

VET Pulse

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Global VET: Skills for a Changing World

**INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
AND PEER LEARNING**

**GLOBAL COMPETENCE
AND CITIZENSHIP**

**GREEN SKILLS FOR
A RESILIENT WORLD**

**IMMERSIVE AND
DIGITAL LEARNING**

**FROM LOCAL SKILLS
TO GLOBAL IMPACT**



European Forum of
Technical and Vocational
Education and Training

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From the President

Joachim James Calleja, EfVET President



Global VET: Skills for a Changing World

In a world shaped by rapid technological advancement, shifting labour markets, demographic transitions, and increasing global interdependence, Vocational Education and Training (VET) is no longer a peripheral component of education systems but central to economic resilience and social cohesion. For EfVET and its network of training providers across Europe and beyond, the challenge is clear: to ensure that VET systems remain agile, relevant, and globally connected, while staying firmly rooted in local realities. In my view, this is not simply a question of VET reform. It is a question of transformation.

Most EfVET members are at the forefront of responding to global transformations. Across our network, providers are redesigning curricula to integrate digital, green, and transversal skills, recognising that technical expertise alone is no longer sufficient. The emergence of artificial intelligence, automation, and platform-based economies requires learners who are adaptable, critical thinkers, and lifelong learners.

Through initiatives such as the Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) and events organized by UNESCO/UNEVOC, EfVET has actively supported the creation of skills ecosystems that bring together education providers, industry, and research actors. These ecosystems are not static but are living, evolving structures that respond to regional economic priorities while aligning with European and global trends.

Many EfVET members are also pioneering flexible learning pathways. Modularisation, micro-credentials, and stackable qualifications are increasingly embedded in programme design in many VET Colleges and Schools, allowing learners to upskill and reskill throughout their careers. This is particularly relevant in sectors undergoing rapid transformation, such as the blue economy, helping to anticipate future skills needs and translate them into responsive training provision.

Digitalisation has also reshaped delivery models. Blended learning, virtual simulations, and

work-based digital environments are becoming integral to VET provision. EfVET's position is clear: technology must augment learning, not replace the human dimension that lies at the heart of vocational education. We are not being requested to talk about the benefits of technology but simply to use it as an added value to learners and teachers.

A defining feature of EfVET's work is in fact its commitment to bridging local skills ecosystems with international opportunities. VET providers operate within specific regional contexts, yet their learners increasingly aspire to mobility both physical and virtual. Many of EfVET's members promote and participate in mobility programmes throughout the year sharing good practice and acquiring new experiences in VET provision.

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) has also been instrumental in enabling transparency and comparability across systems, but EfVET's contribution goes further. Through transnational partnerships, collaborative projects and mobility programmes, our members actively create pathways for learners to gain international experience, recognition as well as employability in international work or study environments.

Projects within the Erasmus+ framework have demonstrated how local providers can become global actors. Whether through joint curricula, international apprenticeships, or virtual exchanges, learners are exposed to diverse working environments and cultures. This not only enhances employability but also fosters a sense of European and global citizenship.

At the same time, EfVET recognises that globalisation must not come at the expense of local relevance. Strong partnerships with SMEs, sectoral organisations, and regional authorities enshrined in our strategic objectives, ensure that training provision remains aligned with local labour market needs. The strength of VET lies precisely in this dual capacity: to serve local economies while opening doors to global opportunities.

Europe's VET systems, particularly dual apprenticeship models, continue to serve as a global reference point. EfVET has consistently advocated for strong employer engagement, social dialogue, and work-based learning as cornerstones of effective VET systems. All principles have been enshrined in EfVET's strategic goals since 2018.

However, innovation is not a one-way process. EfVET actively engages with partners beyond Europe, recognising that valuable lessons can be drawn from global practices. In Africa, for instance, collaboration with networks such as the Don Bosco institutions has highlighted the role of VET in addressing youth unemployment and social inclusion. Capacity-building initiatives aimed at strengthening quality assurance systems are also contributing to more robust and credible VET provision.

Similarly, global examples of integrated skills systems, such as those seen in Asia, reinforce the importance of aligning education, workforce planning, and economic strategy. EfVET's work increasingly reflects this integrated approach, advocating for VET to be positioned not as a stand-alone sector but as a key driver of economic and social development.

Another area of shared learning is the integration of sustainability into VET. Across Europe, EfVET members are embedding green skills into curricula, preparing learners for the transition to a more sustainable economy. This is not limited to new occupations but extends to the greening of existing professions, ensuring that sustainability becomes a transversal competence across sectors.

