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NetWBL

Needs and gaps report

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Introduction

The NetWBL Needs and gaps report aims at summarising the main findings of the monitoring activities carried out in the framework of the NetWBL project, in particular in relation to identified emerging needs and gaps characterising Vocational Education and Training and Higher Education systems in relation to apprenticeships and work-based learning.

The joint effort resulted in an overview of needs and areas of intervention still not adequately addressed by the initiatives financed within the LLP and Erasmus+ Programmes, with a view to identifying possible future fields of activity in relation to the following main areas of interest for the development of learning opportunities within working contexts or in close contact with the world of work:

- guidance and support of SMEs;
- attractiveness of work-based learning;
- cooperation Training Centre/VET School-companies and involvement of social partners;
- curriculum development;
- work-based learning and Higher Education;
- teachers, trainers and mentors involved in work-based learning.

The mapping of relevant projects and the monitoring activities enabled the identification of transversal elements concerning the assessment and recognition of work-based learning experiences, their evaluation and quality assurance as well the governance and management of related schemes and learning opportunities.

The report is based on the main results collected through the monitoring events carried out in the framework of the project that featured lively discussions involving a high number of relevant stakeholders as well as from the assessment and selection of relevant LLP and Erasmus+ projects. The aforesaid activities and diversified inputs all contributed to achieve the present overview of needs, criticalities and open challenges that work-based learning still offers to the potential beneficiaries of the Programme, thus providing suggestions to shape possible future priorities for the Erasmus+ Calls.

1. Methodology

The report identifies emerging needs and gaps characterising European Vocational Education and Training systems in relation to work-based learning, in particular in relation to specific thematic areas concerning the guidance and support of SMEs to be involved in work-based learning experiences, the attractiveness of those opportunities, the cooperation among all relevant actors, the effective development of curricula envisaging work experiences or a close contact with the world of work, the specific features of work-based learning experiences within Higher education pathways and the role of the several different involved professionals.

Specific information on the overall methodology and process underlying the current analysis are available in the “NetWBL WP3 SubWP reports' document”. In particular the monitoring activities carried out focused on project initiatives financed within the LLP Programme (2007-2013) and the first 2 year of the Erasmus+ Programme (2014-2015). The current analysis provides, as a consequence, a limited overview of the contribution provided by relevant projects developed in the framework of the aforesaid Programmes for Education and Training, in particular due to the fact that specific priorities devoted to the development of work-based learning models and schemes were only envisaged by the Erasmus+ Programme and where, therefore, only partially explored by the activities realised.

Nevertheless the diversified monitoring activities implemented provided an ideal setting to reflect upon criticalities and open challenges that professionals and experts as well as policy makers are expected to tackle to further promote and develop work-based learning and apprenticeship schemes across Europe. The main outcomes of the aforesaid activities were analysed in order to provide specific thematic information concerning the needs identified in relation to the main themes of interest as well as transversal inputs concerning the attractiveness of related learning experiences, the specific needs expressed by enterprises, the role of involved professionals, the cooperation among relevant stakeholders, the specific features of work-based learning experiences within Higher education pathways and methods and tools to be potentially further exploited to promote the diffusion of related opportunities.

2. Work-based learning: needs, challenges and opportunities offered by Erasmus+

Work-based Learning and apprenticeship practices include a widely diversified set of experiences corresponding to the different Education and Training national systems at European level. Despite the recent reappraisal of work-based learning in VET and Higher education and the major benefits that it can offer still many obstacles hinder its development and widespread implementation. A clearer understanding of the great potential of related learning experiences is needed and, to this end, the NetWBL project promoted the development of a common understanding of work-based learning in European Education and Training systems, with special regard to the main thematic elements identified by the network while highlighting its economic, social and educational benefits. The support to help enterprises in engaging in work-based learning pathways, the attractiveness, efficient ways to foster cooperation among all relevant actors, the development of effective work-based curricula, the specific features of work-based learning experiences within Higher education pathways and the role of involved professionals were analysed in depth to highlight criticalities and gaps to be addressed through project initiatives to be developed in the framework of the Erasmus+ Programme. The main issues and open challenges identified represent, therefore, lines for action to fully exploit the benefits of related opportunities for students, trainees, employers, thus unleashing the wide unexpressed potential in terms of employability and inclusion.

2.1 Guidance and support of SMES

In general, all European member States are characterised by VET pathways including some form of workplace training, with great variations in the share of work-based and school-based training across the Member States. Due to the specific features of the different national contexts, widely diversified challenges, needs and gaps may be identified in terms of guidance and support of SMEs in relation to work-based learning and apprenticeships. Despite the aforesaid differences, a general need for support schemes targeted at companies offering work-based learning opportunities is perceived and from this point many diversified solutions, tools and proposals may be identified, ranging from small improvements to substantial changes to be potentially applied to the current education systems in some countries.

Needs and challenges faced by SMEs interested in providing such learning opportunities widely depend on the country specific features characterising the provisions of work-based learning elements and apprenticeship systems within the European Countries.

The development of a culture of lifelong learning at the workplace in European countries without a dual vocational education system requires a **change of mindset**. Also small and medium sized enterprises can benefit from staff which is working and learning at the workplace and, in this regard, the return of the investment is evident, nevertheless SMEs are still more reluctant to engage in training apprentices than larger companies.

The availability of **evidence based research on sector specific needs of SMEs** is perceived as crucial to explore the necessary resources, in terms of guidance, financial support and support in the field of human resources. As regards **involved professionals**, apprenticeship counsellors play a crucial role that should be recognised as a new job profile, characterised by the specific task of supporting SMEs in developing an effective work-based training at the workplace. How to start an apprenticeship scheme and where to find good trainers or mentors represent a significant challenge for SMEs that could be addressed by professional apprenticeship counsellors.

Financial resources represent an important factor as the companies check the cost-benefit ratio before engaging in work-based learning schemes. Therefore information on financial support has to be provided to SMEs in a transparent and easily understandable way. Tax reductions or other financial support would facilitate the process while specific information initiatives would be needed to **raise awareness on the return of investment**: purely school-

based learning features evident limits in terms of shaping the future workforce, particularly in the sectors characterised by non-academic contents, such as emerging manufacturing firms.

