

REPORT

# MAKING INCLUSION WORK

REACHING DISENFRANCHISED GROUPS  
THROUGH WORK-BASED LEARNING

Edited by  
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## ABOUT THIS COLLECTION

This essay collection was produced as part of a pan-European programme of work managed by IPPR (the Institute for Public Policy Research). Presenting a series of case studies, it forms part of a series of analyses conducted between 2015 and 2017 on aspects of European skills issues and labour markets. In this collection we have focussed specifically on how work-based learning can be a tool to integrate disenfranchised groups into the labour market.

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# 1. USING WORK-BASED LEARNING TO FACILITATE LABOUR MARKET PARTICIPATION FOR ALL

AN OVERVIEW OF OUR CASE STUDIES  
FROM FIVE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

MANUEL SOUTO-OTERO

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

While many Europeans enjoy access to high-quality education and training, others are unable to secure work or training opportunities. In this respect, Europe still faces significant challenges. More than half of the 12 million long-term unemployed in Europe are low-skilled (European Commission 2016a). Some groups are disproportionately affected by unemployment: youth unemployment rose to over 24 per cent in 2013 and was still as high as 18 per cent in 2016 (European Commission 2017a). The overall proportion of 15–24-year-olds in Europe not in education, employment or training (NEETs) stood at 12 per cent in 2015 (Mascherini and Ledermaier 2016), but ranges substantially from 6 per cent in Germany and 11 per cent in France and the UK to 15 per cent in Spain and 21 per cent in Italy. Low-skilled people, older workers, disabled people, immigrants, lone parents, ethnic minorities and those living in more deprived areas are also particularly affected by unemployment (Barrett 2010, EAPN 2017). Labour markets therefore need to become more inclusive and draw on the skills and talents of all, including vulnerable groups (European Commission 2016a:2).

Supporting people, in particular the vulnerable and disadvantaged, in finding and retaining employment has become a key priority for European countries. The European Commission's 'Recommendation on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market' linked integration into the labour market with notions of human dignity, social justice and social protection (European Commission 2008).

Education and training cannot bring about greater labour market inclusion on their own, but must be combined with other measures (see European Commission 2017b; Business Europe, CEEP, ETUC/CES and UEAPME 2010) addressing specific barriers faced by different groups.<sup>1</sup> Education and training are nevertheless fundamental to achieving inclusive labour markets and reducing unemployment, as recognised in the 2016 EU

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<sup>1</sup> For example, lone parents may rely on the availability of affordable childcare in order to work (OECD 2013) and immigrants may have particular needs associated with discrimination, legal restrictions or employment rights (Stirling 2015).

initiative ‘Upskilling pathways: New Opportunities for Adults’, which aims to help adults acquire literacy, numeracy and digital skills and work towards an upper secondary qualification or equivalent, and the commitment that EU member states made in 2013 to a Youth Guarantee to ensure that all young people under the age of 25 receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education (Council of the European Union 2013a; European Commission 2016c).

Gregg (2015) highlights three valuable assets that increase unemployed people’s chances of securing a job: the right qualifications, relevant experience in a similar role and a reference from an employer. WBL can help with all these aspects. Moreover, it can be part of a range of learner-centred strategies to meet the needs of diverse learners (Andersen, Boud and Cohen 2000). This synthesis report reflects on data from seven case studies in five European countries (France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK) that illustrate practical approaches and initiatives being adopted across Europe to make use of WBL as a tool to promote inclusive labour markets. The remainder of the report is organised as follows: section 2 explains the importance of WBL in achieving inclusive labour markets in Europe; section 3 sets out the main themes and success factors identified in the analysis of the case studies; and section 4 presents recommendations based on those experiences with a view to stimulating further debate and action in this area.

## **1.2. WORK-BASED LEARNING AS AN INSTRUMENT TO PROMOTE INCLUSIVE LABOUR MARKETS**

According to the OECD (2013:5), labour market inclusion means providing the unemployed and other groups at the margins of the labour market with the support, incentives, skills and training they need to move into employment. It also means providing better opportunities for people in low-paid, insecure jobs to find work that is more stable, rewarding and productive.<sup>2</sup> European countries and social partners (see ETUC, Business Europe, CEEP and UEAPME 2015) have acted to promote more inclusive labour markets through preventive measures, reform of their education and training systems – a topic addressed later in this section – and Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs).<sup>3</sup> Recently, cities (Eurocities 2015), NGOs (EAPN 2017) and private employment services (Eurociett 2015) have also devoted attention to the creation of inclusive labour markets through WBL and contributed to debate nationally and internationally.

The global financial crisis further highlighted the need to make labour markets more inclusive (OECD 2013) and has brought the issue to the centre of the debate. Building on previous experiences, the New Skills Agenda for Europe (European Commission 2016a) has recently outlined a set of actions to try to ensure that people acquire the skills they need for work and to integrate in society, which underline the importance of VET and WBL. The agenda underlines the importance of increasing the

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2 The European Commission adopts a similar definition. Labour markets are inclusive when everyone of working age, especially vulnerable and disadvantaged people, can participate in paid work (European Commission 2017b).

3 These generally include human capital investment through basic and vocational training, alongside measures that enhance job search capabilities, extend job opportunities and increase incentives to take up education or employment (OECD 2013). The effectiveness of ALMPs is a contested issue (Etherington and Ingold 2012).

quality and relevance of education in a context with high unemployment but where around 40 per cent of European employers, according to Commission estimates, report difficulty in finding people with the right skills to grow and innovate (European Commission 2016a:2). Meanwhile, the EU has predicted a shortage of people with vocational education and training (VET) qualifications in the future (European Commission 2016a).

WBL,<sup>4</sup> thus, can be instrumental in achieving more inclusive labour markets. Its importance has since been emphasised in EU documents such as the Bruges Communiqué, the Rethinking Education Communication, the Youth Employment Package and the New Skills Agenda for Europe.<sup>5</sup> The Riga Conclusions on deliverables in VET for 2015–20 recommend supporting opportunities for learners to undertake a WBL experience as part of their studies, noting that this would increase the quality and labour market relevance of vocational skills and qualifications (European Commission 2015).<sup>6</sup> European countries such as Italy have reformed their education and training systems to include new provisions promoting apprenticeships as high-quality pathways from school to work (OECD 2013). Action continues, as illustrated by the introduction of an apprenticeship levy in 2017 in the UK (DfE 2017), where it is expected that there will be strong demand for workers in occupations that frequently rely on vocational qualifications (Clifton, Thompson and Thorley 2014:12).

Despite these efforts, the supply of WBL in the EU is underdeveloped (European Commission 2013). The Commission has recently called for an increase in opportunities for WBL and an enhancement of business–education partnerships (2016a:13), considering WBL a proven springboard to good jobs and the development of transversal and soft skills such as the ability to work in a team, creative thinking and problem-solving. Currently, just a quarter of students in upper secondary vocational education attend work-based programmes, while general and higher education programmes rarely include any work experience. Providing access to these measures to disadvantaged groups can be even more challenging (OECD 2013).

### **1.3 WORK-BASED LEARNING AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR THE PROMOTION OF INCLUSIVE LABOUR MARKETS: CASE STUDY FINDINGS**

#### **1.3.1 Introduction**

The European Commission (2013:5–7) has identified three main WBL models in Europe:

- Apprenticeships
- School-based VET with on-the-job training periods in companies (such as internships, work placements or traineeships)

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4 The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction defines work-based learning as an educational strategy that provides students with real-life work experiences where they can apply academic and technical skills (<http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/cte/curriculum/work-based/>). Flanagan, Baldwin and Clarke (2000:360) incorporate additional elements, stating that work-based learning ‘is the bringing together of self-knowledge, expertise at work and formal knowledge’.

5 See European Commission 2010; European Commission 2012a; European Commission 2012b; European Commission 2016a.

6 Such statements have been accompanied by European initiatives such as the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (European Commission 2016a), the Youth Guarantee and the Youth Employment Initiative – see European Commission (2016b).

- Work-based learning as part of a school-based programme

While these are all forms of WBL, they differ in their duration and conditions and the nature of the activities undertaken. Apprenticeships are training programmes in which companies act as training providers alongside VET providers and other education and training institutions. They normally entail formal employment in which a wage or allowance is paid, and are undertaken over an extended period, during which the apprentice is likely to progressively acquire more responsibility. They typically alternate company-based work practice and training, which often takes up more than half of the time, with the acquisition of general and occupation-specific knowledge and skills in VET schools. By contrast, school-based VET may include an optional or compulsory element of on-the-job training in companies, typically representing less than half of the programme's duration and often a quarter or less, while WBL as part of a school-based programme does not contain an on-the-job component. Instead, real-life work environments are recreated in educational institutions, and collaborative projects with real companies or clients can simulate real-life situations, such as a requirement to complete a real-life project assignment design between an employer and the educational institution. While school-based, this modality still allows for interaction with work environments, developing competencies in ways that cannot be simulated in school alone (European Commission 2013:9) while maintaining the quality-assurance controls and pedagogical support associated with school-based provision.

### **1.3.2 Background on the case studies**

#### ***1.3.2.1 Case study characteristics***

The experiences of the initiatives covered in the case studies in this collection illustrate different ways in which training and labour market actors (educational institutions, employers and third sector organisations) engage in different forms of WBL to aid the integration of disadvantaged groups (who are sometimes suffering multiple disadvantages) into the labour market. They vary in their duration, from the newly established to initiatives that have developed over decades, and focus, and deal with diverse target groups.

The types of interventions documented in the case studies are outlined in table 1.2 below. All of the programmes aim to get participants into further education, training or work, and there is often an additional emphasis on social integration.



**TABLE 1.1**

**Main features of the case studies**

	Country	Year of establishment	Target group	Selected themes <sup>^</sup>
<b>Case 1: Centro di Formazione Professionale e Inserimento Lavorativo (CFPIL)</b>	Italy	1971	People with disabilities (mental disabilities in particular)*	Career journeys and recognition
<b>Case 2: Écoles de la deuxième chance (E2C)</b>	France	1997 (first E2C school) 2004 (network)	Young people (16–25)/NEETs who are unqualified/low qualified and (long-term) unemployed**	Career journeys and recognition
<b>Case 3: Talent Match</b>	UK	2012	Young people (18–24)/NEETs, with a particular focus on ‘hidden NEETs’***	Motivation, commitment and engagement
<b>Case 4: Webforce3</b>	France	2014	Open to all, but particularly used by young people (16–30) who have dropped out of school and adults (30–55) made redundant from ICT jobs due to skills obsolescence****	Sustainability and scalability
<b>Case 5: First professional experience (FPE)/Pinaridi</b>	Spain	2015	Low-qualified young people/NEETs without professional experience†	Information, guidance and mentoring
<b>Case 6: INSerimento Integrazione Nordsud inclusionE (INSIDE)</b>	Italy	2016	Asylum seekers, refugees and beneficiaries of international humanitarian protection (accommodated in the SPRAR network‡).	Personalised, holistic approach
<b>Case 7: Targeted VET &amp; work-based learning for newly arrived refugees and migrants (WBLRM)</b>	Germany	2016	Refugees and immigrants	Information, guidance and mentoring

Note: Order follows year of establishment.

\*The centre hosted around 1150 people between 1981 and 2010.

\*\*The network is currently made up of 42 schools, which in 2015 hosted around 15,000 young people on 107 sites.

\*\*\*The programme aims to involve 29,000 people in the period 2014–17.

\*\*\*\*The programme enrolled 500 people in 25 training centres in 2016.

†Pinaridi has trained 200 young people, working with five partners and 34 workplaces.

‡SPRAR: Sistema di Protezione per Richiedenti Asilo e Rifugiati (Protection System for Refugees and Asylum Seekers). The project focused especially on young people.

<sup>^</sup>For additional details on themes see section 1.3.3 below.

All case studies include more than one theme, often centrally; the theme highlighted should thus only be taken as a theme of which the case study provides a good illustration, rather than the main theme of the case study.

**TABLE 1.2**

**Types of interventions documented in the case studies**

Type of intervention	
<b>Case 1: Centro di Formazione Professionale e Inserimento Lavorativo (CFPIL)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of training in a wide range of sectors, amongst which manufacturing features prominently</li> <li>• Duration of training is limited to 3 years</li> <li>• Participants aged 15–17 spend one day per week at CFPIL, the rest of the time being spent at school</li> <li>• Participants aged 18 and over spend 20 hours per week at CFPIL, plus possible internship time</li> <li>• Financed through operating grants and project funding (local, regional, national, European)</li> <li>• Main funder: Province of Varese</li> </ul>
<b>Case 2: Écoles de la deuxième chance (E2C)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course offers are linked to programmes specified by national public employment policy</li> <li>• Courses last 6–9 months on average</li> <li>• Alternating scheme: classroom-based teaching plus internship</li> <li>• The internship must represent half of the overall training programme</li> <li>• Public programme not run by government but linked to the ministry of labour</li> <li>• Financed through national and regional funding</li> </ul>
<b>Case 3: Talent Match</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not targeted at specific sectors</li> <li>• Aims to develop soft, basic and employability skills</li> <li>• Programme runs for 5 years, including development phase. Duration of training varies by project within the programme from short training courses to apprenticeships</li> <li>• Also varied in terms of employer engagement approaches, from agreements on work experience placements to employer subsidies</li> <li>• £108 million in funding from the Big Lottery Fund</li> </ul>
<b>Case 4: Webforce3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclusively focused on the ICT sector, specifically web development</li> <li>• Short, intensive training programmes (generally 3½ months)</li> <li>• The theory portion of the programme lasts for 3 weeks</li> <li>• Financed by private and public sources (private companies, banks, City of Paris, participants)</li> </ul>
<b>Case 5: First professional experience (FPE)/Pinardi</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intensive training programme in key sectors for the Spanish economy (tourism, leisure and catering, logistics)</li> <li>• Examples of positions covered are events assistant, housekeeper, kitchen porter and logistics and customer service roles</li> <li>• The training programme is based on a period of at least 16 weeks as part of a company's workforce</li> <li>• Start of the initiative has been financed through philanthropic donations, not linked to public sector initiatives</li> </ul>
<b>Case 6: INSerimento Integrazione Nordsud inclusionE (INSIDE)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main sectors: hospitality, food, manufacturing</li> <li>• Provides an individual endowment of €5,500 and internship opportunities, as well as skills assessment, tutoring, career guidance and coaching for job search</li> <li>• The maximum duration of the internship is 6 months at 20–30 hours per week</li> <li>• Public and private agencies can be 'lead proponents'; selected through a call for proposals, they need to be accredited at the regional or national level for labour market mediation or the provision of labour market-related services.</li> <li>• Intern receives an allowance €500 per month; lead proponent for the provision of support receives €2,000 for 64 hours of support; hosting organisation for tutoring activities receives €500 for 16 hours of support</li> <li>• Publicly funded with €4.5 million from the National Migratory Fund of the interior ministry</li> </ul>
<b>Case 7: Targeted VET and work-based learning for newly arrived refugees and migrants (WBLRM)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes various publicly funded initiatives</li> <li>• Prospects for Young Refugees is managed by the Federal Employment Agency and delivered by local employment agencies and job centres. It provides orientation on the German training and employment system to young (under 25) refugees and asylum seekers who due to personal circumstances find it challenging to enter apprenticeship or employment in Germany, have little or no professional experience and no initial vocational training recognised in Germany. Typical duration is 4–6 months at 30 hours per week. Geared towards crafts and housekeeping.</li> <li>• The Vocational Education Programme for refugees is managed by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, which funds over 60 projects around Germany. It targets young refugees over compulsory schooling age and companies willing to offer VET opportunities to refugees, and operates in areas of the skilled crafts sector where recruitment is difficult. The initiative provides vocational orientation and tasters of VET in skilled crafts and aims to attract 10,000 refugees by 2018. The programme lasts for 13 weeks</li> <li>• The Rhineland-Palatine integration chain combines several programmes for refugees and is an initiative of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Labour, Health and Demographics of the federal state of Rhineland-Palatinate. It supports both refugees and employers in Rhineland-Palatinate in the simplification of labour market integration. It combines identification of competencies, information, guidance and counselling, individualised support and skills development through courses and job shadowing. The development of an understanding of German culture, society and labour market rules and ways of working are essential parts of the initiative</li> </ul>

Various case studies note that disadvantaged groups have traditionally been excluded from participation in standard school-to-work transition schemes, which tend to target individuals who are closer to integration, such as those who have already achieved a qualification (see also EAPN 2017). In this context, it is essential to review and learn from initiatives that particularly target disadvantaged groups.

#### **1.3.2.2 Approaches to WBL**

The broad approach to pedagogy presented in the case studies is not centred on education that leads to work, but is rather about fusing education and work as a gradual process to aid labour market integration. A hands-on approach to learning can be beneficial for people who are disenfranchised or disaffected with traditional learning methods.

Specific approaches differ across the case studies depending on the objectives of the initiative, the needs of its target groups and the level of commitment that can be obtained from other stakeholders, especially employers: beneficiaries' contact with the world of work can vary from a few days to several years. In some cases, the duration of the training is adapted to the duration of typical projects for that profession in the labour market. Theoretical training is often provided, but often this is highly targeted to sector-specific topics – for example, being associated with production methods or processes. Ample opportunities are provided for beneficiaries to apply theory in order for them to see the relevance of the knowledge and skills that they are acquiring. This acts both as a way to facilitate and monitor learning and as a motivational strategy.

#### **1.3.2.3 Results and impact**

The extent of the assessment of results and impact depends on a project's degree of development and the quantity of available evidence. Few projects are evaluated – an exception is the Talent Match evaluation, which is assessed throughout the life of the programme. Case studies provide information on outcomes in terms of numbers of participants starting or completing a programme or, less frequently, completion rates. However, there tends to be scarce information about the causes of non-completion drop out.

Positive labour market outcomes act as a motivational tool for participants. The initiatives analysed are obtaining good results in terms of 'distance travelled' towards employability for groups that are far from the labour market. Several case studies note a win-win outcome from WBL: those beneficiaries who complete the programmes have improved their skills and employability, and the organisations where they have trained or worked now have employees with specialist skills relevant to the needs of the company. In some cases, the employment outcomes reported are also highly positive. Employment rates following participation in the initiatives were reported in some cases at around 50–60 per cent, and the Webforce3 case study argues that available data suggests it has helped the majority of participants to find a new job, with over 85 per cent of participants having had a positive

employment or training experience after leaving the programme.<sup>7</sup> While this seems high, strong evidence on the net impact of the initiatives is scarce.

With regard to longer-term effects, various initiatives gather information on occupational status six months or one year after participation. In the UK, the Talent Match programme has funded an external evaluation that applies a common data framework across the 21 projects funded. However, there is generally a lack of developed evaluation systems that use standardised indicators (on learner and training characteristics, competencies acquired, completion rates and employment rates) and control groups. This hampers the possibility of assessing the net benefits of WBL and comparing the effectiveness and added value across initiatives.

Employment rates are likely to be varied depending on the nature of the target group of the initiative and how far participants are from labour market integration at the start of their involvement. Outcomes also need to be examined with reference to contextual factors such as new labour market requirements. For example, CFPIL reported that the employment rate of people who had gone through the programme during its first 20 years was 80 per cent, but that this has now fallen to around 50 per cent due to the higher level of productivity and competence now required in the labour market (which is difficult to achieve for people with some types of disability) and technology or automation substituting for labour in routine – and increasingly also more complex – work tasks.

Some case studies also underlined the need to better evaluate the social returns and ‘soft outcomes’ such as integration into society, improvement in everyday life and greater independence and proactivity.

### 1.3.3 Main themes

Analysis of the case studies points to several main themes and success factors, which are reviewed in the following sections.

- Commitment and motivation
- WBL and employer engagement
- A personalised and holistic approach
- Career journeys and recognition
- Sustainability and scalability

Arguably, these themes are applicable to various types of education or training. The case studies underline their relevance in the case of WBL, and detail a range of specific forms that they can take in relation to this area.

#### 1.3.3.1 Commitment and motivation

**Recommendation:** Improve the transparency of initiatives and the connections between different schemes and levels of government to avoid wasteful duplication and build on local and regional good practices. Develop information on complementary initiatives from different public and private sector bodies. Identify underserved areas.

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<sup>7</sup> 44 per cent gained a permanent or, less often, a temporary contract; 27 per cent created their own companies and were self-employed or freelance; 8 per cent found internships; and 8 per cent continued their studies. Salaries for those in employment were in the region of €20–25,000 for those with little professional experience before the programme and €30–35,000 for those with prior experience in the sector.

### **Political commitment, stakeholder co-ordination and flexibility**

The motivation to establish or enhance initiatives for the inclusion of specific groups in the labour market is often related to social and political priorities. For example, the E2C case study noted that ‘[i]n 2013, for young people having left the education and training system in 2010, the youth unemployment rate amounted to 22% ... the highest level ever observed in Céreq’s school-to-work transition surveys’. Public debates in France have thus recently focussed on youth unemployment, as they have in Spain, which also has one of the highest rates of youth unemployment in Europe, and the UK, where the case studies also document youth-related initiatives.

Similarly, recent increases in migration and demand for international protection have raised the profile of projects such as INSIDE in Italy. Significant rises in applications from asylum seekers have also occurred in Germany. This, coupled with a requirement for refugees and immigrants to support themselves rather than rely on social security, has made the provision of WBL, language and cultural integration courses for these groups a priority in the country, as noted in the WBLRM case study. A key question in this regard, reviewed later in this report, concerns the sustainability of pilot projects associated with specific target groups in times of shifting political priorities.

Local flexibility was reported as crucial in some of the initiatives. Local flexibility is grounded in the existence of different local needs, and different approaches to tackle those needs. Local flexibility enables experimentation to find out what works in different contexts and for whom. The most flexible initiatives reviewed adopted a ‘test and learn’ model, whereby it is possible to change workplans and partnerships in the project as it evolves, and feedback on what works and what does not in the local area becomes available. This requires a significant degree of trust between stakeholders and between those funding the initiative and those in charge of their delivery.

The co-ordination of governmental actions with those of other stakeholders is important to avoid duplication and leverage key resources such as funding and expertise. The case studies underline how, given the range of initiatives that currently exist at different levels (national, regional and local) to meet the needs of disadvantaged groups, it is crucial to co-ordinate the work of these different levels of government, and also co-ordinate their work with relevant stakeholders such as chambers of commerce and employment agencies in order to avoid redundant or parallel structures and the fragmentation of efforts.

### **Beneficiaries: motivation, empowerment and responsibility**

Motivation and responsibility are presented in the case studies as both a precondition for learning and a factor associated with appropriate behaviour in a work and learning context. For this reason, several of the cases examined participants’ level of motivation in their recruitment processes or in the early stages of the project, sometimes making (further) participation conditional on the results of these early appraisals. The provision of support or even certain rights (for example to reside in a country, receive training or work), are linked in some of the case studies

to the fulfilment of certain obligations (conditionality). Rights are seen to have responsibilities associated to them.

Empowerment, by enabling individuals to make their own choices and gain control over their own lives, can have strong motivational effects. Some initiatives involved beneficiaries extensively in programme and project design to ensure their relevance (an example of this is the Talent Match initiative). In some cases, beneficiaries have also been made partly responsible for the allocation of a portion of the initiative's funds. As CFPIIL reports, 'The project is both *of* the person, having a say in the choice and definition of the objectives of the project, and *for* the person, being the ultimate beneficiary of it.' This is in contrast with the previous experiences of many beneficiaries, who had been given little choice in their educational decisions, resulting in them following inappropriate educational paths and in disengagement from education and training.

The initiatives further underlined the importance of challenging people in their learning to give participants confidence in their own abilities and achievements. For this, it is important to monitor the development of competencies, not so much as a judgement exercise but as a way of building an individual's self-esteem. Provision of information is also important to support the decision-making process of beneficiaries – a topic to which this report returns below.

#### **1.3.3.2 WBL and employer engagement**

**Recommendation:** Close contact with employers in WBL activities develops skills and attitudes, enhances connections for employment and raises awareness of the value of training experiences. WBL can also provide vital income to vulnerable groups.

**Recommendation:** Employers can provide job shadowing, taster sessions or work experience, mentoring and mock interviews, leading to raised awareness of beneficiaries' labour market preferences and the value of their WBL training experiences.

**Recommendation:** Promote opportunities for substantial employer engagement at the project or programme level: labour market intelligence, job brokerage, planning and design of WBL initiatives, development of the training offer, evaluation and improvement.

**Recommendation:** Having a dedicated officer as a single point of contact for employers can help to build strong relationships. Professional advice may also be necessary, for example to support employers in dealing with complex legal frameworks applicable to the provision of WBL to vulnerable groups.

**Recommendation:** One size does not fit all. Employers with a wide range of profiles were seen as attractive and provided valuable contributions to the initiatives reviewed.

Employer engagement, which can take various forms, is often a time-consuming task, but also a fundamental task. The case studies suggest that having a dedicated officer as a single point of contact for employers

can also help to build strong relationships. Employers are often recruited through marketing, on-going dialogue, planning consultations and joint design of actions by specialist programme staff (see also below in this section) to align those actions to employers' business and corporate social responsibility objectives. This relationship-building must be combined with actions that ensure the preparedness of beneficiaries who are referred to employers: failure to do so can harm relations with an employer (and future collaborations for the provision of WBL) very quickly.

Employer engagement may be facilitated by subsidies, corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies or the existence of unmet employer recruitment needs. Some projects facilitated the involvement of employers in WBL through the provision of thorough pre-screening of candidates, based on employer requirements. Professional support may be necessary in engaging employers, for example to support them in dealing with complex legal frameworks applicable to the provision of WBL to vulnerable groups such as asylum seekers or people with certain types of disability. In these cases, external counsellors from chambers of commerce or equivalent organisations can be helpful in bridging gaps and supporting both the employer and the learner. Counselling of the company and the learner is beneficial not only in the setting up of the WBL experience, but also throughout the delivery of WBL to monitor and quality assure progress.

Employers are fundamental for WBL as they provide opportunities for training and employment. In this respect, the case studies documented a range of variants in which WBL is being used. Alongside the distinction between apprenticeships, school-based VET and work-based learning as part of a school programme – already referred to in this report – the case studies document practices such as job shadowing, provision of taster sessions and work experience, which can be undertaken prior to, and inform decisions around, longer WBL.

Employers also collaborate by supporting activities such as mentoring of participants during (or in the run up to) WBL experiences and participation in activities such as mock interviews, which develop beneficiaries' awareness of the value of their WBL experiences and put them in a better position to capitalise on such experiences to achieve labour market integration. The case studies show that it is important to work with employers to ensure recognition of the competencies developed by WBL activities and increase the chances of employment on completion of the programme. This is particularly important when WBL is not linked to formal qualifications.

The above discussion illustrates various ways in which close contact between training providers and employers in WBL activities can provide added value to beneficiaries: WBL can contribute to the development of relevant skills and attitudes, the enhancement of connections and social capital for employment – that is, contact with a network of potential employers – and to awareness-raising with regard to their labour market preferences and the value of their training experiences. In addition, WBL can provide an income needed by vulnerable groups.

Often, the initiatives promoted opportunities for substantial employer engagement at the project or programme level, from the provision of information on labour market intelligence (on skills needs or future or hidden vacancies) and job brokerage to deep involvement in the planning and design of the WBL initiatives and the development of the training offer, evaluation and improvement-related actions. Some case studies document the involvement of employers in project boards to closely monitor and steer implementation.

Employers with a wide range of profiles were seen as attractive: some initiatives developed links with SMEs close to their location, as they considered that their target groups were more likely to obtain employment in those, whereas other initiatives partnered mainly with large employers that were seeking to improve their CSR performance and whose back-up could boost the initiative's credibility among stakeholders. Some initiatives targeted specific sectors that they saw as being particularly promising for their target groups, whereas others cast a broad net, because of their focus on the individual interests of their beneficiaries. Some initiatives aimed to enhance possibilities for self-employment, but this was often reported as challenging. Self-employment requires a significant degree of confidence on the part of beneficiaries.

#### *1.3.3.3 A personalised and holistic approach*

**Recommendation:** Focus on the needs of the learner rather than the availability of training programmes. Education and training providers should ensure that individual analysis of beneficiaries' needs informs curriculum design and pedagogic strategies. This requires high levels of investment and dedicated (and often interdisciplinary and highly professionalised) support.

**Recommendation:** A holistic approach requires partnerships between agencies at different levels and in different sectors and a clear division of responsibilities between them. The implications of data-sharing activities between stakeholders require careful consideration in this context.

**Recommendation:** Enable beneficiaries to make informed choices by providing high-quality information and advice on education and career choices and labour market regulations. Take into account the specific needs of different target groups, such as the cultural support required by immigrants.

#### **A personalised approach to training**

Individualisation applies to many phases of the initiatives, from needs assessment, counselling and cultural orientation, curriculum development (such as in terms of subject area, competences to develop or tasks to perform) and delivery (such as in terms of pace and place) to personalised guidance upon completion.

Several initiatives include individual profiling and needs assessment in their early stages. This might be done by public employment services or by the organisation carrying out the initiative. The needs assessment



process can vary by target group; as CFPIIL illustrates, for example, complementing competence assessments with the examination of a person's type and degree of disability. Some initiatives included visits to the participant's residence, during which information was provided on regionally available offers of work, training or additional support to meet their needs after a competence assessments has been carried out.

Needs assessment is used to inform the selection of training provision that meets the needs identified and creates a sense of purpose. A beneficiary notes in the E2C case study: 'They built a syllabus just for me so that I don't need to learn things I know and I don't waste my time.' Individual action plans aim to ensure a good match between the participant's experience and occupational preferences and the WBL experience. With groups such as refugees and migrants, who may have substantial experience in the labour market, it is important to ensure that robust systems are in place to validate formal learning for which the immigrant may have no proof, as well as non-formal education, so as to ensure that WBL is targeted to real development needs.

In most initiatives, individualised curriculum designs included technical and 'soft' or transversal skills. Technical skills were acquired largely in-company and were highly relevant to particular occupations and companies. Transversal skills included communication, languages, critical thinking, problem-solving and teamwork, and positive traits that were developed included initiative and autonomy, punctuality and respect for deadlines, adaptability, confidence and motivation. In the WBL initiatives reviewed, this skills training, including soft skills training, is generally adapted to the specific needs of the post where the participant aims to start a career and is delivered through highly practical and experiential learning to engage beneficiaries and facilitate their learning.

The training provided is often characterised by extensive use of small-group work. The intensity of the training can also be adapted to individual possibilities, for example through part-time job placements. Individualised training actions should be continuously monitored and adapted. Some case studies document how learners' individual objectives were reviewed in partnerships with tutors (in companies and in education or training institutions) throughout the life of the learning process, as additional information on skills acquired and individual preferences emerged. This monitoring leads to the identification of skills needs and the updating of personalised training paths. In the Webforce3 case, participants were given access to an online platform and work on exercises daily to assess their knowledge and keep up with their progress on the programme. The teaching staff offered personalised follow-ups for each student, giving them specialised assistance when required.

Personalisation requires high levels of investment and dedicated support, and also has its limits. Participants' interests need to be compared with the specialisations of teachers in the initiative, the openings available in companies and specified priorities in calls for funding.

## A holistic approach

A holistic approach refers to the embedding of a wider set of measures beyond WBL activities to support WBL interventions: before, during and after them –from needs profiling to post-placement support in a range of different aspects. Long-term engagement, and often support after ‘placement’ into further training or employment opportunities is also a key aspect of various initiatives as they aim to provide tools for life, rather than focusing on temporary quick fixes. Figure 1.1 outlines the building blocks of a range of support activities used in the initiatives reviewed.

**FIGURE 1.1**

### Building blocks of the types of support provided to beneficiaries



Source: Adapted from Talent Match case study

Highly occupationally specific WBL may be combined with more generic training according to the individual needs of beneficiaries: for example, extra-occupational linguistic, legal-framework and workers’ rights and cultural training for refugees and migrants, CV preparation, job search skills, personal branding and everyday tasks such as buying bus tickets or paying in a shop. These elements are not WBL as such, but may determine the impact and effectiveness of WBL programmes in terms of job placement – a skilled person without job search skills is reducing their capacity to find employment.

But the case studies show that a holistic approach also means that the diverse needs of disadvantaged groups, beyond their education and training needs, are considered through integrated support, for example with regards to social assistance, housing support, childcare and health services. The case studies document support in areas such as accommodation, transport and social integration through sports and cultural events, or attendance of courses offered by local organisations. Social integration can significantly facilitate employment in some European countries where networks are important for labour market integration.

There are numerous examples in the case studies of holistic approaches that go beyond education and training measures. The E2C initiative, for example, has institutionalised support for social integration, organising its activities around a Training Hub, which monitors participants’ competencies, an Enterprise Hub, which is responsible for establishing partnerships with local companies, and a Social Life Hub providing extracurricular sports, cultural and social activities for inclusion in the community and development of respect for school regulations.

A holistic approach may require the support of a wide range of professionals from different subject areas, which may include specialised professional educators, teachers, social workers, psychologists and psychiatrists. This is particularly important when assisting certain target

groups, such as participants with disabilities or young people with past experiences of substance abuse. Working with a team increases the confidence of participants and acknowledges that the aim of the project is not only employability, but also inclusion in society.

