innovative practice.**

### Support/Training in non-agricultural work for people in rural areas, CRFPS PRO VOCATIE, Romania

This practice has two aims: the first is to identify the needs of rural areas in terms of employment; the second is to provide information, advice and training for people looking for employment. The region covered by this project- North-western Romania, and notably the Salaj administrative area- has one of the highest unemployment rates.

› **The strength of this practice is in the development of an integrated training and employment programme adapted to the needs of rural populations. By offering to boost the occupational skills of the target group, including in the area of environmental protection and the use of ICT, this practice aims to provide an alternative for the unemployed.**

An analysis of the best practices gathered as part of this project enables us to highlight certain elements:

- › **Guidance is the first step towards successful integration** (particularly for young jobseekers), the next ones being vocational assessment and personalised action plans. Guidance is essential for helping young jobseekers in particular to assess their career options and their job opportunities, to understand the realities of the occupation under consideration and to choose appropriate training courses. Several organisations involved in this project offer career guidance services, advice on employment matters or career pathways (Jobcoaching, ...).
- › **Learner-centred training that is adapted to the needs of the labour market.** Several of the best practices selected clearly show that, in order foster the social and occupational reintegration of poorly qualified adults, the use of specific and adapted training is essential (Uni-Est,...).
- › **The use of appropriate methodology.** Most of the best practices set up their own methodology. It reflects an analysis of the learner's needs, the socioeconomic context and/or the legal framework. In no case should it be about reproducing a methodology; instead, there should be a case-by-case analysis to determine which is best suited to the specific context. This can be seen with the preference for worksite training in the case of Agentura in Slovakia and IDF in France or the development of a new methodology from scratch in the case of Jobcoaching in Belgium. The common feature is the prime importance given to the personalisation of the methodology, which has proven to be a key element for the success of a project.

## 5.4 European transparency and recognition tools

### Definition

Validation of formal, non-formal or informal learning is confirmation by an authorised body that an individual has acquired learning outcomes measured against a relevant standard set within the education or training system. Validation leads to certification (awarding of a qualification) through a four-stage process according to European standards:

1. Identification through dialogue of the particular experiences of an individual,
2. Collection of documentation proving prior experience,
3. A formal assessment of these experiences,
4. Certification of the results of the assessment which may lead to the awarding of a partial or full qualification.

Very often, at the national or regional level, only some of the elements of this process are in place. Furthermore, national terminology used to describe these elements are not always directly comparable with European terms, which is an illustration of the limits to the 'Europeanisation' of the labour market.

As highlighted by many European initiatives<sup>11</sup>, the development of competences and investment in training are all the more necessary in that the renewal in the offer in skills will have to meet the needs created by the development of professional mobility that will be taking place by 2020 as a result of changes in the productive system (notably those linked to the economic crisis) and retirements.

A particularly promising point is that of the recognition of an individual's skills through validation of non-formal and informal learning (NFIL). Validation of NFIL is one aspect of a more general trend towards increased attention being given to the personalisation of career paths, but extending it could have positive effects on the workings of the labour market. Over the last decade, several European policies and instruments have been developed and implemented as part of the ET 2020 strategic framework and the Bologna process, aimed at supporting learner and worker mobility through greater transparency and to facilitate recognition of their knowledge and abilities. Giving individuals the possibility of developing their skills in a flexible way and to have those skills clearly understood and recognised across borders (both sectorial and geographical) will help reduce skills gaps and increase the effectiveness of education and training systems. The European qualifications framework founded on an approach of focussing on learning outcomes represents a benchmark for comparing individual qualifications and the qualifications systems in the reference countries. The Europass framework, which includes the Europass CV and the European Skills Passport, provide important tools for citizens to be able to describe their achievements, their knowledge, their aptitudes and their qualifications in a more structured and transparent manner.