The **specific training required by the staff** to effectively be assigned the role of mentors or coaches at the workplace represent a crucial and demanding aspect. The related tasks require pedagogical skills from all the professionals involved (mentors, tutors, coaches) that have to be trained accordingly. From the companies' point of view, the work-based learning approach demands their best performing employees to teach and mentor the students. In order to assist SMEs to provide high quality work-based learning opportunities, **common qualification centres** could be established so to share the burden and costs of the needed training among various enterprises.

Engaging in offering opportunities for learning at the workplace or in close contact with the world of work may also represent part of the **corporate social responsibility of SMEs**, thus leading to a competitive advantage.

A broader approach to **investments in Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance** is to be achieved through the possible introduction of work-based learning opportunities at all levels of education, in initial VET, Higher education and continuous VET, addressed to all the professionals involved, in terms of employees training, management training and requalification for unemployed. A **standardisation of topics in guidance and career counseling** would help reducing the heterogeneity of the training for counsellors, on one hand, while envisaging **country specific training** for career guidance counsellors, on the other. In this perspective guidance activities need to be coordinated by well-established guidance organisations so that all target groups are effectively addressed while further training is needed on changes and new trends on the labour market.

The **necessity to shift from standardisation to innovation** is perceived as a way to effectively **tackle skill mismatches**. The labour market increasingly requires quick change of professions and, as a consequence, the education system has to be more flexible since companies can't commit themselves for years in a change process as the economic circumstances can change rapidly. In this perspective effective providers of work-based learning, including apprenticeships, are crucial to provide the skills that are really needed in today's and tomorrow's labour market. Within the standardised education system changes need more

time to answer these demands: modern and flexible curricula providing permeability across pathways and systems represent, therefore, elements essential for the future of young people across Europe.

An **improved cooperation between educational institutions and companies** would be needed, also in a **guidance perspective**, starting from primary levels to open up schools to the world of work. As a matter of fact teachers often act as career counsellors and, therefore, they should stay in touch with the world of work, for instance through job shadowing in enterprises or specific guidance qualification pathways, thus keeping themselves up to date with the labour market needs. The basis of a good cooperation between schools and companies is identified in the **mutual trust**, supporting dialogues and “trialogues” among a wide range of stakeholders.

A need to **foster cooperation between education and businesses** is clearly identified: a bridge appears as necessary to establish effective links between schools and companies and, in this direction, a third party (NGOs, associations, local organisations) could mediate helping the different actors “to speak a common language”. The involvement of social partners is essential for a successful implementation of work-based learning elements in both the world of education and of work. Also EU-funded projects could serve as bridges as both parties companies and schools need guidance. From this point of view the WBL toolkit has a strong potential to offer both parties project results from EU-projects concerning various work-based learning elements and themes because still a great need for good examples and case studies is perceived.

In the light of the abovementioned areas to be addressed, Erasmus+ may represent a valuable opportunity for developing project initiatives promoting:

- **company-specific modules** that could be **integrated in VET curricula**;
- a basic understanding of **employers’ involvement**;
- **strengthening the cooperation between structural elements, organisational elements, relationships and people** involved in work-based learning;
- proposing **phases of learning within working contexts or in close contact with the world of work before taking a career decision**, in a guidance perspective;
- developing possibilities for **adapting Lifelong Guidance to trends in the labour market**;
- schemes of **work-based learning specifically tailored on the needs of weak learners**.

2.2 Attractiveness of work-based learning

Placing greater emphasis on work-based learning to change the perception of related training opportunities represents a powerful way to increase the attractiveness of VET while making it more relevant to learners. Enhancing the prestige of related pathways represents an open challenge because, despite the effectiveness of related schemes in providing students and apprentices with skills required by the labour market, thus helping to reduce the risk of youth unemployment, VET and work based learning are in many cases still not well reputed among students, families, enterprises and the public in general.

If VET and work based learning is to gain ground and become a more attractive choice for young people around Europe, **guidance, counselling and promotion** activities needs to start early. There is, however, a **need to focus on making professions and career opportunities in VET and WBL more well-known and visible** to families as they play a pivotal role in decisions on education tracks. Similarly, professional guidance counsellors with background in academia often have little understanding of VET pathways and learning in contact with the world of work and, therefore, professional development activities for this target group is also crucial to ensure solid information on career.

Many factors are involved in decision making concerning choices of education and the importance of factors determining the attractiveness of work-based learning pathways differs between countries. There is a **need for analyses that compare attractiveness of work-based learning models and schemes across Europe** looking at VET systems, enrolment trends, public perception of VET, counselling and promotion, company involvement etc.

Clear **education and career pathways** from VET to Higher education represent another element influencing attractiveness of VET and of opportunities to learn at the workplace. Some countries are characterised by smooth transitions from VET to Higher Education, ensuring students the opportunity to “build” directly on top of their VET skills while some national contexts feature barriers hindering the actual recognition of VET based skills as entry requirements to Higher education.

A need to **improve the perception of skills developed through work based learning** by Higher education institutions is perceived, besides the need to improve **formal procedures and pathways leading towards Higher education**.

International work placements may help to improve the quality and status of VET, boost students' self-esteem and attract young people to sectors characterised by labour market demand. Nevertheless there is a **need to show clearly that international learning and job opportunities are not confined to students and graduates from Higher education institutions**. As a matter of fact both VET institutions and companies could use international work experience more systematically in promotion of VET and learning opportunities in contact with the actual experience of work.

Attractiveness of work-based learning relates not only to young people but **also to the companies** that have to provide apprenticeships and other work-based opportunities to make WBL a reality. Evidence shows that many SMEs do not find it attractive to offer training opportunities: the monitoring activities highlighted the fact that **cooperation and support for SMEs** involving education and coaching targeting training supervisors at the companies and focusing on labour market legislation, pedagogical skills, soft skills and behavioural psychology aspects may overcome SMEs reluctance to employ trainees.

Furthermore a **need for European surveys and studies on the impact in companies of employing apprentices** is perceived together with **the necessity to develop more practical support schemes that make WBL attractive for the companies**.