### **Information, guidance and mentoring**

The majority of case studies underlined the importance of information on training and labour market opportunities, personalised guidance and mentoring. In some case studies a mentor – often a human resources employee – works with each beneficiary in each company during their WBL period. This is the person in charge of setting up customised development plans for each participant based on the expectations of the individual and the company and also informs participants about the corporate culture.

Some of the target groups addressed by the initiatives have a more acute need for guidance due to their lack of knowledge of WBL. This is the case, for example, with refugees, as lack of knowledge can lead to misrepresentation of the value of apprenticeships for refugees, who may underestimate the benefit of apprenticeship training because it initially provides a low wage. This may lead to a preference for positions that initially offer a higher wage, even if they generate lower long-term returns, offer uncertain prospects and are below the migrant's level of qualification in their home country. This underlines the importance of guidance and of helping beneficiaries to consider employment opportunities in the longer term (WBLRM).

Information and guidance should also give a clear understanding of the WBL programme itself during the period of engagement with the initiative to empower and motivate participants – see also section 3.3.1.2. INSIDE's Individual Action Plans, for example, set out the services to be offered to the beneficiary – initial interview, skill assessment, internship, tutoring and support towards on-the-job training, career guidance, coaching, company scouting and job search – and provide detailed descriptions for each activity, including its expected duration and the stage in the programme at which it will take place. The vocational orientation programme for refugees in Germany combines training in skilled crafts with workshops at inter-company vocational training centres, at which participants learn in detail about one or more professions that they are considering for their apprenticeship. In this way, they gain an understanding of the nature of the activities and training content they would carry out under different WBL programmes.

#### ***1.3.3.4 Career journeys and recognition***

**Recommendation:** Provide a framework for further educational and labour market progression by giving attention both to the transition between WBL and other forms of education and training and to relevant professional standards. More explicit links with national qualifications frameworks would likely further enhance the labour market value of WBL.

**Recommendation:** Short WBL programmes in occupations with high labour market demand and strong associations with industry standards can be effective in enhancing the employment chances of disadvantaged groups, even when the individuals concerned have little prior knowledge of the sector. Labour market analysis can better identify those occupations and stimulate public and private support for training in those areas.

Educational, social and labour market recognition are required for the education and training provided by the initiatives to be of value for participants. Recognition can take various forms and is of varying importance in different labour market contexts (European Commission, Cedefop and ICF 2014). In ‘credentialist’ countries such as France, qualifications are an important component of an individual’s employability, even if they are not a sufficient condition for finding a good job. The E2C case study notes that unemployment in France for those without qualifications three years after entering the labour force is around 50 per cent, compared to around 30 per cent for those with the very first qualification in the French National Qualifications Framework. This shows how important it is for labour market initiatives in France to lead to recognised qualifications. Currently E2C provides a certificate of learning outcomes and is working towards achieving national recognition for the certificates of competence awarded on completion of the programme. But it is not always possible for the initiatives reviewed to link the WBL they provide to nationally recognised qualifications. In such cases, they often offer some certification of completion outlining the training followed and the activities carried out, so as to provide greater recognition in the eyes of the beneficiary and, potentially, third parties.

Education and career ladders are vital considerations in the design of WBL initiatives, because they make clear that such initiatives are not an educational ‘dead end’, but rather enable further progression and act as a motivational tool. The Webforce3 case illustrates how the occupations for which it prepares its participants have established career routes to well-paid jobs, although further work is required to assess the extent to which the kind of short-term training offered by the initiative can help participants to build careers over time. Those individuals who participate in E2C, on the other hand, can be considered natural candidates for entry into higher-level WBL such as full apprenticeship schemes, putting participants back in contact with the formal education system. The existence of education and career ladders can be communicated to beneficiaries from the early stages of participation. In the case of FPE, after successful insertion into a company for WBL, the support provided continues through the design of a personalised training and career plan for each participant to achieve their professional goals, with inputs from the companies that participate in the delivery of the WBL.

#### *1.3.3.5 Sustainability and scalability*

**Recommendation:** Direct financial contributions from the public sector are important for sustainability, but so are efficient partnership work, co-funding (from beneficiaries or the private or third sectors), political commitment reflected in legislation and the promotion of corporate social responsibility.

**Recommendation:** ICT can facilitate scaling up individualisation in learning for disadvantaged groups. This includes guidance in the use of ICT tools for self-assessment (of transversal skills in particular) and career planning. The potential for mentoring and peer mentoring through social media should be further explored.

### Sustainability

The issue of sustainability is approached in the case studies, mainly from the perspective of funding. Various case studies noted challenges to the continuation of their operations, and it is unlikely, given the nature of the initiatives, that they could be self-financing. The importance of partnership is particularly evident in this regard. The E2C Marseille relies on funding from the City of Marseille, central state and national agencies and at regional and departmental levels. Webforce3 raised €1.2 million from public and private investors in 2016 and has established partnerships with financial institutions to offer loans at preferential rates – currently close to interest-free – to self-financed students to facilitate access to training. Student fees also contribute to the sustainability of the initiative and are adapted depending on the source of funding. European funding is shown to play an important role in the financing of several of the initiatives.

Some organisations cited lack of sufficient funds in relation to current levels of need and perennial fears of closing associated with the prevalence of fixed-term project-based work in this area. They highlighted their need to become expert not only in the delivery of activities for labour market integration but also in the availability of funding, due to the complexity and susceptibility to change of existing schemes. Constant changes in funding systems and legislation, and the associated impact on staff, undermine the capacity of grassroots organisations to operate. Stability and continuity are also important for an initiative's target group and employers, who need to be familiar with the range of services on offer.

Direct financial contributions from the public sector are not the only way in which policymakers can support the sustainability of initiatives: regulation can also do so. In Italy, political commitment to the inclusion of people with disabilities is reflected in the establishment in national legislation of quotas (with related incentives and fines) and rights to training (including WBL). Some case studies also mentioned corporate commitment and corporate social responsibility as drivers of the contributions – in terms of time and expertise – made by companies to initiatives related to the creation of inclusive labour markets.

### Scalability

Some of the approaches documented in the case studies are new in the context in which they are applied, while others have been used and proven effective over time. The E2C case study notes that around 25 per cent of young people in France who leave education with at most a lower secondary qualification obtain a further qualification within seven years. This shows that second-chance education of the type E2C delivers can provide an alternative route towards the achievement of qualifications for many low-qualified individuals. The challenge in deploying such tried-and-tested approaches is therefore not proof of concept but scalability, which was strongly targeted by some initiatives. Webforce3 aims to

increase its provision of training to 1,500 programmers in France in 2017, expand its provision by partnering with companies (mobilising its increasing alumni body) to train graduates in need of ICT skills relevant for the labour market, and enter new geographical areas such as Africa.

For the labour market inclusion initiatives reviewed, scalability is difficult for two reasons: the need for individualisation and the people-intensive character of some of the key elements of those initiatives. In this context, greater consideration needs to be given to the use of ICT and learning analytics to facilitate scaling up whenever appropriate for the target group, for example with regards to skills profiling<sup>8</sup> or monitoring of progress.

#### 1.4 CONCLUSIONS

The need to make labour markets more inclusive has been recognised by public, private and social actors. Work-based learning is a crucial tool in achieving this goal, and is receiving increasing attention from a variety of stakeholders. However, the supply of WBL in the EU is underdeveloped, and historical experience shows that accessing it can be especially challenging for disadvantaged groups. This synthesis report has summarised the experience of seven cases covering WBL initiatives in a range of European contexts, which differ in their scope, target groups and actions. This reflects the diversity of WBL practices and their contribution to the creation of more inclusive labour markets.

On the basis of the experiences documented in the case studies, this report has identified key lessons and challenges associated with motivation, commitment and engagement from the different stakeholders, giving particular attention to the role of policy-makers, beneficiaries and employers. It has also highlighted the need for personalised and holistic approaches, the importance of career journeys, qualifications, certification and recognition and the key issues of sustainability and scalability. One of the main messages across these themes is that while there are differences and innovations in *what* is done in various initiatives, the real differences revolve around *why* actions are taken – an initiative targeting people with severe mental disabilities will have different aims for skills and employment and different timeframes compared with initiatives targeting young people motivated to obtain employment – and *how* they are approached – which stakeholders are involved and what they do, the extent and purpose of employer engagement, the intensity and personalisation of the support provided, the methods by which beneficiaries are identified, recruited and routed, and so forth; and how all of this interacts with specific constraints and labour market contexts that the initiatives face at different stages in their development. The *why* and the *how* are what is most likely to affect the success or otherwise of individual initiatives, and what makes the search for success a complex undertaking.

Three further points are worth noting in relation to the future. First, the experience of the case studies illustrates that countries and regions address issues of educational disadvantage, access to WBL and second-chance education to different degrees. While this is difficult to correct, a minimum guarantee of service should be available across European

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<sup>8</sup> See, for example, the Skills Health Check initiative in the UK: <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/skills-health-check/home>

regions and countries for vulnerable as well as non-vulnerable groups. Second, strong evaluation measures are required to contribute to the coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and scalability of initiatives in this area. Concrete evidence on the net effects and impacts of the initiatives is relatively scarce. More generally, there is a need to improve the availability and circulation of information on the labour market outcomes of WBL initiatives for vulnerable groups and to share good practice so as to maximise the programmes' impact. At the same time, it is important to recognise the diversity of vulnerable groups and their conditions and value outcomes. Finally, some of the case studies note that the future will present many new challenges for disadvantaged groups and for labour markets in general. These include trends towards greater competition for low-skilled jobs, relocation of jobs to low-cost countries and changes caused by automation. However, automation can also expand opportunities for certain disadvantaged groups by breaking down, standardising and simplifying tasks. There is therefore an urgent need to better understand the consequences of these new trends for disadvantaged groups, and to explore ways in which WBL can support workable means of addressing these challenges in the future.

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## 2. CREATING ‘SECOND CHANCE’ OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

THE FRENCH *ÉCOLES DE LA DEUXIÈME CHANCE*

*ISABELLE RECOTILLET AND PATRICK WERQUIN*

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*‘At E2C school, it’s a bit like having private lessons with a tutor; at the beginning we take an exam to identify our gaps and what we need to invest in; they built a syllabus just for me so that I don’t need to learn things I already know and I don’t waste my time.’*

Former E2C participant

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This paper describes the development and functioning of the French EC2s (Second Chance Schools; *Écoles de la deuxième chance*), based on a review of recent literature and fieldwork. The E2Cs target 16–25-year-olds who are experiencing severe challenges in finding a job. They employ a work-based learning methodology, which takes into account individual participants’ learning styles. The E2Cs facilitate school-to-work transition by providing personalised training lasting around six months. There are three key elements to the E2C’s work-based learning approach: the Training Hub (which updates young people’s basic competencies); the Business Hub (which establishes partnerships with local companies); and the Social Life Hub (which encourages inclusion in the wider community). The partnerships forged with businesses are a pillar of the E2Cs’ success; a key element of the work-based learning programme is the immersion internships in partner businesses.

This case study begins with an outline of the context in France with respect to youth unemployment, as well as an overview of recent policy and political developments. It then goes on to analyse the approach and outcomes of the E2C model, and concludes with a summary of the successes and challenges of the E2C approach.

### 2.2 THE CONTEXT IN FRANCE: RECENT POLITICAL AND POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

France is making concerted efforts to tackle youth unemployment and the social exclusion of young adults. In 2013, for young people having left the education and training system in 2010, the youth unemployment rate in France was 22 per cent, leading Barret et al (2014) to state that ‘this is the highest level ever observed in Céreq’s school-to-work transition surveys. The increase compared with the 2004 cohort is 16 percentage points for non-graduates and 3 percentage

points for graduates of long degree programmes.’<sup>1</sup> As a result, public policies to promote youth employment primarily target young people with educational disadvantages, who face severe difficulties in having a smooth school-to-work transition. As the Court of Auditors (*Cour des comptes*) points out in a 2015 report on youth schemes for unqualified young people, the Ministry of Education (*Ministère de l’Éducation nationale*), the Ministry of Labour (*Ministère du Travail*) and the administrative regions, as well as social partners, are all engaged in implementing strategies in favour of this target group.<sup>2</sup> It is young people without qualifications and NEETs (those not in education, employment or training) that benefit most from the government’s specific schemes and youth labour contracts.

Among specific schemes, there are:

- the Youth Guarantee (*Garantie jeunes*), which qualifies 16–26-year-olds not in employment or training for financial support and specific guidance toward a job;
- the E2Cs; and
- the EPIDE (Establishment for Integration Into Employment; *Établissement pour l’insertion dans l’emploi*) programme. This programme targets young people, particularly those who are socially excluded and identified as having serious behavioural issues. The focus is on understanding proper codes of conduct, at work and in society at large.

Among the youth labour contracts, there are:

- Employment for the Future Contracts (*Emplois d’avenir*), which are jobs reserved for 16–25-year-olds without qualifications or only holding a qualification at the lowest level, not in employment or training, and having difficulties in finding a job, with priority given to young people living in districts benefiting from state urban policy measures; and
- Unique Integration Contracts (*Contrats uniques d’insertion*) and the CAE (Guidance to Employment Contract; *Contrat d’accompagnement vers l’emploi*), both of which are used to target any unemployed person having difficulties in finding a job; the contract is 24 months long at most and qualifies the jobseeker for training and guidance toward employment.

While the number of young people who left initial education and training without any qualification – that is, below the first level of the National Qualifications Framework (*Commission Nationale de la Certification Professionnelle*) – was stable in France from the early 1990s until 2010, it has been decreasing since then (see table 2.1 below). In 2012, the number of unqualified young people aged 18–24 who were not in education or training – the European definition of ‘early leaver’ – was around 600,000, or 11.6 per cent of the age

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1 Barret C, Ryk F and Volle N (2014) ‘2013 survey of the 2010 cohort: The gap between levels of qualification widens as the crisis deepens’, *Training and Employment*, 109–10, June

2 Cour des comptes (2015) Les dispositifs et les crédits mobilisés en faveur des jeunes sortis sans qualification du système scolaire

group.<sup>3,4</sup> Pending confirmation of the first estimate for 2013, it seems likely that the proportion of early leavers will be above 10 per cent.<sup>5</sup> This figure is slightly below the European average, which is 11.6 per cent.<sup>6</sup> However, France has not reached the goal set out in the Europe 2020 strategy of 9.5 per cent.

**TABLE 2.1**

**Unqualified young people in France, flows and stocks, 1998–2015**

Date of labour market entry (date of survey, date of publication)	Flow Data		Stock Data
	Number of individuals entering the labour market without a qualification	Proportion of individuals entering the labour market (% of the full cohort)	Number of unqualified young people aged 18–24 not in education or training (% of the age group)
1998 (2001, 2002)*	119,000	16	
2001 (2004, 2005)*	133,000	17.45	
2004 (2007, 2008)*	123,000	17	
2007 (2010, 2012)*	133,000	18	
2010 (2013, 2014)*	119,000	16.8	
2013** and 2015***	100,000	-	
2012****			600,000 (11.6)

Source: \*Céreq (1998 onwards) *Génération*, [www.cereq.fr/themes/Access-aux-donnees-Themes/Enquetes-d-insertion-Generation](http://www.cereq.fr/themes/Access-aux-donnees-Themes/Enquetes-d-insertion-Generation); \*\*Le Rhun B, Minni C, Martinelli D and Recotillet I (2013) 'Origines des jeunes sans diplôme', *Insee Références: Formations et emploi*; \*\*\*Cour des comptes (2015) *Les dispositifs et les crédits mobilisés en faveur des jeunes sortis sans qualification du système scolaire*; \*\*\*\*Lefresne F (2013) 'Réduire les sorties précoces: un objectif central du programme Education et Formation 2020', *Insee Références: La France dans l'Union européenne*

France has a sizeable flow of young people entering the labour market every year with absolutely no qualifications. The dropout rate is somewhat lower than the European average, but remains high.

Some additional facts can be singled out:

- France has a highly selective labour market. The selection operates on the basis of qualification and field of study. There is a high demand for mid- and senior-level workers, but a much lower demand for unqualified workers.
- The number of NEETs remains high, whatever the age group selected: in 2015, the share of NEET young people aged 20–24 years was 18.1 per cent for France and 17.3 per cent for the EU-28.<sup>7</sup>
- The apprenticeship system attracts more and more new apprentices aiming at a higher education qualification (100,000 new contracts in 2014 for higher education levels), but fewer and fewer aiming below

3 Lefresne F (2013) 'Réduire les sorties précoces: un objectif central du programme Education et Formation 2020', *Insee Références: La France dans l'Union européenne*

4 'Early school leaving occurs when an individual aged 18 to 24 has attained at most lower secondary education and is not engaged in education and training. In 2009, 14.4 per cent of the European population (EU-27) was in this condition, with some countries close to the 10 per cent mark (Austria, Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands, Sweden, Czech Republic, Poland and Slovenia) and other countries very far from this mark (Spain, Portugal, Italy, and – somewhat surprisingly – Norway and Iceland).' Brunello G and De Paola M (2014) 'The cost of early school leaving in Europe', *IZA Journal of Labor Policy*, 3(22)

5 Lefresne F (2015) 'La lutte contre les sorties précoces dans l'Union européenne', *Note d'information*, 9, March

6 EC (2015) *Education and Training Monitor*

7 Eurostat (2016), 'Share of young people neither in employment nor in education and training, by sex and age, 2015', [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Share\\_of\\_young\\_people\\_neither\\_in\\_employment\\_nor\\_in\\_education\\_and\\_training,\\_by\\_sex\\_and\\_age,\\_2015%25.png](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Share_of_young_people_neither_in_employment_nor_in_education_and_training,_by_sex_and_age,_2015%25.png)

upper-secondary education (from 191,000 apprentices at the level of the CAP or *Certificat d'aptitude professionnelle*, equivalent to level 3 in the European Qualifications Framework, in 2010–11 to 174,700 in 2013–14).<sup>8</sup> This, despite the fact that the system is often presented as a possible solution for young people at risk of dropping out. The objective of the French government is to promote apprenticeships and achieve a 50 per cent increase in apprentices by 2017.<sup>9</sup>

- There are regional inequities, due to the decentralisation process and to the varying extents to which the different regions address the issues of educational disadvantage and access to vocational preparation (and second-chance education in general).

### 2.3 WORK-BASED LEARNING TO SUPPORT INCLUSION

Unqualified young people often struggle to find a job because they do not possess any qualifications. They are more likely to stay out of employment for longer and therefore be stigmatised twice over: once because they do not possess a qualification, and then because they cannot display a positive track record in the labour market. Employers associate a lack of success at school and poor performance in the labour market with a high risk of bad behaviour, and finding a job therefore becomes unlikely for the unqualified and long-term unemployed. In a nutshell, unqualified young people lack the competences and attributes to be considered employable. Individual guidance, alongside the updating of basic social competences and literacy skills, with the corresponding award of a registered qualification, has become necessary for the successful inclusion of these young people in society.

The French system values accreditation and credentials; a qualification is an essential component of employability, even if it is not a formal condition for getting a decent job. Employers tend to use results as proof of competence when selecting new workers. Evidence is provided by Ilardi and Sulzer (2015): young people at the lowest level of qualification display the highest unemployment rate.<sup>10</sup> They find that three years after entering the labour market, the unemployment rate in this group amounts to 49 per cent. Compare this figure with 31 per cent for those with the very first qualification in the French National Qualifications Framework; 20 per cent for those with the vocational baccalaureate; and 10 per cent for those with a qualification gained in higher education. In addition, vocational qualifications – even at the two lowest levels of the National Qualifications Framework – credentials, such as the vocational baccalaureate and the CAP, significantly foster employability.<sup>11</sup>

In situations where unemployment is high, dual training – combining apprenticeships in a company and vocational education in an institution – is often presented as the most efficient way to get young people into work (as is the case in Germany and Switzerland). The assumption is that

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8 Recotillet I and Verdier E (2016) 'Orientation, formation, insertion: quel avenir pour l'enseignement professionnel'

9 It is worth noting that participants at E2Cs are natural candidates for entering, or re-entering, the apprenticeship system at the lowest level of the qualifications framework; the system aims at drawing young people with educational disadvantages back into the formal training system.

10 Ilardi V and Sulzer E (2015) '2013 survey of the 2010 cohort: Crisis makes school-to-work transition for CAP-BEP holders even more difficult', *Training and Employment*, 116, June

11 Recotillet and Verdier, 2016 'Orientation, formation, insertion: quel avenir pour l'enseignement professionnel'

technical, vocational education and training (TVET) better prepare young people for a successful entry into the labour market, equipping them with the competences employers expect and demand.<sup>12</sup> In tackling youth unemployment, the European Commission (EC) singles out the kind of scheme engaging with both schools and businesses as an essential pillar of the public policies that governments should implement.<sup>13</sup>

Unemployed, unqualified young people are also viewed as being at risk of social exclusion, and of committing crime. In France, public policies have developed in two directions:

- Preventing early school leaving (preventative measures)
- Implementing remedial programmes, based on the provision of vocational training and work-based learning, for early school leavers (curative measures). The Second Chance Schools, expanded on below, belong to the latter (particularly supporting young people that have failed in the traditional education and training system).

## 2.4 AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND CHANCE SCHOOLS (ÉCOLES DE LA DEUXIÈME CHANCE) IN FRANCE

The first E2C opened in 1997 in a disadvantaged neighbourhood of Marseilles, the second-largest city in France. It was the first in a network that now comprises 42 schools all over the country. The schools provide courses for unqualified, unemployed young people who have often been out of work for a substantial period of time. The courses last, on average, six months. Although E2Cs belong to a network and have to comply with a set of regulations, they nevertheless remain independent units with significant autonomy. Each E2C is a not-for-profit organisation, benefiting from national and regional funding. The programmes they offer adhere to the structures of the national public employment policy. They are mainly resourced through public funds (allocated at city, state, region, *département* (an administrative division between the municipality and the region) and levy level; see table 2.2 for of the breakdown of funding at Marseilles).

**TABLE 2.2**

### Funding of E2C Marseilles

Origin of funding (as a percentage of total)	
City of Marseille	34%
State	26%
Region	21%
<i>Département</i>	9%
Levy	9%
ANRU (National Agency for Urban Renovation; <i>Agence nationale pour la Rénovation Urbaine</i> )	1%

Source: Sabuco P (2016) 'L'école de la deuxième chance: co-construire un cheminement vers l'insertion professionnelle?', masters thesis, Aix-Marseille University

12 Cedefop (2015), *Stronger VET for better lives*; Unesco (2015) *Unleashing the Potential – Transforming Technical and Vocational Education and Training*

13 EC, 2015

The work-based learning methodology of the E2Cs is based on a scheme alternating internships in businesses with classroom-based sessions; the key aims are to update the academic knowledge of participants and to provide learning sessions that take place in the workplace. Young people work with trainers on their career plan, in an approach different to that of the traditional school system and which is a key success of these second chance schemes.

E2Cs are labour-oriented, and do not belong to the set of educational policies in which France is also very active, including the development of apprenticeships and various actions to improve the attractiveness of vocational training, such as the Trades and Qualifications Campus (*Campus des Métiers et des Qualifications*).

The 42 E2Cs hosted around 15,000 young people in 2015, on 107 sites in 11 regions and 51 administrative units (*départements*) (see figure 2.1).

**FIGURE 2.1**

**Geographical distribution of the E2Cs**



Source: Reproduced from Dares (2014), 'L'École de la deuxième chance: la "grande école" des décrocheurs motivés', *Dares Analyses*, September

The very first E2C opened thanks to a local initiative based on the work of the EC in 1996, the year for education and lifelong learning. The conclusion of the EC's 'Cresson' White Paper (1996) proposed the key features for the establishment of E2Cs, aiming to tackle the social exclusion that hits disadvantaged young people, especially those living in deprived neighbourhoods. It contained the key components of the E2C programme, which became a network in 2004. The network expanded rapidly between 2009 and 2011.<sup>14</sup> In 2009, the network adopted a Quality Charter which guarantees that procedures of a consistent quality are applied among member schools. The establishment of common standards across all the courses offered could strengthen this further.<sup>15</sup>

The E2C programme targets 16–25-year-olds who experience severe challenges in finding a decent job. The participants are mainly identified by local outreach offices (*Missions locales*), who decide whether to send them to an E2C based on an assessment of their needs.<sup>16</sup> In practice, the average age of young people registered in the E2C network is 20, and almost all (87 per cent) have no qualifications.<sup>17</sup> One in every five is an early school leaver: they have left school before the end of the junior cycle of secondary education – probably the day they turned 16, which is the school leaving age in France. This group is educationally disadvantaged, and often suffers from additional issues such as family conflict or legal issues. These are young people severely at risk of social exclusion. The programme aims to provide them with vocational preparation, both in the interest of personal development and for easing the school-to-work transition process. It also aims at providing them with social competences so that they are better integrated into society and can cope in the workplace. Before participating in the programme, most of them are out of the labour force, or are long-term unemployed.

## 2.5 THE OBJECTIVES AND ORGANISATION OF THE E2CS

The main objective of the E2C is to reintegrate young people into the labour market. The E2C gives young people alienated from employment, and (for the most part) without any qualifications, the opportunity to:

- benefit from updated education and training sessions necessary to develop basic competences (French, English, mathematics, information and communication technologies), using appropriate pedagogy, based on e-learning approaches;
- discover trade jobs, and benefit from immersion internships in partner businesses;
- undertake extra-curricular activities to develop social competences; and
- be awarded a certificate of learning outcomes, their first formal document that will help when seeking a job.

14 Dares (2014) 'L'École de la deuxième chance: la "grande école" des décrocheurs motivés', *Dares Analyses*, September

15 Sénat (2015) *Les écoles de la deuxième chance: donner aux jeunes décrocheurs les moyens de réussir*, report on behalf of the finance committee

16 In France, young people aged 18–25 may seek assistance from a specific public employment service. The *Missions Locales* constitute a network of not-for-profit, state-aided organisations providing outreach support.

17 E2C (2015) *L'Activité en 2015*, <http://www.reseau-e2c.fr/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/0418-Synthèse-Données-2015-DEF.pdf>

The pathways are based on the principle of individual guidance, with young people committing to show motivation, to behave properly within the organisation with which they have an internship, and to being regularly assessed. The dropout rate is 22 per cent – almost one quarter of the registered young people do not finish the E2C pathway. This is an issue to be addressed by the managers of the E2Cs (see recommendations in section 5), but there is no specific monitoring of young people dropping out of their E2C. The reasons for leaving and their activities afterwards are therefore unknown.

All E2Cs are organised into three hubs:

- **Training Hub:** This hub is in charge of updating young people's basic competences, with a strong orientation towards the standards of the Ministry of Education. The approach, through e-learning, allows each young person to progress at their own pace. There is grading of each participant's performance, so that young people are not put in a position of failing outright, but acquired competences are still validated. The Training Hub of E2C Marseilles also prepares participants for occupational integration, with three hours per week devoted to CV design, drafting cover letters for job applications, writing memos and rehearsing for job interviews.<sup>18</sup> Working sessions have also been organised to help young people improve their physical appearance, with experts advising on personal presentation for the workplace.<sup>19</sup> The objective is to help young people realise that the image they convey is key to success in the labour market.
- **Business Hub:** This hub is responsible for establishing partnerships with local companies. Contacts are established through the E2C staff designated to approach businesses, establish partnerships, and organise communication campaigns and specific cultural events involving local businesses. The key point is the emphasis on local partnerships, so that competences are assessed and recognised locally. Businesses are therefore fully informed about existing competences and may hire E2C participants accordingly. This hub works to provide young people with internship opportunities and personalised guidance for the development of an occupational project. Among the operating principles of E2Cs is that an internship must represent half of the participant's overall training time.
- **Social Life Hub:** This hub is the responsibility of educators, project leaders for inclusion in the community and facilitators. It is in charge of organising extra-curricular activities (sport, cultural and social events) and ensuring that young people respect the school regulations.<sup>20</sup> Within the E2C Network, this hub is somewhat less active than the other two – a point for improvement, as underlined by the French Senate (*Sénat*, 2015).<sup>21</sup>

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18 Sabuco, 2016

19 E2C Marseille (2016) *E2Cnews*, online newsletter.

20 Examples may be found on the E2C webpages, with projects designed in partnership with businesses and not-for-profit organisations. An interesting example is provided by the E2C in Seine-Saint-Denis, which, with the support of the network of alumni and trainer, produced a movie on the future of former students (see <https://vimeo.com/54962043>). This movie received the Asteria d'Or at the Deauville American Film Festival (*Festival du Cinéma Américain de Deauville*). It says a lot about the pride of these 'dropouts', who went on to build up their own training pathways after their participation in a E2C, found jobs, built a social and family life.

21 Sénat, 2015



Most young people who enrol in an E2C are either opposed to the standard codes of conduct conveyed by the education system, or have been prompted to stop their studies by an unexpected event (the death of a close relative or friend, for example, or the divorce of their parents). They often report that, before engaging in the E2C, they were ‘doing nothing’ (current student with E2C Marseilles).<sup>22</sup> It is in the junior secondary system that they started losing track, sometimes early on. Here again, they were ‘doing nothing’: ‘School was like a day-care centre, I could not care less ... I was feeling lost’ (former student with an E2C in Seine-Saint-Denis, a suburb of Paris). They may have also experienced poor guidance: ‘They sent me to accountancy, but I was not ready to do that all my life’; ‘They made me meet a career guidance officer at the end of the 9th grade; she told me you will learn catering, but I was not interested at all in catering. I was told I had no choice.’ (both former students at a E2C in Seine-Saint-Denis). In the E2C network, the pathways are reassuring because they are tailored to each individual – the listening skills of the guidance officers are important – but they are still of a binding nature, so that students are properly guided through the system.

After a period lacking direction, these young people are encouraged to realise they cannot stay inactive, and that finding a decent job demands a qualification. In this context, the E2Cs represent a bridge back to the classroom (participants resume learning) and to trade experience (thanks to the business partnerships promoted by the E2C).

## 2.6 ANALYSIS OF HOW THE E2CS ARE FUNCTIONING

Although they represent only a small fraction of the youth schemes available, the E2Cs are experiencing growing success and, as a result, the right to second-chance education is now recognised as a priority in France. There has been a growing number of young people registered with an E2C over the last 12 years (see figure 2.2).<sup>23</sup>

According to the local outreach officers, a key advantage of the E2Cs is that anyone can enrol at any point during the school year. The only criteria are age (16–25) and unemployment (which, in the majority of the cases, will be long-term).

Another key feature is that teaching within an E2C is tailored to the career plan of each participant, as is summarised by one trainer:

*‘We can adapt our approach to an individual’s project; for example, a sales person will need to work out percentages and VAT, whereas young people leaning toward the construction industry will need measurements and surface area.’<sup>24</sup>*

Young people are assessed in the classroom and also in the context of their internship, so that all competences they have acquired are

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22 E2C Marseille, 2016

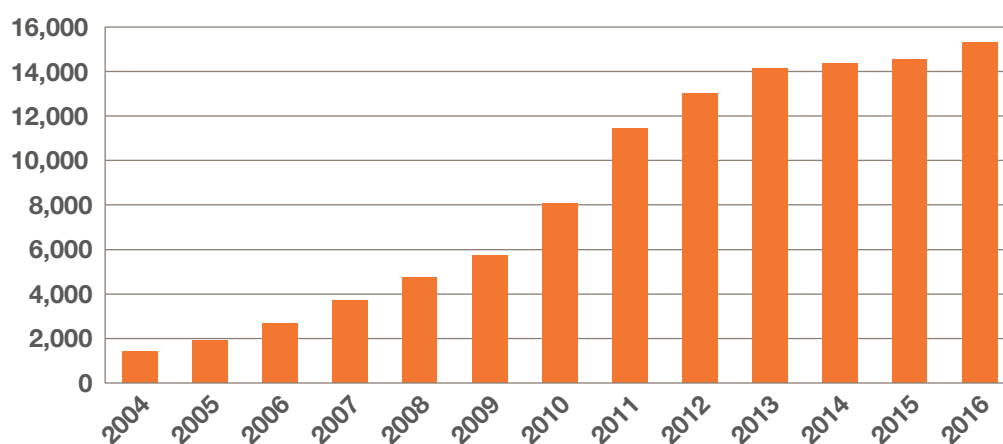
23 Other youth schemes include the PES Individualised Project (*Projet personnalisé d’accès à l’emploi*, from *Pôle Emploi*); the guidance provided by the *Missions Locales*, subsidised contracts (the Employment for the Future Contracts, Guidance to Employment Contract, and CIE – Employment Initiative Contract or *Contrat initiative emploi*), and training spells sponsored by regions. For unabridged statistics, see *Cour des comptes*, 2015, p.32.

24 Interview transcript available at [www.fondatione2c.org/temoignages-et-exemples/](http://www.fondatione2c.org/temoignages-et-exemples/)

validated. Young people really enjoy the pedagogy employed by the E2C, because it is different from that employed in traditional education, particularly as it is adapted to suit individual expectations and learning styles. A former trainee says: ‘At E2C school, it’s a bit like having private lessons with a tutor; at the beginning we take an exam to identify our gaps and what we need to invest in; they built a syllabus just for me so that I don’t need to learn things I know and I don’t waste my time’.