<sup>11</sup> In particular the Europe 2020 and Education and Training 2020 strategies and the initiatives aimed at developing lifelong education and training, the instruments instituted by the Union (such as the European Certification Framework or the ESCO [European Skills/Competences, qualifications and Occupations] programme, but also via Community Law (directives or recommendations) or the work of the European social partners (such as the resolution by the European Confederation of Trade Unions: More investment in lifelong learning for quality jobs).

However, some challenges remain. A coherent framework needs to be established, as well as better coordination between instruments and departments, as called for in the “Rethinking Education” communication put out in 2012, which announced the creation of “European Area for Skills and Qualifications”.

As far as the recognition and certification of competences at the European level is concerned, there is a great wealth of experience of validation, as well as a great disparity by country in terms of whether it exists or is implemented. However, even where the “right” to validation exists, it is not necessarily activated or used, often due to a lack of information or support. It is important that all stakeholders address the issue of validation of skills: businesses, trade unions, employees, training professionals and government, in order to create the conditions for proper implementation of transparent and effective validation mechanisms, and to generate a movement for the recognition and raising of skills.

In order to understand the importance of such recognition, we have chosen to present an example of best practice implemented in Belgium.

#### Care worker training, AID, Belgium

In Belgium, the training of care workers is governed by a law that requires having a secondary education diploma in order to be allowed to perform the job. The practice in question consisted in enabling interns to acquire skills validated by the education authorities without having to pass through school, and thus to obtain the diploma necessary to access this employment. In order to do this, the training courses had to be recognised on the basis of their quality.

The strength of this practice resides in the methodology. Work was done on identifying the skills acquired in each course, rather than a comparison of course results, which would have resulted in failure. What was needed was to establish a common language.

› **This best practice rests on the operators’ willingness to work together and identify common interests. Another element that makes up the strength of this practice was the success in overcome the distrust between operators and for them to really consider themselves as partners. This illustrates the importance of working in partnerships that, by establishing links, lead to sustainable results thanks to the participation of all the players concerned.**

## 5.5 Constructive partnerships

An essential pillar for a policy to encourage the social and occupational integration for low-skilled people, working in a partnership is often a key to improving their skills and qualifications and helping them to access the labour market.

A partnership aims to:

- **bring diverse and complementary expertise together in the same place;**
- **set up synergies with operators and actors** working in the field of social and occupational integration, employment and training;
- **enable a better knowledge of the operators and the services they have to offer.**

Partnerships are an important formula for ensuring that national or regional authorities take an inclusive approach when they are conceiving their programmes, by joining together with the various regional or local actors: the social partners and civil society stakeholders. It is a question of developing a coherent strategy- all actors need to be approached, as their visions often represent non-negligible added value- but also to encourage, as much as is possible, a local approach, since the local actors in the field have a better knowledge of local needs and will help to better target the instruments for successful and lasting social and occupational (re)integration.

In order to demonstrate the benefits of partnerships, we have chosen to present some examples that demonstrate the effectiveness of such an approach.

### Examples of best practices

#### Acquiring basic skills through work, Médialys, France

The aim of this practice is to increase the grasp of language and logical thinking skills, improve the quality of transferable occupational skills, develop social autonomy and improve access to employment for people who have difficulties in mastering the French language and lack basic knowledge. Médialys' activities take place across the Lyon metropolitan area's public transport network and are supported by a public/private partnership that brings together SYTRAL (public transport trade union in the Lyon metropolitan area), the firm Keolis Lyon, the Rhône General Council and the Greater Lyon metropolitan authority.

This unusual partnership in support of social and occupational integration activities closely linked to a public service implies a very strong requirement for quality, which is regularly monitored through surveys.

However, it is an exceptional instrument that offers the chance to get trained and gain qualifications by allying working situations, training activities and activities that are of public benefit. This means that despite the tight requirements in terms of quality, people disconnected from the traditional labour market can be brought in through specific actions made possible by this type of partnership.