The **role and perception of learning at the workplace or in close contact with the world of work varies substantially between countries**. VET systems are widely diversified across Europe and so are the approaches to learning as well as the traditions for involving companies in the process: in almost all EU countries work-based learning represents a component of VET pathways, however the level of formalisation varies from well-established apprenticeship systems where students are contracted and paid by companies and where a major part of learning takes place at the workplace to countries where work based learning takes the form of unpaid internships in periods of various duration. Many different actors are involved in information, counselling and promotion of work-based learning opportunities. Parents, friends teachers, guidance counsellors and mentors, as well as public authorities and business organisations (chambers etc.) and social partners all contribute - however at quite different levels. Family and friends have major influence on education choices made by young people - and often contributing with own experiences. However, often they have only a limited view of the education system. Teachers, guidance counsellors and mentors are important to inspire professionally and help to confirm choices. However, it is the duty of authorities, chambers

(including member companies) and other business organisations to **make career opportunities for VET graduates visible** and promote the role of learning in contact with the world of work in skills acquisition. **Promotional activities must reflect challenges and traditions for work-based learning in different countries and different sectors.**

Despite differences **the image of VET** remains a challenge in many countries – also where work-based learning is embedded in existing and well established apprenticeship systems. Often such opportunities are seen as a second choice for young people not aiming for Higher Education. This appears not to be the case in countries characterised by a long tradition of dual education, where a large share of young people chooses dual education and companies are strongly engaged in marketing themselves to get the best apprentices. In some sectors those countries experience a lack of apprentices, and companies have to recruit from other regions or countries to fill vacancies, thus experiencing language issues. It's therefore crucial to **make the actual benefits of work-based learning opportunities visible** to young people with good basic skills and professional ambitions.

In **some countries a lack of information on work-based learning opportunities** and also knowledge among all involved professionals is identified: interest in work-based learning schemes is evident - both among companies and social partners - but education systems appear to be still more focused on curricula than on competences and, as a consequence, VET students are weakly prepared for the actual world of work.

In many countries there is a strong tendency towards Higher Education, and consequently also towards secondary education programmes that primarily prepare students for Higher Education. **The attractiveness of VET and work-based learning experiences can be raised by creating (or showing existing) bridges and pathways from VET towards Higher Education.**

The monitoring activities and events represented valuable opportunities to share views on the attractiveness of work-based learning and apprenticeships from the perspective of both young people and the companies. In particular the analysis enabled the identification of **several potential benefits for companies** engaging in in-company training of young people through apprenticeships, the analysis identified the following main elements:

- companies take part in **shaping their workforce**, potentially characterised by a good understanding of corporate culture as well as technical and soft skills;

- **apprenticeships help to improve company loyalty and reduce staff turn-over;**
- taking on an active role in the training of young people **helps strengthening the image of the company** in a corporate social responsibility perspective;
- apprenticeships save companies costs associated with recruitment of personnel. Training within the company enables companies to select the best performing skilled staff from a talent pool of apprentices while **minimising the risk of unsuccessful placement of externally hired staff;**
- although there are personnel costs associated with training apprentices and paying their salaries the **actual productivity of the apprentices is rapidly increasing** over the duration of the training period as they are able to perform increasingly demanding tasks;
- companies may succeed in recruiting the best candidates for apprenticeships creating a **stimulating learning environment** with diversified and varied tasks that allow learners to develop their competences;
- positive support in the form of **access to competent and committed trainers at the workplace for instruction and guidance** is needed. Attention, care and feedback from instructors and good working atmosphere play a vital role for young people;
- in the process of making decisions on education and training good future work prospects are also an important factor along with corporate culture and values and company reputation;
- companies are able **to attract young people convincing them both on a factual and emotional level, make recruitment a priority and have realistic applications requirements.** This includes also involving parents and teachers and also existing apprentices.

In the light of the abovementioned areas to be addressed, Erasmus+ may represent a valuable opportunity for developing project initiatives promoting:

- the **definition and sharing of methods to ensure more extensive and effective promotion activities** on VET and work-based learning opportunities, in particular through the use of role models, success stories and television to visualise VET jobs and careers could help tackling the aforesaid prestige weaknesses;
- the creation of **methods and tools to enhance the visibility and prestige of professions and career opportunities in VET and work-based learning** in particular towards families;

- **professional development activities** addressing professional guidance counsellors to increase their awareness of VET pathways and of the world of work;
- providing **targeted careers guidance to potential participants** concerning related learning opportunities or developing mechanisms to allow this to happen;
- developing and/or providing **information to one or more stakeholder groups on the benefits of work-based learning;**
- **promoting work-based learning and/or developing materials** allowing related learning schemes to be promoted.

2.3 Cooperation Training centre/VET school – companies and involvement of social partners

Systemic cooperation between VET providers and actors from the world of work is essential to ensure good quality work-based learning opportunities and ensure smooth transitions from school to work because effective work-based learning experiences promote the development of relevant technical and social skills significantly increasing the employability of learners involved. Work-based learning is proving to be a successful model to ease the students' and apprentices' access to the labour market, which is especially relevant at this time in Europe due to the high youth unemployment rates. Furthermore the work-based learning approach makes VET more labour-market-oriented by combining practical and theoretical learning so as to qualify skilled workers in a practical way and better prepare them for the requirements of the labour market: in this perspective the related learning opportunities trigger positive effects on all the actors involved. Students take advantage of the knowledge of real productive processes and working environments while being in touch with the labour market demands is crucial for education institutions as well as for companies that effectively contribute to shaping their future workforce. However, several barriers hinder the establishment of stable partnerships fostering the links between the world of VET and the world of work.

As regards the promotion of a systematic cooperation between VET schools, training providers and companies, the Erasmus+ Programme may represent an opportunity for projects taking into consideration the following issues:

- **selection of companies for training**, because the percentage of company training in VET education varies between countries;
- **stimulating the interest of companies** in work-based learning demonstrating the **expected benefits**;
- the **lack of communication between education providers and the world of work** that should be changed from an early age in education. Governance framework should be established promoting an enhanced and structured dialogue between institutions and companies, with a stable involvement of social partners and trade organisations;
- the need for a **stronger involvement of policy makers and relevant stakeholders**;
- the **validation and monitoring of related pathways**, that are necessary to ensure quality in work-based learning opportunities;

- **use of ECVET as a tool of communication between the organisations** (schools and companies) responsible for the education and training;
- **school - company partnership** should be **apprentice- (learner-) oriented**;
- **open up the teachers (education) to the real life**. A higher involvement of teachers/trainers in companies would be needed. It would be positive to strengthen teacher and trainer competences by encouraging job-shadowing in companies. Employers should go to schools for a short period to teach and, in this way, to get a better understanding concerning the world of school. Moreover, teachers should complete practical training periods in enterprises where apprentices can be learn;
- developing a **clear learning outcomes framework** at European, national and local level between schools and companies;
- **professional guidance for students** would be needed to strengthen and improve the professional orientation. That guidance would also help bridging the gap between schools and companies.