**FIGURE 2.2**

**Number of E2C trainees over the last 12 years**



Source: Sénat (2015), *Les écoles de la deuxième chance: donner aux jeunes décrocheurs les moyens de réussir*, report on behalf of the finance committee, 160

Everything is done in such a way as to make young people responsible for their own choices (young people sign a contract with the E2C); to further their educational projects (a portfolio of competences is identified and elaborated); to promote self-esteem; and to further success (progress is monitored in terms of targeted competences). An issue currently at stake for the E2C network is the achievement of national recognition for the certificate they award to successful E2C students.

The empowerment of young people entails a selection process, operating over a period of time as part of the registration process for an E2C. The following, for example, details the selections made by the Marseilles E2C:<sup>25</sup>

- During the three first weeks, motivation is tested, especially regarding the participants’ willingness to update their competences (the course is half-time, the level is 6th grade).
- The next two weeks are set aside for a two-week internship, with an assessment centring on a participant’s behaviour within the business environment, and attendance, punctuality, respect for the rules and adherence to the dress code.

The rule is to keep only the most motivated young people: those who are ‘ready’. In this inception period – which lasts between two and seven weeks according to the particular E2C – the overall dropout rate varies between 10 and 25 per cent.<sup>26</sup> Once this inception period

25 Sabuco, 2016

26 Dares, 2014

is over, the selection process continues. A contract is signed between the E2C team and the young person in question. Every three months, this contract is revisited on the basis of an assessment of the young person's acceptance of the E2C's rules; in exchange, the team offers intensive guidance, with a weekly meeting and an appointed tutor. At E2C Marseilles, for example, a monitoring committee is set up, composed of a tutor, a mission head for each business, a pastoral support officer and trainers for other subjects. A typical committee follows a group of fifteen interns.<sup>27</sup> Finally, a mentoring system has been established, pairing already-enrolled participants with newcomers.

## 2.7 CONCLUSION: OVERALL SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES OF THE E2Cs

The right to resume an education or training programme, for all young people who did not achieve level V (CAP; Level 3 in the EQF) upon entering the labour market, is now enacted in French law (Law 8 July 2013, on the 'Re-foundation of School', or *Refondation de l'école*). Recent research on the effect of obtaining a post-initial qualification displays, in fact, that 'one quarter of young people who left the education system with at best lower-secondary qualifications obtained a further qualification during the following seven years.'<sup>28</sup> This figure is relatively high and shows that policies to bring young people back into the formal education and training system work; those obtaining a qualification experience improved opportunities in the labour market.

The E2C programme demonstrates a number of key success factors, but also challenges to address. The key success factors are as follows:

- E2C combines education and training to develop basic competences, using appropriate pedagogy, based on e-learning approaches; immersion internships in partner businesses; and extra-curricular activities for the development of social competences. The success of the programme is largely due to its personalised support (lectures are more like private lessons with a tutor), individual guidance and emphasis on individual commitment. A consequence of this is that the number of young people entering E2C is low. There is evidence that, among existing education policies in the OECD countries, those aiming at reforming pedagogical methods seem to be the most effective.<sup>29</sup>
- The E2Cs respond to the significance of monitoring and accreditation by delivering a certificate of learning outcomes.
- The E2C network is composed of independent units, each of which benefit from a large degree of autonomy and the capacity to adapt to local contexts. Partnerships with local businesses are a fundamental pillar of E2C success. The E2C staff plays a central role in approaching businesses, explaining the work of the E2Cs and forging partnerships. They do this by organising communication campaigns and through cultural events that target local businesses. This strengthens the connections and partnerships with businesses, which

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27 Sabuco, 2016

28 Goffette C and Recotillet I (2014) 'Obtaining a post-initial qualification: a second chance for young people with at best lower-secondary qualifications to access better jobs?', *Training and Employment*, 113, March

29 OECD, 2015

can result in internships being set up, and, potentially, opportunities to hire E2C participants.

- The individual E2Cs would not be so successful without inclusion in a national network and membership of the E2C brand (although some territories are not covered by the programme) (see figure 2.1).

The challenges to address are as follows:

- In France, there are high numbers of programmes devoted to tackling youth unemployment. Co-ordination at local or regional level would enhance the exchange of information with the target group and the attractiveness of E2C units. Duplication of similar programmes carried out by different government departments is the main risk. For instance, the development of the Youth Guarantee programme could present an alternative that limits the attractiveness of the E2C network.
- E2Cs and participants would benefit from the recognition at national level of the certificate offered by the E2C network.
- The E2C network displays a high success rate (59 per cent of the participants have found a job or are participating in further training)<sup>30</sup> but it suffers from the lack of a standardised monitoring and evaluation system. Elaborating a monitoring system should take place at national level; each E2C should be able to produce the same statistical indicators (in terms of the main characteristics of learners, main characteristics of the training periods, competences acquired, retention rate and success rate). Currently the rate of success corresponds to entrance into further training or employment and is generally calculated twelve months after graduation from the programme. Evaluation is necessary to measure the impact of the programme and aims and compare the programme beneficiaries (treatment group) to a control group, containing individuals that ought to be similar to programme participants in respect to key characteristics (learning activities undertaken, age, gender, social origin). The evaluation would consist of comparing performance indicators for the two groups. The evaluation system could be built at the national level, probably under the aegis of the Ministry of Employment.

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30 E2C (2015)

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### 3.

# CFPIL (CENTRO DI FORMAZIONE PROFESSIONALE E INSERIMENTO LAVORATIVO)

A WORK-BASED LEARNING CENTRE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN ITALY

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*'I have to understand who you are, I have to respect your skills, I have to know your wishes and limits, I have to monitor the way in which you change, so that your work may be real and possible.'*

CFPIL motto

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The present study focuses on the work undertaken by the CFPIL (Vocational Training and Job Placement Centre; *Centro di Formazione Professionale e Inserimento Lavorativo*), a training agency operating in the province of Varese in Lombardy, Italy. CFPIL supports service users with mental and physical disabilities who are currently outside the labour market. The work-based learning strategy is flexible and is adapted to suit the characteristics of each individual participant. CFPIL has developed a three-step model consisting of: 'manual activities workshops' (*laboratori di attività manuali*), with a focus on acquiring basic skills; 'formative islands' (*isole formative*), where participants have the opportunity to experience working within a company, abiding by standards, timetables and rules; and, finally, the traineeship or internship phase, in which the aim is to enhance basic professional knowledge and to increase the autonomy of the user, both at a professional and personal level. In some cases the service users go on to be hired by the company they are working for during the formative island or traineeship phase.

The case study begins with a summary and overview of the employment of people with disabilities in Italy. The legal framework is outlined, as well as the Italian approach to work-based learning and vocational education and training, particularly with respect to people with disabilities. It goes on to review the CFPIL approach, with a particular focus on the work-based learning methodology. Finally, in light of this analysis, this paper draws out the lessons that can be learnt from the CFPIL approach.

### 3.2 THE CONTEXT IN ITALY: A REVIEW OF THE EMPLOYMENT RATE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Italy has experienced a long and drawn-out economic downturn as a result of the 2008 economic crisis. Italy also has a higher proportion of manual jobs in comparison with other EU countries – Lombardy, for example, ranks first across European regions for manufacturing turnover and added value, and third for employment.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, technological changes, international competition and delocalisation are changing the landscape quickly. These factors have had consequences for the employability of disabled people: 20 years ago, around 80 per cent of people with a disability could find a job; now, the figure has reduced to around 50 per cent.

Over the course of conducting interviews for this study, we noticed that the difficulties faced by people with disabilities worsened, mainly as a result of two factors:

- Greater competition, due to greater unemployment caused by the economic downturn
- Lower availability of repetitive jobs based on simple tasks, which are the easiest for people with disabilities to undertake

More specifically, Italy displays a disability employment rate of 45.6 per cent, ranking fourteenth in the EU. Once the gap between average employment rate and disability employment rate is considered, however, Italy performs better and compares favourably with other member states – trailing only Luxembourg, Sweden, France, Latvia and Finland. Table 3.2 shows the employment rate for people with disabilities across the EU in 2011, compared with the employment rate for people without disabilities in the same year.

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**TABLE 3.1**  
Users of CFPIL services by type of disability, 1981–2010

% of participants	Typology
72.43	Mental disability
14.80	Physical disability
5.76	Down's Syndrome
2.75	Psychological and physical disability
2.57	Psychiatric
1.69	Sensory

Source: Azienda Provinciale della Provincia di Varese (2011) *Perché il lavoro sia possibile*

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1 Éupolis Lombardia (2016) *Osservatorio del mercato del lavoro e della formazione: rapporto 2015*

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**TABLE 3.2****Employment rate in the 28 EU member states, by disability status**

	People with disabilities (%)	People with no disabilities (%)	Gap (in % points)
Austria	60.3	75.6	-15.3
Belgium	40.7	66.4	-25.7
Bulgaria	30.7	61.8	-31.1
Croatia	33	55.8	-22.8
Cyprus	46.4	70.9	-24.5
Czech Republic	38.6	68.5	-29.9
Denmark	46.7	78.1	-31.4
Estonia	49.5	68.6	-19.1
Finland	60.8	73.2	-12.4
France	56.2	66.1	-9.9
Germany	51.5	72.1	-20.6
Greece	35.5	58.5	-23
Hungary	23.7	61.1	-37.4
Ireland	29.8	60.9	-31.1
Italy	45.6	58.9	-13.3
Latvia	50.8	62.6	-11.8
Lithuania	40.4	63.2	-22.8
Luxembourg	62.5	64.9	-2.4
Malta	34.4	59.2	-24.8
Netherlands	42.7	80.1	-37.4
Poland	33.9	63.9	-30
Portugal	51	67.8	-16.8
Romania	31.8	63.5	-31.7
Slovakia	31.9	62.6	-30.7
Slovenia	47	68.4	-21.4
Spain	44.3	60.5	-16.2
Sweden	66.2	75.7	-9.5
UK	47.6	75.4	-27.8

Source: Eurostat (2014) 'Situation of people with disabilities in the EU – Fewer than 1 in 2 disabled adults were in employment in the EU28 in 2011 – And almost a third at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2013', press release, 2 December 2014

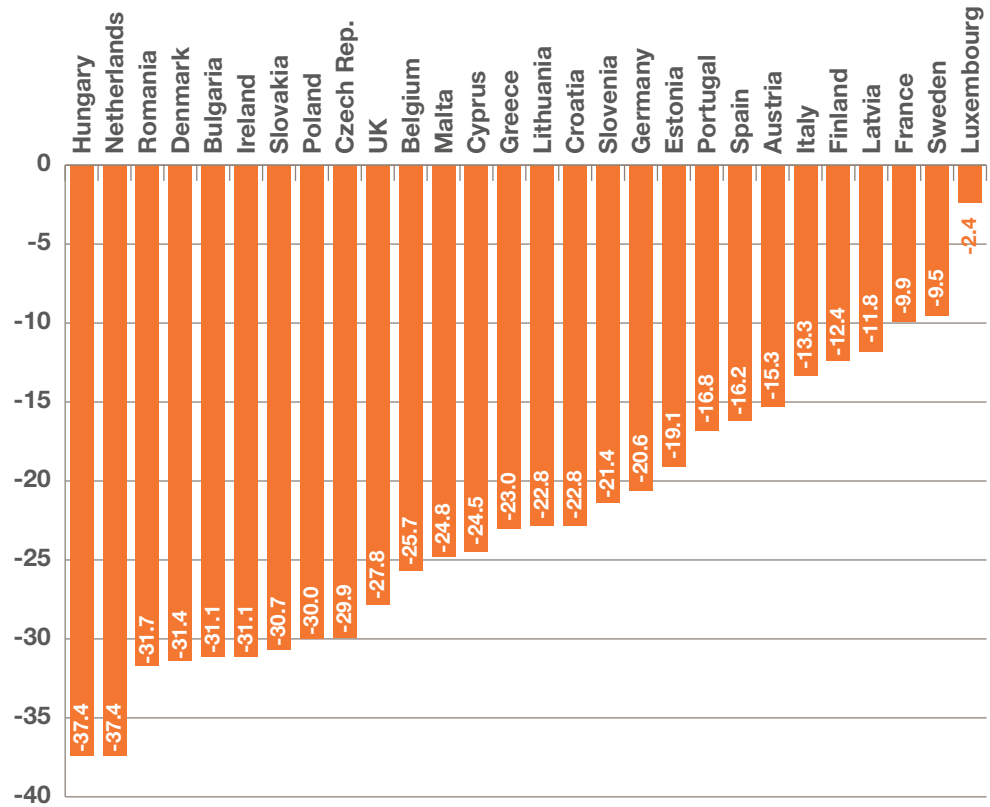
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Figure 3.1, below, ranks the values listed in table 3.2.



**FIGURE 3.1**

European countries ranked by % point gap in disabled and non-disabled employment rates, 2011



Source: Eurostat (2014) 'Situation of people with disabilities in the EU – Fewer than 1 in 2 disabled adults were in employment in the EU28 in 2011 – And almost a third at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2013', press release, 2 December 2014

### 3.2.1 The legal framework

There have been many changes in Italian legislation regarding people with disabilities. Law 482, dating back to 1968, for example, introduced a 15 per cent employment quota for people with disabilities.<sup>2</sup> The 1990s were a period of particularly dramatic legislative changes, with some of the most relevant interventions as follows:

- Legislative decree 112, which transferred social policy and responsibilities to the regional level, as well as social services and secondary-education responsibilities for people affected by disabilities.<sup>3</sup>
- Law 68, which outlined the employment rights of disabled people.<sup>4,5</sup> In particular, the law introduced requirements such as contracts based on work-based learning principles; vocational and educational training

2 'Legge 2 aprile 1968, n. 482. "Disciplina generale delle assunzioni obbligatorie presso le pubbliche amministrazioni e le aziende private"', <http://www.handylex.org/stato/I020468.shtml>

3 'Decreto Legislativo 31 marzo 1998, n. 112. "Conferimento di funzioni e compiti amministrativi dello Stato alle regioni ed agli enti locali, in attuazione del capo I della legge 15 marzo 1997, n. 59"', <http://www.parlamento.it/parlam/leggi/deleghe/98112dl.htm>

4 'Legge 12 marzo 1999, n. 68. "Norme per il diritto al lavoro dei disabili"', <http://www.parlamento.it/parlam/leggi/99068l.htm>

5 It was implementing the principles of the framework law 104 of 1992: 'LEGGE 5 febbraio 1992, n. 104. Legge-quadro per l'assistenza, l'integrazione sociale e i diritti delle persone handicappate', <http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/1992/02/17/092G0108/sg>

for people with disabilities; an increased employment quota for people with disabilities (with a structure of incentives or fines for companies who abide by the law or fail to do so); and the creation of a regional fund for employment. This fund was also tasked with developing ways to integrate people with disabilities into the labour market.

- Law 328, which created the framework for developing an integrated system of interventions into social services.<sup>6</sup> This included an update to the compensations received by people affected with disabilities; new rules for adherence to the standards set by the ICIDN (International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities, and Handicaps); and a new system that simplifies the criteria for demonstrating disability.

However, new legislation to aid the integration of people affected by disabilities into the labour market has been hampered by insufficient availability of funds, with funding cuts continuing through the 1990s. Moving responsibility for employment and social responsibilities to the regional level increased the level of heterogeneity among different regions and allowed them to choose different paths and strategies. Between 2013 and 2016, for instance, the region of Lombardy set up a system of endowments, both for people with and without disabilities, which was not replicated by or comparable to provision in other regions of the country.<sup>7</sup> The resources were, however, exhausted by mid-2015.<sup>8</sup>

### 3.2.2 Provision of work-based learning for disabled people in Italy

In recent years, national reforms have been put in place concerning VET (vocational education and training), work-based learning and assistance for people with disabilities. Most notably, these have included:

- reforms of the national education and training system (called *La buona scuola*), which should raise the number of support teachers in Italy by 6,400;<sup>9</sup> and
- a comprehensive reform of the labour market (the Jobs Act),<sup>10</sup> which foresees changing employment quotas for people affected by disability and a new system of sanctions and incentives (the so-called *chiamata nominativa*).<sup>11</sup>

Despite these legal developments, the landscape and the current debate surrounding VET and work-based learning for disabled people remains fragmented at the regional level. Frequent changes to funding systems and legislative frameworks, combined with institutional instability, consume the resources of centres seeking to support people with a disability. This

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6 'Legge 8 novembre 2000, n. 328: "Legge quadro per la realizzazione del sistema integrato di interventi e servizi sociali"', <http://www.parlamento.it/parlam/leggi/00328l.htm>

7 Regione Lombardia (2010) 'Dote Impresa - Incentivi all'assunzione di persone con disabilità', <http://www.agevolazioni.regione.lombardia.it/cs/Satellite?c=Page&childpagename=Regione%2FMILayout&cid=1213787980613&p=1213787980613&pagename=RGNWrapper>

8 Ibid.

9 'Legge 13 Luglio 2015, n. 107: Riforma del sistema nazionale di istruzione e formazione e delega per il riordino delle disposizioni legislative vigenti', [http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/atto/serie\\_generale/caricaDettaglioAtto/originario;jsessionid=ciz0QGnWUVK0ExN5IVkr0w...ntc-as4-guri2b?atto.dataPubblicazioneGazzetta=2015-07-15&atto.codiceRedazionale=15G00122&elenco30giorni=false](http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/atto/serie_generale/caricaDettaglioAtto/originario;jsessionid=ciz0QGnWUVK0ExN5IVkr0w...ntc-as4-guri2b?atto.dataPubblicazioneGazzetta=2015-07-15&atto.codiceRedazionale=15G00122&elenco30giorni=false)

10 Camera dei deputati (2015) 'Atto del governo sottoposto a parere parlamentare: Schema di decreto legislativo recante disposizioni di razionalizzazione e semplificazione delle procedure e degli adempimenti a carico di cittadini e imprese e altre disposizioni in materia di lavoro e pari opportunità (176)', paper presented to parliament, 16 June 2015, <http://bit.ly/2I7HJkm>

11 More information is available here: <https://www.disabili.com/lavoro/articoli-lavoro/lavoro-disabili-e-riforma-fornero-piu-posti-grazie-ai-nuovi-riconteggi->

affects both the target group and the composition of staff. For both actors on the ground and other stakeholders, it has become difficult to stay up to date with structural changes and to understand how the work-based learning landscape is changing.

### 3.3 AN INTRODUCTION TO THE APPROACH OF CFPIL IN ITALY

CFPIL was created in 1971 in the province of Varese in Lombardy, Italy. The centre was originally set up as a school for people with disabilities, before being transformed to help disabled people to enter the labour market. Most notably, in 2002, it became part of the province's network of training agencies.<sup>12</sup>

While there were some existing organisations assisting those with physical disabilities in the city of Varese, CFPIL was the first to focus predominantly on mental disabilities. Between 1981 and 2010, CFPIL hosted 1,128 service users; the majority of these had mental disabilities of varying types and degrees (see table 3.1 for more details). Those suffering from mental disabilities often suffered from learning difficulties and, sometimes, relationship problems in addition. In 1998, the centre began to host physically disabled individuals too, including people with additional cognitive difficulties, and those whose disability had come about as a result of an injury sustained at work or degenerative disease. Over the last few years, CFPIL has again broadened its scope, and is accepting people affected by sensory deficiencies (mainly those affecting sight and hearing) and psychiatric patients.

Over time, the age range of CFPIL participants has expanded and, recently, due to the launch of a regional-level endowment plan,<sup>13</sup> CFPIL has started working with people aged 13–14 in secondary schools.<sup>14</sup> When the centre first started to operate, participants were rarely more than 22 years old; it now accepts participants up to the age of 50.

CFPIL focuses on people affected by medium-to-high-impact pathologies and provides support to people who are experiencing exclusion, mainly due to being outside the labour market. As a parent of a former pupil stated: 'If it was not for [CFPIL] intervention, our son would stay home all day. Before knowing the centre, that was his reality.'<sup>15</sup> Another parent conceded that 'there are several people affected by serious disabilities that are completely isolated ... The risk of remaining alone for them and their family is high.'

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12 In the Italian legal system, a 'special company' is a not-for-profit public agency that acts as an instrument (hence the Italian, *ente strumentale*) for reaching objectives set by policymakers at municipal level.

13 <http://www.agevolazioni.regione.lombardia.it/cs/Satellite?c=Page&childpagename=Regione%2FMILayout&cid=1213787980613&p=1213787980613&pagename=RGNWwrapper>

14 Italian secondary schools are divided into two: middle school (*scuole medie inferiori*, lasting 3 years), and 'high school' (*scuole medie superiori*, lasting from 2 to 5 years). According to the most recent change in the regional plan, students in their last year of middle school (including those with disabilities), are entitled to receive an endowment to spend in the education market. In order to make students and their families aware of its services, CFPIL has started to present them to people with disabilities in this last year. This represents a major change in CFPIL communication strategies, which historically relied on word of mouth and advice given to families by people working in the education and health sectors.

15 This quote is taken from one of four interviews conducted for this study by Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini. They revolved around the activities conducted at CFPIL, the collection of data concerning the period of stay at CFPIL, the phases of the CFPIL programme, the role of pupils in drafting their own objectives, the problems faced, and possible ways to improve the process. Four people were interviewed: Anna Sculli, current manager of CFPIL, with 30 years of experience in the centre; a former pupil; and two family members of former pupils.

Prior to enrolling, all potential CFPIL users have to undertake a psychological and aptitude evaluation, and participate in an orientation phase before training begins in earnest. The evaluation itself differs according to the three main types of potential users, namely:

- people finishing the *scuola secondaria di primo grado*, a lower secondary school for Italian children between the ages of 11 and 14;
- people with physical or sensorial disabilities; and
- adults with mental disabilities, who have to undertake vocational training.

The amount of time spent at CFPIL varies with the age of the participant: for people aged 15–17, it is one day per week (the rest being spent at school). At 18, the participant can access 20 hours per week, in addition to potential internships. Over the years, CFPIL has developed an intervention strategy characterised by flexibility, having evolved, both with experience and with exposure to changes in legislative frameworks and functions; the programme adapts to the characteristics of the individual participant. Recent legislative changes have set the limit for vocational training at CFPIL to three years (in the past, it could last indefinitely, but on average lasted between four and six years).

### 3.4 THE THREE-STEP MODEL DEVELOPED BY CFPIL

The process at CFPIL comprises three main phases of support: ‘manual activities workshops’, ‘formative islands’, and work experience.

#### 3.4.1 Manual activities workshops

These workshops form the first phase of the process, originally intended to train users for four years (between the ages of 14 and 18).<sup>16</sup> The objective is not yet to learn a profession, but rather to gain the basic skills required for the next two phases. The CFPIL centre initially offered woodwork and gardening classes, but later added options including cooking, leatherwork, weaving, pottery, basic jewellery-making and mosaicking. The tasks are characterised by their ease and repetitive nature, and are targeted to each user’s individual disability and needs. The activities on offer depend on the experience of assistants and support teachers, and basic actions are taught, alongside the basics of health and safety in the workplace.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, a special computer laboratory, opened in 1998 and teaches elementary Microsoft Word and Excel and internet use, with classes tailored for users with physical disabilities.

Starting from their second year at CFPIL, users, in small groups of seven or eight, are involved in work-related activities one morning per week, under the supervision of instructors. The activities are offered within companies who also offer the ‘formative island’ experience (discussed below). Pupils below the age of 18 have a more structured offer, given that attending class is mandatory for people of this age in Italy. Specifically, they have to attend classes for 29 hours per week, with work divided between six main areas:

- Technical and professional workshops.

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<sup>16</sup> According to the interview with Anna Sculli, in recent years, only 35 per cent of users have been younger than 18.

<sup>17</sup> With the onset of the financial crisis, many practitioners who lost their jobs have decided to pass on their skills to the users of the centre, either on a voluntary basis or as employees on short-term contracts.

- Cultural workshops, strengthening basic literacy skills, numeracy skills and problem solving.
- Communication workshops, focusing on interaction, emotion and relationship management (as it relates to the work environment).
- Autonomy, including space and time management, personal hygiene, food education and home economics.
- Social independence (money management, use of public transportation, use of the public welfare system).
- Physical activities

For pupils over 18 years old, CFPIL proposes another structure. Every pupil follows an individual path, ranging from 600 to 1,000 hours of contact time, lasting from one to two years. The pupils are separated into small groups (six to 12 people), with a focus on manual activities and the acquisition of skills and knowledge that can be applied in a working environment.

Service users have the chance to try different activities, helping them to decide the areas to which they are best suited.

It is worth mentioning the following two aspects of the first phase at CFPIL.

- If, during assessment, some users over the age of 18 years old show good manual skills, their period at CFPIL may be shortened to a few weeks or months and they may be able to skip to phase two.
- If a user remains stuck in this stage for too long, they may be redirected to other centres, better suited to dealing with people with more serious disabilities.

### 3.4.2 The ‘formative island’

The ‘formative island’ programme is the trademark of CFPIL and distinguishes it from other, similar centres. The physical setting for this phase of work-based learning is a partner company. CFPIL has worked to develop partnerships with local companies over the years, allowing disabled people to become acquainted with the labour environment of workers (although often separated from other workers themselves, in order to have a calmer and safer experience). While in a formative island, the user is monitored by two people: a support teacher from CFPIL and a worker from the partner company.<sup>18</sup> The model is a gradual path towards employment via authentic, workplace-based learning.<sup>19</sup> Users have to learn, not only to work within the standards set by a company, but also to abide by its timetables and rules.

Companies participating in the formative island programme include Bticino, a large, locally-based manufacturing company with a focus on home automation; Condenser, a machine tools company; Agricola Varesina, which provides gardening and landscaping tools and services; Tecniplast; and Verve, these last two involved in plastic manufacturing. Of particular relevance is Bticino, which embarked on a pilot project with CFPIL in 1987 in order to help a student arriving from a mainstream school, where she had been assisted by a support teacher but, nevertheless, was having

<sup>18</sup> The support teacher from CFPIL has a double role as psychologist/acquaintance for the user and mediator with a professional figure at the partner company. This CFPIL staff member is ultimately responsible for overseeing and evaluating the user’s experience – shifts, timing, rhythm, productivity levels.

<sup>19</sup> Interestingly, this method was first used in 1987, anticipating the law by more than a decade.

difficulties integrating. Her desire to be accepted prompted the idea of looking for a way to help pupils entering the labour market. Bticino accepted the challenge, thus becoming a founding pillar of the formative island pilot, which gradually expanded to involve other companies. The partnership enabled Bticino to meet their employment quota for disabled people.

Placement in the formative island is gradual, and may be on a part-time basis (according to the user's level of disability). A placement may fail or be considered unfit on one or both sides (normally due to factors such as stress for the student, relational problems or the user's inability to perform specific tasks). If this is the case, the user returns to the CFPIL workshops until a new formative island position opens. Users average over two formative island experiences each. The need for a repeat experience stems primarily from the difficulty users have in adapting to a working environment for which they are not prepared. CFPIL's latest approach is also to encourage users to try different environments and tasks, so that they come to be more at ease with varied tasks.

### **3.4.3 Work experience: traineeships and internships**

The third phase is work experience, which starts as a traineeship. The aim of this phase is to provide basic professional knowledge and to increase the autonomy of the user, both at a professional and a personal level. Some internships are undertaken in the same company in which the user had a formative island experience, while other users gain new experiences. In some cases, users may go on to be hired full-time by a company.<sup>20</sup>

Several CFPIL stakeholders have agreed to devote part of their free time to helping supporting users into the workplace. A good example is the not-for-profit sports organisation ADP Varese Onlus, which is composed mainly of parents of current or past users of CFPIL. The organisation offers a wide range of classes in activities including swimming, basketball and *bocce* in order to offer opportunities to users with different disabilities. The objective is to help people with disabilities to interact and liaise among themselves and among people without disabilities, while enjoying their free time and developing their social skills. The association is run entirely by volunteers, and is funded by local organisations and by the parents of users themselves.

In interviews conducted with a user who attended CFPIL a decade ago, and two parents of former users, it emerged that one of the main advantages of being involved in CFPIL activities was taking part in these group activities and being part of a community, which strengthens users' self confidence and social skills. The rationale behind the whole approach is that a job is not seen as a goal in itself, but rather as a stepping stone for integration into society.

A work experience placement is chosen taking into consideration different criteria:

- The skills, character, interests and personal history of the person with disabilities

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<sup>20</sup> Interviews held with the families of three former service users revealed that all three had been hired. As stated in section 1, however, the financial crisis and disappearance of simple tasks have meant that the overall success rate has dropped to 50 per cent in recent years, from 80 per cent in previous years.

- The specialisations of available teachers and trainers
- Availability of a vacancy
- Funding available, including calls for proposals at different levels

These could be summed up by one of the mottos of CFPIIL: 'I have to understand who you are, I have to respect your skills, I have to know your wishes and limits, I have to monitor the way in which you change, so that your work may be real and possible' (*devo capire chi sei, devo rispettare le tue capacità, devo conoscere i tuoi desideri ed i tuoi limiti, devo monitorare il tuo cambiamento, affinché il tuo lavoro sia reale e possibile*).

There are three key options for work experience placements.

- **Private companies:** In order for a person with disabilities to be hired, it is required that they be able to show productivity equal to 50 per cent of that of an average worker. This prevents a good share of CFPIIL users from entering the private sector. Moreover, people interviewed highlight that over the years it has become increasingly difficult for people with disabilities to be employed in such companies, the main reasons being the replacement of human beings with machines where simple and repetitive tasks are concerned; the growing need for people with a wide range of skills, who are able to deliver on different tasks; the greater importance of basic digital literacy in the current job market; the overall higher level of complexity of the jobs; and increased intensity and speed as minimum requirements. A former pupil at CFPIIL told us: 'In the first company where I was working I was cleaning used cans so that they could be reused. Now nobody is doing that task because they have a machine doing that.' The manager of CFPIIL, Anna Sculli, added: 'the 50 per cent of productivity of a 'normal' worker is a very difficult mark to clear for our pupils. Most of the time the companies accept a lower level, to help them.'
- **Public bodies:** Until 1996 there were specific openings for people with disabilities at public regional bodies approved by the Regional Commission for Employment in Lombardy (*Commissione Regionale per l'Occupazione in Lombardia*), such as resolution 476, from 12 February 1996, replaced in 1997 by a new set of regulations (law 196), which created a specific quota for people with disability in public sector.
- **Type-B Co-operatives** (*Cooperative di tipo B*; a specific type of consortium established by Italian legislation). These support disadvantaged people, including people with disabilities. Since the outbreak of the financial crisis, these co-operatives are facing funding problems and their numbers are decreasing.

Two of the main purposes of CFPIIL are the provision of careers advice and monitoring of former CFPIIL pupils during their work experience. This monitoring sometimes continues for years after a user is hired by a company or co-operative. There have been cases of people in employment for more than 10 years, who were dismissed and then had a second period at CFPIIL before being re-employed.

With respect to the availability of funding, this is related to the dedicated budget lines and projects calls for funding at local, regional, national and

European levels.<sup>21</sup> The most stable supplier of funds is the province of Varese, which provides salaries to 14 educators. Constant monitoring of these opportunities detracts from time available for work on the ground and a general institutional and funding stability would pay dividends.

### 3.5 ANALYSIS OF HOW CFPIL IS FUNCTIONING

The way CFPIL operates is by adapting to the constantly changing environment. At the heart of the holistic intervention provided is analysis of, help offered to, and understanding of the user, in order to advise them and integrate them into society.

CFPIL evaluates progress by drafting a project objective for each user; this is very fluid and will be modified all through the CFPIL process, once further information becomes available and new skills and preferences are developed by the user. The project is both of the person, who has a say in the choice and definition of the project objective, and for the person. In order to help achieve this project objective, multidisciplinary teams are created by CFPIL for each user. The teams include professional educators with expertise in a range of specific areas, teachers, social workers, psychologists and psychiatrists. Currently, there are five different multidisciplinary teams working with CFPIL, with four additional educational groups.

The task of the multidisciplinary teams is twofold: on the one hand, they have to programme the intervention experienced by a user, while, on the other hand, they have to verify the user's progress (and, in some cases, change the project objective according to new evidence). The ultimate aim is to advise the user (given their preferences and interests), and this is possible only if the entire network works together. By 'network', we refer, not only to the multidisciplinary teams, but also to the user's family and to institutions at local, national and European levels.

According to anecdotal evidence collected through the interviews conducted for this study, the approach developed by CFPIL can be considered effective. Positive success rates, the feeling that participants' well-being is improving and that they are becoming more integrated into society, and the positive effects on their everyday life (that they engage more, and become more independent and proactive) are all identified.<sup>22</sup> One of the interviewees, from a region in southern Italy, stated that 'an approach this comprehensive and empowering is unheard of in southern Italy. When I speak with parents of people affected with disabilities in my region they are astonished.'