As a European organisation of training providers, EfVET firmly believes that VET has a transformative role to play in building inclusive societies. It offers pathways for learners from diverse backgrounds, including those who may not thrive in traditional academic routes. By focusing on practical, applied learning, VET empowers individuals to access meaningful employment and contribute to their well-being, their quality of life as well as to the development of their communities.

Inclusivity, however, does not happen by default. EfVET advocates for targeted measures to support disadvantaged groups, including migrants, early school leavers, and individuals with disabilities. Flexible learning pathways, recognition of prior learning, and strong guidance systems are essential in ensuring equitable access and form part of the work that EfVET undertakes with its members and partner institutions.

Sustainability is equally central to EfVET's vision. The green transition presents both challenges

and opportunities, and VET is uniquely positioned to equip the workforce with the skills needed to navigate this shift. Through collaboration with industry, VET providers can co-create programmes that address real-world environmental challenges, from renewable energy to sustainable construction and circular economy practices.

Yet, as VET systems become more globally connected, it is essential that they remain anchored in local communities. EfVET members play a vital role in supporting regional development, particularly in areas facing economic transition or demographic decline. By aligning training provision with local needs, VET contributes to social cohesion and economic resilience.

As EfVET looks towards the future, including its strategic directions for 2027–2030, the focus is clear: empowering VET providers to navigate a transforming Europe within a global context. The motto think globally, act locally is as relevant today as it was thirty years ago! Such approach requires strengthening networks, fostering innovation, and ensuring that VET systems are both forward-looking and inclusive. In fact, our next cycle of strategic objectives focuses on empowering teachers, trainers, learners and managers in VET provision.

Collaboration will be key. No single institution or country can address the challenges of skills development in isolation. EfVET will continue to act as a platform for dialogue, exchange, and partnership, bringing together stakeholders from across sectors and regions within and outside the old continent.

At the same time, leadership within VET institutions must evolve. Providers are no longer just centres of training; they are strategic actors within their ecosystems. This requires new competencies, including the ability to anticipate change, engage with industry, and leverage technology effectively.

Ultimately, the success of global VET will be measured not only by employment outcomes but by its contribution to society as a whole. By equipping individuals with the skills, values, and adaptability needed in a fast-changing world, VET can help build societies that are more inclusive, sustainable, and connected. Every individual is an asset for development.

EfVET's message is therefore clear: Global VET is not about standardisation, but about connection, learning and transformation. It is about linking local strengths with global opportunities, fostering innovation while preserving identity, and ensuring that no learner is marginalised.



"In a changing world, skills are the bridge. Training providers, the potential catalysts for a better world."

Joachim James Calleja,
EfVET President

What can VET learn from each other? Five years of GRETA and the power of peer learning



Susanne M. Nielsen

Human Capital Development Expert, ETF (European Training Foundation)

This year, GRETA – Greening Responses to Excellence through Thematic Actions – celebrates its fifth anniversary. Looking back at the past five years, one thing has become very clear: although VET systems operate in very different contexts, many of the challenges they face are remarkably similar.

The global green network is led by Susanne M. Nielsen, at the EU Agency – European Training Foundation. [Home](#) | [ETF](#)

Climate change, the green transition, digitalisation and artificial intelligence are changing the world of work. At the same time, demographic change, skills shortages and changing industries are putting new demands on VET systems. These developments are global, but the response is very much local – in VET providers, companies, regions and communities.

This is where international cooperation and peer learning have an important role to play.

GRETA was established within the ETF Network for Excellence to look at how VET can support the green transition and how vocational excellence can contribute to this change. Over the past five years, it has grown into a global community bringing together VET providers, Centres of Vocational Excellence, policymakers, ministries,

industry and international organisations. [Going green: GRETA | ETF](#)



What has been particularly valuable is the opportunity to learn directly from peers.

Peer learning is more than sharing examples of good practice. It is about discussing what works, what does not work and why. It is about asking questions, challenging our own approaches and seeing how an idea developed in one context might be adapted to another.

A VET provider in Italy may work in very different circumstances from one in Türkiye, Georgia, Kenya, Spain or India. Yet they may be asking many of the same questions. How do we prepare learners for changing green industries? How can teachers and trainers develop new competences? How can VET providers work better with companies? And how can greening become part of the institution rather than another project alongside everything else?

There is much to learn from each other, even when the solutions cannot simply be transferred from one country to another.