Fostering a **structured dialogue between all relevant stakeholders** could represent a powerful leverage to overcome different obstacles such as financial and resource constraints, lack of professionals to support the trainees and apprentices, the challenges related to the effective development of integrated curricula as well as the transparency and recognition issues. In this perspective a strengthened cooperation could promote the joint development of training curricula matching labour market demands through modular and flexible pathways.

From this point of view Erasmus+ may represent the opportunity to:

- develop **cooperation models and tools supporting a structured stable dialogue involving all relevant stakeholders**;
- create **training curricula defined through an organised cooperation** involving education and training Institutions and enterprises or the related representation bodies (e.g. chambers, social partners etc.);
- establish **support frameworks** initiating or encouraging communication among participating organisations e.g. training providers, employers and social partners;
- **match learners with a company or work environment** or developing processes to enable this to take place efficiently;

2.4 Curriculum development

At European level, VET curricula represent an inventory of activities implemented to design, organise and plan an education or training action, including definition of learning objectives, contents, methods (including assessment) and materials, as well as arrangements for training teachers and trainers¹. School and business cooperation on the provision of work-based learning can also enhance cooperation in areas such as curriculum design, career guidance and mentoring. Some countries search for a business model for sharing costs, resources and technology with employers. In work-based models, learners spend a large part of their training pathway at the workplace. It is therefore crucial that the workplace offers diverse and rich learning opportunities enabling learners to develop the skills, knowledge and competences effectively matching labour market needs. Too narrow and too company-specific training limits opportunities for transferability and career progression. Students need exposure to a range of situations and tasks, and the curriculum for work-based learning should define a sufficiently broad range of knowledge, skills and competences, including a range of key competences. In some countries companies, especially SMEs cooperate to establish “**training alliances**” to offer learners a full range of settings and tasks. Sharing an apprentice among several companies ensures that the student becomes familiar with different technologies and processes. Furthermore specific economic sectors, such as information technology or creative industries, may be organised in a way that does not fit into traditional apprenticeship schemes² of providing learning at the workplace, with dedicated training by a master craftsperson. Innovative models of work-based training may overcome this challenge, for example by engaging apprentices in problem-based, creative and innovative tasks and assignments³.

The diversified monitoring activities enabled the identification of specific **needs and challenges** characterising existing VET systems in relation to the development of curricula including work-based learning, in particular:

- the necessity to **enhance work-based learning supporting teachers** to move beyond traditional teaching;

¹ European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, 2011

² Tradition in a few countries in Europe.

³ Work-based learning, Practices en policy pointers, Policy handbook Europe Commission, June 2013.

- the need to develop **tools including different methodologies for teaching, tutoring and learning** which can be adapted to different national contexts;
- the necessity to **link needs** of the identified target groups to labour market needs as well as to the existing educational offer to **develop flexible, modular and motivating curricula**;
- the need for **strengthened cooperation** between schools and world of work in curriculum design (see chapter 2.3 of the present report);
- the necessity to **develop attractive and motivating curricula**, ensuring learners early access to the world of work.

The areas to explore identified mainly focused on:

- the **quality of flexible curricula**, featuring the development of core competences integrated by the responsiveness to changing environment and labour market trends;
- the ability to **meet the needs of both companies and learners**;
- the **involvement of learners in curricula design**;
- a **structured cooperation with all relevant stakeholders** (see paragraph 2.3 of the present report).

The analysis underlined a series of recommendations and conclusions related to the **involvement of learners in curriculum design**:

- organisations of learners who participated in apprenticeships could be involved;
- the learning outcomes approach, including assessment, should be used in curriculum development;
- a flexible part of the curriculum could be designed or suggested by the learners (potential ULO);
- guidance should be provided for learners involvement during curriculum development;
- financial incentives should be provided for students to get involved with curriculum development;
- guidelines on how to properly involve learners in curriculum design could be useful.

As to the governance level, the following **good practices concerning stakeholder cooperation in the curriculum design** were identified:

- definition of a **supportive legal basis** ensuring structured dialogue, clear identification of requirements and space for reform processes;
- encouragement to **consultation between employers, employees and VET providers**;
- **national level acting as “intermediary body”** promoting the necessary networking among all relevant stakeholders;
- **clear distribution of responsibilities** among all relevant stakeholders within a well-established **governance framework**.

The following **methods for the development of flexible, modular and motivating curricula** were identified:

- **awareness of different languages** on LM and ED should be raised (tasks, processes, Learning Outcomes, ECVET);
- effective **accompanying measures** for internships, traineeships and placements should be implemented.

As regards **validation** issues, the analysis highlighted the need to provide a **personal and meaningful evaluation**, to apply a **variety of assessment methods**, to simplify the **procedures concerning validation** and to set up **common criteria for validation**.

In Erasmus+ different possibilities for project proposals will enable the applicants to fulfill diversified needs, in particular the necessity to foster the **exchange so to learn from good practises**, so to enable a useful cross-fertilisation between countries characterised by a longstanding experience in the field and national contexts that are in the process of developing related learning models and schemes.

Furthermore Erasmus+ may represent an opportunity to effectively address the following themes:

- **forecast and analysis of needs expressed by the companies**;
- **forecast and analysis of learners’ needs**;
- development of **effective methods and tools to involve learners in the design of effective curricula** integrating work-based learning experiences;

- sharing of **good practices concerning stakeholders cooperation in the design of curricula** including work-based learning components;
- development of **learning programmes or curricula that combine classroom-based and work-based learning**;
- development of **individual learning plans**;
- development of **programmes or methods supporting teachers in applying innovative methodologies** for teaching, tutoring and learning, also through ICT;
- elaboration of **methods supporting the development of flexible, modular and motivating curricula**;
- delivery of **work-based learning programmes targeting the development of transversal skills or the development of occupational skills** in a real work environment;
- delivery of **work-based learning programmes including an element of transnational mobility**;
- development of **methods for stimulating a structured and effective cooperation** between VET school and providers and the world of work in curriculum design;
- cooperation on the **definition of learning outcomes** with education or industry partners;

Curricula looking towards the future are required in all countries: this is where work-based learning meets the crucial issues concerning the new skills for new jobs and the labour market trends and prospects.