› **The practice presented here rests on a learning method that is built around work missions. Individualisation and personalisation are the strong points of this supported training that is carried out in the field by the tutor, according to occupational tasks and the identification of needs carried out jointly by the firm Keolis Lyon and the Médialys support staff.**

In the classical configuration for training or work, the intern or the employee has to adapt to the framework. In the case of this accompanied learning, it is the tutor who adapts to the person. Demonstrating confidence in employees' potential, concretely showing them their capacities and skills from their workstation is a formidable tool for rebuilding self-esteem, which has often been damaged for this type of group that finds itself in deep difficulty and has suffered failures, particularly in learning situations.

Having a dedicated tutor and supervisor for these activities ensures daily contact. This also enables a relationship of trust to develop, which is essential in cases where learning history is troubled.

Working on employees' transversal skills is a positive point that gives meaning to their learning path. The participants become aware that the competences they acquire can be mobilised in other jobs and other areas...

#### **Integrated systems to support education and the social economy, Barka Foundation of Mutual Help, Poland**

With the collapse of the communist system at the end of the 1980's, many people were unable to face up to a more independent way of life. This led to an increase in alcoholism, poverty and social violence. This, in turn, led to a rapid rise in homelessness. For many people, it meant having no other choice than to live in the street. At the same time, the collapse of the collective agriculture system left several thousands of hectares of land in Poland's rural areas, along with farm buildings, abandoned and neglected. All of this took place against a background of massive political upheaval and uncertainty.

This is the context in which Barka managed to change legislation and provide a chance for people who found themselves excluded.

Barka created "Centres for social integration". These centres are vocational training institutions that help the long-term unemployed to rebuild their work ethic and return to the labour market. The centres offer participants financial incentives that are greater than those offered by social security. They provide a year (up to one-and-a-half years) of vocational training that is dispensed daily, for between six and eight hours a day.

The centres are set up as part of what are called "Local partnerships for the social economy and social integration". These partnerships involve social, public and private partners.

Barka's activities also aim for the creation of social cooperatives and social enterprises.

› **The strength of this activity is the local partnership approach. All of the players are mobilised to enable social and vocational reintegration. Barka's activity has the merit of highlighting the importance of engagement for the city or neighbourhood in which we live, and of mutual help. They have managed to get across the message that each of us has not just a responsibility towards our community, but also has the power to change the society in which we live, by helping others. The added value of this practice is in bringing all the local actors together to act on a social problem such as excluded people.**

### Local insertion and training through insertion enterprises,

Fundacio privada Trinijove, Spain

A social insertion enterprise combines training and qualification for low-skilled people who are at risk of exclusion. The aim is to help those vulnerable groups to acquire the necessary competences and to support them in their search for employment. The project is based on the synergies created from networking different actors: the public sector and private businesses (hotels...).

Trinijove has signed an agreement with the Catalan Employment Service and the Catalan Institute for Vocational Qualifications, which enables it to award qualifications to participants on the basis of work experience or training courses. Trinijove trains jobseekers according to the requirements of businesses. It therefore represents a bridge between the supply and demand for jobs.

The activities take place in different neighbourhoods in Barcelona. This local approach is one of the added values of Trinijove's activities. It enables all the actors to be put in contact with each other, creating links that strengthen mutual trust. This means that businesses can overcome the distrust that often exists towards people who have an occupational or personal history that is often chaotic.

Trust and building links are the foundations for a constructive partnership.

› **Trinijove's strength is its public/private partnership model, and the fact that the training provided matches the needs of businesses is a lever for employment. In the single year 2014, the social enterprise enabled 79 people to find employment.**

### Cross Lohucca training project, Integrity, Bulgaria

This project enabled a cross-border partnership to be established between Greece and Bulgaria. This partnership brought together municipalities, local businesses, regional associations and vocational education and training providers. The main activities are:

The main activities are:

1. Analysing unemployment in the region
2. Providing training to acquire key competences
3. Setting up a database of job opportunities
4. Creating a dynamic tool for communication between employers and jobseekers
5. Creating a tool for simplifying job searching

› **The strength of this project is in encouraging the creation of conditions that can foster growth and employment in the region. The use of new technologies is an important asset of this best practice. It also enables closer cross-border cooperation.**

**Nazareno Cooperative, SCF, Italy**

The aim of the cooperative is to promote a cultural shift that helps break down the barriers between the “world of the disabled” and the “world of the able-bodied”. The cooperative works with disabled and disadvantaged people in general, through care and rehabilitation services, support for insertion into the world of work, and the sale of products made by those people.