Yet some negative developments should also be highlighted, namely the decrease in participant placement rates over the years. As set out above, the difficulties are linked to the decrease in the number of jobs requiring easy and repetitive tasks, the economic downturn, and the generally higher level of productivity and competence required in the

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21 The collaboration with Bticino, for example, was strengthened in 1984, thanks to a European project funding job placement for 24 users. The project was not specifically planned with people with disabilities in mind, yet CFPIL and Bticino were awarded with two places for CFPIL users. Today, funds from the Youth Guarantee programme are being used.

22 It has to be stressed that the Italian state places emphasis on the care of people with disabilities before they are 18 years old through education and other social policies. One interviewee, the parent of a former pupil, told us that the whole family felt 'abandoned by the state' after his son reached the age of 18. The parent stressed that this is a common feeling among parents of people with disabilities.



labour market. These challenges are real and their threat is growing, but an easy solution is difficult to find given the inherent limitations of people with disabilities.

Another challenge, related to the legislative context and availability of funding, comes from the rising number of requests for support. Among these are a significant group of requests from young people (approximately 16 years old) with disabilities, coming from short-track secondary school classes (*percorsi formativi di base triennali*), who would benefit from vocational training and work-based learning paths. These pupils do not meet the criteria for help from a centre such as CFPIL. In terms of age, these potential users are cut off from both regional and provincial funding and, therefore, even if included in classes, do not bring funding in to CFPIL. The problem was solved in 2011 by integrating such users into manual activity workshops, while additional support was provided through workplace placements (mainly on fixed-term contracts) and the help of ‘socially useful workers’ (*lavoratori socialmente utili*, meaning people at disadvantage in the labour market, often having lost their manufacturing jobs in the financial crisis). CFPIL was able to raise its capacity in this way and provide added value both for people with disabilities in CFPIL and to the ‘socially useful workers’ – that is, the unemployed with no disabilities. Ultimately, however, CFPIL does not receive money to take care of these additional pupils.

This is just one, recent example of the flexibility of which CFPIL is capable. The centre’s readiness to quickly and creatively react to new challenges sets a positive and constructive example for other centres facing difficulties. But creativity and adaptability are not the only CFPIL qualities that can be learned from and replicated. The centre also:

- advocates the use of part-time employment;
- supports changes throughout the working experience ;
- engages in clinical follow-up for each user;
- practises constant monitoring;
- maintains the stability of its service;
- creates a network with other institutions in the territory; and
- ensures that inclusion is viewed as a comprehensive concept, not limited to the labour market, but rather to society as a whole.

The use of part-time opportunities to create formative islands and job placements, from the user perspective, can help those people who cannot handle more than four hours of work per day. It can also be useful for the partner company, allowing them to sustain the work experience and provide a manageable space and time investment.

During their period at CFPIL, and on formative islands and work placements, the user has to become accomplished at switching between different tasks. For some participants this can be challenging initially, but is ultimately likely to be useful – partly because the user gains confidence through discovering new tasks and activities that prove their value, and also because it builds competence. In most instances, the labour market now requires employees to be capable of carrying out multiple tasks.

CFPIL has a clinical, educational and formative path for every participant. Contact with former users continues for many years, and some employers will go back to CFPIL for further help after more than ten years. Having at its disposal seasoned staff, with qualifications, expertise in dealing with people with disabilities and direct knowledge of the peculiar needs and characteristics of the individual users that have passed through, CFPIL provides an incredibly useful source of information. Linked to this is the monitoring and filing of all users who pass through CFPIL, to provide and forward relevant information to other medical professionals and centres that may have to work with them. Another aspect of CFPIL's success is the stability of the service and the training offered to people who are willing to become educators. Thanks to this, other examples of formative islands have been opened in other towns in the vicinity, such as Arese.<sup>23</sup>

Collaboration with organisations at the local level is another replicable characteristic of CFPIL. This is not only about creating a network among vocational education and training providers, schools, hospitals and institutions (which, in fact, exists and has its own information system),<sup>24</sup> it is about creating a pleasant and lively environment for users, which includes the opportunity to participate in leisure activities in parallel and as a complement to work placement, thus giving users the chance to demonstrate their potential in different fields. Inclusion not only in the job market, but also within the community, is the hallmark of CFPIL.

Our interviews demonstrate that CFPIL presents a positive example of how to provide work-based learning support for people with disabilities. Inclusion in a working environment is a step towards greater self-confidence and integration within broader society. The people interviewed for this study agreed on this point: that obtaining a job and feeling a part of society has a tremendous effect on the whole system of interactions and relations experienced by people with disabilities.

### 3.6 CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

Work-based learning programmes, especially those focused on people experiencing disadvantages, are facing new challenges. It is of interest to note that our interviewees agreed on the difficulties in proposing changes to the methods in use at the centre; this may derive from the fear of changing a mechanism that is working well. The parents of a former pupil shared with us that they could not see how CFPIL could be improved, adding that the priority for the policymakers should be 'to help successful centres like CFPIL, because the chances of being left alone are high'. The parent of another former student, a lawyer by profession, stated that the most important factor was 'to keep things as they are now, because there is always the threat that bureaucracy or some policymaker will ruin the process'. She mentioned a factor in the success of the CFPIL model, which is also identified by CFPIL management: 'The participation of the families of the students is fundamental, even outside the activities strictly linked to CFPIL.'

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23 For people with disabilities, distance is a much more relevant barrier than for people without disabilities. In the case of one interview, the job placement failed partly because of its distance from the CFPIL centre. From a logistical perspective, having a pupil 25km from the centre can cause problems.

24 Its creation followed law 328 in 2000 (see <http://www.parlamento.it/parlam//003281.htm>, note 6).

The constant change affecting the manufacturing sector in Italy, which absorbs the majority of CFPIL's former participants, may ultimately lead to a change in the CFPIL model. In order to mitigate these challenges, greater stability and funding would be welcome, so that time and resources can be focussed on the core activities of the centre. Intertwined with this is the need for a mapping exercise (ideally made by public authorities) for all the resources in the territory, in order to further develop the network of stakeholders in the field, share approaches, better understand the needs of users and their families, and improve the offer from other centres and institutions working in the region. This would also empower users and legitimise their needs. The need for further education and training fuels the demand for specific courses for people with disabilities.

The CFPIL example demonstrates that a work-based learning programme for disabled people needs to focus on three specific areas.

- The comprehensive consultation of stakeholders involved in each case, starting with the disabled individual, and involving their family, the doctors and the social assistants who spend time with that person.
- The use of public resources and funds to support the stakeholders involved in the process of work-based learning for people with disabilities (such as the training of trainers and improvement of facilities).
- The creation of a more equal and inclusive society that considers how to benefit from the contribution of all members of the community.

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# 4. TARGETED VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND WORK-BASED LEARNING FOR NEWLY ARRIVED REFUGEES

GOOD PRACTICE FROM GERMANY

*JUTTA RUMP AND SILKE EILERS*

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*'I have informed the employees in advance of the new colleague's arrival and his background, and I have attached great importance to him taking part in company celebrations and activities outside of the workplace.'*

Hotel manager, interviewed about supporting a new refugee employee

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This paper addresses the challenge of achieving an efficient and thorough integration of newly arrived refugees into the German education system and labour market. This paper reviews three separate initiatives providing targeted, personalised, work-based learning support to refugees in Germany. The latest wave of refugees reached Germany in 2015 and it has taken time for these responsive projects and initiatives to become established. As such, there is limited data available on success rates, and official project evaluations are due to take place soon. Nevertheless, these initiatives display a range of insights to reflect on and to learn from at this early stage.

The German context is reviewed at the outset, taking into account the ways in which refugees integrate, and are supported to join the labour market. The challenges are explored, along with a review of the political commitments and focus of the debate in this area. Three initiatives are then reviewed in more depth. These are: Prospects for Young Refugees (*Perspektiven für junge Flüchtlinge*), a programme implemented by local employment agencies and job centres, which supports young refugees (25 and under) to attend vocational training – combining both theoretical and practical experience; Vocational Orientation Programme for Refugees (*Berufsorientierung für Flüchtlinge*), part of the wider qualification initiative called Ways into Vocational Education (*Wege in die Ausbildung*), which comprises more than sixty projects all over Germany working in close collaboration with companies in the crafts sector; and The Rhineland-Palatine Integration Chain (*Die Rheinland-Pfälzische Integrationskette*), which includes a range of initiatives and programmes that provide support for refugees in areas such as German work culture, technical training and socio-educational counselling. A review of additional research undertaken by IBE and Hays Recruitment Agency is also outlined, as the research with employers deepens the analysis

further and reflects on some of the common themes across this range of programmes. The conclusion sets out a thematic overview of the lessons to be learned when implementing work-based learning programmes for refugees, based on this range of early stage examples.

## 4.2 THE GERMAN CONTEXT: INTEGRATING REFUGEES INTO THE LABOUR MARKET IN GERMANY

In 2015, 1.1 million new asylum seekers were registered across Germany in the so-called EASY system.<sup>1</sup> 476,649 formal asylum applications were submitted to BAMF (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees; *Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge*), 273,815 more than in the previous year.<sup>2</sup> Many are very young: more than half (55.9 per cent) of the refugees from countries with a high protection rate are younger than 25 years old. This is especially the case for asylum seekers from Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria; approximately half of the population of these countries is younger than 19 years old, one third is between 20 and 39 years, roughly 15 per cent between 40 and 59 years, and only about 5 per cent are 60 years and older.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, many do not have a vocational qualification comparable to those issued in Germany. Germany already has a high proportion of people with a ‘migration background’:<sup>4</sup> in 2014, they made up 20.3 per cent of the overall population.<sup>5</sup> Their integration into the VET (Vocational Education and Training) system and labour market, however, is still far from optimal.

According to Joachim Möller, Head of IAB (Institute for Employment Research; *Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung*), roughly two thirds of refugees have no training that is relevant or applicable in the German labour market.<sup>6</sup> In its study *Arbeitslandschaft 2040, Prognos* noted that refugees tend to have a lower level of qualification compared to the local population.<sup>7</sup> Analyses of the Institute for Employment’s Socioeconomic Panel’s Migration Sample (a household survey carried out in 2013) show that in the past, the integration of refugees into the labour market was not as successful as that of other migrant groups.<sup>8</sup>

The average age of a German citizen without a migration background is 46.8 years, while the average age of a citizen with this background is 35.4 years. According to the micro-census of 2012, every fourth adolescent aged 15 to 19 years old in the target group for apprenticeships in Germany

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1 The EASY system is an IT application for initial allocation of asylum seekers across the federal states of Germany; see BMI, 2016. Regarding these figures, it has to be noted that error or double entries cannot be ruled out, due to the still-ongoing process of identification and collection of personal data.

2 BMI, 2016

3 Statistisches Bundesamt, 2015a

4 According to the German Federal Statistic Office (*Statistisches Bundesamt*, or Destatis), ‘the population group with a migration background consists of all persons who have immigrated into the territory of today’s Federal Republic of Germany after 1949, and all foreigners born in Germany and all persons born in Germany who have at least one parent who immigrated into the country or was born as a foreigner in Germany. The migration status of a person is determined based on his/her own characteristics regarding immigration, naturalisation and citizenship and the relevant characteristics of his/her parents. This means that German nationals born in Germany may have a migration background, too, be it as children of Ethnic German repatriates, as children born to foreign parents (in accordance with the so-called *ius soli* principle) or as German nationals with one foreign parent.’; Destatis, 2016. For further information, see <https://www.destatis.de/EN/FactsFigures/SocietyState/Population/MigrationIntegration/Methods/MigrationBackground.html>

5 Statistisches Bundesamt, 2015a and 2015b

6 Möller, 2015

7 Prognos, 2015

8 IAB, 2015

has a migration background (nearly 1.1 million people).<sup>9</sup> This figure is set to rise considerably due to the large number of young refugees.

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#### **Box 4.1: Facts and figures on refugees**

The following reports and statistics underline the fact that the integration of people with a migration background already living in Germany into the VET system and labour market still requires improvement:

- Even within the group of people born in Germany, who have passed through the entire German school system, the rate of school dropouts among those with a migration background is twice as high as the rate in the overall population.<sup>10</sup>
- The most recent applicants survey confirms the findings of previous studies, which show that many employers have reservations about hiring young people with a migration background for a VET programme and that these people's prospects of successfully completing a dual vocational training – under otherwise identical conditions – are significantly worse than those of adolescents without a migration background, particularly for people of Turkish and Arab origin.<sup>11</sup> Approximately 60 per cent of companies currently accepting apprentices have never offered an apprenticeship to an adolescent with a migration background.<sup>12</sup> The reasons for this cannot be answered conclusively at this time, but might be due to uncertainty within companies regarding the applicants' experience, abilities and performance. To reduce this uncertainty, companies, in their selection processes, tend to fall back on descriptive characteristics such as migration background or foreigner status and consider these in addition to school-leaving qualification.<sup>13</sup>
- In 2014, among eligible young people without German citizenship, only 31.1 per cent began an apprenticeship, while, among adolescents with citizenship, 56.3 per cent started an apprenticeship.<sup>14</sup>
- Persons with a migration background often remain without any vocational qualification at all, disproportionately so. Consequently, twice as many adolescents with a migration background as without a migration background can be found in the so-called 'transition' system.<sup>15</sup> Measures and educational courses in this segment of the VET system do not provide a fully qualifying training and are characterised by detours, repetitions and 'queues', from which it is hard to find the way into qualified VET.<sup>16</sup>

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9 Die Bundesregierung, 2014

10 Creutzburg, 2014

11 Die Bundesregierung 2014; Granato M, Beicht U, Eberhard V, Friedrich M, Schwerin C, Ulrich JG and Weiß U, 2011

12 Enggruber R and Rützel J, 2015

13 Beicht, 2014; Becker, 2011

14 BMBF, 2016

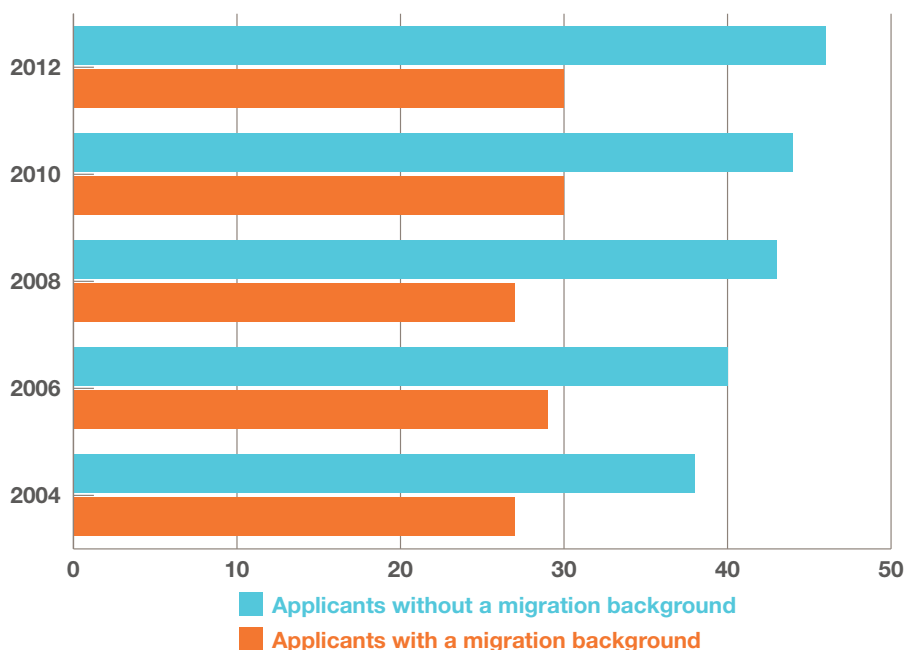
15 Ibid.

16 Die Bundesregierung, 2014

As far as the continuance of VET is concerned, considerable differences between those with a migration background and those without are evident. A core element of a broader integration strategy would lie in providing for a successful integration of refugees into VET, for instance by means of work placements (see figure 4.1 for further details).

**FIGURE 4.1**

**Continuance of VET for applicants with and without a migration background, 2004–2012**



Bundesregierung (2014) 10. Bericht der Beauftragten der Bundesregierung für Migration, Flüchtlinge und Integration über die Lage der Ausländerinnen und Ausländer in Deutschland: October 2014, [https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Anlagen/IB/2014-10-29-Lagebericht-lang.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile&v=4](https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Anlagen/IB/2014-10-29-Lagebericht-lang.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=4), p. 75

#### 4.2.1 Political overview and a focus on the debate around refugees and inclusion

In order to integrate a large number of young refugees into German society and the labour market, it is essential to ensure they are able to participate in the VET system. This is the key to their leading an independent life, as part of which they can find satisfactory professions and support themselves and their families. The substantial efforts to address this issue at both the federal and state level of the German government show that this topic has reached the top of the political agenda.

In light of demographic developments, such as an ageing society and workforce, the question of how to make sure that enough skilled personnel will be available in the future has become ever more pressing. One way of ensuring this is to facilitate the transition of young people with a migration background into an apprenticeship.<sup>17</sup> This involves the quick and thorough integration of people coming to Germany as refugees. Furthermore, it is essential to prepare all migrants to support themselves, rather than

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

their depending on Germany's social security systems due to a lack of vocational qualifications (still one of the most important factors in access to a satisfactory professional life). Therefore, the German government and its federal ministries have put into practice numerous measures to improve the participation of young people with a migration background, among them refugees, in VET. There are also intensive efforts being made to ensure that occupational qualifications acquired outside Germany lead to employment appropriate to a person's level of education – this is the mission of the network IQ (Integration through Qualification), funded by BMAS (Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs; *Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales*) and the ESF (European Social Fund).<sup>18</sup>

The guiding focus of the new Integration Act (*Integrationsgesetz*), which came into effect in Germany in August 2016, is to give refugees and employers more security and to make sure that integration courses are available for all refugees at an early stage, making it clear that they are seen as an obligation rather than a non-binding offer. The most important regulations, in brief, are as follows:<sup>19</sup>

- Refugees who become apprentices are now granted a temporary suspension of deportation (a 'tolerance permission') for the duration of their apprenticeships. After successful completion of the apprenticeship and in case of subsequent employment, the refugee is granted the right of residence for two years. Refugees who will not be employed by the apprenticing company after completion of their apprenticeships are granted a further tolerance permission of six months to find employment. The previous upper age limit of 21 to begin an apprenticeship is repealed. In case of termination of an apprenticeship, a temporary suspension of deportation of six months is granted, in order to allow the person affected to find a new apprenticeship. The right of residence is revoked only when any subsequent employment relationship is terminated, or in the case of conviction, when the person concerned can be shown to have been intentionally committing an offence.
- Courses promoting integration will be made available to a greater number of participants (both by increasing the maximum number of participants and opening out to include more course providers). This regulation is newly created, with asylum seekers with good prospects of permanent residence in mind. The right to participate in an integration course will, in the future, expire after one year instead of two years, as before.
- For the first three years, refugees in Germany have to remain in the federal state to which they were allocated on arrival. Exempt from this rule are refugees who are already undertaking an apprenticeship or are employed, subject to social insurance contributions (it is required that they are working at least 15 hours per week, with an income of at least €712).
- Refugees are required to carry out work in the community during the process of applying for asylum (for up to six months, at 30 hours per week). They receive an allowance of €0.80 per hour. The programme 'Measures for integrating refugees' offers 100,000 such employment opportunities. Refugees are therefore able to learn the German language and basic principles of German society at an early stage and are

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18 Information on this network is available in English here: <http://www.netzwerk-iq.de/network-iq-start-page.html>

19 Bundesregierung, 2016



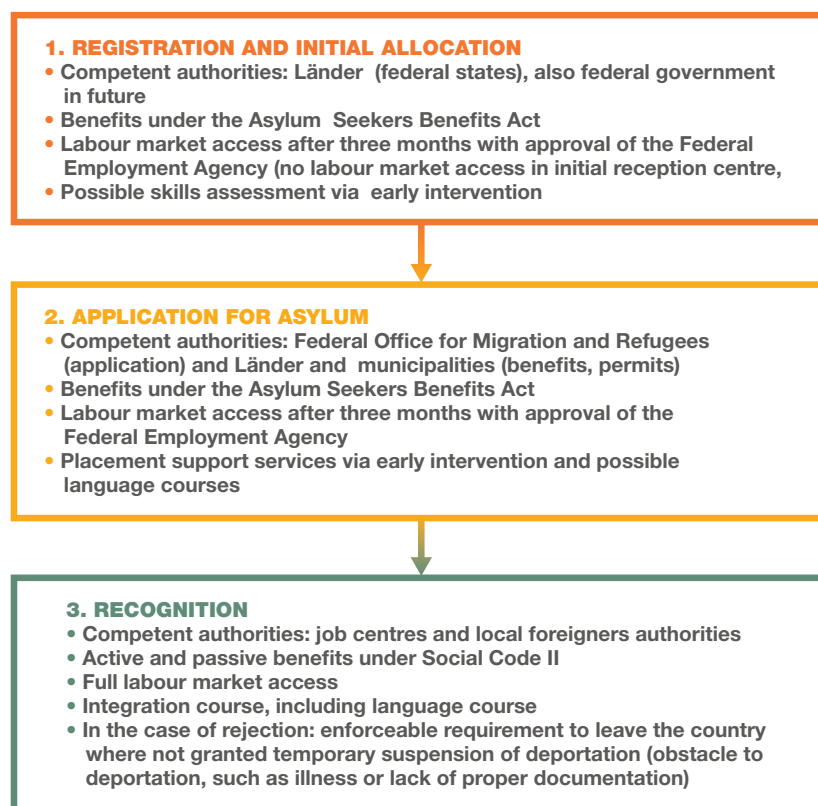
introduced into the labour market. The programme is not available to asylum seekers from safe countries of origin or to those required to leave. Offers for asylum seekers may be reduced if they decline or terminate work opportunities or integration courses without good cause.

- In certain areas, the ‘priority review’ is waived for three years. This facilitates the commencement of work for refugees with good prospects of permanent residence. Employment on a temporary basis is also permitted in these regions.
- In the future, a permanent resident permit will be granted to asylum seekers, usually only after five years holding a temporary resident permit, provided that they also meet certain integration requirements. In the case of excellent integration, it is possible to obtain a permanent resident permit after only three years.<sup>20</sup>
- In the future, a residence permit<sup>21</sup> will be issued to migrants with the receipt of proof of arrival. This will ensure asylum seekers obtain access to the labour market and integration services legally and at an early stage.

The following graphic issued by BMAS illustrates the asylum procedure:

**FIGURE 4.2**

**Continuance of VET for applicants with and without a migration background, 2004–2012**



BMAS (2015) Asylum procedure', <http://www.bmas.de/EN/Our-Topics/Fresh-start-in-germany/Asylum-procedure.html>

20 A person is considered to have achieved ‘excellent’ integration if, for example, they have a good command of the German language and, for the most part, earn their living independently.

21 A residence permit (*Aufenthaltstitel*) is the right to stay in Germany during asylum procedures (Section 55(1) of the Asylum Law). The permit also constitutes the certification that persons who have applied for asylum in Germany receive.

### 4.3 EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE: THREE INITIATIVES, THEIR APPROACHES AND THE PLANNED BENEFITS AND BENEFICIARIES

There has been a shift towards personalised, targeted approaches when it comes to supporting people into the workplace in Germany – with a particular focus on offers of counselling and sensitisation regarding cultural barriers, as well as explaining unwritten social customs that exist in the workplace. Some programmes focus on these sorts of approaches for all their beneficiaries (with a particular focus on targeting young German people from disadvantaged backgrounds), but there are also initiatives that focus solely on the integration of refugees into apprenticeships and work placements.

Three programmes are described below; they are illustrative of the targeted approach Germany is taking in this area to address the need for work-based learning support for refugees:

#### **Prospects for Young Refugees**

A programme issued by the Federal Employment Agency (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit*), which can be implemented by local employment agencies and job centres and integrated into other programmes and initiatives for refugees. This specifically targets refugees below the age of 25.

#### **Vocational Orientation Programme for Refugees**

Part of the wider qualification initiative Ways into Vocational Education. A programme issued by the BMBF (Federal Ministry of Education and Research; *Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung*), which funds more than 60 projects all over Germany.

#### **The Rhineland-Palatine Integration Chain**

In the federal state of Rhineland-Palatinate, the aim is to achieve integration by combining several initiatives and programmes for refugees in this so-called ‘Integration Chain’.

#### **4.3.1 Prospects for Young Refugees<sup>22</sup>**

This programme, instituted by the Federal Employment Agency in 2016, provides orientation in the German training and employment system for refugees between the ages of 16 and 25. It is the responsibility of local employment agencies and job centres to provide support with seeking out appropriate employment offers. Prospects for Young Refugees has been established pursuant to Volume III of the German Social Code (*Sozialgesetz*). The local employment agency decides on the individual access to this measure on a case-by-case basis.<sup>23</sup>

The aim of this measure is to provide young refugees with sufficient proficiency in the structure and function of the German apprenticeship and labour market, and how to access it, so that they are able to make career choices independently and embark on apprenticeships. It is particularly important in this context to explain the German VET system and the career opportunities it offers. Participation lasts for four to six months. In general, weekly working hours, including mandatory classes in vocational school where applicable, amount to 30 hours, without

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<sup>22</sup> For more information, see <https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/web/wcm/idc/groups/public/documents/webdatei/mdaw/mjk5/-edisp/16019022dstbai820006.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> Arbeitsagentur, 2016a

breaks. The system is designed to support the performance, and aid the development of, participants. Ending the course early in order to begin an apprenticeship or make an early transition into job preparation is welcomed.

The target groups for this measure are as follows:

- Young people aged 25 and under, who want to pursue vocational training
- Asylum seekers or refugees granted temporary suspension of deportation with access to the labour market
- People who are entitled to asylum or are recognised refugees and who, due to their personal situation (such as traumatic experiences during flight, lack of orientation in the German training and employment system, lack of motivation to begin an apprenticeship in an unfamiliar training system) encounter obstacles or who, due to difficulties in social acclimatisation in an unfamiliar socio-cultural environment, require special support in order to motivate them to begin an apprenticeship or professional training.
- People who do not have an initial vocational training recognised in Germany and who have minimal or no professional experience
- People who possess sufficient language skills to allow them to benefit from this approach
- People who, without this measure, have not yet been able to integrate for personal reasons

During the introductory phase (the first two weeks of individual participation in the programme), an assessment is carried out to establish the obstacles to integration and a review of the existing language skills of the participant is carried out. The aim of the project approach is to give participants the chance to try out qualifications and any inclinations toward a particular craft, such as woodwork, metalwork or decorating, as well as domestic areas such as housekeeping. Participants pursue at least three areas, allowing for their different interests, resources and competencies. The work-based learning phase provides participants with the opportunity to put their newly gained theoretical knowledge and experiences to the test in a work environment.

In addition to certain tasks (development of key competencies, socio-educational counselling and networking), the following must be provided either by the job centres or employment agencies that co-ordinate the programme:

- Opportunities for transfer and enhancement of job-related language skills
- Job application training
- Addiction and debt-prevention training
- Training in the fundamentals of a healthy lifestyle

The most important successes of this programme are its individual approach, which brings into play the needs and background of every single person; the combination of practical and theoretical elements; and the engagement of companies. The programme gives refugees the chance to gain an insight into the German labour market and, therefore, the opportunity to work practically at an early stage of residence in

Germany. Furthermore, the programme provides participants with crucial knowledge regarding the rules for life and work in Germany. In 2016, more than 6,000 refugees participated in this project. However, detailed figures and further information are not available before mid-2017. The duration of the programme was increased to six to eight months in 2017, following assessment.

#### 4.3.2 Vocational Orientation Programme for Refugees<sup>24</sup>

In this programme, launched by BMBF in 2016, young refugees are offered the opportunity to try out different crafts with a work-based learning approach. This strategy aims to provide young refugees with a clear impression of what vocational training in different crafts entails, in order to support them on their way into vocational training. The aim is to get 10,000 refugees into a VET in crafts by 2018. The programme forms part of the joint qualification initiative Ways into Vocational Education, created by BMBF in partnership with ZDH (German Confederation of Skilled Crafts; *Zentralverband des Deutschen Handwerks*).

The objective is to offer young refugees a vocational orientation that will enable them to develop a realistic idea of their own abilities and interests and gather practical experience in a variety of occupational fields. The programme provides participating companies from the crafts sector with the opportunity to get to know potential apprentices personally and understand their ways of working. For several years, the search for suitable apprentices in the crafts sector in Germany has been extremely challenging; there is, therefore, a mutual interest at work, that leads to apprenticeship contracts. Ideally, each participant is found an apprenticing company soon after their enrolment in the programme.

This programme, and the initiative to which it belongs, targets young refugees who are too old for compulsory schooling. Furthermore, it supports companies who are prepared to offer VET to a refugee.

There are some key phases and features that make the programme successful.

- During the entire period of the measure (13 weeks), the participants receive **language training**.
- All participants benefit from **intense and customised counselling**. They regularly receive oral feedback and written documentation as regards their learning progress from the project counsellor. The project counsellor is also responsible for finding an apprenticeship or, where applicable, further support measures for each participant.
- Several **practical workshops** – ‘workshop days’ (*Werkstatttage*) – are scheduled at the inter-company vocational training centres of crafts federations and their partners. In these workshops, participants are provided with the opportunity to find out about professions in which they might be interested in carrying out an apprenticeship. For nine weeks, during which full-time involvement is expected, the participants find out if the chosen professions really match their personal qualifications and interests. During the workshop days, they also get to know more about the structure and contents of dual

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<sup>24</sup> For more information, see <https://www.berufsorientierungsprogramm.de/de/berufsorientierung-fuer-fluechtlinge-1782.html>

vocational training in the chosen professions and are prepared for the demands of vocational school.

- Based on their experiences during workshop days, participants make decisions regarding their chosen professions, which they further test in crafts companies during the subsequent company phase. For four weeks, working full-time, the participants then apply the previously acquired competencies in practical work placements. They experience working processes up close and get to know the companies at which they are placed. At the same time, each company gets to know potential apprentices. More than 60 partners all over Germany have put this programme into practice.

The Vocational Orientation Programme for Refugees is of benefit for those who are over the compulsory age for vocational education and who are often not adequately considered in other programmes aimed at younger people. A first evaluation of the programme will take place in 2017 and will provide findings regarding the success factors and challenges of the course over the coming years.

#### **4.3.3 The Rhineland-Palatine Integration Chain<sup>25</sup>**

The MSDAG (Ministry of Social Affairs, Labour, Health and Demographics in the Federal State of Rhineland-Palatinate; *Ministerium für Soziales, Arbeit, Gesundheit und Demografie des Landes Rheinland-Pfalz*) wants to support both refugees coming to the federal state and employers in Rhineland-Palatinate to make labour market integration as straightforward as possible. The Integration Chain is part of the initiative Ways into Work (*Wege in Arbeit*).<sup>26</sup> It targets all refugees coming to Rhineland-Palatinate and the companies that take them on. The Rhineland-Palatinate Integration Chain comprises a range of initiatives and programmes, some of which are set out below.<sup>27</sup>

##### **4.3.3.1 Identify competencies and opportunities**

The aim of this model project – from the Rhineland-Palatinate Ministries of Labour and Integration, and the Federal Employment Agency – is the combination of individual identification of refugee competencies in initial registration centres with (multilingual) information events about the German labour market. In particular, it aims to provide refugees with an overview of the legal framework, but also the unwritten rules, of the German work culture shortly after their arrival in initial registration centres. Some refugees need guidance and support to adapt to German customs, culture and ways of life. In German work culture, for example, employees are frequently encouraged to think for themselves, self-organisation is promoted and autonomy is deemed important. The purpose of the project is to promote successful integration into the labour market by creating awareness of these sorts of cultural norms. After the information events, a personal conversation with counsellors from the local employment agency takes place, in which a refugee has the chance to share their educational and professional history.

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25 For more information, see [http://www.mainz-bingen.de/deutsch/downloads/soziales/270116Broschuere\\_Integrationskette\\_RLP\\_01\\_2016.pdf](http://www.mainz-bingen.de/deutsch/downloads/soziales/270116Broschuere_Integrationskette_RLP_01_2016.pdf)

26 For more information, see <https://msagd.rlp.de/de/unsere-themen/arbeit/arbeitsmarktintegration-von-fluechtlingen/>.

27 MASDG, 2016

This data is then forwarded to the Federal Employment Agency or stored directly in initial registration centres.

#### **4.3.3.2 Arrive, explain, understand and integrate**

This project supports orientation on life and work in Germany. The module ‘Arriving in Germany’ (*Ankommen in Deutschland*) makes it clear that the current economic environment in Germany poses distinct challenges and there may be a need to adjust expectations (for example with respect to housing). Further modules refer to the German constitution – in particular the principles of gender equality and non-discrimination, freedom of religion and the constitutional state – and to unwritten cultural rules and the possibilities of support in the municipality. These orientation courses supplement the courses ‘Living our values together’ (*Unsere Werte gemeinsam leben*) from the BMJV (Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection; *Bundesministerium der Justiz und für Verbraucherschutz*). This theoretical element is combined with work shadowing, offered in co-operation with regional companies, which enables refugees to develop an authentic impression of working in Germany.