2.5 Work-based learning and Higher education

In relation to Higher education, work-based learning represents the “umbrella” term used to identify activities which collaboratively engage employers and Higher Education Institutions in providing structured learning experiences for students in a working environment. These experiences focus on assisting students in developing broad, transferable skills for higher education and the workplace.

Work-based learning occurs, away from the Higher Education institution, in a business or community organisation and it is combined with theoretical learning which takes place within the Higher Education organization. The main purpose of learning experiences occurring at the workplace or in close contact with the world of work is to be meaningful to students by narrowing the gap between theory and practice.

Study programmes which include work-based learning generally require a different set of practices for learning facilitation and learner support from the ones appropriate to taught programmes or conventional research degrees. The role of the tutor often moves, on the one hand, from being a teacher to being both a facilitator and an expert resource, and, on the other, from supervisor to advisor or counsellor.

The main aim of work-based learning schemes is to strengthen employability. As a consequence work-based learning opportunities should be labour-market-oriented and, in the same perspective, the ratio of Higher education programmes must be geared to the needs of the respective national economic contexts, or even European labour market.

Several weak areas to be tackled to promote work-based learning within Higher education systems were identified. In particular the analysis focused on the identification of **common challenges and major barriers when implementing work-based learning**, in particular in the framework of Higher education pathways.

The main current needs and future challenges identified are represented by:

- **curriculum development that faces both rigid academic plans and rigid national legislation.** Furthermore often the academic calendar represents a challenge in itself because many students look for traineeships at the same period of the year;
- the **low flexibility of curricula** that should take more into account the company procedure;

- the **transparency issues** related to the difficulties to evaluate transversal competences and soft skills. Often the recognition of work-based learning represents a challenge, in particular when such element is not an integrated part of the curriculum;
- lack of knowledge and **mutual trust** between Higher Education organizations and the world of business;
- learning outcomes that appear as difficult to assess in practical areas - risk of using the same way of measuring already applied to theoretical aspects - models for practical exams are needed. Furthermore often companies experience difficulties in understanding the concept of learning outcomes;
- **Incentives** to stimulate companies to cooperate with educational institutions and engage in offering work-based pathways;
- the **promotion and dissemination of work-based learning** among Higher education institutions so to support the needed change of attitude thus enhancing the prestige of related learning opportunities;
- the **harmonisation of existing differences in curriculum development** between different types of Higher education institutions.

2.6 Work-based learning for mentors, teachers, trainers

Teachers, trainers, mentors, job instructors play in achieving quality work-based learning.

From this point of view, the main issues identified concern the different roles of a mentor, the competences, skills and qualities that are required to be a mentor supporting work-based learning experiences, the cooperation between teachers and mentors to support the learning process (when both are in the same country / when both are in a different country), the role of these professionals as key for quality assurance, the specific training provision for mentors, the recognition of skills, the role of teachers and mentors in the ECVET process and the communication between professionals and learners.

Whilst there are aspects of learning delivery that might seem like second nature to some, it is equally true that there are areas where additional training or capacity-building might be beneficial, with topics potentially including: development and use of learning outcomes, embedding assessment and recognition; developing workplace mentors.

There is a clear understanding of the competence profile of the professionals involved in WBL and the skills needed while **a standardisation of existing qualifications** could be envisaged as well **a formal recognition of the professionals**. For the professionals from the enterprises a range of titles is used which could hinder clear communication: supervisor, mentor, job instructor, professional learning agent, work place facilitator, job coach, etc.

A wealth of documents already exists (checklists, learning agreements, evaluation tools, etc.) and, in this regard, the need to avoid an overload of **documentation** is perceived, with a particular attention to companies that are often overburdened with documentation. Both in relation to documentation and tools the effort should be to not re-invent the wheel, for instance envisaging a well disseminated EU wide WBL portal supporting the sharing of products and tools.

The **development of competences of the different professionals involved**, at different levels, in work-based learning experiences remains an open issue: in particular teacher training should include well-targeted activities and contents supporting the development of the ability to cooperate with the world of work. In this regard the open challenge remains how to develop the **mutual trust** between the different actors involved. In this field the availability of common quality standards is not enough while developing a notion of work-based learning being a win-win situation represents a key factor.

In this perspective **work-based learning appears to require a cultural change** both in schools and training centres and at the workplace. It is necessary to bridge the school culture with the company culture tackling the specific governance issues: for example governance bodies should “open up” schools and training centres to the world of enterprises thus enabling the companies to be effectively and actually involved in curriculum development. A **training culture should be promoted among SMEs**, focusing on the related investment represented by the learner rather than on the related costs **while the company culture should positively influence the learning process** through a structured cooperation in curriculum development. VET schools and providers may play a crucial role in supporting SMEs while the awareness of labour market trends is essential to effectively develop related learning schemes.

As to possible messages for the future in terms of gaps, needs and expectations concerning the profile of the mentor, several aspects were identified. The possibility and **need for certified workplace mentors** was raised. But it depends on the definition of “certification” as it should never become an obstacle to work-based learning opportunities: actually the related learning opportunities should be fostered avoiding additional requirements on the side of companies. In the same simplification perspective, the certification of the workplace mentor should be considered as an asset for companies (quality, security, know how to deal with students), as a kind of quality label.

From this point of view, Erasmus+ could represent an opportunity for developing:

- **specific training schemes** targeted at work-based learning professionals improving their ability to deal with young people;
- **training or capacity building actions** aimed at the professionals working on one or more aspects of work-based learning;
- **skills profiles** for teachers, trainers, tutors, mentors or workplace supervisors working on one or more aspects of work-based learning;
- **peer learning** between teachers from schools and mentors of companies, for instance through the inclusion of peer learning in the agreements between schools and companies;
- **job shadowing opportunities** for teachers in enterprises and for mentors in VET schools;
- **blended learning schemes**;
- **opportunities for continuing professional development** of the involved professionals;

- **specific promotion initiatives** stimulating the needed cross-fertilisation between the school culture and the company culture, for the mutual benefit.