This has been an important principle behind GRETA's work on greening VET. The green tran-

sition cannot be addressed through the curriculum alone. It requires changes across the institution – in leadership and strategy, teaching and learning, teacher and trainer development, partnerships, financing and the way VET providers engage with their surrounding skills ecosystems.

This is closely linked to vocational excellence. Centres of Vocational Excellence can play an important role as places where education, industry, innovation and regional development come together. They can help connect the needs of local economies with wider changes taking place across sectors and countries.

GRETA's work has also shown the value of looking at specific sectors. Construction is a good example. The sector is central to the green transition, while at the same time facing major skills needs. Our work has looked at how vocational excellence can support the sector through stronger links between VET providers, companies and policymakers.

green VET. The green and digital transitions are increasingly connected, and AI and new technologies are changing the way people work and the skills they need. VET systems therefore need to learn not only from their own experience, but also from what is happening elsewhere.

After five years, perhaps this is one of the main lessons from GRETA: no VET system has all the answers. But every VET system has experience that can be useful to others.

The future of VET will be shaped by global changes, while the solutions will still have to work in local communities, institutions and labour markets. International peer learning can help connect these two levels – bringing different experiences together, learning from each other and adapting what we learn to our own reality.

Learning globally, adapting locally and acting together. This is where international VET cooperation can make a real difference.



The ETF publication *Greening of vocational education and training: Processes, practices and policies* brings together experience and lessons from the GRETA community and highlights the importance of a whole-institution approach to greening VET.

[Greening of vocational education and training: Processes, practices and policies](#)

The more recent publication, *Accelerating Vocational Excellence in the Construction Sector*, looks at how VET and Centres of Vocational Excellence can contribute to the transformation of the construction sector and its skills needs.

[Accelerating Vocational Excellence in the Construction Sector](#)

The experience from GRETA is relevant beyond

WorldSkills movement crucial to strengthening TVET development in a rapidly changing world



Laurence Gates

Chief Executive Officer, WorldSkills Europe and Chair of the WorldSkills Conference Coalition

Skills and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) are essential for transforming and strengthening the fortunes of young people, societies, and economies across Europe and around the world. We know that skills build individual self-esteem and release personal potential, they also create opportunities and connect communities. But, much more than this, skills are the foundation of modern life and the driving force behind thriving industries and economies.

However, as we know, the world is facing unprecedented challenges, international transformations, and emerging innovations. These things, together with adverse external shocks, such as the fallout of conflicts around the world, the climate emergency, and of course the growing skills gaps in many industries and countries, mean that TVET systems are having to draw new roadmaps to empower individuals to fully participate in the changing labour market.

Several multilateral organisations are already playing a central role in this area by promoting global dialogue, setting international standards, and driving innovation. Last year's launch of the Towards a Global TVET Agenda, set out a clear path, highlighting the need to strengthen international cooperation in skills development.

Towards a Global TVET Agenda

Sponsored by the German Federal Ministry for Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMBFSFJ) and the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB), the initiative supports the development of a global TVET agenda. At its core are multilateral organisations including UNESCO-UNEVOC, the European Training Foundation (ETF), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

From the beginning of 2025 until the end of 2027, these organisations will collaborate to implement measures across four areas:

- Knowledge sharing and global fora
- Global and regional TVET innovations – capacity building for social partner involvement
- Prototyping TVET data reporting
- Partnership for Excellence

As a supporter from the outset, [WorldSkills was invited to take part in the launch of the initiative](#), and as Chair of the WorldSkills Conference Coalition and CEO of WorldSkills Europe, I highlighted how the WorldSkills Conference, together with international skills competitions, is a key platform to advance the Global TVET Agenda.



WorldSkills Conference 2026

Building on this momentum, the [WorldSkills Conference 2026](#), taking place alongside [WorldSkills Shanghai 2026](#) this month (23 to 25 September 2026), is uniquely placed to connect people, policy, and progress, making it the natural home for turning a joint TVET agenda into action.

The event will not only be a gathering, but a call to action – empowering policy makers, industry, and education to share best practices and deliver skills solutions in a rapidly changing world and shape the United Nations post-2030 agenda.

The Towards a Global TVET Agenda initiative will feature across three activities at the Conference. Find out more at worldskillsconference2026.com.

Skills Competitions

International skills competitions have become renowned as the premier platform for nations of the world to come together to celebrate what skilled people can achieve, and for serving as key catalysts for shaping the future of skills development.

WorldSkills and EuroSkills Competitions, in fact, bring together industry leading companies, the best TVET institutions, and the most talented young people from across the world – in a way that no other initiative comes close to matching.