Disabled people, those with mental health problems and disadvantaged are the target group. The cooperative seeks to improve the health and wellbeing services on offer by building and structuring networks working on the issue; to innovate to diversify the range of services on offer; strengthen integration by expanding the existing networks and creating new support networks; to rationalise the rehabilitation system for an optimal use of resources and centre those resources on the priority needs of the person.

› **The strong points of this experiment are the flexibility in meeting the needs of the individual and the motivation displayed by their operators in their everyday work. In particular, we should also emphasise the importance of having a large network and contacts with people, institutions, non-profit organisations, foundations, etc., whether local, national or foreign.**

An analysis of the best practices gathered as part of this project enables us to highlight certain elements:

› **Partnership: a key element for successful integration:**

Very often, partnership is the key element in the social and occupational reintegration of poorly qualified people. Partnership enables the different stakeholders to get together, to overcome distrust and to create the constructive relationships that can lead to projects that create growth and lasting employment.

› **The local level:** This is often the most appropriate scale for promoting partnerships. It enables actors who know the needs of the target groups and the labour market well to not only help supply meet demand but, especially, to organise training activities, reintegration pathways and support that is well adapted to the local needs and realities.

# PROPOSALS FOR POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the goals of this project was for it to lead to a series of policy recommendations. The project promoters' intention was to put innovating ideas to the fore, starting from an analysis of the best practices set out in this guide.

This exercise was carried out throughout the duration of the project and led to the presentation, at the closing seminar on 18 December 2014, of nine proposals for policy recommendations.

These nine proposals will be the subject of more in-depth work all the way through 2015. Their aim is to raise the awareness of political actors (Members of the European Parliament, of the European Commission), as well as civil society (organisations, think-tanks...). The goal is to make the recommendations and their added value, and also to put forward our vision of vocational education and training. In the current period, where social achievements are being sacrificed or threatened in a number of European countries, to permanently freeze efforts in education and training would be another blow to the social and economic development of the European area. It is of prime importance that European efforts in the field of training and education become tangible on the ground by ensuring the possibility: of better vocational training, the promotion of basic competences and an effective tackling of early school leaving, of constructive partnerships to put in place global and lasting solutions, of recognising skills for everyone in order to ensure better anticipation and management of occupational mobility.

1. Support for integrated training pathways: alternating work/training for adults with low skill levels to meet the needs of businesses, using an approach that fosters social and occupational inclusion.

**Examples of best practice:**

**UNI-EST (FR), EQUA (SP), Agentura R2I (SK), Mesogeia (EL)**

UNI-EST is the lead organisation of the Local Plan for Integration and Employment for the Est lyonnais area and has put in place short training modules lasting for 12-60 hours. These training modules are highly practical and adapted to the needs of business sectors that are experiencing a shortage of labour (catering, cleaning, personal care, maintenance of green spaces, ...) and tailored to the needs and expectations of the learners the majority of whom have few basic skills.

These training courses enable them to acquire the basic competences to work in those sectors that are experiencing a shortage of labour.

The added value of the best practice is that UNI-EST is the only organisation in the Lyon metropolitan area to fit the following criteria: training in short modules, training for sectors that are short of labour and do not require a high level of training, teaching methods tailored for a low-skilled target group, training activities that can be joined at any time.

2. When granting subsidies for European projects to promote training and social and occupational integration for those with low skill levels, to take account of whether there exists a partnership between the various actors, such as: civil society, public authorities, educational and training bodies, the social partners and businesses.