#### **4.3.3.3 Fit for the Job for Refugees**

The programme Fit for the Job (*Fit für den Job*), already established in Rhineland-Palatinate, was expanded to Fit for the Job for Refugees (*Fit für den Job für Flüchtlinge*), which launched in eight locations in January 2016. Its aim is to provide young refugees with the chance to gain practical insight into various occupations in training centres – insight that can be deepened by means of accompanying work placements. In addition, there is a theoretical element that includes career path planning, which takes cultural background into consideration, as well as linguistic, technical and professional promotion. Furthermore, socio-educational counselling is provided.<sup>28</sup>

#### **4.3.3.4 Counselling in work**

This model project (operated in collaboration with the job centre Vorderpfalz Ludwigshafen) is aimed at companies – in particular, small and medium-sized businesses – that would like to train and employ refugees. At first, employers are informed about the general conditions and challenges connected with the employment of refugees. In the second phase, companies and refugees are brought together, support is provided regarding the process of job application and interview, and intercultural competencies are taught. If the refugees take up work, counselling of the company and of the employee(s) is continued in the initial phase of the employment in order to prevent conflicts and problems at an early stage.<sup>29</sup>

### **4.4 INTEGRATING REFUGEES INTO THE LABOUR MARKET: ANALYSING THE EXPERIENCES OF EMPLOYERS**

The above examples are all in early stages of development; the most recent wave of refugees arrived in Germany in 2015. Accordingly, these programmes and initiatives are being tested and form an initial set of interventions. For example, the Ways into Vocational Education

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<sup>28</sup> The offer is funded equally by the state, the ESF and participating job centres.

<sup>29</sup> The project is offered in collaboration with the job centre Vorderpfalz Ludwigshafen and is mostly funded by the state or the ESF.

programme has planned an evaluation, to start in 2017, which will lead to scientifically founded findings regarding success factors and impediments over the course of the following years.

In order to give an indication of how employers feel about supporting refugees to integrate into the labour market, INQA (the New Quality of Work Initiative; *Initiative Neue Qualität der Arbeit*) has interviewed a number of employers of refugees who came to Germany before the surge of 2015, regarding their experiences.<sup>30</sup> A similar approach – asking managers about their expectations, hopes and fears about the integration of refugees – was taken by IBE (the Institute for Employment and Employability; *Institut für Beschäftigung und Employability*) and Hays recruitment agency in early 2016. The results of these two studies provide additional insights into the German context, and so they are described briefly below.

#### **4.4.1 At Work (*In Arbeit*): Interviews for INQA**

Over the course of the At Work programme, through which INQA supports companies that already employ refugees, experiences from various companies, industries and regions are collected. The following two statements are from representatives of companies who report the successful integration of refugees, as well as obstacles in their companies:

*'I have informed the employees in advance of the new colleague's arrival and his background, and I have attached great importance to him taking part in company celebrations and activities outside of the workplace.'*

Manager of a hotel

*'In my opinion, the young man from Damascus was talented and would have managed to complete the apprenticeship... The problem was that his father, in a way the head of the family, came to Germany as well. His father did not understand why his son would invest three years in an apprenticeship that is compensated with a relatively low wage at the beginning. He suggested he should abandon the apprenticeship.'*

Manager of an automotive company<sup>31</sup>

As the second example shows, there is a challenge involved in demonstrating the value of work-based learning and vocational training, initially earning a small salary in order to earn a decent salary after around five years. In some cases, the reluctance to invest in vocational training over several years is a result of pressure to quickly earn money in order to pay off debts and support relatives. In addition, some refugees have grown up in an environment that has prevented them from being able to make long-term life plans. This may well remain the case in Germany, at least for as long as a refugee's immigration status

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30 Improving the quality of work in ways that benefit companies and employees – the central aim of the Initiative New Quality of Work. Founded in 2002 by BMAS (Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs) and leading social partners, today the Initiative represents a nonpartisan alliance, which includes Federal and State-level government, business associations, trade unions, the Federal Employment Agency, companies, social insurance providers and foundations.

31 INQA, 2016

remains unclear, and means that some refugees will accept an unstable and low-paid job that is below their level of qualification.<sup>32</sup>

However, it can help to be more open about expected salaries both during and after vocational training and compare this with a salary of someone earning after years of performing auxiliary work; what could seem like a loss quickly turns into a lucrative investment in the long term.<sup>33</sup>

#### **4.4.2 'Integration of refugees into the labour market': a research study by IBE and Hays**

In 2016, IBE, on behalf of Hays recruitment agency, interviewed 354 managers in Germany – approximately 70 per cent of them from small and medium-sized businesses, with fewer than 1,000 employees – on the integration of refugees into their companies. Three quarters of those surveyed reported very positive or mostly positive experiences with regard to the employment of refugees in their companies. Only 6 per cent reported that they had (mostly) negative experiences, in particular with regard to bureaucratic obstacles, communication problems and different values and behaviours, for instance concerning reliability and discipline or the acceptance of gender equality. Of the survey participants, 59 per cent stated that they could imagine employing refugees in the future, especially for auxiliary and support, crafts, basic administrative and technical work. For more than 20 per cent of the survey participants, it was also conceivable to employ refugees for demanding administrative work, as well as in specialist and management positions. Regarding potential forms of employment, those surveyed were willing to consider work placements as well as temporary contracts and, to a lesser extent, permanent contracts. Of the survey participants, 22 per cent do not see the possibility of integrating refugees into their companies or organisations; among them were especially small and medium-sized businesses. When asked about their main reasons for this response, they cited language barriers, lack of expertise and cultural barriers.

With regard to a decisive governmental and legal framework for successful integration, survey participants cited the following as desirable: a publicly funded offer of extra-occupational linguistic, technical and advanced cultural training; the simplification of entrance into work; increased information on the legal framework surrounding refugee employment; increased transparency concerning the recognition of skills; and support in the reception of refugees from third parties, such as Chambers of Commerce, local initiatives and foundations.

At the organisational level, survey participants considered the following as vital: the support of managers in integrating and sensitising employees to issues regarding diversity; the social integration of refugees (such as group excursions or invitation to join regulars' tables) and specific in-house advanced training (including coaching and language courses); transparency concerning employment opportunities for refugees; team-building in diverse teams; and offers targeted at cultural and inter-cultural education in companies.

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32 Berlin-Institut für Bevölkerung und Entwicklung, 2016

33 Ibid.



When asked about the refugees themselves, survey participants cited a willingness to educate oneself on the linguistic level and to engage in the company culture as especially important.<sup>34</sup> Finally, the survey participants were asked for their assessment as to whether they saw the integration of refugees as an opportunity or more as a risk. The majority responded positively, showing that they saw the existing challenges but were hopeful for the refugees' potential.

## **4.5 CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE OUTLOOK**

In addition to the need to provide refugees with language skills, some key factors in project success can be drawn from the work-based learning and VET programmes and initiatives described above.

### **4.5.1 Addressing cultural barriers and 'unwritten rules'**

Cultural barriers can present a challenge in establishing a positive working relationship between newcomers and settled populations. This can be the case within companies, but also in creating a stable social environment more generally. Adequate integration of persons from countries of origin with value systems that differ significantly from the value system in Germany requires a comprehensive approach. It is very important to support refugees to understand the 'unwritten rules' of the German work culture.

### **4.5.2 Addressing different education systems and structures**

In some instances, education systems, working environments and economic structures in a refugee's country of origin will differ from those in Germany, which is on its way to becoming a knowledge and innovation society. This means that jobs requiring a low-to-medium level of skill may be deemed less important or substituted in the course of digitisation, while high-skilled jobs may gain in importance. As a consequence, the demand for people with low or medium levels of skill, and for people who have only a limited command of the German language, continues to decrease. Programmes and initiatives for refugees must include cultural sensitisation, and companies who take on refugees have to be willing to address possible conflicts and encourage mutual exchange and understanding.

### **4.5.3 Taking a case-by-case approach**

Refugees can by no means be considered a homogeneous group – backgrounds and experiences differ significantly from one case to the next, particularly with respect to ethnicity, language and culture. Given that this is the case, individual and practically oriented approaches to assisting both refugees and companies increase the success of VET programmes. Soft and individual approaches such as professional counselling are crucial. There is no single solution, but, in small and medium-sized companies in particular, individual approaches are likely to lead to success.

### **4.5.4 Company engagement**

Refugees and employers should get to know each other 'in person', ideally within an official initiative or programme, in order to minimise

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34 Rump J, Schabel F, Möckel K and Eilers S, 2016; Hays and IBE, 2016.

reservations about hiring refugees on the part of companies and inform refugees about employment possibilities. At the same time, it is important to support refugees and the companies they work for during apprenticeships and work-based placements, so that individuals are able to complete programmes successfully, even after a difficult start.<sup>35</sup> Small and medium-sized companies often don't have the capacity to support refugees with specific needs. An external counsellor can be helpful in bridging gaps in expectation and knowledge, and can support both employer and refugee.

#### **4.5.5 Establishing transparency and reducing legal and organisational obstacles**

The fact that the legal situation as regards employing refugees remains non-transparent for people who are not experts presents another obstacle, which discourages many companies from doing so.<sup>36</sup> With regard to infrastructure, it should be noted that many refugees still wait a long time for language and integration courses to become available, making their integration into VET and the labour market extremely difficult. The BMAS has launched the German- and English-language website 'Fresh Start in Germany' for asylum seekers, providing information about asylum procedure, labour market access, recognition of qualifications and assistance in Germany and is helpful both for refugees and the companies who seek to employ them.<sup>37</sup>

#### **4.5.6 Holistic approaches**

It is crucial that approaches to integration are holistic and address the three areas of linguistic ability, qualification attainment and cultural integration. Experiences in Germany demonstrate that it is only when all three requirements are met that integration can be truly successful. Furthermore, this support should be implemented seamlessly, preferably directly after arrival in Germany, during work-based learning programmes and continuing until the point of taking up VET or employment.

The integration of refugees into apprenticeships, and the labour market more generally, requires perseverance and a focused approach on the part of all players in the economic sector, in politics and society, to ensure that nobody gets left out. The path the federal government is pursuing in implementing the principle of 'encourage and demand' underlines the fact that extensive help is offered to refugees, but that there are also clear expectations regarding co-operation, such as regular participation in language or integration courses. Integration has now reached the top of the political agenda and is supported by a wide variety of work-based learning initiatives and VET programmes, which are organised on a federal or regional level and which co-ordinate the work of all relevant stakeholders, such as chambers of commerce and employment agencies, in order to work towards a common goal.

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35 BMBF, 2016

36 Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016

37 For more information, see <http://www.bmas.de/EN/Our-Topics/Fresh-start-in-germany/fresh-start-in-germany.html>

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# 5. FIRST PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

LESSONS FROM A SPANISH WORK-BASED  
LEARNING INITIATIVE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

*JAVIER DOVAL, SONIA MARTÍN AND BELÉN OTEGUI*

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*'First Professional Experience helped me strengthen my skills, techniques, self-confidence and ability to withstand pressure. The process made me more aware of the company's values and policy so I could develop my role properly.'*

First Professional Experience trainee

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This paper reflects on the approach and operation of First Professional Experience (FPE), a work-based learning initiative created and led by the Spanish not-for-profit organisation Pinardi. FPE collaborates with private-sector partners to help young people who are experiencing difficulties entering the workforce.

The case study begins with an analysis of the political and policy context in Spain, particularly with respect to youth unemployment, then describes the barriers to labour market entry that young people face and reflects on some of the broader structural causes of unemployment in Spain. FPE's approach is then described in detail, with reference to the significance of work-based learning as a strategy for fostering inclusion. There follows an account of the programme's operation, including analysis of its challenges and successes. Finally, lessons that may be learnt from this experience are outlined in the conclusion.

## 5.2 ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL AND POLICY CONTEXT: YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN SPAIN

Youth unemployment is one of Spain's most significant social and economic challenges of recent decades. Since the 2008 financial crisis, the country's youth unemployment rate has risen to the second highest in Europe, surpassed only by that of Greece. Despite a slight recovery from the peak of 2013, in 2016 four in ten people aged 20–24 wanted to work but could not find a job. Thirty-four per cent of the country's active young people are unemployed.

### 5.2.1 Barriers to youth employment in Spain: structural causes

While Spain's gross domestic product (GDP) has undergone similar changes to the rest of Europe's, the recent history of its unemployment rate, especially among young people, has been markedly different. The proportion of people leaving school before completing basic education is unusually high. This means that many young people are not equipped

with the personal and social skills required to enter the job market. At the same time, the number of young people with technical training acquired through professional education is unusually low, and this lack of suitably qualified technicians leads to university graduates accepting jobs for which they are overqualified.

More generally, Spain has depended excessively on certain economic sectors, especially construction, has a long-term unemployment rate nine points above the European average, and is especially subject to employment insecurity due to the widespread use of temporary contracts.

As part of the European Commission's Youth Guarantee commitment, the Spanish government presented its Youth Guarantee implementation plan at the end of 2013, aiming, in accordance with the goals of the scheme as a whole, to ensure that all young people under the age of 25 receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education.

In order to implement the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) and set up the Youth Guarantee Schemes, Spain has established an Operational Programme for Youth Employment within the framework of the architecture and design of the European Social Fund for the programming period of 2014–2020.

This programme enables the implementation of the Youth Guarantee systems and ensures that they have been integrated in the programmes co-financed by the EU since the start of the Multi-Annual Financial Framework for 2014–2020.

The most important aspects of this Operational Programme for Youth Employment are the following:

- **Scope:** This is a national programme in which there will be a national part (financed and managed by the General State Administration) and a regional part (financed and managed by the Autonomous Communities).
- **Timeframe:** Although the allocation from the Youth Employment Initiative should be concentrated in the first two years, an Operational Programme is planned to extend throughout the programming period of 2014–2020.
- **Target population:** The target population for actions under the Operational Programme for Youth Employment will be young people aged between 15 and 24 who are not in education, employment or training, irrespective of their level of training.
- **Fund allocation:** The programme is covered by a minimum approximate allocation of 2.359 million current Euros in terms of aid, of which 943.5 million will come from the specific allocation from the Youth Employment Initiative. The total cost of the programme will be 2.824 million current Euros.

The Operational Programme will act in the following priority areas:

- Promotion of sustainable, quality employment and of labour mobility
- Sustainable inclusion in the labour market of young people not in education, employment or training, in particular in the context of the Youth Guarantee

- There will also be an additional provision for technical assistance
- The Strategy for Entrepreneurship and Youth Employment 2013–2016 is aligned with the objectives of the Youth Guarantee, in that it covers actions based on the conviction that there is no single solution for all unemployed young people. It is therefore a matter of measures designed to resolve the situation and meet the particular needs of the different profiles of young people, whether or not they have training or experience or receive unemployment or other benefits.

### 5.3 AN INTRODUCTION TO FIRST PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

FPE is a social intervention model created and led by Pinardi, a not-for-profit organisation, and supported by J.P. Morgan. The model works with selected partners in the private sector to help young people who face difficulty entering the workforce. Pinardi, as a social entity working with minors, young adults and communities at social risk, has developed this model based on its experience in vocational training with young people and innovation in labour insertion. Pinardi has the support of the public administration and has signed more than 200 agreements with private companies in projects during the last two years.

#### 5.3.1. Target group

The initiative is aimed at 18–25-year-olds in situations of social vulnerability.

The most common risk factors identified among beneficiaries are:

- **Personal:** lack of personal and emotional skills; lack of motivation towards training or job search; low self-esteem and confidence in their abilities; migrants experiencing instability; young people who have been associated with the criminal justice system or with no clear plans for the future.
- **Educational:** low level of education and poor academic performance; learning difficulties; training inadequately tailored to labour market needs; lack of job skills; high rate of early school-leaving.
- **Family:** low socio-economic background; parents with low level of education; unemployed parents; family conflicts; lack of decent housing; family abandonment and lack of social assistance; time spent in the child protection system.
- **Social:** lack of social network support, especially among those from migrant backgrounds.
- **Work:** lack of work experience; long-term unemployment; undeclared work and inadequate working conditions.

Potential participants in the initiative are thus exposed not only to exclusion in the labour insertion process but also to social risk, and are in need of a more personalised approach in order to access mainstream education, training and employment through a practice-based learning method emphasising motivation, individualised support and comprehensive monitoring.

#### 5.3.2. Work-based learning to support inclusion

FPE is based on the idea that learning in a real work environment can be an effective alternative to education or employment alone, especially for those young people who do not adapt well to formal education or cannot

access suitable work for themselves. On this basis, the programme offers work-based learning in which the most significant factor is the time spent in the workplace.

This approach has had a proven positive effect on the participants, providing them with:

- An introduction to the world of work and to a particular industry and company and an understanding of workplace culture
- General and job-specific skills and knowledge in the workplace and occupational networks, all of which increase their possibilities for employment after completion
- A sense of progress and accomplishment and the perception that they can make choices, fostering their confidence and commitment
- The motivation to work towards a formal qualification or engage in further training

The initiative aims to complement on-the-job training, which is important for meaningful learning, and off-the-job-training, which allows reflection on workplace practices. This is carried out through soft-skills workshops and interviews with an educational mentor. The programme's professional development element is intended to support the trainees dispelling any misconceptions they might have about the workplace and to reach positions from which the participants can learn and benefit from the placement.

#### **5.4 ANALYSIS OF HOW FIRST PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE IS WORKING**

The FPE model was developed in September 2014, when Spain's youth unemployment was increasing, its rate of early school leaving was double the EU average and temporary and part-time employment contracts were commonplace. Spain also had a vocational training model that was not well adapted to the structure of qualifications required by its economy. These problems were exacerbated for people at risk of social exclusion.

In this context, Pinardi designed an immersive training model focussing on the country's largest employment sectors – tourism, hospitality and, later, logistics – and established alliances with numerous public and private organisations. The initiative's methodology encourages the participation of companies in the design, development, evaluation and improvement of the project, and for at least 16 weeks the participants are members of the partner company's workforce.

The model is made up of seven stages.

- Potential partner companies are identified and selected on the basis of their support for the work-based learning programme. All of the parties agree to design a training programme adapted to suit the specific needs of the position within the company, which vary from one to the next.
- Participants are selected from Pinardi's five social centres, which are located in areas of high deprivation and poverty. Young people come to the centres through personal recommendations and referrals from social services and schools or respond to awareness initiatives that are mentioned or advertised in the media. The selection process



consists of initial filtering by Pinardi job counsellors, who complete a curricular analysis and endorse the application, followed by a week-long selective training programme including information sessions, group dynamics, individual interviews and role-playing. Around half of the 12–15 shortlisted candidates are then selected by the partner company’s human resources team.

- Before the practical training phase begins in the workplace, participants undertake a theoretical phase in which they learn about the types of tasks that the job will entail, support with financial education, instruction on the structure and nature of the industry and the sector, as well as information and background about the company and its products.
- The participants are then prepared for the placement by training in transferable skills such as language and finance.
- The participant takes up a position in the partner company. The candidate testimonies below illustrate in more detail the experiences of two participants who pursued the FPE work-based learning programme working with a partner company. Their experiences highlight how after, three to four months of training and support, learning techniques and participating in workshops, the candidates were in a position to take up longer term work contracts.
- After the participant has successfully found work, support continues with the design of a personalised career and training plan to achieve professional growth and on-going development. This on-going support is a key part of Pinardi’s approach and allows participants to strengthen their skills and pursue leadership development.
- The project is evaluated in collaboration with the partner company to assess how well the participant is managing and what, if any, further support is necessary.

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### Candidate testimonies

After moving from Peru to Spain in 2014, **Naara Ramos** joined FPE and undertook three months’ training in Grupo VIPS as a kitchen assistant, where she learned cooking techniques and participated in workshops on soft skills. After her training, and thanks to the skills she had acquired, Naara found work in Parques Reunidos for six months and was then hired by Grupo VIPS to work in one of their restaurant kitchens. She says: ‘First Professional Experience helped me strengthen my skills, techniques, self-confidence and ability to withstand pressure. The process made me more aware of the company’s values and policy so I could develop my role properly.’ Naara’s association with Pinardi continued when she took part in its professional development training, attending sessions delivered by professionals from other partner companies and learning to improve her assertiveness, decision-making and management of priorities. This helped her to earn a permanent contract at the restaurant, and she has now been recommended for assessment for promotion within the company.

After an 11-day journey by boat from his home country of the Gambia, **Lamin Jaiteh** accessed the project in its first edition in

October 2014 on the recommendation of his cousin, who had previously taken part in the programme. He learned cooking techniques for four months in the kitchen of a Melià hotel, during which time he also participated in soft-skills workshops and a masterclass at the US embassy in Madrid. After his training, he worked in two of the group's other hotels, and in 2016, as a result of the potential observed by both Melià and Pinardi, Lamin accessed the professional development project, which gave him training in leadership, English, digital literacy and career progression. Melià then offered him the opportunity to continue receiving professional training while working as a cook at Hotel Tryp Plaza de España, with a stable contract and responsibility for the kitchen, organisation of restaurant service and food preparation. Lamin is still at Hotel Tryp and is supported by a professional mentor from the company in his career plan. He takes part in all the activities of the professional development project and gives motivational speeches as part of the shortlisting process for FPE.

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#### **5.4.1 Company participation**

Working with businesses is one of the core elements of FPE. The proposal to take part in the initiative involves working with different departments, depending on the characteristics of each company to which this shared-work model is presented. These include general management, operations, HR and CSR. To all of them, the key elements of the proposal are presented, that this is a social project for the benefit of young people; the involvement of the company along the different stages of the process; mentoring the young participants; and monitoring the last phase of job placement.

There have been shown to be many benefits to companies, including improvement of the working environment, reinforcement of the corporation's values by the employees and enhancement of the teamwork of the employees involved, since they all have a common goal around the young participants.

The project also provides the company with the opportunity to incorporate talented young people, who become emotionally attached, motivated and identified with the corporation's values and culture, as well as the possibility of sharing with other businesses a successful model in their work with young people and gaining public acknowledgment of their brand and their contribution to the project.

Finally, corporate partners also experience the fulfilment of being able to give back, thanks to their knowledge and involvement, economic and social benefit to their community.

### **5.5 THE SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES OF THE FIRST PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE APPROACH**

#### **5.5.1. Successes**

Key to the success of the model has been the collaboration between employers, the project team and the beneficiaries themselves. Employers take an active part in the design, implementation and evaluation of the

WBL process, embracing the model and helping to customise it according to their needs. Pinardi's project team act as social stakeholders, guiding the methodological framework but also delivering educational mentoring. The support provided by the team provides the participants with the space to assess their personal progress, and the Pinardi team are also able to suggest options to overcome the difficulties they might be facing. Participants' active engagement is thus essential to the process, and their involvement, commitment and willingness to learn are key to maintaining their personal and professional growth.

The FPE model's provision of work-based learning oriented to short-term labour insertion has delivered positive outcomes for both participants and partner companies. In the first year of the project, 71 per cent of candidates found work, and overall 40 per cent of participants are hired by partner companies at the end of the process. The immersive nature of the programme adds value to the experience: participants are integrated into company departments, allowing them to experience corporate culture, departmental interaction, specific tasks and requirements, the assumption of roles of command and the development of initiatives. They have also learned about organisational models and specific elements of the industry in which they work, and developed skills including punctuality, self-image and confidence, teamwork, motivation, achievement orientation, time management and conflict resolution. As a result of their involvement in the programme, the participants make a marked improvement to their employability.

Thanks to their participation in the design of the programme, partner companies have obtained human capital formed specifically for their brands, but in addition to these tangible business benefits, the initiative has produced qualitative improvements in companies' operations. Employees have engaged with the communities in which they work, with more than 50 professionals involved in the transmission of knowledge, as well as professional mentorship from human resources or corporate volunteering. There has been a significant influence on the work environment of the departments involved, and some of the programme's practices have been implemented across corporations, such as the measurement of intangible value in Meliá Hotels International.

In total, more than 150 company professionals have been involved in the initiative, the model has received official recognition at the national level and the initiative has been showcased in various forums and media. A particular key to the success of the project lies in the role and involvement of the partner companies. Substantial operational engagement is needed to facilitate the transfer of knowledge to young people and to ensure co-responsibility.

Professional mentors, often human resources professionals, are appointed by each partner company to establish customised development plans that are designed in accordance with the company's expectations of each participant. This relationship enables the transmission of specialised knowledge and corporate culture and allows for the detection of potential risk factors for each participant. This minimises the likelihood of drop-outs and provides valuable, tailored support. Through individual and group

processes, the mentor proposes, challenges and evaluates the candidate as well as the link between Pinaridi and the company.

Another key success is the establishment of open, constructive collaboration between the not-for-profit and private sectors. This is achieved by fostering an approach that is based on the shared commitment of all parties. For example, all of the parties agree on the design and implementation of the individualised training programme. This is an innovative and effective approach, which ensures co-responsibility and encourages everyone involved to contribute throughout the process.

The programme's multidisciplinary approach combines on-the-job training with the acquisition and development of transferable skills which, together with English and financial education, make up 50 per cent of the training programme. In addition, masterclasses with leading figures in relevant industries and involvement in various events have improved motivation and enabled contact between participants and industry professionals.

### 5.5.2. Challenges

The project has faced operational challenges, such as developing a personalised approach for each process. It has also been challenging to ensure that the partner companies incorporate a professional development element into the programme, which calls for a more flexible model of intervention. Additionally, as the overwhelming majority of Spanish companies are small and medium-sized enterprises, it has been necessary to adapt the model to the culture and needs of this type of organisation.

To meet the needs of participants, it has been important to take account of their social situation; they need permanent social and economic support so that external circumstances do not force them to leave the programme. More specifically, to support integration into partner organisations, a package of formulas for welcoming participants has been defined, with the objective of establishing educational standards and criteria agreed by all the parties.

FPE's other main challenges concern the management of scaling the initiative and expanding its reach. FPE began with a focus on the hospitality and tourism industries, but later began working in the logistics sector, where highly complex business structures demand the quick and effective acquisition of industry-specific knowledge. Scaling the project to other territories has required the consolidation of the model in order to strengthen the FPE brand. Following the development of some localised scalability experiences, Pinaridi and its partners are now analysing the viability of expanding the project plan nationally.

In 2014 the focus was on consolidating the viability of Pinaridi's model, whereas the more recent challenge is to encourage growth and sustainability and to improve the project's quality.

For this reason, during the second edition, the FPE model is implementing the following aspects focussing on a range of new requirements:

- **Professional development:** After participants have secured a contract, Pinaridi proposes to provide them with a career plan that will support them in developing and reaching their full potential.

- **Measurement of impact:** It is crucial to be able to quantify the social return, efficiency and effectiveness of the project, as well as using qualitative indicators of added value to society.
- **Scalability:** FPE has developed ways of applying its model to SMEs, which dominate the business landscape in Spain, with a format adapted to entrepreneurs with active expansion plans.
- **Extension of private partners' involvement:** In addition to the time allocated by HR departments, staff, managers and directors are being involved in the transmission of knowledge through workshops and activities with participants.
- **New complementary actions:** These add value to the proposition by preparing young people for new challenges in the labour market, including innovation and creativity, the digital and technological world and entrepreneurship.

## 5.6 IMPACT AND LEARNING FROM THE FIRST PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE EXAMPLE

The first year of the project's implementation consisted of consolidating and formalising Pinardi's previous experiences of employment with vulnerable groups, deepening analysis of partner companies and increasing specialist market and industry knowledge.

In total, there were five partners in the tourism, hospitality and logistics sectors affiliated to the project. More than 4,000 hours of in-company training were carried out and at least 34 workplaces collaborated with FPE.

Contact with industry professionals and real clients has enhanced participants' practical knowledge and ability to manage work-based stress and to manage future career expectations. It has also enabled businesses to evaluate young people in a labour context and identify the more able and passionate candidates.

Some participants undertook on-the-job training abroad, which allowed them to develop language, communication and customer care skills and acquire intercultural competences, but even those who stayed in their home country were confronted with new environments and had to learn new ways of thinking and adjust to new ways of solving problems.

The FPE project has succeeded not only in developing an innovative practice, but also in contributing to the national conversation on youth unemployment and its many challenges and potential solutions. Through the involvement of companies, the dialogue between partners has brought into focus the values of social and economic profitability, as well as the importance of improving Spain's approach to helping young people into the workplace.

## 6.

# INSIDE (INSERIMENTO INTEGRAZIONE NORDSUD INCLUSIONE)

STRENGTHENING ACCESS TO THE LABOUR MARKET FOR BENEFICIARIES OF INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

GIANCARLO DENTE AND AMERIGO LOMBARDI,  
FONDAZIONE GIACOMO BRODOLINI

*'At the outset we did not have any experience in supporting the work integration of beneficiaries of international protection. But by participating in the INSIDE project we have become acquainted with their particular needs and have developed specific competences and working methods.'*

INSIDE Tutor

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

This case study focuses on the pilot project INSIDE (Strengthening Access to the Labour Market for Beneficiaries of International Protection; *INSerimento Integrazione NordSuD inclusionE*).<sup>1</sup> The INSIDE project supports integration through an individual endowment and internship programme, which aims to strengthen competences and promote the employment of people benefiting from international protection. INSIDE is seeking ways to reduce the vulnerability of refugees, particularly by enabling access to the labour market and by strengthening connections, given the absence of established family networks. INSIDE's work-based learning programme operates by appointing 'lead proponents': training institutions that can bid for the opportunity to work with participants and then act as intermediaries between individual beneficiaries of the scheme and partner organisations and businesses.

This case study begins with an overview of the contextual situation regarding the reception and integration of migrants requiring international protection in Italy. It goes on to set out the legal context and key policy debates. The study then reviews the INSIDE example, with a particular focus on the role and approach of the 'lead proponent' agencies that facilitate the connection between beneficiaries and employers. Finally, some evaluation and reflections are included, although it is worth highlighting that this is a pilot project, rather than a fully-fledged programme. Nevertheless, it presents an opportunity to reflect on challenges, assess what has been successful to date and explore what could work for similar schemes in the future.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this document, 'beneficiaries of international protection' refers to refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection. More information can be found at <http://www.canestrinilex.com/resources/international-protection-in-italy-asylum-humanitarian-assistance/>

## 6.2 THE RECEPTION AND INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS REQUIRING INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION IN ITALY

The scale and speed of migration towards Italy has accelerated in recent years. Italy is a natural transit and destination country for migrants, particularly because of its proximity to north Africa. Almost 160,000 migrants reached Italy by sea between January and October 2016 – 19,000 more than in 2015.<sup>2</sup> The trend is likely to continue, mostly due to regional conflicts in Africa and the Middle East.

The Italian SPRAR network (the Protection System for Refugees and Asylum Seekers; *Sistema di protezione per richiedenti asilo e rifugiati*) consists of a range of managing entities, namely municipalities, that design and implement reception projects for people forced to migrate.<sup>3</sup> At the local level, each managing entity, in close co-operation with the third sector (not-for-profit organisations, NGOs), implements an integrated reception that goes beyond the provision of board and lodging, and includes a series of measures aimed at effectively integrating arrivals into Italian society, such as orientation programmes, legal and social assistance and the development of personalised paths for socio-economic integration. Such projects may be focused on individual adults and households, single-parent families, single pregnant women, unaccompanied minors seeking asylum, victims of torture, or individuals with psychiatric or physical disabilities. The primary objective is to provide support to each individual in the reception system through implementation of a tailored programme aimed at supporting them in regaining independence and thus integrating effectively in Italy, in terms of employment and housing, and access to local services and education (for minors). Resources are public, provided by the Ministry of the Interior (*Ministero dell'Interno*) and local authorities.

The latest SPRAR report shows that 85,000 applications for international protection were submitted in 2015, compared to 65,000 in 2014. The increase in numbers put a great deal of pressure on the SPRAR system. Since 2013, the national reception system has been enlarged in order to respond to the increased flow of migrants arriving on national territory. As shown in figure 1, this has resulted in increased hosting capacity.<sup>4</sup> The continuous increase in migration, not expected to diminish in the years to come, makes it necessary, however, to improve the national system of reception and integration for beneficiaries of international protection, so as to promote their economic independence.