Through this cooperative approach, the TVET institutions whose Experts participate in the organisation of the Competition get to collaborate directly with employer partners, providing the industry insight and expertise that is essential for preparing the young talent of today for the jobs of tomorrow.

This way of working enables us to shape Technical Descriptions and the [WorldSkills Occupational Standards \(WSOS\)](#) which are a common global language for TVET, reflecting the global occupations that are represented by WorldSkills and EuroSkills Competitions. Experts can in turn use this information and learning to benchmark the quality of TVET systems in their own countries and organisations.

These partnerships provide fertile ground and impetus for our Member Countries to adapt and implement changes to teaching and training methods, working together with governments on a national level to drive up standards of education that will contribute to industry and economic growth.

Furthermore, the groups of Experts from education and industry who represent their Member Country organisation at EuroSkills and WorldSkills Competitions are also responsible for providing additional training to Competitors for up to two years ahead of the Competition. The training is often delivered at TVET institutions and employer facilities all over Europe, where other teachers, students, and colleagues, who may not be directly involved, have the opportunity to observe and learn about the importance of world-class skills excellence.

EuroSkills Düsseldorf 2027

In October, the spotlight will shift away from WorldSkills Shanghai 2026 and towards Europe

as the countdown to [EuroSkills Düsseldorf 2027](#) gets under way.

EuroSkills Düsseldorf 2027 is the tenth edition of EuroSkills – the biggest vocational education and skills excellence event in Europe. Held every two years and organised by WorldSkills Europe together with its 36 Member Countries, EuroSkills brings together hundreds of young professionals from countries across the continent to compete for the chance to become the Best in Europe in their chosen skill.

EuroSkills Düsseldorf 2027 marks the first time that two countries – Germany and Luxembourg – are jointly hosting a EuroSkills Competition. Under the motto 'Skills! Shape Your Future', Germany and Luxembourg want to motivate young people to shape their professional future and discover the diversity of professions – both in Düsseldorf and in the run-up to EuroSkills through cross-border activities.

The event will welcome around 800 skilled young professionals from 36 countries to participate in 51 different skill competitions and demonstrations. 150,000 visitors from across Germany and abroad are expected to attend.

EuroSkills Düsseldorf 2027 will be the unmissable skills event of 2027, showcasing the importance of international cooperation in strengthening skills development, and inspiring young people to turn their passions into a profession. I encourage everyone with an interest in the development of TVET to support the event. Find out how to get involved at euroskills2027.com.



Let's talk about Global Gateway: interview with Alexis Hoyaux, DG INTPA



Alexis Hoyaux

TVET Adviser, G3 DG-INTPA

Alexis Hoyaux is a TVET expert at the G3 DGINTPA (European Commission) and friend of the EfVET community. His participation to the TVET Global Thematic Team conference in Bruges last May was widely appreciated. Alexis agreed on an interview with VET Pulse on the EU Global Gateway initiative as a key pillar for bridging, globally, the EU VET community worldwide and give it important opportunities.

Dear Mr. Hoyaux, thanks as usual! Global Gateway is often associated primarily with major infrastructure projects. How would you define its broader ambition, particularly in relation to investment in people, sustainable development and international partnerships?

Global Gateway is about more than supporting investments in hard infrastructure, it is about investing in people and building alliances towards prosperity. By promoting a 360-degree approach that creates an enabling environment for sustainable and quality investments we support our partner countries to build up their local industries and move up the value chain. It touches upon sectors like energy/climate, digital, transport, education/research and health.

The European Commission promotes a "360-degree approach" to Global Gateway investments. What does this approach mean in practice, and which principles guide its implementation?



The 360-degree approach is about:

- The systematic application of the six key Global Gateway principles, including green and clean, equal partnerships, democratic values and high standards, good governance and transparency, security-focused, and catalysing the private sector.
- Creating an enabling environment (regulatory frameworks, norms and ESG standards, technology transfer, know-how, skills and education, etc.).

Not about ticking boxes, but rather about analysing different dimensions from the identification/design phase of each flagship to identify opportunities and risks and, if necessary, accompanying or mitigating measures.

It requires a whole-of-**Delegation and Team Europe approach**, combining a **mix of modalities and tools** (RMF+, Greening Toolbox, CAS, CSO Roadmaps, GAP III CLIPs, environmental impact assessments, etc.).

Why should education, skills development and employment be integrated from the outset into the design of Global Gateway investments rather than treated as separate areas of intervention?