3. Findings, challenges and recommendations for the further development of work-based learning in VET and Higher Education

3.1 The attractiveness of work-based learning

The **role and perception of work-based learning** still varies substantially between countries. VET systems are different and so are the approaches to learning and traditions for involving companies in the process. In all EU countries work-based learning is a component of VET pathways, however the level of formalisation varies from well-established apprenticeship systems, where students are contracted and paid by companies and where a major part of learning takes place at the workplace, to countries where work-based learning takes the form of unpaid internships in periods of various durations. Many **different actors are involved in information, counselling and promotion of work-based learning** opportunities. Parents, friends teachers, guidance counsellors and mentors, as well as public authorities and business organisations (chambers etc.) and social partners all contribute - however at quite different levels. Family and friends have major influence on education choices made by young people - and often contributing with own experiences. However, often they have a limited view of the education system. Teachers, guidance counsellors and mentors are important to inspire professionally and help to confirm choices. However, it is the obligation of authorities, chambers (including member companies) and other organisations to make career opportunities for VET graduates visible and promote the role of work-based learning experiences in skills development. Promotional activities must reflect challenges and traditions characterising learning in contact with the world of work in different countries and different sectors. Despite differences **fostering a positive image of VET remains a challenge in many countries**, also where work-based learning opportunities are embedded in existing and well established apprenticeship systems. Often learning within work contexts or in contact with the direct experience of work is still seen as a second choice only suitable for those who are not interested in carrying on their studies towards Higher education. Nevertheless this is not the case in countries characterised by a longstanding tradition in the field of dual education, where a large share of young people chooses alternance schemes and companies are strongly engaged in marketing themselves to get the best apprentices. The attractiveness of Vocational Education and Training pathways, in general, and work-based learning, in particular, can be raised by creating or enhancing the visibility of **existing bridges and pathways from VET towards Higher Education** through specific awareness-raising actions.

The analysis identified several **needs and possible elements to explore to effectively involve companies in the promotion of work-based learning** while **making work-based learning and apprenticeships**, in particular, **attractive to young people**:

- **cooperation between education and business** represents a weak area while diversified ways to foster useful links are available, for instance the provision to students in lower secondary school of opportunities to visit companies and talk to apprentices as well as the offer of short internships during school breaks to introduce the learners to companies' culture and work environments;
- **information and promotion opportunities** are still identified as a critical area to be further tackled, through specific information actions involving companies experienced in training young people that could attend as speakers career guidance events or education and training fairs. In the same perspective companies could take part in national, regional and local promotion and awareness raising activities and campaigns concerning VET and apprenticeships through employers' organisations and chambers, with education and training authorities, institutions or in other networks;
- the full **exploitation of the potential of companies as effective "role models"** represents a powerful leverage. The involvement of entrepreneurs as testimonials should be promoted, clearly regulated and recognised so to ensure an early contact between learners and the opportunity/idea/possibility of self-employment;
- **families represent a major issue**. If companies are able to "market" their traineeships to parents and show what they can offer to them much is achieved in terms of getting to young people. The arrangement of open company days targeted at parents could help;
- **Tell a good story**. The attractiveness of work-based learning pathways should be further increased through all available channels and, from this point of view, the use of media to brand the company, its training programmes and job and career opportunities for apprentices after completion still remains a weak area to be further explored.

The issue of attractiveness is quite broad dealing with both the demand side – how to make work based learning attractive to young people, and the supply side – how to make it attractive to companies to offer training opportunities.

Some findings highlighted by the monitoring activities **on the demand side:**

- **in promotion of VET and WBL** through guidance and counselling activities it is important to **include families within the relevant target groups**, in the awareness that decisions concerning education are not made by young people alone;
- **peer activities and involvement of role models** can help the young people to actually see the opportunities in VET;
- **jobs prospects and career pathways must be attractive and transparent;**
- **tracks towards Higher Education** must be open for VET graduates;
- **international placement opportunities in VET programmes** may help to raise attractiveness;
- **stimulating working and learning environments in companies** with dedicated trainers affects decisions on education.

Some findings on the supply side:

- **national policy** to support and promote work-based learning opportunities are needed to increase the number of companies engaged;
- the **administrative burden** associated to hiring and training apprentices should be reduced, in particular in relation to SMEs;
- **costs and benefits** of training young people **should be transparent** for companies. The availability of surveys and case studies based on the conditions in different countries may answer such need;
- **financial incentives** to hire apprentices can increase supply of training opportunities;
- **peer interaction and sharing of experience on training issues between companies** may convince more to become engaged in work based learning.

3.2 The perspective of enterprises

The involvement of the world of work in the development of work-based learning schemes represents a crucial aspect to ensure the effectiveness of related learning opportunities as well as their actual widening. Skill needs expressed by the labour market should actually guide the definition of curricula and of the related expected learning outcomes. In this perspective **regular information flows and frameworks** should be established so to enable a stable communication between education and training providers and the labour market actors. Furthermore it's necessary to consider that also EU countries characterised by a long apprenticeship tradition feature a majority of businesses that have no apprentices, thus highlighting a significant unreleased potential to exploit for increasing the demand for work-based learning opportunities. From this point of view, the analysis highlighted the fact that **often companies experience difficulties in “getting in contact” with the education and training systems** that envisage experiences of learning in working environments and those difficulties increase in relation to small enterprises or to family run companies. The related complexities and “resistances” are widely diversified, but undoubtedly the **lack of appropriate information in relation to both the opportunities and benefits that work-based learning offer to enterprises** and the added value that students and apprentices may ensure within the company represent significant background elements to consider.

The above-mentioned context highlights elements that might represent **challenges for a wider diffusion of work-based learning schemes**. First of all **awareness-raising initiatives targeted at enterprises** are needed, with a view to providing the world of work with tailored suitable information concerning the specific benefits that they may obtain in terms of strengthening of the company image, knowledge of latest trends in an innovation perspective, investment in shaping their future workforce. Furthermore specific initiatives could envisage the exchange of experiences and best practices among enterprises, involving both companies that implemented work-based learning schemes addressed at students and apprentices and enterprises that never experienced such initiatives. Such peer-learning could represent an effective tool to attract the world of work showing the actual feasibility of work-based learning.

As already highlighted in the present report, the different national contexts characterising the European countries hinder an exhaustive overview of obstacles to the widespread diffusion of work-based learning across Europe. Moreover the identification of effective transferrable models is even more complex as a consequence of the widely diversified national regulations, education and training systems and rules concerning the access of young people to the labour

market: those differences hinder the definition of a one-size-fits-all common scheme universally valid and effective. A further area of interest is represented by the **need to support enterprises through skilled professionals** able to guide and assist them in the development of work-based learning pathways.