In Italy, as in Europe overall, migrant integration strongly depends on the labour opportunities that migrants find on arrival in a host country. Understanding the link between skills acquisition and improvement and the skills requirements of businesses is key to ensuring the availability of opportunities. In Italy, labour market integration is not at the heart of

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2 UNHCR (2016), Operational Portal Refugee Situations: Mediterranean Situation, January – October 2016, <https://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/documents.php?page=1&view=grid>

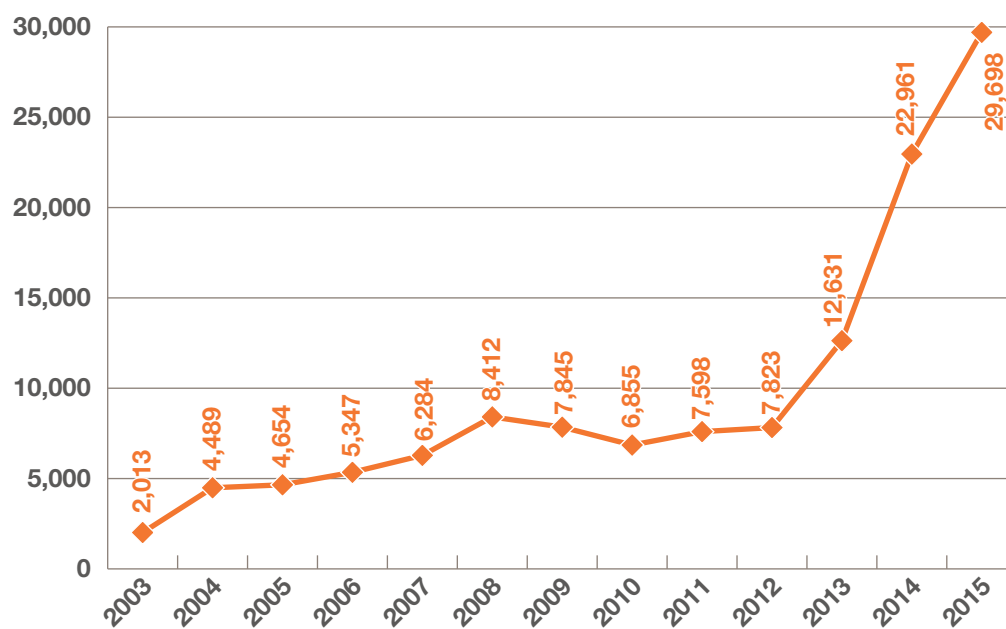
3 In Italy, protection and support for asylum seekers, refugees and beneficiaries of humanitarian protection is managed by SPRAR. The body was created by law 189 (2002) and is made up of the network of local institutions that implement reception projects for forced migrants by accessing the National Fund for Asylum Policies and Services (*Fondo nazionale per le politiche ed i servizi dell'asilo*), managed by the Ministry of the Interior.

4 SPRAR (2015) *Rapporto Annuale SPRAR*, [http://www.sprar.it/images/Atlante\\_Sprar\\_2015.pdf](http://www.sprar.it/images/Atlante_Sprar_2015.pdf)

refugee policies and thus represents the weakest link of the integration policy chain.

**FIGURE 6.1**

Number of people hosted within the SPRAR system, 2003–2015



Source: SPRAR (2015) *Rapporto Annuale SPRAR*. [http://www.sprar.it/images/Atlante\\_Sprar\\_2015.pdf](http://www.sprar.it/images/Atlante_Sprar_2015.pdf)

Support with integration into the work place is, in fact, not an obligation for SPRAR. However, in 2015, SPRAR projects have managed to ensure labour market integration (through permanent or temporary contracts) to 1,972 individuals. The sectors in which most placements were registered were tourism and food services, agriculture and fisheries, and personal care services.<sup>5</sup> In addition, internships with a work-based learning dimension are implemented by SPRAR projects and are characterised by a trilateral relationship between the company, a proponent body and the intern. However, work integration paths and internships are implemented not systematically but on an ad hoc basis, and without a uniform model operating across the whole national territory.

### 6.2.1 The legal framework and the policy debate

A 1998 Consolidated Act regarding migration established that the Italian state, regions and local authorities, in co-operation with relevant associations, should promote measures that support the integration of migrants into the labour market.<sup>6</sup> Although it prescribes taking measures for migrants' labour market activation, it indicates that migrants in general and beneficiaries of international protection are considered equally, without any attention to the peculiar vulnerability of the latter. In addition, as is not the case in other European countries, there is no national programme

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Ms. Federica Federico, responsible for the overall management of INSIDE on behalf of Italia Lavoro, 21 November 2016

<sup>6</sup> Legislative decree 286 (1998), 'Consolidated Act of Provisions concerning immigration and the condition of third country nationals', article 42



of labour integration for beneficiaries of international protection. The absence of a national framework means that the management of policies affecting beneficiaries of international protection is in the hands of local communities, operating through the SPRAR system.

In recent years, a change of attitude has been manifested in a series of legislative adjustments. The first step was the adoption of two decrees by the Ministry of the Interior, in July and September 2013,<sup>7</sup> according to which an increase of the accommodation capacity of the SPRAR system was envisaged.<sup>8</sup> In addition, legislation concerning asylum was amended through legislative decree 18/2014, which established a National Co-ordinating Working Group (*Tavolo di Coordinamento Nazionale*) with the aim of improving the reception system.<sup>9</sup> In the same vein, the government, regions and local authorities signed, in 2014, an agreement to tackle the extraordinary flow of migrants (including unaccompanied minors).<sup>10</sup> All signing parties committed to contributing to improving the system for reception of beneficiaries of international protection in such a way as to accelerate the transition from first-level reception centres into the SPRAR system.<sup>11</sup> This agreement is the cornerstone of a plan to switch from an ‘emergency approach’ to the management of migration flows towards a systematic and structured reception and integration policy. Since then, the policy debate has started to turn to the labour market integration of beneficiaries of international protection, also as a means of reducing the risks posed by exploitative work.

The policy debate is currently focussed on two main topics: the need for greater integration between sources of financial support, and the need to overcome the fragmentation of services for beneficiaries of international protection. In the future of reception and integration policies, a key role will be played by EU resources; the 2014–2020 programming period for the ESF (European Social Fund) and the AMIF (Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund) envisages a set of actions to be implemented, jointly with the regions, for improving the competences and the labour market inclusion of vulnerable migrants, with a particular attention to beneficiaries of international protection. In this regard, the pilot project, INSIDE, set out below, represents an opportunity to pilot a model of work-based learning that could be implemented on a larger scale within the 2014–2020 period.

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7 Ministry of Interior Decree n. 9/2013, 30 July 2013, <http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2013/09/04/13A07254/sg>; and a decree of 17th September 2013, [http://www1.interno.gov.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/assets/files/27/2013\\_09\\_18\\_capacitx\\_ricettiva\\_SPRAR\\_2014\\_2016.pdf](http://www1.interno.gov.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/assets/files/27/2013_09_18_capacitx_ricettiva_SPRAR_2014_2016.pdf)

8 *Consiglio Italiano per i Rifugiati* (CIR) and European Council for Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) (2015), *Asylum information Database, Country Report: Italy*, [http://www.cir-onlus.org/images/pdf/aida\\_italy\\_thirduupdate\\_final\\_0.pdf](http://www.cir-onlus.org/images/pdf/aida_italy_thirduupdate_final_0.pdf)

9 Legislative decree 18/2014, <http://www.programmaintegra.it/wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Decreto-legislativo.pdf>

10 ‘Understanding between the government, regions and local authorities on the national plan to deal with the extraordinary flow of non-EU citizens, adults, families and unaccompanied minors’ (2014), [http://www.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/sub-allegato\\_n.25\\_-\\_intesa\\_conferenza\\_stato\\_regioni\\_del\\_10\\_luglio\\_2014.pdf](http://www.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/sub-allegato_n.25_-_intesa_conferenza_stato_regioni_del_10_luglio_2014.pdf)

11 These reception centres are CARA (Centres for Accommodation of Asylum Seekers; *Centri di Accoglienza per Richiedenti Asilo*), CDA (Accommodation Centres; *Centri di Accoglienza*), CPSA (First Aid and Reception Centres; *Centri di Primo Soccorso e Accoglienza*) and CAS (Emergency Reception Centres; *Centri di Accoglienza Straordinaria*). More information is available at <http://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/italy/reception-conditions/short-overview-italian-reception-system>

### 6.3 AN INTRODUCTION TO INSIDE AND ITS APPROACH

The INSIDE project was originally conceived in January 2015, and development lasted more than a year. This time was used to consult relevant ministries and stakeholders: the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (*Ministero del lavoro e delle politiche sociali*), Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Ministero degli affari esteri e della cooperazione internazionale*), the central service of SPRAR, ANCI (National Association of Italian Municipalities; *Associazione Nazionale Comuni Italiani*), UNHCR (UN Refugee Agency), CIR (Italian Refugee Council; *Consiglio Italiano per i Rifugiati*); and IOM (International Organisation for Migration). This consultation process delayed the launch of the project but ensured that the target group was adequately chosen and that major risks would not occur during the implementation. The project activities started in early spring 2016, lasting until May 2017, but internships, which are the core measure, were completed at the end of November 2016 and no more will be implemented within this pilot phase of the project.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policies officially launched INSIDE alongside a series of similar integration actions. The project is managed by Italia Lavoro, the operational agency of the Ministry, whose activities focus on the implementation of active labour market policies for the most vulnerable groups in society. The second key institutional stakeholder is the Ministry of the Interior, which provides financial resources through the Fund for Migration Policies (*Fondo nazionale per le politiche migratorie*). At the implementation level, key players are training institutions, which provide services (training, career guidance, company scouting) to the final beneficiary; manage all administration, from the application for funding through to financial reporting; and support partner companies of the scheme.

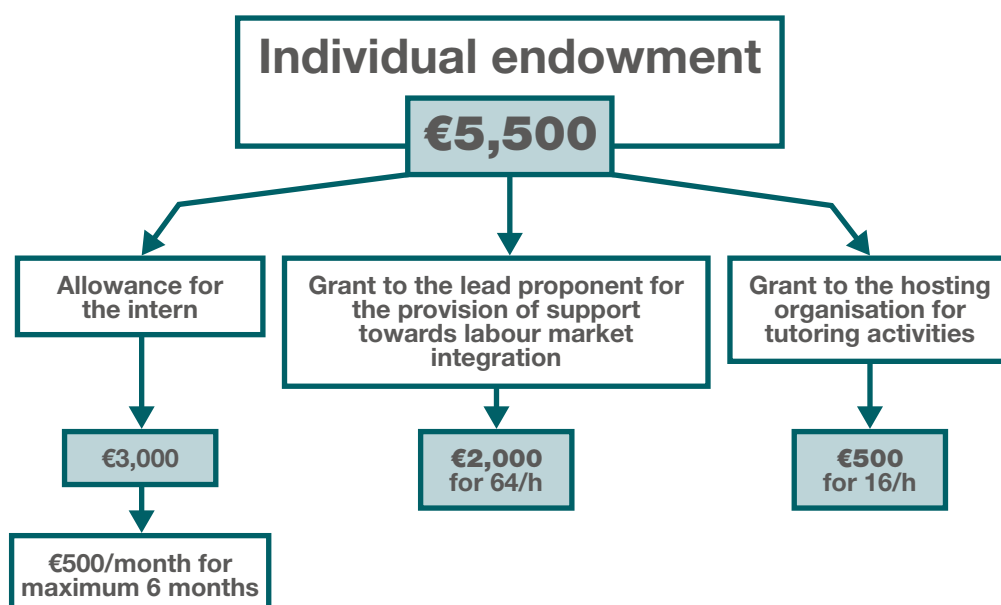
The INSIDE project supports integration through an individual endowment and internship programme. The majority of participants are aged between 18 and 34. The key variable in providing labour market support to people in this group is their degree of vulnerability. This vulnerability – in many instances, refugees have experienced torture and extreme violence – is exacerbated if the international protection they receive does not enable a good quality of life. Vulnerability can also be linked to the lack of a network of family and friends; in Italy, such a network is, traditionally, crucial in enabling access to the labour market and the lack of it can place refugees in an even more disadvantaged situation.

‘Lead proponents’ are the agencies accredited at the regional or national level for labour market mediation or for providing labour market services. Both private and public agencies and services can apply, but public agencies cannot benefit from monetary contributions within the project. Eighty-four lead proponents were involved in the INSIDE project, the majority of them private training institutions, with a small proportion of third sector organisations. These agencies acted as intermediaries between individual beneficiaries of the scheme and partner organisations and businesses.

The project is funded by the Fund for Migration Policy with a budget of €4,500,000 (it is worth noting that it is fully funded through national resources). The pilot project was implemented through a single call for a grant, published on 23 November 2015, which envisaged an individual endowment for every beneficiary, covering the mix of services to be provided. As is shown in figure 2, most of this endowment is directed to the intern as a monthly allowance (the maximum duration of an internship is six months, with the intern working between 20 and 30 hours per week); the lead proponent also receives remuneration for tutoring services and the provision of support services, and the hosting company is granted some support for providing work-based learning.

**FIGURE 6.2**

INSIDE individual endowment: distribution of resources



Source: INSIDE project documents provided to the researchers by Italia Lavoro

## 6.4 OBJECTIVES OF INSIDE

The principal objective of the INSIDE project is to promote, throughout Italy, actions aimed at the social and labour market integration of individuals benefiting from international protection, accommodated within the SPRAR system. The approach is personalised and aims to strengthen competences and promote the employment of people benefiting from international protection. This objective is pursued through a close co-ordination between labour market policies, reception policies and integration policies.

Secondary objectives of the project are:

- strengthening the support provided by national-level institutions, through Italia Lavoro, for actors promoting labour market integration of beneficiaries of international protection at the local level;
- piloting a model of intervention that can be replicated for migrants hosted within the SPRAR system; and

- promoting the exit from the SPRAR system of successful beneficiaries. The achievement of an employment contract will result in the autonomy of the individual and, thus, exit from the SPRAR system. This frees up places for ‘newcomers’.

#### **6.4.1 INSIDE project phases**

The phases of the project can be outlined as follows:

1. Italia Lavoro publishes a call for applications from proponents on 23 November 2015 (the call is open until 5 March 2016).
2. An assessment by Italia Lavoro of applicants (administrative screening) takes place, so as to check that the lead proponent in each case is not in a condition of bankruptcy or closure, that it is up to date with taxes and social security payments in favour of its employees, and that it complies with legislation on labour rights of the disabled.
3. A list of lead proponents judged suitable to implement the project is published.
4. Italia Lavoro makes available to the selected lead proponents a list of local SPRAR bodies, who have also been informed about the project and encouraged to identify potential trainees for the scheme.
5. Successful lead proponents start the identification and selection of potential interns and upload to an online platform the dossiers for the paths that they intend to implement (information regarding hosting companies and personal information on potential interns is included).
6. Templates are provided by Italia Lavoro for IAPs (Individual Action Plans), skill assessments, meetings between hosting organisations and lead proponents, and registers. These are filled in for each potential intern by the relevant lead proponents.
7. For each internship, Italia Lavoro assesses the adequacy of the IAP submitted by the lead proponent and greenlights the internship. As is stated in the technical annex attached to the initial call for proponents, particular attention is devoted to the relevance of the professional profile of the beneficiary selected, the tasks assigned to the final beneficiary and the economic sector of the company. Attention is also paid to the consistency between the objectives of, and tasks assigned to, each intern.
8. Monthly payment of intern allowances begins.
9. Financial statements are prepared and grants are paid to each lead proponent and hosting organisation.

#### **6.4.2 Outcomes of the INSIDE process**

Each lead proponent, in their application dossier, had to indicate the intended number of endowments that could be implemented; each lead proponent could apply for no more than 30 endowments. As soon as lead proponents were selected by Italia Lavoro, they began the process of identification and selection of participants. This was done in close co-

operation with social assistants and cultural mediators of SPRAR.<sup>12</sup> The selection was made on the basis of three main criteria:

- **Italian language skills.** Although a minimum level of competency was not formally required, the ability to understand basic concepts and communicate effectively with a tutor in the partner company was a key selection criterion.
- **Motivation to enter the labour market and to become autonomous from SPRAR support.** There was no set of criteria or guidelines for measuring motivation. However, two individuals interviewed for this study reported that potential participants were asked to provide information about previous work experience in their country of origin.<sup>13</sup>
- **Existence of a medium- to long-term plan for residence in Italy.**

After selection, the required documents for each beneficiary (such as IAP; see section 4.2) were prepared and uploaded to an online platform managed by Italia Lavoro. Ensuring equal gender participation was not a key factor in the selection process, although attention was paid to the involvement of women. It is worth mentioning that the majority of participants were male; according to data provided by Italia Lavoro, women represented 14.3 per cent of participants.

**FIGURE 6.3**

### Journey of the INSIDE participant



Source: INSIDE project documents provided to the researchers by Italia Lavoro

As of 21 November 2016, 420 internships have been concluded and 71 are still ongoing. Within the implementation of each endowment, the tutor, a staff member from the relevant lead proponent, plays the pivotal role. This person supports the beneficiary in the identification of their needs and in

12 The social assistant supports the beneficiary of international protection in expressing their needs and accessing the services (social and health) that are available. The beneficiary is generally hired by a SPRAR managing body (such as a municipality) or third sector organisation providing support services to individuals hosted within the SPRAR system. The cultural mediator provides cultural and linguistic mediation between the beneficiary and SPRAR, and provides guidance on rights and duties of the citizen as envisaged by the Italian legal system. In most cases, they are of foreign heritage, with a profound knowledge of the language and of the culture for which they mediate. Most Italian regions have developed a specific qualification, related courses and public registers of cultural mediators.

13 Interviews were held with Federica Federico, responsible for the overall management of INSIDE on behalf of Italia Lavoro (21 November 2016) and with Flaminia Ferrantelli, tutor for the project on behalf of the Marche region branch of lead proponent IAL (Innovation, Learning, Employment; *Innovazione, Apprendimento, Lavoro*), on 28 November 2016.

designing their path through the experience. The tutor is responsible for the beneficiary's relationships with all relevant services involved – during the preparatory actions; before the internship starts; with the company tutor during interviews; with the network of stakeholders; and, once the internship is concluded, with the local system of labour market demand (this phase involves coaching and company scouting). The participant journey is illustrated in figure 6.3, above.

### 6.4.3 Skill assessment and IAP (Individual Action Plan)

The skills assessment conducted by the lead proponent for each beneficiary summarises the outcomes of their social, educational and training experiences, in order to identify competences and elements likely to be valued within an internship. According to a tutor interviewed for the purpose of this study: 'The skills assessment and IAP are produced through close co-operation and meetings with cultural mediators and social assistants of SPRAR. Companies do not take part in the preparation of the IAP.'

The same interviewee also acknowledged that 'IAP preparation is a crucial step in ensuring that the sector of the internships is close to their expectations. Most participants had previous working experience in their country of origin and it is also considered [beneficial] to acquire self-awareness of their own competences.'

The IAP (see section 4.2) sets out the services to be offered to the final beneficiary (for example, initial interview, skills assessment, internship, tutoring and support towards work-based training, career guidance, coaching, company scouting and post-internship job search). For each of these activities, a detailed description is provided, along with the duration envisaged and the period during which it will be carried out. The final beneficiary is involved in the development of the IAP: they are asked about their interests and previous working experience in their country of origin. The IAP specifies that, from the third month of participation onwards, 14 hours of the beneficiary's time in each week will be devoted to career guidance, to coaching aimed at promoting personal potential, and to scouting of businesses potentially interested in hiring.

### 6.4.4 Training content and recognition of competences

The lead proponent, within two months of the start of an internship, provides each beneficiary with basic guidance on labour market legislation, the main rights and duties of an employee, and the forms of contract that can be activated in Italy. This guidance enables participants to recognise forms of undeclared work or exploitation. In Italy, undeclared work by migrants is often associated with exploitation, due to the absence of basic workers' rights.<sup>14</sup> Interns are also provided with a course on health and safety at work and receive the relevant certification.<sup>15</sup> Between 30 and 40 hours of basic guidance and health and safety training are provided in classes, in Italian. A tutor stated that 'company tutors receive, informally, basic guidance on how to approach and how best to communicate with the intern. In any case, the leading

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14 ISFOL (2014) *Il lavoro sommerso e irregolare degli stranieri in Italia*, [http://isfoloa.isfol.it/bitstream/handle/123456789/895/Ficco\\_ladevaia\\_Pomponi\\_Tagliaferro\\_Lavoro%20stranieri.pdf;jsessionid=E4CC C445B868D1CD857FAE9B707D190E?sequence=3](http://isfoloa.isfol.it/bitstream/handle/123456789/895/Ficco_ladevaia_Pomponi_Tagliaferro_Lavoro%20stranieri.pdf;jsessionid=E4CC C445B868D1CD857FAE9B707D190E?sequence=3)

15 In Italy, health and safety at work are regulated by legislative decree n. 81/2008 (known as the *Testo Unico Sulla Sicurezza Sul Lavoro*).

proponent tutor is always available to provide support to company tutors while the intern is at the workplace.’ She also told us that ‘the work-based learning covers practical experiences in the workplace: the intern learns how to execute the tasks enshrined in the IAP and how to use all the equipment; they are mostly involved in routine manual tasks.’

A minor part of each internship is focused on the acquisition of theoretical competences relating to sector-specific topics. The training role in this regard is held by the hosting organisation’s tutor, who is responsible for transferring the relevant competences. From interviews conducted for this study, it emerged that the lead proponent tutor ensures – through frequent phone calls with the hosting organisation’s tutor, with the interns and with SPRAR cultural mediators – that the training content enshrined in the IAP and basic rules (in terms of maximum working hours and the tasks undertaken) are respected.

There is no formal certification provided to the beneficiary at the end of an internship. However, the business involved may issue a certificate that describes the path and sets out the activities carried out by the participant.

## 6.5 ANALYSIS OF INSIDE’S OUTCOMES

After the selection process, 84 lead proponents were selected, with a total of 508 hosting organisations brought to the programme. Of 683 endowment paths initiated, 29 terminated before the end of the first month and 163 before their planned end, largely due to beneficiaries relocating abroad or within Italy (to reunite with relatives or friends, or as a result of having found an alternative job). As of 21 November 2016, 420 internships have been concluded and 71 are still ongoing. The overwhelming majority of participants (more than 83 per cent) are aged between 18 and 34, and 85.7 per cent of the cohort is male. The greatest number of participants are Afghan nationals (21.35 per cent), followed by Pakistani nationals (16.4 per cent) and Somali nationals (10.6 per cent).

**TABLE 6.1**

**Participants in INSIDE internship programmes, by age, 2016**

Age	Number of participants	Percentage of INSIDE cohort (%)
17	2	0.31%
18–24	231	35.32%
25–29	170	25.99%
30–34	139	21.25%
35–39	50	7.65%
40–44	29	4.43%
45–49	19	2.91%
50–54	8	1.22%
55+	2	0.92%
<b>Total</b>	<b>654*</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Source: Monitoring data provided by Italia Lavoro.

\*Note: The total includes concluded (420) and ongoing (71) paths, as well as those concluded one month after the start of the intervention (163). Those ones concluded before the end of the first month have not been considered, since the formal administrative communication of the start of the internship was not made and no payments were issued.

As regards placement by economic sector, 16.9 per cent of participants were placed in the hospitality and food sectors, with manufacturing (13 per cent) and trade (12.8 per cent) the next most prominent areas of employment.

The implementation of the pilot project is not yet fully completed and therefore no formal evaluation or assessment of the results has been carried out. Questionnaires intended to collect evidence on the overall quality of the project are being submitted to beneficiaries; the results will be examined by Italia Lavoro in 2017. Data provided by the overall manager of INSIDE suggests that participation in the project supports participants to exit the SPRAR system: 118 participants have left the SPRAR system, although the majority (408) did not (for the remaining 128, information is not available). It is likely that they have acquired sufficient skills to pursue social and labour market inclusion autonomously and, as a result, they do not need further support from SPRAR services. In terms of placement outcomes, six months after internship, 56 participants had been hired across the hospitality, manufacturing and retail trade sectors, and 24 by companies other than those in which they carried out their INSIDE internships.

## 6.6 OVERVIEW OF SUCCESSES AND MAIN CHALLENGES

As this project is a pilot, there is no existing study or evaluation that elaborates on its success. However, according to an officer of Italia Lavoro, INSIDE can be considered a positive experience, since it has allowed, for the first time, the opportunity to test a uniform policy approach throughout the national territory. The tutor interviewed also expressed a largely positive opinion, stating: ‘At the outset we did not have any experience in supporting the work integration of beneficiaries of international protection. But by participating in the INSIDE project we have become acquainted with their particular needs and have developed specific competences and working methods.’

No evidence is available but, according to our interviewees, participants who are – or entered the SPRAR system as – minors (under 18) seem to be those most appreciated by companies, and they experience better outcomes after finishing the internship. This is probably due because they attend or have attended mainstream Italian schools.<sup>16</sup>

The project is beneficial and appealing to employers for several reasons:

- They have the opportunity to activate a six-month internship without any cost (the monthly allowance to the intern is provided by the project).
- They are exempt from providing the obligatory course on health and safety at work, as it is provided by the leading proponent concerned.
- Insurance against work-related injuries and third party liability is covered by the lead proponent.
- They receive €500 as compensation for providing tutorship.
- The internship is not an employment relationship and the company is not obliged to hire the beneficiary at the end of the internship.

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<sup>16</sup> In accordance with Italian legislation, foreign minors are subjected to compulsory education.



The only obligations relevant to the business are to provide notification of the start of the internship through the central online system, Unilav, and to guarantee the presence of a tutor when an intern is in the workplace.

Most participating companies are already known to their relevant lead proponent, since they have participated in work-based learning schemes; most have already proved themselves to be socially responsible as regards vulnerable groups. In this regard, it is interesting to note that companies that already have foreign employees are more willing to host beneficiaries of international protection, as there is a greater inclination to deal with international staff.

A key achievement of INSIDE has been the establishment of consolidated relationships with third sector organisations active in providing support to beneficiaries of international protection within SPRAR. Their support is key in the pre-selection process as they can provide insights about individuals on the basis of Italian language skills and motivation, and they may have insights on the personal migration plans of the potential beneficiaries. However, providing information on an individual's migration journey is sometimes very difficult, since beneficiaries of international protection may not always reveal it. This is a relevant issue for INSIDE, given that participants can drop out of a project when they relocate somewhere else.

The SPRAR system offers a wide range of services: linguistic and cultural mediation services, material support (lodging and food), pocket money, access to local services, access to school for minors and Italian language courses. The latter is key to the integration process and a necessary competence for labour market inclusion. Beneficiaries of international protection can attend courses offered by local organisations – within Provincial Centres for Adult Education (*Centri Provinciali per l'Istruzione degli Adulti*) and Permanent Territorial Centres (*Centri Territoriali Permanenti*); these encourage autonomy and facilitate the establishment of a network of acquaintances in the interest of social integration. However, where the number of courses available is low, SPRAR organises courses within hosting centres. Courses are provided by SPRAR for a minimum of 10 hours per week.

According to our interviewees, lack of language skills is a major barrier to communication with a workplace tutor and hinders the acquisition of competences. This is because once they are out of a language course, beneficiaries spend most of their spare time with fellow nationals, or with non-Italian speakers. Difficulty in acquiring language skills is amplified by the lack of focus that is often linked to extreme traumatic experiences. In this regard, it is recommended that a greater investment be made in consolidating teaching methods tailored to victims of violence or torture, and that social opportunities for practising language skills are increased.

Dropout rates represent a major issue for lead proponents and for the whole network of services, since a huge amount of time and energy is invested in beneficiaries. Lead proponents are reimbursed but, according to one interviewee, the reimbursement hardly covers the effort actually made. Since the personal migration plan of each participant is an inherent variable, the issue does not have a single solution. However, a stronger effort on the part of SPRAR staff (cultural mediators and social

assistants), aimed at ascertaining the intentions of potential participants, should be encouraged in future.

Paperwork seems to be a significant burden for lead proponents. More specifically, the templates provided by Italia Lavoro for documentation such as the IAP, is only available in Italian, so their content is sometimes difficult to share with participants, especially those with a low educational attainment level. According to one INSIDE tutor, the templates are inspired by mainstream work-based-learning schemes, and not always tailored to the INSIDE target group. The recommendation derived from the interviews is that templates are translated into English, French and Arabic and made simpler so as to facilitate the tutors' tasks.

This tutor stated that some companies were willing to host interns but that their premises were hard to reach by public transport for INSIDE interns. In these instances, financial or logistical support would ease the commuting challenges, and increase the number of potential hosting organisations.

The issue of standardisation was also raised. In the opinion of a representative of Italia Lavoro: 'Although the overall quality of services provided to beneficiaries of international protection by the SPRAR system is good, the support regarding labour market integration of beneficiaries of international protection varies across the different local contexts, however, and thus needs to be enhanced according to standard procedures throughout the whole territory.'<sup>17</sup>

## **6.7 CONCLUSIONS: THE FUTURE OF INSIDE**

The effectiveness of the project can only be measured when information on the outcomes of the interns' paths is available. However, the perception of Italia Lavoro and of stakeholders is that it represents an adequate policy tool to improve the capacity of the national system to deliver effective and uniform services to particularly vulnerable groups, such as the beneficiaries of international protection. The fact that the overwhelming majority of participants are aged between 18 and 34 suggests that the design of the project is especially effective for vulnerable young people. The impact of this project, or similar projects that will be implemented in the future, will largely depend on investment in improving Italian language skills among participants, in such a way as to allow for better communication between company tutors and interns.

The INSIDE pilot project is about to finish. However, Italia Lavoro has begun to reflect on how the pilot experience can be used in the future. It is expected that a new call for grants will be launched mid-2017. Italia Lavoro intends that the next stage of the project will be ambitious in scope. The aim is to reach all beneficiaries of international protection hosted within the SPRAR system within the next two to three years. The target group will consist not only of those hosted within the SPRAR system, but also of the beneficiaries of international protection who have exited the SPRAR. The aim is to reach 10,000 people per year.

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17 Interview with Federica Federico, 21 November 2016

With regard to the delivery model, each participant going forward will have a personal modular endowment. This means that the combination of services granted to participants and their intensity will depend on the professional and personal background, educational level and gender of the participant. The implementation model will undergo some adjustments. In particular, a key role will be played by the Public Employment Service (*Servizi per l'Impiego*), which will be responsible for taking charge of the participants and organising the delivery of the range of services to be provided within the endowment. Most resources will derive from the ESF programmes; the main source will be the Italian operational programme for social inclusion, managed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, and the AMIF, managed by the Ministry of the Interior.

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# 7.

## WEBFORCE 3

PROVIDING WORK-BASED LEARNING FOR PEOPLE  
IN THE IT SECTOR IN FRANCE

*CHRISTOPHE ALIX WITH BENJAMIN CLADY*

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*'80 per cent of success depends on how you prepare for a project, that's what they teach you at WebForce3. The more experienced people chaperone others who have just started that could potentially drop out ... Being personally involved is fundamental.'*

WebForce 3 graduate

### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

WebForce3 was created in Paris in September 2013. It offers innovative and intensive training (for 35 hours per week over three and a half months) in web development and integration, resulting in a command of basic programming languages for web and mobile applications.<sup>1</sup> The programme was initially designed for a young and underqualified target group. It provides an alternative route into the IT industry for those who do not meet the entry criteria for existing academic programmes (BAs, MAs).<sup>2</sup> WebForce3's work-based learning approach is flexible, practical, intensive and career-focused. It aims to provide trainees with the basic knowledge and skills they require to become IT professionals in a fast-paced industry.

This case study begins with an overview of the job market in France, with a particular focus on the challenges faced by young people. It also sets out how the professional landscape in the IT industry has changed in recent years. It then goes on to explore how WebForce3 operates and is functioning, also reflecting on its challenges and successes. Finally, it sets out the lessons that can be learned from the WebForce3 approach.

### 7.2 THE JOB MARKET IN FRANCE<sup>3</sup>

The French job market exhibits a high unemployment rate (10 per cent) and weak employment rate (less than 65 per cent) in comparison to other OECD member economies (the employment rate is more than 70 per cent in Germany, the United Kingdom and Scandinavian countries). These features have been persistent for 30 years, the unemployment rate

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1 Author's note: Figures and statistics about WebForce3's performance regarding success or placement rate as well as trainees' socio-economic profile have not been audited or scrutinized further. They should therefore be considered carefully. As a consequence, no conclusion on WebForce3 training financial or social performance in the longer run can be drawn at this stage from the case study.

2 It is difficult to provide a detailed picture of the beneficiaries of WebForce3. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, Workforce3 was launched relatively recently and it is still too early to generate robust statistics on beneficiaries and their performance (the statistics that are available draw a limited picture, though, and some observations are made in this case study). Secondly, in France, statistics referring to ethnic groups are only authorised under very specific circumstances (unlike in Anglo-American countries, where this data is freely captured and analysed).

3 All figures and statistics presented below are extracted from a brief note from IDEP (*Institut de l'entreprise*) on youth unemployment in France: IDEP, 2016.

not being very sensitive to economic cycles. Indeed, unemployment has never dropped below 7.5 per cent, even during periods of strong economic growth, indicating structural issues in the labour market. In metropolitan areas, 2.8 million people are seeking a job, including 1.2 million who have been looking for more than a year. Increasing long-term unemployment that structural unemployment will get worse in the future. By the end of the first quarter of 2016, long-term unemployment hit an all-time high.

Inequalities with regards to unemployment are significant. Among young working people, the unemployment rate had reached 25.9 per cent by the final quarter of 2015. This figure is especially high in comparison to other leading European economies, such as Austria (11.3 per cent), Germany (6.4 per cent), the Netherlands (11.1 per cent), Sweden (16.3 per cent), or the United Kingdom (13.1 per cent). The unemployment rate for people aged under 24 is 2.5 times higher than that of the French population over the age of 24, according to Insee (National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies; *Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques*). Inequalities relating to job market access correlated highly to the level of qualification. Therefore, there is a discrepancy between employers' qualification requirements and worker skill levels for a significant part of the working population. This situation mainly results from the shortcomings of the educational system. 85 per cent of secondary-level students reach the last year of high school in the French education system (77 per cent graduate with the *baccalauréat*), but 150,000 young people per year – 20 per cent of a class – drop out with no qualification at all.