All members of the CEC are, wherever possible, trying to develop regional partnerships that can, depending on the

case, include schools, training centres, the non-profit sector, businesses and public authorities that offer training and social and occupational integration of people with low skill levels.

The members of the CEC want the work done in setting up partnerships to be considered as an added value for accessing European funding, without forasmuch having the Commission impose partnerships that may be difficult to implement and that would become a rule for funding eligibility. Yes to partnership, but with some flexibility for action.

3. Tackle early school leaving by giving support to innovative learning approaches that can foster a renewed appetite for learning: use of interactive learning tools, more practical teaching approaches, work placements...

**Examples of best practice:**

**Fissaaj (BE), Fondazione Luigi Clerici (IT) SCF (IT)**

The Fissaaj (Be) Federation operating in French-speaking Belgium in the areas of help for young people and help for the disabled has presented the best practice of one of its members, the "School Retention Services" (SAS), which are approved and subsidised by the Wallonia-Brussels Federation. Their mission is to provide young people aged 12-18 who are in an early school leaving situation with social, educational and pedagogical support by providing daytime reception services and, if need, home support services with the young person's family. The SAS's goal is to enable the young person to return to an educational establishment under the best possible conditions.

The Fondazione Luigi Clerici brings together some 20 training centres in the Lombardy region. These centres offer tools and methods to help re-engage with the school environment, but also guidance and vocational training to enable young people above the age of 14 who do not wish

to re-enter the classical school environment to become involved in alternance training/education activities that would provide them with the opportunity to acquire the competences and aptitudes that meet the needs of the labour market.

#### 4. Promote informal learning of basic skills centred on the learner's needs.

##### Example of best practice:

##### Hope in the Community (UK)

HITC is a charitable organisation based in Kent (UK) that is working with community interest company Medway English Training Council to develop activities to improve English language and mathematics levels for target groups that have few or no qualifications and are experiencing difficulties in learning, and who no longer wish to participate in formal education and training, where they have experienced repeated failure. In the geographical areas covered by this best practice, only 38% of 16-year olds have completed basic education.

The 6-12 month training courses are organised in local communities, in small mixed-ability groups with a maximum size of 10 participants, in order to encourage peer learning and can be joined at any time. The training takes place in an informal environment, making learning easier and more attractive.

The aim of these essentially learner-centred training courses is, above all, to develop the personal skills, self-confidence and self-esteem of people who have lost their way in society and to consider positive changes in their personal and vocational development.

We propose that the EU provide better recognition, or even a European label for this kind of organisation providing training and skills in an informal manner. This could be done via Erasmus+ or ESF European projects.

5. Facilitate access to validation of prior experience. Streamline training programmes for those with low levels of qualification. ECVET as an instrument should be respectful of the teaching processes of the various training operators. They should, through the development of assessment tools, enable automatic recognition of achievements between national and European operators.

##### Example of best practice:

##### AID (BE)

AID is a federation that is active in Wallonia and Brussels, bringing together non-profit organisations that work in providing training and social and vocational integration for people with low skills levels. They have set up a care worker training course for under-qualified people with no secondary school diploma.

Training in care work is governed by a law that requires holding a diploma in order to be able to exercise the job. In Belgium, only the education authorities can award this diploma.

The practice consisted in enabling trainees to obtain this diploma without having to return to school. This was done by building bridges and pathways and bringing together actors in the fields of social welfare training and vocational training.

6. 1. Develop public/private partnership mechanisms that offer actions for inclusion that integrate work, training (technical and transversal skills) and social and professional accompaniment; for example, offer incentives (fiscal, social...) to encourage private funding of initiatives in favour of social and occupational integration.

##### Examples of best practice:

##### MEDIALYS (FR) Trinijove (SP), SCF (IT), ACFI (BE)

Médyalis is an association set up under the 1901 statutes, set up by the state, Systral Keolis Lyon and Greater Lyon. Its goal

is to work in partnership with the public and private actors involved in the operation of the Lyon public transport network. The partners operate in the Lyon metropolitan area, working to strengthen social ties and for the social and vocational integration of disadvantaged through activities carried out around the TCL/TER (public transport) network.