Moreover a need to **reduce the administrative burden** was highlighted, together with the need to limit the documentation required by enterprises interested in work-based learning. The necessity to define **financial incentives** and subsidies for enterprises involved in cooperation initiatives with education Institutions was also underlined as a possible tool fostering strengthened links between the relevant actors.

The analysis highlighted diversified needs and possible areas to explore to **make the benefits of work-based learning visible to companies:**

- a **need for a specific national policy and clear official messages targeted at companies** regarding work-based learning emphasising the benefits for both the society as a whole and the companies involved;
- **support from relevant stakeholders and bodies like federations of employers and employees, chambers of commerce is important** as well as their involvement in the organisation of a system on national level, setting rules etc.;
- some level of **support to companies** is needed, especially on pedagogical and administrative issues (see more in detail paragraph 2.1 of the current report);
- a **financial support to enterprises has to be linked to quality** and a system that is monitored and checked, thus highlighting the need for specific **quality assurance provisions** concerning work-based learning experiences;
- emphasis should be placed on the possibility for learners to have their **training in more than one company**. Both learners and companies might benefit from such a system that could support the development of competences while reducing the investment of companies, in a virtuous shared approach;
- as to the **information on the benefits of work-based learning**, cooperation between companies was identified as a powerful tool to share the knowledge and increase awareness through **“peer to peer” thinking and exchange of good examples and best experiences that companies have**.

As already highlighted the **main obstacles** hindering the participation of enterprises, SMEs in particular, in work-based learning vary in relation to the different national contexts involved as well as in relation to the diversified schemes. In general, **obstacles to the development and diffusion of work-based learning** opportunities are:

- **time and resources. SMEs focus on their business and customers and have little time (staff resources) and capacity to recruit and train apprentices.** Incentives and a clearer picture of the costs and benefits of apprenticeship may help overcome such barriers. The **duration of related learning experiences may represent an obstacle.** The eagerness of SMEs to provide such opportunities may depend on whether the envisaged training consists in a short internship or in an apprenticeship of longer duration. The commitments of companies and formalities concerning training obligations may differ accordingly;
- the **lack of competent on-the-job trainers and lack of staff to take care of administrative tasks** associated with training activities;
- the **unavailability of training opportunities** specifically targeted at entrepreneurs that often in SMEs have to play the role of in-company tutors without a specific expertise;
- the **lack of financial support measures** may represent a barrier. Incentives may motivate enterprises to invest in providing work-based learning opportunities while also **non-financial support initiatives** should be put in place to help the company dealing with the self-assessment of company's skills needs, recruitment procedures, the definition of the in-company training, the administrative tasks and the assessment and certification of the related learning outcomes;
- the limited availability of **targeted information initiatives and of networking opportunities with more experienced enterprises.** In particular smaller companies need specific guidance on how to take on apprentices, what it involves and how to deal with such situation;
- the **uncertainty concerning pedagogical concepts and quality standards** for the related training;
- the **uncertainty or lack of a clear legal framework defining the responsibilities of SMEs** providing such opportunities;
- the **attitude among SMEs.** In some cases companies underestimate in-house training due to the fear of a complex bureaucracy and of the related obligations;

- the **weak cooperation with the educational systems** demonstrated by the fact that often SMEs underestimate the learning outcomes acquired within education pathways and doubt that learners are adequately prepared for apprenticeships;
- the lack of an actual **apprenticeship culture**, both in the society as a whole and in the labour market, in particular in countries that are not characterised by a longstanding tradition in the field.

3.3 The role of work-based learning professionals

A crucial role is played by the different professionals involved in work-based learning experiences, often only “informally” assigned the task to effectively support learners involved in learning processes in working contexts or in close contact with the world of work. These professionals’ role should be adequately recognised, taking in consideration the different activities required from them. Those professionals are assigned guidance duties while teachers and trainers are, in some cases, not appropriately trained to provide an effective service and they have, therefore, to “compensate”, as best as they can, the related lacks in existing guidance and education systems.

In this perspective guidance professionals should receive a standardised training on-the-job with a view to ensure a service based on the same quality minimum standards to all potential interested actors. As a consequence it would be, therefore, necessary to **identify common training standards** (not sector-specific) to be potentially applicable to every context and sector. Simplification processes would also be needed in relation to the **documentation** of learning experiences realised at the workplace or in contact with the world of work as well as a wider use of already existing relevant tools supporting the recording and assessment of related activities and outcomes.

A **weak professionalisation of involved professionals**, who are assigned the task to support WBL learners both within schools and training providers and enterprises, was highlighted as a crucial gap to tackle: the job profile of tutors, in-company tutors, mentors and coaches should be revitalised and innovated through strengthened links between school-based learning and the labour market. In this perspective ad hoc training pathways, specifically addressed to tutors and mentors would be useful, with a view to enabling these professionals to effectively provide guidance services to foreign students and apprentices. In particular, in relation to guidance and counselling services targeted at NEETs, often involving low-skilled young people, it is necessary to underline the urgent need to develop accessible and “user-friendly” guidance services.

A need to **support the development of exchange processes** (e.g. communities of practice) involving tutors, mentors and VET teachers was highlighted, with a view to promoting the sharing of a common language to facilitate communication and the diffusion of both information and best practices. Often existing VET and Higher Education systems are characterised by **limited “contacts” between the professionals** involved, at different levels, in work-based learning processes **and the world of work**: pathways to enable stable and

effective contacts between teachers and trainers and the world of work were identified as a possible way to explore to make VET and Higher Education provisions more responsive to economic trends and to the evolutions in the labour market.

3.4 Cooperation and dialogue efforts

The information collected within the monitoring activities underlined a general **weak level of communication among all relevant stakeholders** as well as a limited, in cases nonexistent, exchanges and dialogues between the world of vocational education and training and actors from the business side. This context hinders the definition of effective work-based learning schemes and the possible implementation of positive development processes while there is broad consensus in Europe that work-based learning opportunities represent an efficient way of addressing labour market imbalances.

Even if it is possible to highlight different levels of dialogues characterising the different European national contexts, experts underlined the necessity to strengthen the links and the cooperation between education systems and the world of work, a cooperation that should be widened to all levels of education with the corresponding establishment of guidance services accessible since primary education. In this field a national **governance and regulatory framework** involving all relevant actors is perceived as a necessary precondition to effectively implement work-based learning opportunities. Nevertheless **fostering the dialogue between all relevant stakeholders could help overcoming several obstacles** highlighted, such as financial and resource constraints, lack of professionals to support the trainees, the challenges related to the effective development of integrated curricula as well as the transparency and recognition issues. In this perspective a strengthened cooperation could promote the joint development of training curricula matching labour market demands through modular and flexible pathways. From this point of view Erasmus+ could represent the opportunity to **develop cooperation models and tools supporting the creation of training curricula defined through a structured and organised cooperation** involving education and training Institutions and enterprises or the related representation bodies (e.g. chambers, social partners etc.).