There is a lack of relevant professional training in France in comparison to other OECD economies, according to France Stratégie, a public thinktank affiliated to the prime minister. This explains why experienced workers with adequate academic backgrounds find it difficult to find a job after having been made redundant for the first time.

### **7.2.1 Developments in the digital job market**

The professional landscape in the IT industry has changed radically over the past decade. The need for programmers has increased rapidly, due to the transition from a web that was centred on information, documentation and electronic commerce to one focussing on services and cloud computing. Whereas coding languages were previously used to create specific applications for each field, and were developed internally by corporate IT departments, new applications are developed directly on and for the web. They are conceived so that all professionals can access them on desktop computers, mobile phones or tablets. This evolution has rendered many coding languages, such as COBOL (invented in 1959), obsolete. New languages have become widespread on the web: HTML, PHP and Java to name a few. Software used by businesses on a daily basis for invoicing, inventory management, customer relationship management and payroll management can be accessed directly via the internet. Such technologies are constantly evolving and updates are available directly on numerous platforms. Demand for programmers is also growing with the emergence of new web interfaces. The emergence of the IoT (Internet of Things) represents the next wave of disruption and

will lead to increased connectivity for billions of objects that we use every day, especially in the context of the trend for home automation.

Finally, this revolution is leading to a shift in the way software is sold, with the rapid normalising of software known as SaaS (Software as a Service). Applications are now stored remotely and paid for on a subscription basis. Companies like Salesforce (a fast-growing American software editor) are a case study in the enormous changes that are transforming the IT industry: released software is stored on the cloud, accessible across all platforms (PC, smartphone and tablet) and designed to be user-friendly. This revolution impacts on businesses, as well as individuals, given that office tools such as Google Drive allow for personal file storage in the cloud.

### **7.3 AN INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF WEBFORCE3**

Originally created as a not-for-profit organisation, WebForce3 was incorporated as a social business in April 2016, meeting specific legal criteria regarding corporate purpose and profit distribution. This corporate structure applies to newly created subsidiaries in major French cities (Aix-Marseille, Lille, Lyon and Paris), as well as franchised training centres in other parts of the country and in Luxembourg. In total, around 20 training centres currently operate under the WebForce3 label. Franchising development was funded in February 2016 through a €400,000 capital increase from Impact Partenaires, a social impact fund. Local financial institutions also granted €200,000 in long-term debt. The group is currently looking for additional partners to fund the development of its regional subsidiaries. Due to its particular organisational model, WebForce3 currently remains limited to fewer than 10 employees (including the founders), but there are plans to grow as the group expands. In addition, the group collaborates with around 100 independent contractors – IT professionals – who oversee the training sessions provided. WebForce3's group turnover exceeded €700,000 in 2016.

The content of the training itself is still in the trial phase and is structured on the basis that it should help a variety of people get a job – from young people who have dropped out of school to older people who are switching careers. WebForce3 now attracts people from various age groups, as well as those with academic and professional backgrounds, who are drawn by the prospect of swiftly finding a job. The selection process is minimal and focuses primarily on the motivation level of applicants, regardless of their age, gender, previous qualifications or experience.

WebForce3 trains future web developers or web integrators, while preparing them for the workplace through meetings with recruiters and contact with IT professionals. The training is specifically designed so that students can find a job as quickly as possible after it is completed. Although the work-based learning methodology suits people who experience difficulties entering the job market (many at WebForce3 fit that category), this training programme was not initially solely conceived for this audience.

The three-and-a-half-month duration of training is in line with industry standards, as digital projects in the IT sector tend to last for three-to-

six months. The theoretical part of the training lasts only three weeks and is followed by a more ‘hands-on’ phase. Trainees switch between theory and practice continually, gaining knowledge and seeing immediately how that knowledge is applied. This is achieved with the help of specially selected trainers, who are also employed in companies from the relevant sector. The training programme is conceived to increase the amount of marketable skills WebForce3 students have on graduation. The programme also aims to develop the critical thinking and collaborative skills of students, as well as promoting the interdisciplinary and horizontal perspective that is characteristic of digital culture. This is done by reinforcing the students’ sense of initiative and autonomy, while refraining from assessing them solely according to academic criteria. In this way, WebForce3 aims to expose students to the same working conditions and practices that they will experience on graduation.<sup>4</sup>

Jobs in the IT industry are changing at a fast pace and the workforce includes a high proportion of self-taught individuals, who have played an important role in changing traditional perceptions of the IT sector. The challenge is to determine whether the form of training offered by WebForce3, characterised by its short duration and demand-led approach, is capable of helping people build careers over the long term.

#### 7.4 KEY CHARACTERISTICS AND APPROACH OF WEBFORCE3

There are 25 WebForce3 training centres across France, and 500 people enrolled in 2016. Around 20 per cent of trainees are women, a figure significantly higher than for traditional IT training programmes. Webforce3 was only relatively recently launched, so it is difficult to generate robust statistics on the beneficiaries and performance of the programme, but some observations have been drawn from the statistics available.<sup>5</sup>

There are some distinctive traits that characterise the beneficiaries of WebForce3. Overall, the largest group of trainees is made up of young people, aged 16 to 30. They represent 85–90 per cent of all trainees. The majority share negative experiences as regards education or employment. They are likely to have dropped out of school after an inadequate orientation and most have never benefited from a long-term work contract. A small minority grew up in disadvantaged areas, and they are provided with ‘special guidance’ by Workforce3 in response to their specific needs (this longer, more targeted programme is referred to in more detail below).

The remaining 10–15 per cent are older (30–55 years old) and more likely to have professional experience in the IT industry – some are IT engineers with relevant work experience. However, these students were made redundant as a result of their skills becoming obsolete, or their qualifications relating to technologies that have long been

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4 Students at WebForce3 do not receive a degree, but two professional certifications, validated by the CNCP (National Qualifications Framework; *Commission Nationale de la Certification Professionnelle*).

5 In France, one cannot legally collect data or information about the racial, ethnic or religious origin of groups of people; breaking this law can result in five years in prison and a €300,000 fine. This legal provision aims to prevent discrimination, both negative and positive – a principle at the centre of France’s republican model of democracy. France is an indivisible republic that is secular, democratic and social in character; individuals must be rewarded based on merit only and helped according to their needs, regardless of race, origin or religion.

decommissioned, and did not receive the training necessary to remain current with new trends and coding languages.

Below, a series of factors that characterise WebForce3's approach are explored.

#### **7.4.1 Recruitment**

Joining WebForce3 is straightforward. There are no obstacles. 'The main criterion is motivation,' the WebForce3 director, Alain Assouline, asserts. He mentions employment agencies and Facebook as the main sources of candidates.<sup>6</sup> The viral aspect of social media recruitment campaigns is essential. Many applicants, who have submitted their application following the example of others, would never have known about WebForce3 were it not for social media. In fact, they probably would not have asked for information at their unemployment agency either. What triggers young applicants to apply is often a sense of curiosity and the appeal of the digital world, rather than a need to join a training programme and work. This particular job sector benefits from a very positive, modern image, whereas the corporate world is generally seen as a turn-off for trainees. Recruitment meetings are organised across France and are followed by one-to-one meetings, before students are enrolled. According to Assouline, only 20 per cent of applications to the programme are rejected. Regarding the profile of accepted applicants, roughly 60 per cent are in career transition, while 40 per cent are school dropouts.

Before they begin their training, students have to take an exam to assess the level of their IT and web knowledge, in order to verify that they have, at minimum, an interest in the IT sector. This test is complemented by a small test in logic, which allows the school to make sure that its future students have the abilities required to learn programming languages. Students who usually have difficulty with such basic tests prepare beforehand to make sure that they will meet the requirements (in grammar, and basic understanding of French and English) of the test. 'We have observed that for those coming from socially challenging areas, but who are integrated in rather large cities, the results in logic were generally good. The students who come from rural areas or semi-rural and industrialised areas, and who are therefore more socially isolated, experience more difficulty, which proved that this is not a question of education level,' Assouline remarks. A WebForce3 trainer states: 'We insist a lot on the fact that students must give us all of their attention during the three and a half months. The training is very demanding. During that time, each student must concentrate on their work as much as he or she can.'

The diversity of backgrounds in WebForce3 contributes to creating strong relationships among students. It is a clear asset for the school and makes it unique. Diversity is social, cultural and geographic, and embraces age and gender. 'The fact that people live together over three months and take part in collective projects creates a mindset that our students use when they graduate and enter the workforce,' Assouline comments. 'Our work culture is very similar to what students will find in a professional setting. This explains why they are operational when they graduate. The

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<sup>6</sup> Alain Assouline, director of WebForce3, was interviewed for this study in December 2016 and January 2017. Interviews were also held over the same period with a trainer from WebForce3.



transition between the two worlds exists, but due to our approach it is something that comes naturally to them.’

For those who join WebForce3, the prospect of finding a job becomes a reality: it represents the main source of motivation for a young person who has dropped out, whether for domestic, social or educational reasons. For example, in the deprived neighbourhood of Villeneuve-la-Garenne, in the *département* Hauts-de-Seine, 12 jobseekers have enrolled in WebForce3. The group includes young people from poor neighbourhoods who have taken part in social integration programmes, whose goal is to become programmer-integrators. In this specific case, the training lasts, not three months, but 10; these trainees have a working contract of 35 hours and enjoy more assistance. It is a ‘reinforced programme,’ Assouline explains, designed for ‘people for whom it is difficult to find a job and that do not have the prerequisites to begin training.’

#### **7.4.2 Training: content, methodology, guidance**

Training at WebForce3 represents 490 hours of class, equivalent to approximately one year of university classes. In addition, 15 days are dedicated to a team project, as well as strong support through the LMS (Learning Management System) developed in-house by WebForce3. Every day, each student has to complete a quiz and training modules in the LMS, which also hosts forums, to enable communication with other students and training instructors. Classes are very intensive, with a dozen students per class. Once classes are over, students are free to go home and work there. They are given access to an online platform with worksheets and multiple questions – these have to be completed on a daily basis, so that students can assess their knowledge and move on to the next learning phase. The teaching staff offers a personalised follow-up for each student, helping when students experience difficulties and providing special assistance where needed.

Everything taught at WebForce3 (seven units in total) is delivered in the form of practical exercises that can be done individually or in teams. ‘It’s kind of like working with a master carpenter who shows you first how to do the foot of a chair, and then the entire chair itself,’ Assouline says. The difference is that the trainee has to learn in a piecemeal fashion how to code, starting with how to make a drop-down menu and then moving on to doing a full webpage and, later, a mobile app. ‘From the very first day or even from the very first hour, we can see the concrete results of what we are teaching; it is very empirical and is part of a gradual learning process. For young people who only know failure and dislike school, this is very gratifying,,’ says Assouline.

The fact that the training period is very short echoes the short lead times of projects in the professional sector. ‘If projects last longer than this period of time, teams generally have the tendency [to withdraw] and lose their motivation, and this is why we avoid having projects that last too long,’ Assouline says. He notes that a project for the web does not require the same amount of time and investment as it used to, when programmers were asked to build information systems from scratch (without including maintenance). Those projects usually involved the work of large teams, sometimes hundreds of people, who would work

together for years on end. ‘Today the method is different. It is very common to adapt and copy code that is freely accessible on the web and use it for a very specific purpose. The learning method is based on looking at what others are doing and assembling everything together like Lego bricks.’

At WebForce3, respect for deadlines and quality control, in terms of how precise and clean code is, are the most important concerns. In parallel to this, trainees get to learn the main languages of the internet (HTML, JavaScript, PHP, MySQL for databases and so on). Students are also encouraged to think in terms of long-term goals. They are given the task of building a website or mobile application (with a minimum level of complexity) either on their own or in teams, in only two weeks. This project is important, as it is what they will leverage to find a job. The fact that they are allowed to choose a theme for their project gives trainees an opportunity to express their personality and follow individual interests.

Learning coding is very practical. It is short and intensive, and students are also free to continue developing their skills by extending their initial training. They have the choice of doing this at WebForce3 or elsewhere. ‘We are here to give them the general tools they need so that they can make it on their own, find a job, and be operational in a work environment. Our task is not to train coding geniuses that do not need us, or maybe only so that they can teach themselves the discipline to work in teams,’ Assouline adds. Dropouts from the programme are very rare. ‘We have taken into account the fact that a person who has dropped out of school or is without work will be less willing to pursue a degree that lasts for a year. The situation might be a bit different for people who already have a degree and are looking to change their field of work and whose skills have become obsolete. In that case we are thinking, for those who have the willingness and ability, to create specific and more advanced training programmes that can lead to a specialisation.’

#### **7.4.3 Training costs**

Tuition is not free at WebForce3, but the price depends on the person paying for the programme. When a student is sent by the employment agency, the cost (covered by the agency) is €8 per hour, which amounts to €4,000 over the total programme. When students are sent by other training organisations, the cost is somewhere between €12 and €20 per hour, amounting to €5,880–9,800 overall. However, when a student is paying alone, which is rare, WebForce3 only charges €6 an hour, which amounts to €2,940 – a total that is lower than the cost of running the programme. For this category of students, the school has put in place a partnership with the Caisse d’Epargne bank, which allows students to take out a loan at a preferential rate, close to zero. Students start paying back the loan six months after they graduate and within a four-year period. ‘The idea is that money should not be an obstacle to studying at WebForce3, although most students do not pay for school themselves,’ Assouline explains.

#### **7.4.4 The value of a work-based learning approach at WebForce3**

Work-based learning approaches produce convincing and tangible results that facilitate access to the job market, especially when it comes to people who have experienced social disadvantage. In using this approach, ‘WebForce3 can be used “as an instrument to battle unemployment”,’ Assouline explains. ‘We have two missions: to offer an alternative for people who have dropped out, and to allow people who are older but with out-of-date skills due to rapid transformation of technologies to gain necessary skills to re-enter the job market.’

Work is done individually or in teams, as it would be in a company. Before they graduate, students are asked to complete a project, which can be either a website or mobile application. The work can be done individually or in teams, and trainees have to use all of the knowledge that they have acquired throughout the programme. It is something that students can leverage to access the job market. As one WebForce3 trainer, interviewed for this study, says,

*‘Students gain basic knowledge of coding languages that are not necessarily the most cutting-edge or popular but that correspond, 60 to 70 per cent of the time, to the skills for which there is market demand – the programme relies on self-learning for the remaining 30–40 per cent.’*

The level of requirement is very high and is comparable to what students will find when they are employed. The school puts great emphasis on respecting deadlines, and on making sure the quality of the work that is delivered is outstanding and that it conforms to the standards of the industry.

The second reason a work-based learning approach is beneficial is that trainees gain valuable social skills. Students learn how to act in a professional environment, as well as how to work in teams and share information with others. These are skills that will play an important role during the course of their professional careers.

Although WebForce3 does not provide a work placement service, a specific department is in charge of trainee support when it comes to the definition of a career path, the use of social networks for job-seeking and job interview preparation. This department also develops partnerships with future employers, and benefits in this regard from the support of the main trade organisations in the IT sector (Syntec-Numérique, FAFIEC, Cinov-IT). The idea behind these partnerships is to find adequate placements for trainees, but also to garner insights on the required technical skills that should be included in training in order to boost trainees’ employability. In addition, some of the functionality of the LMS developed in-house by WebForce3 enables trainees to contact alumni as well as partner companies and discuss potential opportunities in the sector.

#### **7.5 ANALYSIS OF HOW WEBFORCE3 IS FUNCTIONING**

WebForce3’s first school opened in January 2014 (and data is only available for the years 2014 and 2015), so we are only able to make early observations at this stage. Nevertheless, available data shows that, out of the first 500 graduates, only 10 per cent have remained unemployed, or have not pursued another degree, one year after having graduated

from the school. The graduates that secure employment tend to become webmasters, web programmer-integrators or web developers.

Since its launch, WebForce3 has succeeded in helping the majority of its trainees find new jobs. Before they enrolled, most of them were poorly integrated into the job market, whereas around 89 per cent have had a positive experience since leaving Workforce3 (and, in many cases, their involvement has led to permanent employment).

According to data collected from WebForce3 in Paris, of the 267 trainees who completed their training:

- 32.8 per cent have a permanent contract;
- 17.7 per cent have a temporary contract;
- 15.5 per cent are freelancing;
- 10.7 per cent are pursuing another training opportunity; and
- 12.4 per cent have an internship.

This means that 89.1 per cent of those who completed the training had a positive experience and were able to either find work or continue their studies.

WebForce3 provides much more than a certificate; its goal is to address the demand for qualified workers in the IT field. Assouline thinks that one of the reasons for the school's success is the exponential growth of the IT sector. In order to respond to the high demand, the school favours training programmes that are short and intensive, so that students can quickly find a job once they graduate.

The school is actively boosting employment in the IT sector. Workforce3 responds to the needs of web agencies looking for people who know how to tackle the challenges of digital transformation, which affect every aspect of their customers' business. Up until now, small businesses (with fewer than 10 employees) specialising in the IT sector have been among the first to recruit students from WebForce3. This is changing, however. Large companies that used to hire only graduates of engineering schools are also seeing the benefits of recruiting students from WebForce3. France's leading IT consulting company, Capgemini, has announced a vast recruitment campaign of 2,800 people, including WebForce3 graduates. 'This is a sign that things are changing,' Assouline believes. 'The fact that some of our graduates are going to Capgemini is extremely important. It increases the credibility of our training programme in places that used to be very hard for students to access.'

There is another sign of success. Young graduates are now able to apply to programming jobs previously only given to people who had a master's degree and at least two years of experience. 'We encourage them to go to interviews and ask to be evaluated and some have even found a job this way. To us, this means that our training programme corresponds to the needs of the market.' Both employers and trainees testify to the demands and benefits of the programme (see box 7.1, below).

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### Box 7.1: Testimonials from an employer and trainees

*‘The interest of a training programme such as the one offered by WebForce3 is to recruit beginners that have acquired the basics in order to deepen their knowledge of coding languages ... With technology always evolving, I do not mind taking in people who do not have diplomas. It is easier to receive training at a company than at a school. I have already recruited five people from WebForce3 and two ... were poached by our clients. The training programme works as a career boost and now that the school has built close relationships with companies like ours, we help them improve their initial programme offering. In three months [the trainees] gain technical skills that go way beyond the capacities of a webmaster that deals with maintaining and updating a website. I favour people with more experience, even though they come from various sectors. For instance, I recruited a former delivery person. The biggest obstacle is probably this: it is hard to trust someone who has not or almost never worked. However, employers who are looking for people to hire at the lowest cost may be interested in them. In any case, they will always earn more as a developer than working at a sandwich shop or at McDonalds.’*

David (45), CEO of Atypic, a web agency that employs 10 people and was founded 15 years ago

*‘I was looking for an activity where I could be self-employed; I went to WebForce3 because I was told that there would be many job openings and opportunities to work this way, being free to choose. I found a client by word of mouth and for whom I built a website one week after I finished the training programme.’*

Young woman from Québec:

*‘In three and a half months, I was able to learn the basics along with the tools and techniques necessary to then continue my training on my own. A good developer has no choice but to constantly keep him or herself abreast of new technological trends, that’s just part of your job.’*

Former IT sector computer operator

*‘The effect of being part of a group and a community definitely plays a role. After WebForce3, I hung out at a professional bar that is part of the Numa incubator in Paris, and, in two days, I had four job offers.’*

Etienne, 28, has been working on platforms before moving to web

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WebForce3’s initial successes attracted attention from the French press and government. As a direct consequence, 20 training centres operating under the WebForce3 label were also certified as part of *Grande École du Numérique*, a specific initiative started in 2015 at the instigation of the French president (it is not reserved for elite students, as the

name suggests, but it is a label given to educational establishments specialising in the IT sector).

## 7.6 DRAWING CONCLUSIONS FROM THE WEBFORCE3 MODEL

WebForce3 offers short training courses with a work-based learning methodology that prepares people for ‘actual jobs’. This kind of training did not exist previously, in an industry where IT service companies and web agencies were characterised by high staff turnover and constant change in the skills and qualifications required for newly created positions. To address a fast-growing demand, the only qualifications traditionally available were master’s degrees or, to a lesser degree, bachelor’s degrees. The founder of WebForce3, Alain Assouline, attributes the success of his initiative to its flexible, adaptive approach and positioning in the growing market. Experts estimate that a million jobs will be available for web programmer-integrators in Europe by 2020. For those who are enrolled at WebForce3, the prospect of finding a job is very real.

A work-based learning approach makes it easier for trainees to acquire skills. Students personally witness their advances in a project. They can see their contributions first-hand and, generally speaking, their overall progress as well. This method can also prove to be useful when it comes to revealing trainees’ personalities, tastes and other talents, in a way that is often not the case in theoretical classes. People who have dropped out of school, or who had previously been excluded from the educational system, begin to gain confidence and become curious again. The programme enables students to prove that they have the capacity to pursue an education.

Students who use the learning-by-doing approach can compete in the job market early on and are capable of easily integrating into a company. This approach allows for learning new skills and greatly facilitates a trainee’s access to the job market. Some positive, practical features are the pace of the WebForce3 training, which corresponds to the average French working day,<sup>7</sup> and its duration (three and a half months, like many projects in the IT sector), as well as the training content, which is based on practical work.

In 2014–15, approximately 150 people were trained. This figure increased to 500 in 2016 and is expected to reach 1,500 in 2017. Since its inception, WebForce3 has trained more than 600 people, of whom 85 per cent found a job in the six months following the programme. This excellent success rate is partly explained by the demand-led approach retained by WebForce3. The IT sector in France is currently experiencing a shortage of skilled workers. According to Syntec Numérique, one of the largest trade associations in the IT sector, 50,000 positions are waiting to be filled, of which 20,000 are in the sphere of web and mobile development and integration.

According to Assouline, web programmer-integrators who already have experience in the sector (the ‘older’ age group studying at WebForce3, representing 10 to 15 per cent of all trainees) are likely to receive a gross salary of €30,000 to €35,000 per year. The younger age group, who have dropped out of school or have no professional experience, can expect to

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<sup>7</sup> Usually seven hours per day over five days, or 35 hours per week. However, these hours do not include the personal time that students are obliged to devote to their projects after class is over.

receive a gross salary of €20,000 to €25,000 per year. It is possible for people to advance very quickly in this industry if they keep themselves abreast of developments and have the skills that companies are seeking. ‘Symphony is an important case in point. Symphony is a Silicon Valley start-up that offers a communication platform (secure email, instant messaging, forums and so on.) The start up is popular in the finance industry due to its reliability and is starting to be adopted in other fields as well,’ Assouline explains. ‘People who have knowledge of Symphony and can work on its platform can ask for a gross salary of €40,000 to €50,000 per year. This is something that not everyone graduating from WebForce3 can access, as they do not have a strong backbone in the industry yet, but after two years of experience and a new, three-month training program, they definitely could.’ In the future, WebForce3 intends to develop partnerships with companies, in order to offer graduates a continuous education.

After three years, WebForce3 is a unique case study in France. The only school that is based on the same philosophy is Simplon.co, with its goal of building a ‘social fabric of programmers’. However, the Simplon training programme is longer (six to eight months) and puts a greater emphasis on the idea of inclusivity. According to Assouline, his goal is to train ‘the future blue-collar workers of the digital world’ – specialised workers in charge of executing projects (though not responsible for design or IT architecture). The network of WebForce3 schools (20 in France at the end of 2016, with a presence in all of the regions except Brittany, where a new centre is due to open in 2017) was able to secure a healthy budget, and this will allow it to strengthen its position well into the future.

After independently raising €400,000, WebForce3 raised another €1.2 million from public and private investors in 2016. This includes the €400,000 given by Impact Partenaires (see section 1). Many banks have also contributed to the programme by supplying loans totalling €200,000 to trainees at preferential rates. The Paris Code programme sponsored by the city of Paris was able to help the school secure €600,000 in public financing as part of the *Grande École du Numérique* programme. The money that the group was able to raise will allow it to live up to its very ambitious promise of training 1,500 programmers in 2017.

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# 8. HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE FURTHER AWAY FROM THE LABOUR MARKET

THE TALENT MATCH INITIATIVE IN THE UK

MANUEL SOUTO-OTERO

*‘Being a talent scout is just absolutely great; I love it. We’re building that bridge with employers, but not only that, it’s run by us young people. We go out there and get other young people and convince them and motivate them. We tell them, “Listen, there are jobs out there and we’re going to help you.”’*

Talent Match talent scout participant

## 8.1 INTRODUCTION

This paper reviews the approach and outcomes of Talent Match, a national voluntary programme launched in 2012 that operates across England targeting young people who are furthest away from inclusion in the labour market and face strong barriers to gaining the skills required for employment. The programme focusses on people aged 18–24 who have been out of employment, education or training for at least 12 months and who live in areas with particularly difficult employment conditions. Talent Match’s work-based learning programme operates by addressing three of the most significant challenges that this target group faces: lack of work experience, lack of skills and lack of confidence. Its distinctive approach makes extensive use of links with local organisations, which helps to build trust among the participants. Another key characteristic is the involvement of young people in the design and implementation of the model.

The case study begins with a broad overview that sets out the context in the UK with regard to youth unemployment and summarises policy developments in this area. It goes on to provide an overview of the Talent Match programme, including its target group and expected outcomes. Next come an analysis of the key characteristics and results of the programme and reflections on its successes and challenges. The study concludes by describing what makes the Talent Match intervention distinctive and how it could be strengthened in the future.

## 8.2 THE CONTEXT IN THE UK: YOUNG PEOPLE FAR AWAY FROM THE LABOUR MARKET

In 2015, the UK youth unemployment rate stood at around 15 per cent (Eurostat 2017). National debates have underlined that helping young people into jobs must be a high priority for the UK if it is to avoid losing a generation to unemployment. Youth unemployment has not only short-term effects, but also long-term ‘scarring’ effects. Using data from the

National Child Development Survey, Gregg and Tominey (2004, 2005) show the impact of unemployment during youth on people's income up to 20 years later. They report that a significant wage gap remains even after controlling for educational achievement, region and other family and individual characteristics.

The causes of long-term youth unemployment and NEET (not in education, employment or training) status are complex and go beyond education and skills issues. For example, around 15 per cent of NEETs in the EU (21 per cent in the UK) are in this position because of family responsibilities, and around 7 per cent (8.5 per cent in the UK) due to illness or disability (Mascherini and Ledermaier 2016:36). While the causes of long-term youth unemployment are complex, Mascherini and Ledermaier (2016:2) state that 'education is confirmed as the best protection against unemployment and exclusion'. More than 30 per cent of young people at ISCED<sup>1</sup> level 0-2 (primary and lower secondary education) are NEET in the UK (Mascherini and Ledermaier 2016:19).

### **8.2.1 The policy context**

UK policy around youth unemployment since the 2008 financial crisis has gone through three main phases (Gregg 2015). The first was a response to large increases in youth unemployment in the second half of 2008. This resulted in the 'September Guarantee', which required local authorities to find education and training places for 16- and 17-year-olds (Gov.UK 2017a). From 2015 the participation age was increased so that young people would stay in education and training until the age of 18, reducing youth unemployment rates, but not necessarily boosting transitions from school to work.

The second phase aimed to improve transitions into work, notably through the Future Jobs Fund (FJF) and the Work Programme. The first of these was introduced in 2009 to provide subsidised job placement experiences and, to some extent, skills for disadvantaged young jobseekers, to enable them to obtain unsubsidised employment following participation. The target group of the programme was young people who had been claiming jobseeker's allowance for at least six months; and although participation was offered on a voluntary basis, young people unwilling to take part could be directed to other employment support programmes and face sanctions for non-participation in those. The FJF was replaced by more conventional welfare-to-work support services provided by private companies and charities (Gregg 2015), under the Work Programme (for more information on the Work Programme, see section 3.1). The Work Programme was the government's mainstream welfare-to-work programme for long-term unemployed people aged 18–24 and over 25.

The third phase was based on the stimulation of traineeships and apprenticeships for young people. This has been a long-term aim in the UK, but has had limited success in terms of take-up by young people and employers. In 2017 the government introduced an apprenticeship levy at a rate of 0.5 per cent of the annual wage bill for employers with

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<sup>1</sup> ISCED is the International Standard Classification of Education. The classification considers the level of education and also field. ISCED level 2 refers to lower secondary education. For more details see <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/isced-2011-en.pdf>

a wage bill over £3 million (see gov.uk 2017b for further details), in a further attempt to stimulate apprenticeships.

Today, the focus of the debate continues to be around the enhancement of the effectiveness and coherence of the measures that are in place to address long-term youth unemployment, and on the role that stakeholders from the public, private and third sectors can play in this process. From autumn 2017 the Work Programme (and Work Choice Programme<sup>2</sup>) will be replaced by the Work and Health Programme, which will provide specialised employment support for long-term unemployed people and (on a voluntary basis) people with disabilities.<sup>3</sup>

Operating within this complex and evolving context, Talent Match is a national programme based on partnerships between various stakeholders that aims to provide holistic support, from an initial assessment on first engagement to skills development and job-search, to young people who have experienced long-term unemployment. As one beneficiary put it:

*‘Talent Match is a different type of programme. It helps young people to become aware of their potential and goals and provides them with the support they need to realise dreams’*

Talent Match beneficiary

### 8.3 INTRODUCTION TO THE TALENT MATCH INITIATIVE

Talent Match was launched in 2012. It is a national programme operating across England, the predominant focus of which is on supporting young people who face strong barriers to entering the labour market and acquiring the skills they need to access it. The programme focusses on people aged 18–24, who have been NEET (not in employment, education or training) for at least 12 months and who live in areas with particularly difficult employment conditions (BIG 2012).

The Big Lottery Fund (BIG), the biggest community funder in the UK,<sup>4</sup> funds the Talent Match programme. It specified that for the Talent Match programme it was particularly interested in targeting the so-called ‘hidden NEETs’: those who are completely disengaged, ‘are not claiming work related benefits and are less likely to be targeted by other existing provision’ (BIG 2013:1). This group had been on the increase before the introduction of the programme, probably reflecting changes to welfare conditionality, and notably the increased use of benefit sanctions (Powell and Wells 2015). BIG (2013:2) stated that ‘we expect [Talent Match] projects to focus on the many young people who have been NEET for 12 months or more but are not claiming JSA, whether because they are on a different type of benefit, or because they are completely disengaged from the system. This may include young people facing barriers that require additional support over and above, but complementary, to what the Work Programme can offer.’

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2 <https://www.gov.uk/work-choice/overview>

3 <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7845>

4 The Big Lottery Fund funds 12,000 projects related to health, education, environment and charity, using money raised by National Lottery players. It distributes around 40 per cent of the money (around £1 billion in 2014/15). Around 90 per cent of its awards are for less than £10,000; around 95 per cent go to the voluntary and community sector.

The targeting of specific sub-groups depends on the needs and concentrations of different local areas, but typically these have included (CRESR and IER 2014: 25–26):

- black and minority ethnic (BME) groups,
- ex-offenders,
- Traveller communities,
- homeless people,
- lone parents, young parents and care givers,
- people engaged in alcohol or substance misuse,
- people living in isolated rural areas,
- people suffering from mental health problems,
- people with low levels of literacy and numeracy,
- people with physical or learning disabilities, and
- refugees and asylum seekers.

As one beneficiary put it: ‘Talent Match is a different kind of programme’. The interview with Sheffield Futures (lead in the Sheffield City Region Talent Match project) underlines the fact that many of the young people targeted by the programme would be sanctioned in mainstream programmes such as the Work Programme for not applying for jobs or not going to interviews initially. Many of these young people do not have role models at home (London Youth interview).