It is important to address the skills and employment dimension as integral component and enabler of specific value chains and investments. Skills, higher education and VET need to be integrated in the investment partnership design to ensure the availability of an educated, skilled and competent youth able to take those GG created job opportunities and make those investments effective, equitable and sustainable over time.

This reflects a **shift in the approach from higher education and VET as a standalone sector of intervention to an enabler to value chains and to infrastructure investment** through support to skills.

DG INTPA has called for VET provision to be “reverse-engineered” from the employment opportunities generated by public and private investment. What does this paradigm shift entail for VET systems and providers?

DG INTPA is promoting a paradigm shift where VET is reverse-engineered from concrete job opportunities stemming from public and private sector investments under the Global Gateway. When coupled with a **strong dialogue and engagement with the private sector**, VET and skills development can act as crucial enabling factor for inclusive and decent employment and local value addition. This is established through sector skills councils, national/sectoral training funds based on skills levies and other incentives, based on a tripartite principle.

What role can cooperation with employers, sector skills councils, training funds and other social partners play in ensuring that VET responds effectively to the value chains supported by Global Gateway?

VET Centres are core hubs of the productive ecosystem, based on strong external linkages with the private sector, through their strategic alliance units at those VET centres.

Erasmus+ actions in higher education and VET are now aligned with the investments under the Global Gateway, to build a comprehensive approach, where skills development and institutional progress at universities in partner countries is linked with job creation, market demands and with the priority investments under the Global Gateway.

Finally, cooperation in research can build up knowledge-based economies and innovative value chains with mutual advantages for the EU and our partner countries.

At a time when some international donors are reducing their education budgets, what does the EU's continued commitment to education reveal about its wider international partnership priorities?

The EU is playing its part as a top donor for education. While other donors are cutting budgets, we are committed to maintaining our investments in education at 13% of the EU's budget for international partnerships. Current estimates show that EU is on track to deliver over EUR 6 billion for edu-

cation (2021-2027).

Education is also a powerful mechanism to address inequality and poverty by providing a path towards quality jobs – opening doors for girls, youth, and marginalised groups. Quality education and skills are among the top priorities expressed by young people as vital to their empowerment, and young people represent up to 70% of the population in many partner countries. Education also provides a springboard for human connections, debate, and democratic values embedded in the Global Gateway strategy.

In other words, education is a transformative investment, not an expense, that must be supported by a whole-of-government and cross-sectoral approach.

Which instruments does the EU use to support education and skills development in partner regions, including Latin America and the Caribbean, and how do these instruments complement one another?

The EU provides support to education and skills in Latin America & Caribbean countries through various instruments including bilateral and regional programmes, Erasmus+ and global initiatives such as Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and Education Cannot Wait (ECW).

The lifecycle approach supported by the EU includes attention to skills development throughout basic and secondary education through higher education including vocational training. Foundational skills and competences are essential to ensure knowledge and skills acquisition at higher levels of education.

Global Gateway's education priorities include quality education with a focus on teachers, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and tertiary education. Education and skills for the green and digital transitions are also a growing priority.

Building Connections: What We Are Learning While Building a More Coherent Palestinian TVET System



Rabeh Morrar

Head, NTC- Palestine

From national coordination and evidence-based policy to stronger links with employers and the wider VET community

Palestine has a relatively small TVET sector, but it operates within an exceptionally complex and rapidly changing environment. Its institutions, programmes and stakeholders extend across different parts of government, education, the private sector and the wider economy, each with its own mandate, priorities and capacities. There is considerable experience within the system, committed professionals, and institutions that have accumulated valuable knowledge over many years. Yet many of these components have developed along separate paths.

The challenge, therefore, is not simply whether the individual pieces of the system are working. It is whether they are working together.

This distinction matters. When policy is disconnected from data, when training provision is insufficiently informed by labour-market demand, when employers are only occasionally involved in shaping skills and qualifications, or when qualifications are difficult to compare and recognise, fragmentation eventually reaches the learner. It affects progression, employability, mobility and the ability of institutions to respond to economic change. In a context where resources are constrained and the demand for new and different skills is accelerating, fragmentation becomes particularly costly.

It was within this context that I took on the role of Head of Palestine's National TVET Commission (NTC). I came to the position as an economist and academic, following more than two decades of work across higher education, research, public policy, labour economics and the relationship between education and the economy. That experience has reinforced a lesson that now shapes much of how I think about TVET reform: a system becomes stronger not only when its individual institutions improve, but when the relationships between those institutions improve as well.