3.5 Work-based learning in Higher Education

Despite the common elements already highlighted, the world of Higher education in relation to work-based learning is characterised by specific features not applicable to the other thematic areas explored.

Work-based learning systems are expected to assess and recognised the initial competences as well as the competences acquired through the study/work experience in working settings. In this field we can highlight the difficulties experienced by Higher education Institutions in the **assessment of transversal and soft skills** acquired by students through their traineeship in enterprises, in particular abroad.

A further element of complexity is represented by the difficulty to assess learning outcomes developed within apprenticeship experiences, due to the demonstrated trend towards the application of the same assessment methods and tools applied to the evaluation of theoretical knowledge. The assessment is increasingly complex when apprenticeship experiences are not integrated in the curriculum, a situation that often still occurs, even if positive trends towards the stable integration of WBL in curricula emerge. As a matter of fact the different European systems are widely diversified also in relation to this specific topic.

It is therefore necessary to develop models and tools supporting Higher education organisations in the **process of learning assessment** while promoting the definition of flexible curricula, if possible overcoming the rigidity of the single Universities as well as the rigidities due to national regulations.

Lastly it is important to highlight the necessity to establish processes aimed at **supporting the transition of VET graduates towards verso Higher Education** through the use of the EQF and ECVET tools thus promoting the transparency of acquired competences and their recognition and valorisation in students' CVs.

Furthermore as regards the cooperation between Universities and enterprises it is useful to underline the fact that substantial differences exist between science and technology faculties and literary studies faculties: as a matter of fact the faculties related to scientific studies are characterised by longstanding effective cooperation arrangements.

Clear **education and career pathways** leading from VET to Higher education represent another element influencing the actual attractiveness of work-based learning opportunities. In some countries transition from VET to Higher education is smooth and students build directly on top of their VET skills while in different national contexts students rarely get their VET based skills recognised in relations to entry requirements to Higher education pathways. A cultural change

is also needed in relation to the **perception at Higher education institutions of skills obtained through work based learning**, besides the need to improve **formal procedures and pathways leading towards Higher education**.

3.6 Methods and tools

Work-based learning and apprenticeships, in particular, are high on the EU agenda, also due to the high unemployment rates affecting young people even if this kind of work-based learning scheme is perceived as a “second option” in comparison to education and Higher education pathways. In some countries work-based learning is mainly connected to apprenticeship and it is sometimes considered as an old-fashioned tool. Nevertheless it is clearly necessary to further promote and implement well-structured methods and tools able to effectively answer the specific needs of individuals and enterprises potentially interested in work-based learning while **enhancing the attractiveness and effectiveness of related learning schemes**. Specific tools would also be needed to **foster a positive image of work-based learning opportunities**, and apprenticeships in particular, to be promoted also through **improved career guidance**. New teaching and learning methods, enabling the actual application in practice of the theoretical knowledge acquired should be promoted, together with an **increased use of ICT** mainly in the development of updated sector-specific curricula.

Moreover the analysis highlighted the need to promote the development of tools to **identify, and possibly anticipate, labour market demands and trends**, with a view to supporting the definition of models supporting the development of competences matching the evolving requirements expressed by the world of work.

It is increasingly essential to develop **work-based learning pathways envisaging transnational mobility experiences**: these opportunities should be promoted and widened with a view to be accessible by large numbers of VET graduates.

Moreover it is necessary to create **ways of “coming back” to enterprises** specifically targeted at work-based learning tutors thus enabling these professionals to get back in contact with the evolving world of work, also with a view to let them experience new technologies and processes. From the point of view of **quality assurance** in work-based learning provisions, it is necessary to develop effective **validation and monitoring strategies and tools**, enabling work-based learning schemes to prove effective in providing actual opportunities and solutions promoting the access of young people to the labour market. Implementing **formative or summative assessment** frameworks and tools while promoting the **accumulation and portability of achieved learning outcomes** would promote an increased transparency of related work-based pathways while enhancing employability and inclusion.

Conclusions

Unleashing the potential of workplace learning represents a major open challenge to be tackled at all levels, through a joint effort of all relevant stakeholder groups aiming at the establishment of supportive governance framework and effective cooperation arrangements promoting the development of networks involving education and training providers, enterprises and social partners as well as local and national authorities.

The significant contribution of both the LLP and the Erasmus+ Programme in the promotion of partnerships supporting the transnational development of shared work-based models and approaches represented a powerful leverage that will only prove fully effective in the light of a general cultural change improving awareness of related benefits in terms of skills development, employment opportunities and innovation.

The development and testing of innovative solutions supporting the modernisation of Education and Training systems significantly contributed to the integration of non-formal and work-based learning in traditional qualification pathways, to the upskilling of teachers, trainers, tutors and mentors in relation to the different training learning settings, to the promotion of an actual lifelong learning culture, to effectively answer a rapidly changing labour market trends and to the development of models and tools supporting the transparency of competences acquired within non-formal learning contexts.

The study highlights further areas of interest to be addressed through future Erasmus+ Programme priorities promoting the development, dissemination and mainstreaming of effective work-based learning models and schemes across European VET and Higher Education systems. Therefore the report also represents a tool to inspire potential beneficiaries interested in developing project initiatives, in particular in relation to VET and Higher education to tackle the different criticalities and areas still open to intervention in the effort to improve existing systems effectively exploiting the potential represented by learning within work contexts or in close contact with the experience of work.

The study represents a thematic overview of the contribution provided by project initiatives focused on the promotion of related learning opportunities and pathways developed in the framework of the LLP Programme and in the first 2 year of Erasmus+ implementation: further

initiatives are under development in the framework of specific Programme priorities that are providing space for innovation.

Despite the limited scope of analysis, the report is to be considered as an effort to offer to both, the level of practitioners and the level of policy making, a contribution in terms of criticalities to tackle, models to mainstream and areas to explore to stimulate the possible diffusion and further implementation of effective work-based learning models and schemes.