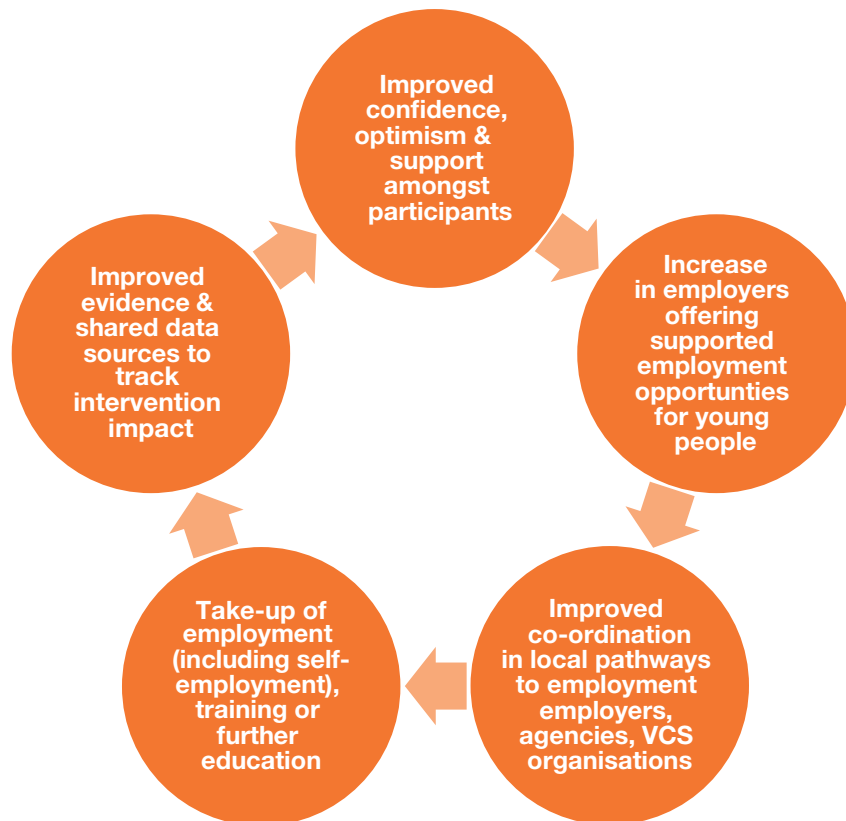
The programme is delivered by partnerships of employers, grass-roots youth organisations, educational institutions and other organisations led by a voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisation with experience working with NEETs. Some partnerships (for example in the Sheffield City Region and Leicester and Leicestershire) also include local authorities. The Talent Match project can thus be integrated and feed into other provision offered by the VCS organisation.

The programme was launched through a request for prospectuses that set out a clear local vision. This then led to the reception of grants for partnership development, with only one application within each local area being accepted. Partnerships then developed their prospectus for funding with support from BIG. After a review of the prospectuses, in January 2014 BIG announced an investment of £108 million in 21 projects in areas that are youth unemployment hotspots. The projects received between £1 million and £10 million. These partnerships are delivering their projects over the period 2014–2017. BIG expects them to prepare sustainability plans and continue their operations after BIG funding ends (for further details on partnership working and development see Crisp, Green and Fletcher 2014).

The Talent Match programme aims to generate a range of outcomes related not only to participants’ development, but also changes in the volume of employment opportunities available for young people, co-ordination amongst stakeholders, and use of evidence, as outlined in figure 8.1.

**FIGURE 8.1**

**Types of outcomes expected from Talent Match projects**



Source: Based on BIG (2012). VCS= Voluntary and Community Service organisations.

Sheffield Futures underlined the importance of raising aspirations in families and communities and engage with them: Talent Match is about the provision of skills, but also confidence and resilience and networks that young people require to achieve labour market inclusion (Talent Match London 2016c).

Overall, the partnerships aim to engage over 29,000 young people over the course of the programme, with at least 20 per cent of them entering sustainable employment (CRESR and IER 2014) – continuous employment lasting six months or more. Given the programme budget this would be a cost of around £3,700 per young person involved, with reported unit costs varying between £1,600 and £7,500 per beneficiary, depending on the nature, degree of innovation and intensity of support provided (Powell and Wells 2015:4).

## **8.4 NATURE OF THE ACTIVITIES: TALENT MATCH CHARACTERISTICS, ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES**

### **8.4.1 Involving young people**

One of the most distinctive and innovative characteristics of the Talent Match programme is the degree of involvement of young people in the initiative (Atfield, Bashir, Crisp and Poowell 2014). This makes the programme different from mainstream governments' interventions.

Young people were involved in the design of the programme as a whole: 'In developing the programme BIG worked closely with stakeholders and a team of 20 young people who have consulted thousands of their peers' (BIG 2012:3). They are also involved in the design and implementation of the projects carried out in each of the Talent Match local partnership areas. As Worth-It Projects, a social enterprise working on the provision of positive psychology coaching services established in 2011, explains in relation to its involvement in one of the Talent Match projects,

*'A panel of young people from Leicestershire have been involved in the project as part of the Talent Match process. These young people had the job of selecting a number of NEET support providers to be involved as a local partnership with the Big Lottery Fund Worth-It projects has been selected as one of these providers [...] we'll use our positive psychology coaching to help young people in the Leicestershire area with mental health problems get into education, employment or training.'*

Worth-It Projects 2017

This kind of involvement increases the attractiveness of the programme for young people, and can thus be expected to reduce drop-out rates.

Involvement of young people was expected to result in their increased confidence, the injection of new ideas and energy into projects and a sense of empowerment and 'being heard'. This is illustrated by the words of a Talent Match London 'talent scout':

*'Being a talent scout is just absolutely great; I love it. We're building that bridge with employers, but not only that, its run by us young people. We go out there and get the other young people and convince them and motivate them. We tell them, 'Listen, there are jobs out there and we're going to help you''.'*

Close involvement of young people in decision-making continues during the implementation phase, although there is much variation in this respect across partnerships (Powell and Wells 2015). Some partnerships have given commission groups led by local young people active control over parts of the budget (CRESR and IER 2014), or given them a strong say on which employers to target (Sheffield Futures interview).

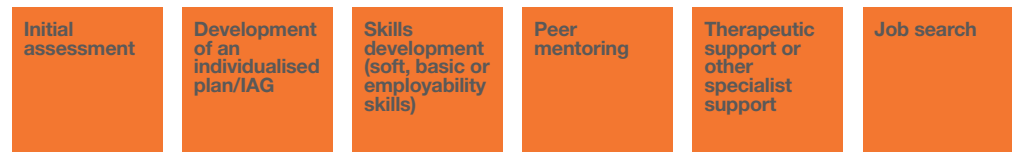
#### **8.4.2 Activities**

The activities vary by partnership area, as the projects funded by the programme are customised to the needs of the local area. However, there is a relative consistency in the work of partnerships (CRESR and IER 2014) involving a combination of some of the activities outlined in figure 8.2.

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**FIGURE 8.2**

**Building blocks of Talent Match projects**



Source: Based on CRESR and IER (2014).

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Amongst these, peer mentoring and therapeutic support are some of the more innovative approaches used in the programme (CRESR and IER 2014). A large majority of the projects used the other elements of the building blocks outlined. The projects aim to offer one-to-one support tailored to the needs of each young person, and the most common form of support offered is one-to-one information (received by 97 per cent of participants), followed by advice on personal development (80 per cent), information, advice and guidance about careers (71 per cent) support in addressing practical barriers (65 per cent), and support with travel (50 per cent); around 30 per cent of participants have received seven or more forms of support (the average number of forms of support received is around five) (Wells and Pearson 2017). The Prince's Trust (one of the VCS organisations leading on Talent Match projects), for example, notes that mentors meet with a young person to match their interests and hobbies to a job or training course (Prince's Trust 2017a). Mentoring in the Prince's Trust's projects involves regular meetings with the young person participating in the initiative, and providing support to move towards employment, education or training through the identification of goals and targets, and combining empowerment of the young person to make decisions with signposting to support organisations when needed (Prince's Trust 2017b). The support offered to beneficiaries is ongoing and can continue for more than a year after they get a job.

Looking at the specific project examples of the use of different actions, the Sheffield City Region project (one of the larger projects with funding of around £10 million), led by Sheffield Futures, offers a wide range of activities, such as:

- Job search support
- Coaching support (young people and enterprises)
- Bespoke training
- Health and safety and first-aid certificate training
- Workplace 'buddy' support
- Peer mentoring
- Mock interviews
- 'Employer Champion' workplaces
- Voluntary work experiences
- Self-employment support
- In-work support
- 'Employer Champion' jobs
- Taster days and enterprise action projects

The activities a participant will undertake are targeted to the needs of the young person. As one project put it:

*‘The project has an individual budget for every beneficiary, but the way to invest that budget depends on individual needs.’*

Interview with Sheffield Futures

The activities of the Sheffield City Region project are expected to produce a set of specified outcomes in aspects such as the provision of basic skills training, apprenticeships, volunteering work experiences and employers engaged. These outcomes are expected to lead to the achievement of the projects’ ‘ultimate goals’, such as: 20 per cent of 3000 participants achieving sustainable employment, 80 per cent achieving improvement in the capacity to overcome education, employment and training (EET) barriers, or 40 per cent positively progressing towards EET.

The London Talent Match project<sup>5</sup> follows a ‘Journey of Change’ model, that outlines eight main phases in the involvement of young people in Talent Match, from meeting Talent Match Staff to the provision of support after participation in the programme.

**FIGURE 8.3**

**Journey of change model (London project)**

<b>Getting to know us</b>	Young person meets Talent Match staff (workshop, event, etc.)
<b>Getting to know you</b>	Talent Match staff get to know young person & what they need to access opportunities
<b>Explore</b>	Participation in short activities & workshops with other young people to identify work preferences
<b>Talent plan</b>	Young person & support worker produce plan, looking at preferences and personal development needs
<b>Skill up</b>	Upskilling for a period of at least 6 months
<b>Focus</b>	Focussed on career goals, job-specific skills through opportunities for volunteering, shadowing of professionals and learning to start own business. Support to apply for work placements & training courses.
<b>Achieve</b>	Young person is supported into employment & training opportunities
<b>Sustain</b>	Contact continues for at least 6 months after the young person becomes a Talent Match alumnus

Source: London Talent Match Project (Talent Match London 2016b)

Support once a training or job opportunity has materialised is crucial, according to the London Talent Match project: ‘Our learning is that young people can and need to be supported while in work, to progress their

<sup>5</sup> This is also a large project with BIG funding of around £10 million.

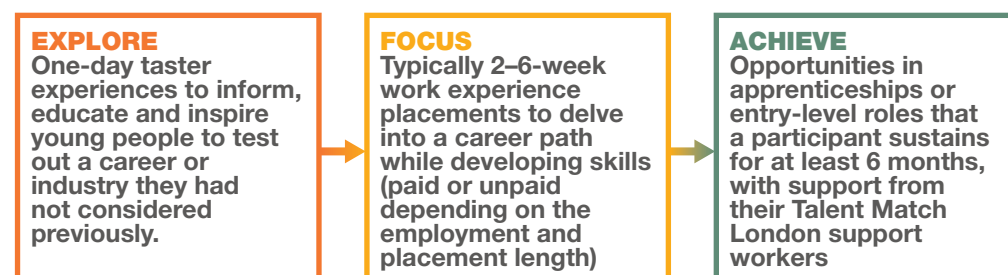


own development, while at the same time earning some money and gaining the practical experience that they need to enhance their later prospects' (Talent Match London 2016c:24). For employers, in particular SMEs, the provision of such support can also be beneficial, as they do not necessarily have the time and resources to provide vulnerable young people with all the support they may need (Talent Match London 2016c).

Work-based learning is central to Talent Match activities. 41 per cent of participants in the London Talent Match project reported a lack of qualifications, 39 per cent a lack of job-specific skills and 47 per cent a lack of work experience as barriers to employment (Talent Match London 2016c). 34 per cent reported not knowing what jobs might suit them. Successfully undergoing work-based learning can also help to overcome other important barriers, such as lack of confidence. As part of the pre-employment training offered in the workplace to provide young people with the skills and experience that they need to obtain employment, partnerships support activities such as internships, short-term work experience and work placements and structured volunteering leading to the development of job skills (CRESR and IER 2014:26). The London Talent Match project combines one-day taster sessions with longer work experience placements and skills development as preparation for the apprenticeship and employment opportunities under its 'Explore, Focus and Achieve' model.

**FIGURE 8.4**

**Journey of change model (London Talent Match project)**



Source: Based on London Talent Match Project (Talent Match London 2016a)

In the experience of the project, young people need around five Explore experiences to gain a good understanding of the career options available and their preferences before progressing to the focus stage of the journey: '35 per cent of the young people we asked cited lack of knowledge of the labour market as a barrier to employment. Our learning is that offering a variety of opportunities – starting in most cases with small scale, short (one-day) exposure and building to longer-term structured placements – can help young people build their knowledge, aspirations and readiness to ultimately go into a job' (Talent Match London 2016c: 26).

**TABLE 8.1****Examples of Explore and Focus activities (London Talent Match Project)**

Explore	Focus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep London moving (exploring careers in transport and logistics at the London Transport Museum)</li> <li>• Explore tech careers with Microsoft (including the opportunity to create an app for the Surface tablet)</li> <li>• A day in the life of London's air ambulance at Whitechapel hospital</li> <li>• Sky Academy (a day discovering careers in broadcasting)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office administration: paid two-week placement with White Oak Underwriting (insurance brokerage)</li> <li>• Paid two-week placement with the accounts team at Essential Living (developer and operator of private rental homes in the UK)</li> <li>• One week long experience programme at HM Treasury, where participants learn about the departments' activities</li> </ul>

Source: Based on London Talent Match Project (Talent Match London 2016a)

Achieve opportunities should pay at least the Living Wage Foundation's London Living Wage.

Certification of training is seen as a powerful motivator, according to the Sheffield City Region. This project gives in-house certificates for participation in skills development activities, for example in the area of team-building, and for some of its clients this is one of their first reflections of achievement. While the project sometimes pays for outside courses and beneficiaries can also be involved in apprenticeship training, most of the project's training activities are pre-apprenticeship and pre-traineeship.

The Sheffield City Region project reported that it expected that self-employment would be more frequent amongst participants, and the programme envisaged a significant amount of advice and support in this regard. However, experience has shown that uptake in this respect has been lower than expected, as a high degree of confidence is required to become self-employed, and many beneficiaries do not possess this quality when they participate in the programme. Similarly, the London project reports that their scheme to support young people to set up their own business did not work, as most beneficiaries saw this as too large a step to take (Talent Match London 2016c).

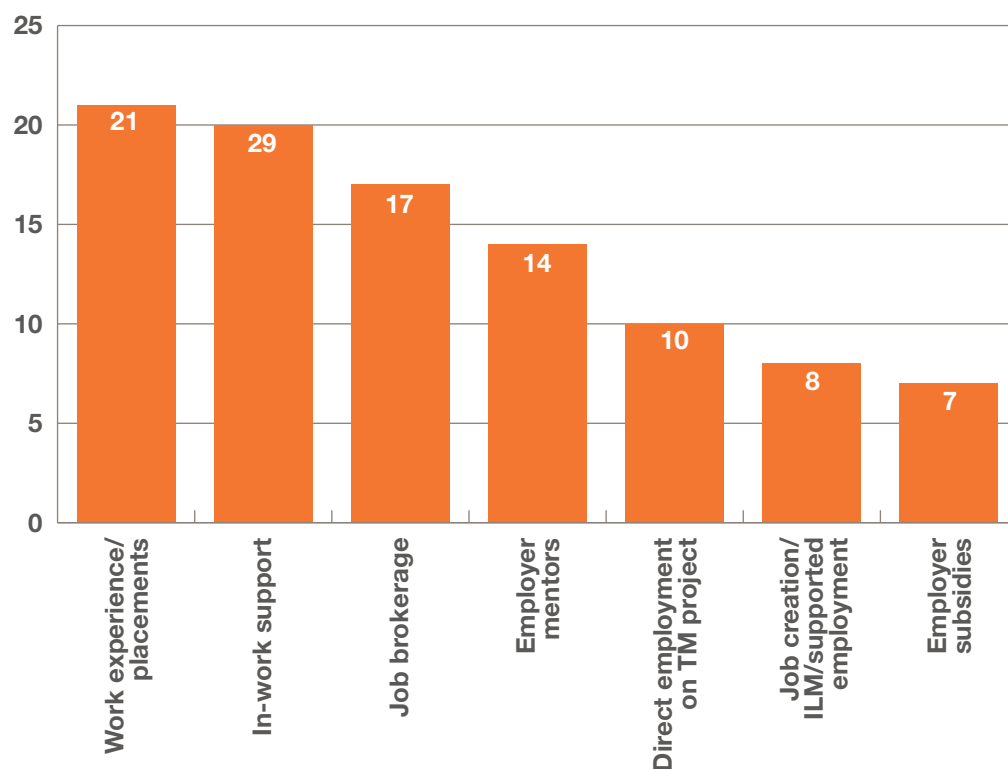
## 8.5 EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

A key theme in the initiative, together with the support to young people, is employer engagement to increase employability. Amongst the activities that require employer engagement are the provision of work experience/placements, in-work support and job brokerage (linking beneficiaries to labour market opportunities). A much smaller proportion of partnerships used job creation and supported employment and employer subsidies measures. The partnerships making use of these measures tended to be larger and urban partnerships with significant grant awards. Employers are often engaged through marketing, ongoing dialogue, planning consultations and joint design of actions by specialist programme staff, to align those actions to employers' business and corporate social responsibility objectives. Sometimes incentives are available to engage

employers – wage subsidies, for example – but the interview with the London Talent Match project suggests that, at least in some regions, employers are often willing to collaborate.

**FIGURE 8.5**

**Approaches to employer engagement and job creation among Talent Match partnerships**



Source: Based on CRESR and IER (2014:28).  
 Job brokerage: Data not available for 3 partnerships; Employer mentors: Data not available for 3 partnerships;  
 Direct employment on TM project: Data not available for 2 partnerships. ILM= intermediate labour markets such as the promotion of volunteering as a way to gain experience, self-employment, etc.

The Sheffield City Region mentioned four main methods of employer engagement in their project, as illustrated in figure 8.6 below.

Employer engagement in the provision of employment opportunities is facilitated by the wage subsidies offered by the project. Such subsidies amount to 100 per cent of the young person’s wage; the project has provided subsidies for 100 positions, and will allocate 70 more before completion. According to the project, around 90 per cent of those who start employment experiences supported by the wage subsidy complete the six-month period. Such experiences started in the voluntary sector, but now also target the private sector and sole traders. Around 60–70 per cent of Talent Match beneficiaries that participate in this scheme are kept on by the employer upon completion of the subsidised period, according to the project. Employers also contribute to the provision of strategic direction to the project as part of its Strategic Board, participate in the delivery of employability skills and are engaged in awareness-raising activities.

**FIGURE 8.6**

**Employer engagement in the Sheffield City Region Talent Match project**



Source: Case study interview (Sheffield Futures).

The London Talent Match project engages with employers in relatively similar ways to those described for the Sheffield City Region: provision of placement and internship opportunities, engagement in the project's Partnership Board, involvement in awareness raising activities, involvement in the development of employability skills (London Youth interview). It was also noted that employers (representatives from Business in the Community and London Chambers of Commerce) were members of the original project steering group. Large employers (such as Barclays, British Land, Microsoft and O2) were consulted in the planning process to better understand their needs and corporate social responsibility objectives. They also underlined the role of employers in helping young people to explore their vocations through visits to their premises and informal discussions with beneficiaries (London Youth interview). The project has organised 'Hook Up' community events to bring potential beneficiaries and employers together. Neither of the projects interviewed for the production of this case study targeted employers in specific sectors, because of their focus on young people's interests – employers are approached based on interests, rather than the interests needing to be aligned to a set of pre-defined priority sectors.

A key motivation for employer engagement was CSR, although many employers involved in the programme are driven simply by recruitment needs. The relative importance of these factors varies by employer. Given that different regions work with employers (sometimes the same organisations). Talent Match projects are currently preparing for a national campaign to promote the Talent Match Mark, a gold, silver or bronze badge recognising the contributions of employers to the programme, and serving to raise the visibility of the initiative (London Youth interview).

London Youth reported that large employers can be easier to engage. The London partnership has engaged over 200 employers. However, not all areas have equal access to large employers. Different areas will therefore need to adopt different approaches to employer engagement. Some aspects, however, are common: having a dedicated employer officer or team as single point of contact for employers has helped some partnerships to build particularly strong relationships (Green et al. 2015; London Youth Interview), for example in order to learn about ‘hidden vacancies’ that are not advertised. This relationship-building needs to be combined with actions to ensure that the young people sent to employers are ready, as doing otherwise can destroy employer relationships very quickly. This requires an understanding that getting young people to the stage where they are ready to engage with employers can require a significant amount of time and include step-by-step actions, such as work placements or part-time work, to prepare for full-time employment.

Employers involved with the programme are particularly positive regarding the pre-screening work undertaken by partnerships before they put them in contact with suitable young people for their vacancies. This better facilitates the recruitment process than approaches whereby they receive large numbers of profiles of candidates who are clearly not suitable for the vacancies that they offer, in terms of qualifications or interests (Green et al 2015).

## **8.6 EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS OF TALENT MATCH’S RESULTS**

BIG aims to identify, through the programme evaluation, where the largest impacts have occurred, and what has worked well in the different environments where the programme has been implemented. This information can then be used in the development of future interventions and to improve practice. The evaluation of the initiative is being carried out by two British universities (Sheffield Hallam and Warwick) and is additional to the BIG prerogatives in terms of information checking on those organisations to which it awards funds (BIG 2015). The evaluation has been ongoing since the early stages of the programme and includes longitudinal tracking of beneficiaries, thematic research, site visits and surveys (Powell and Wells 2015). The evaluation team is currently preparing a final evaluation of programme, in which its results and impacts will be detailed, but has already produced annual evaluation reports (see for example CRESR and IER 2014), and other evaluation outputs that provide valuable insights into how the programme is working and the kind of results it is generating. Some of the main findings from the evaluation exercises carried out so far are outlined below. Later phases of the evaluation will provide additional data regarding the impact of the programme.

In the first three years of operation (Q1 2014 to Q4 2016) over 17,000 young people were involved in the programme (Wells and Pearson 2017). At the end of the period, over 3,700 young people involved with the programme had secured employment<sup>6</sup>; around 1,200 were in sustainable employment.<sup>7</sup> Talent Match London (2016c) reports that 66 per cent of

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6 Working 16 hours per week or more/ working less than 16 hours per week with caring responsibilities/ childcare commitments/ disability/ ill health or education commitments which limit the number of hours they can work/ self-employed.

7 Defined as 6+ months or 12+ months for self-employment.

young people completing the programme obtained employment; of these, at least 53 per cent remained in employment 6 months later.

At programme level, a high proportion of those in employment were satisfied with their current role (85 per cent), although a relatively high proportion of participants (around 40 per cent of those in employment) reported being underemployed (Wells and Pearson 2017). In the first 18 months of operation (2014–2015) around 20 per cent of participants were hidden NEETs. The London Talent Match project reported during the case study interviews that in its first two years of operation it had engaged around 1,000 people, of whom 41 per cent were not accessing any support prior to starting on their participation in the programme.

The programme targets those young people who are furthest away from the labour market, as measured by characteristics such as their qualification, experience or disability. Over 20 per cent of participants had a disability and almost 20 per cent had experienced mental ill health issues. Around 70 per cent of participants in the initial phases did not have five GCSE A\*–C grades including English and Maths (Powell and Wells 2015), although only 8 per cent did not have any qualifications (Powell and Wells 2015). Thus, while participants are on the whole low-educated, some were not, and according to the programme evaluators some partnerships need to have a clearer rationale for their targeting strategies in order to remain in line with the objectives of the programme (CRESR and IER 2014).

The most important barriers to employment that the target group reported were cost of transport, lack of work experience, lack of local job opportunities, lack of qualifications and skills and lack of confidence (Powell and Wells 2015).<sup>8</sup> This underlines the importance of work-based learning for this group, as work-based learning helps to address three of the most important barriers that these young people face: lack of work experience, skills and confidence. In order to be fully effective, partnerships are likely to need a combination of supply-side measures (such as IAG and outreach work) and demand measures (such as wage subsidies) (CRESR and IER 2014).

Results based on a survey of 664 individuals engaged in some way in the programme by the end of June 2014 suggest that gaining confidence (39 per cent), taking up additional training (20 per cent), improving their basic (19 per cent) and specific (17 per cent) skills, and undertaking some form of work experience (16 per cent) are amongst the most important goals of participants in the programme (CRESR and IER 2014). A follow-up survey with 118 participants three months after their initial engagement – also undertaken in 2014 – shows that almost 40 per cent had undertaken some kind of work experience, a similar proportion to those who had taken up additional training; around 15 per cent had completed a non-formal education or training course and 5 per cent a formal education course. Around a third stated that they had gained employment (CRESR and IER 2014: 81).

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<sup>8</sup> A survey of around 660 participants in 2014 showed that around 60 per cent of them saw lack of prior work experience as a barrier to employment – the most frequently signaled barrier. Over half of respondents also mentioned lack of job specific skills (CRESR and IER 2014:77).

As a result of these and other programme activities, at least 40 per cent of participants reported having improved their skills in relation to every measure for which the follow-up survey gathered data including aspects such as communication, motivation, planning, problem-solving and keeping to deadlines, with the exception of teamwork<sup>9</sup> (39 per cent) (CRESR and IER 2014). In some aspects, results were substantially higher: over 60 per cent reported an improved score in relation to their confidence.

BIG (2017) also made available various inspirational stories from young people who decided to become involved in the programme as mentors. An example of these is Luke, a young person from Nuneaton in the West Midlands, who experienced homelessness before being referred by his careers adviser to a charity working with Talent Match. Through the charity, he is gaining voluntary and training experience, and obtaining qualifications and the confidence to move into employment.

## 8.7 SUCCESS FACTORS AND CHALLENGES

There are several success factors – and some challenges – to be identified from the experience of Talent Match so far. First, Talent Match allows a high degree of local flexibility. It is a national programme, but makes extensive use of links with local organisations who have widespread contacts with the target groups in the area and are selected in collaboration with young people, who see the value in the work of those organisations. These are effective ways to reach young people.

Local flexibility is grounded in the existence of different local needs, but also different approaches to tackle those needs. Local flexibility enables experimentation to find out what works in different contexts and for whom. Associated with the need to better understand these factors is the existence of an evaluation system that has monitored the programme since its inception, and is now in the process of examining in detail the programme's impact and additional lessons for the future. An example, of the use of flexibility in the programme is the possibility to include new organisations in the project as it evolves. For example London Youth mentioned during the interview conducted for this case study that its partnership had not included a local authority, but will do as the project enters a new phase and targets new areas in London in 2017. Working with local authorities can also help to improve the options for sustainability of actions (London Youth interview).

However, local flexibility also brings challenges. For example, partnerships vary significantly in terms of their degree of recruitment of young people furthest away from the labour market, or in their involvement of young people (Powell and Wells 2015). There can also be a degree of competition between programmes that overlap with Talent Match geographically, or even between Talent Match projects, as they offer different services and benefits. This can be observed, for example, in terms of employer engagement, as some partnerships offer employer subsidies whereas most do not (Green, Atfield and Barnes 2015). Local flexibility and the degree to which the programme has relied on specific local needs and the profiles and capabilities of local partners can also

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9 Working with other people/ getting on with people/ respecting others.

result in challenges for the replication of the programme results in other areas – hence the importance of evaluation to better understand the factors leading to successful outcomes under specific conditions.

The programme is also very flexible, in that projects can reshape their design as they progress. This is associated with a related theme around learning. The Talent Match programme adopts a ‘test and learn’ model whereby, if some elements of the project plan need reshaping or changing on the basis of previous experience, this is facilitated by the structure of the programme. This is different to many other funding programmes, where what is proposed initially is what must be delivered (Sheffield Futures interview). BIG has also set up programme managers meetings three times a year to share information and best practices. Both the Sheffield and London projects interviewed for this case study reported having identified useful lessons from participation in these meetings.

The programme is also characterised by the systematic involvement of young people in its design and the selection of organisations to be involved in delivery. In some cases, young people have also been given a strong say in the allocation of some of the funds that the initiative makes available. There is often a sense of community between participants, as they are allowed significant levels of interaction and formal and informal peer mentoring takes place in various projects. This type of voluntary engagement, however, may not be a successful approach across the target group for the programme, and can be associated with high dropout rates.

In terms of its approach to the target group, the programme is characterised by its non-compulsory character and, by extension, empowerment of young people in making their own decisions, while providing information, advice and guidance to support them in their decision-making. Given its target group, it is key for projects not to expect young people to come to them, but to carry out intensive outreach work with specialist workers (Talent Match London 2016c). The London Talent Match project has reached out to young people in youth clubs, community centres, leisure centres, cinemas, youth services, GP surgeries, libraries, shops and other places young people may access, and have worked with pupil referral units, social services, probation services, and family information services for their outreach work. Outreach workers for the project have a variety of specialisms, including working with young people with disabilities, young parents and carers, homeless young people, ex-offenders, enterprise coaching and sports, a diversity of specialisms that has been beneficial for the project as it has allowed it to support young people more effectively.

Long-term engagement, and often support after placement into further training or employment opportunities, is also a key aspect of the programme. The focus of the programme is also on the provision of tools for life, rather than focusing on quick fixes (London Youth interview).

One aspect that requires consideration in terms of replicability and scalability is that the programme is resource-intensive. It entails a substantial investment (over £100 million in 21 areas), and thus there is a need to carry out robust analyses of the value for money it has produced. Scalability may be easier in terms of the use of lessons



learned than in terms of the continuation of the interventions put in place in their current form.

Finally, the landscape of interventions in the area analysed in this case study is highly complex, and this makes it difficult for young people to have a clear overview of what is available and from whom. A challenge for the future will be to clarify available governmental and non-governmental support measures for the creation of a coherent structure to support the integration of those young people who are far from the labour market. The programme experience could also potentially benefit from more extensive use of data-sharing with other programmes – see also ICF 2015 in relation to this issue in employment promotion measures more generally.

## 8.8 CONCLUSIONS

Talent Match is a complex intervention, and a number of evaluation approaches are being used to analyse its results and identify success factors and challenges. Yet so far, results suggest that the provision of work-based learning and other supporting measures that the Talent Match programme is using helps young people far from the labour market to change their attitudes and acquire the experiences and skills that will facilitate their integration into employment. Indeed, supporting measures – which include support in practical aspects, such as transport – are key to the success of the initiative, as part of Talent's Match personalised, holistic and flexible model. Work with local employers can help employability, and personal contact facilitates employer engagement. This underlines the importance of location in the delivery of support services, and helps to explain BIG's selection of areas for action.

Besides this, there are a number of elements in Talent Match that make it a distinctive programme and that other programmes may consider. One characteristic is the degree of involvement of young people in the initiative. It is also much more flexible than standard interventions in terms of its non-mandatory character, and the explicit acceptance, as part of the learning process, that some of the innovative aspects of the programme may fail (CRESR and IER 2014). Moreover, government interventions have not tended to allow the same degree of local adaptation as Talent Match. Local adaptation is seen as a strength of the programme, although it also presents challenges associated with consistency and replicability. The delivery of activities outside of Public Employment Service programme (PES) frameworks may also be preferred by some participants, as stereotypes about PES services can be common among NEETs (ICF 2015). This underlines the importance of input from public, private and community service organisations in addressing youth unemployment.

Finally, and related to the previous point, it is worth noting that the landscape of interventions in the area analysed in this case study is highly complex, and this makes it difficult for young people to have a clear overview of what resources are available, and from which providers. In general, policy responses in relation to long-term youth unemployment in the UK have varied during various phases

since the Great Recession, and many of its current elements have been poorly integrated within existing structures and organisations, which has affected their effectiveness (Gregg 2015). Talent Match is a contribution towards greater integration and joint work between partner organisations at the local level, which can include employers, educational institutions, voluntary and community sector organisations, and local authorities. A challenge for the future will be to clarify available support measures, so as to move towards the creation of a more coherent and transparent structure to support the integration of those young people who are furthest away from the labour market.

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### Note on methodology

This case study has examined the importance and political context of long-term youth unemployment in Europe and the UK, and introduced the 'Talent Match' programme based on a review of existing sources, including statistics from national and international organisations, academic and grey literature on the youth unemployment and programme-related information including programme evaluation and evaluation-related reports, programme websites and a selection of the websites of the projects involved in the delivery of Talent Match. The case study benefitted from interviews with members of two Talent Match projects:

- Jo Booth (Talent Match Programme Manager, Sheffield Futures)
  - Matthew Dronfield (Senior Employability Manager, London Youth).
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# ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Christophe Alix** is a journalist for the French daily newspaper *Libération*, working as editor of the economic section. His main focusses concern the digital transformation of the economy and society.

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**Javier Doval** is an executive coach and expert in leadership and innovation in NGOs, and since 2001 has been general manager at Pinardi, where he supervises all the actions carried out in the organisation and establishes alliances with public administration and corporate partners. He is currently a member of the regional Immigration Forum and the Commission for Protection of Child Rights in Madrid, and actively collaborates as a lecturer in the postgraduate course on psychosocial community-oriented intervention at the Autonomous University of Madrid. Additionally, he has actively participated in the International Visitors Leadership Program (IVLP) of the US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

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**Dr Jutta Rump** is Professor of Business Studies, particularly international personnel management and organisational development, at Ludwigshafen University of Applied Sciences. She is also director of the Institute for Employment and Employability (IBE), a research unit concerned with questions related to the labour market, personnel management and employment. Since the late 1990s she has successfully completed numerous research projects for public organisations and private companies, using extensive quantitative and qualitative research methods, such as face-to-face interviews and online surveys, and has published a large number of academic articles and books.

**Dr Manuel Souto-Otero** is a senior lecturer in the School of Sciences of Cardiff University. His main areas of interest include education policy analysis and evaluation, social stratification and the future of work, and he has published widely in these areas. He has undertaken a large number of research and consultancy projects for the European Commission (in particular DG Education and Training and DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion), the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Institute of Adult Learning in Singapore, various government departments in the UK and internationally, thinktanks and voluntary sector organisations. He is an associate editor of the *Journal of Education and Work*.

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