› **This practice offers an example of an atypical partnership that gives the opportunity for those with few skills to get trained and qualified by joining together a workplace environment, training schemes and activity that is of public benefit.**

7. Encourage the creation of social enterprises whose project includes the setting up and implementation of actions for training and social and occupational integration of people with low skill levels.

**Examples of best practice:**

**Trinijove (SP), Barka (PL)**

Following the fall of the communist regime in Poland and the disappearance of large-scale agricultural schemes, hundreds of thousands of Poles found themselves without a job or income. These people were, on the whole, poorly qualified and found themselves in a situation of extreme precariousness. To respond, at least partially, to this situation our Polish partner, the Barka Foundation, collaborated in the early 2000's with the Ministry for Work and Social Policy to draft legislation that enabled the creation and funding of social integration centres in the country. These training centres are tasked with the re-socialisation, training and social and occupational integration of the long-term unemployed. With help from the government and the ESF, they offer unemployed people financial incentives that are higher than social security benefits, which enables the participants to no longer depend on handouts and take active steps for employment and enter or re-enter the labour market.

8. Enhancing the value of apprenticeships as part of policy action at the European level to develop genuine collaborations between schools and businesses.

**CEC recommendations:**

It is recognised that apprenticeships ease the transition between school and employment. The new Commission should, as part of a European-level policy action, give greater value to apprenticeships than it currently does, via funding through the ESF or specific funding.

Several member states should improve the general image of vocational training and notably apprenticeships, which can be a real career opportunity and a genuine instrument for tackling unemployment among young people.

9. Promote new training pathways in potential growth areas where there is a shortage of skills.

**Examples of best practice:**

**IDF (FR), UNI-Est (FR),**

Best practice from the Institut pour le Développement et la Formation en Corse (IDF), which is a grouping of training centres in Corsica that offer a training course for 'heritage enhancement and maintenance officers', which enables young people and adult jobseekers to acquire key competences in a working environment and the establishment of a professional qualification from the Training Federation.

# CONCLUSION

The best practices analysed above have varied objectives, the common thread being support, training and social and/or vocational integration for low-skilled people. In order to be truly effective, and to meet the needs of the target group whilst taking account of the requirements of the labour market, it is vital that they do not lose sight of the three following objectives:

## 1. Adapted methodology:

- Continuous guidance and support for the person throughout their training period and, if required, during the first months of employment;
- Support that is individual or in small groups, starting from the needs of the learner, through formal or informal training that is more practical than theoretical and centred on the requirements of the labour market.

## 2. A specific approach:

- The importance of a bottom-up approach: the need to take account of the background, of national and/or regional specificities, of the economic and social realities, of the legal framework...
- The region, the neighbourhood or the micro-neighbourhood are often the most appropriate scale to reach people who are dropping out of school or low-skilled by setting up formal or informal training schemes that are centred as much as possible on the learners' needs.

## 3. A logic of partnership:

- The importance of working in partnership (actors in education, training, the business world, the non-profit sector, public authorities) and to value local actors;

- Increased investment from businesses in the training of this group by encouraging apprenticeships and offering more workplace internships.

Moreover, the European Union should facilitate the exchange of best practices between Member States and ensure that policies and funding programmes for Vocational Education and Training take account of the specific needs of these target groups.

Of course, this project will not stop when European funding ends in December 2014.

The CEC and its members will, in their daily work, continue to defend the points made above by raising awareness, meeting with and challenging their local, regional, national and European partners to implement policies, initiatives or projects that enable the setting up of pathways for training and socio economic integration that take better account of the needs of all stakeholders.

The documents referred to in this guide (best practice forms, reading grids) can be downloaded from the following address: [www.cecasbl.org](http://www.cecasbl.org)