NTC was established in 2021 as a national body under the Council of Ministers to contribute to the governance and development of the TVET system, support policy and legislation, and strengthen coordination and integration among its different components. Our role is therefore not to become another training provider or to compete with existing institutions. It is to help create the conditions in which the system can function more coherently: connecting actors, bringing evidence into policy discussions, strengthening cooperation with employers, and creating clearer links between national priorities and what happens in training institutions, workplaces and communities.

From institutions to a system

When I look at the Palestinian TVET landscape, I repeatedly return to one word: connections.

We have institutions, but institutions need coordination.

We have data, but data needs to become evidence—and evidence needs to inform decisions.

We have employers, but their knowledge of occupations, technologies and changing skills needs must reach the places where programmes and qualifications are designed.

We have qualifications, but qualifications need to be understood, recognised and trusted.

And we have international partners and networks, but international cooperation becomes most valuable when it connects global knowledge to national priorities.

For me, this is where system development begins. Not with another isolated project, but with a clearer understanding of how the different parts of the system depend on one another.

Connecting data to decisions

One of the most important connections we are working to strengthen is the relationship between

data, evidence and policy.

A modern TVET system needs reliable information about learners, providers, qualifications, graduates, occupations, employers, skills shortages and emerging areas of demand. Yet collecting information is only the beginning. Data sitting in different databases does not automatically improve a TVET system.

The real value comes when we can transform data into evidence, evidence into policy, and policy into action.

This means asking more useful questions. Where are employers struggling to find skills? Which occupations are changing? What happens to graduates six months, one year or two years after completing training? Where are women and young people underrepresented? Which regions face particular skills gaps? Which programmes are producing strong transitions into employment, and where do we need to adjust?

For NTC, strengthening this evidence chain is becoming an important part of building a more responsive national system. We want decisions about TVET to be increasingly informed not only by what we believe the labour market needs, but by what the evidence tells us.

Connecting qualifications to trust

The same principle applies to qualifications.

A qualification is much more than a certificate received at the end of a programme. It represents a promise—to the learner, to an employer, to another educational institution, and potentially to another country—about what a person knows and is able to do.

That promise depends on trust.

Our work around the National Qualifications Framework is therefore not simply a technical exercise in assigning qualifications to levels. It is part of a broader effort to strengthen transparency, quality, progression and recognition across the Palestinian education and training system.

A stronger qualifications framework can help create a common language between education and the labour market. It can make pathways clearer for learners, help employers understand qualifications, support progression between different forms of learning, and provide a stronger basis for national and international recognition.

In this sense, qualifications are another form of connection: They connect learning to opportunity.

Bringing employers closer to the system

At the other end of the skills system is the labour market.

TVET cannot remain relevant if employers and workplaces are distant from the institutions that prepare people for work. Employers see technological and occupational changes as they happen. They know where skills shortages are emerging, where existing qualifications no longer fully match workplace requirements, and which competencies matter when someone enters a real workplace.

But employer engagement needs to become more than consultation.

The direction we are pursuing is toward more systematic participation: stronger sectoral dialogue, better work-based learning, greater involvement of employers in identifying occupational needs and shaping standards, and stronger partnerships between enterprises and TVET institutions.

From my perspective as an economist, this connection is fundamental. Skills policy cannot be separated from economic policy. A TVET system ultimately has to help people build capabilities that have value in a changing economy.

And the relationship should work in both directions. TVET should respond to the economy, but it should also help the economy develop by creating capabilities for new sectors, technologies and forms of work.

Building a system that can learn

This is increasingly important because the world of work is changing faster than traditional education and training systems were designed to change.

Digitalisation, artificial intelligence, the green transition and new forms of employment are reshaping occupations and creating new combinations of skills. For Palestine, these changes present risks, but they also create possibilities.

The answer cannot simply be to introduce a new course every time a new technology appears. No TVET system can keep pace that way.

The deeper challenge is to build a system capable of learning and adapting.

That requires better labour-market intelligence, more flexible learning pathways, stronger relationships with employers, attention to digital and green capabilities, continuous development

of trainers, and institutions that can adjust programmes as occupational requirements evolve.

For a relatively small TVET system, adaptability may actually become one of our strengths. We may not have the scale of larger systems, but with stronger coordination we can potentially shorten the distance between identifying a problem, discussing it with stakeholders, testing a response and learning from the result.

Connecting Palestine to the wider VET community

Building this capacity also means looking beyond our borders.

Palestine does not need to develop its TVET system in isolation. Around the world, countries and institutions are confronting many of the same questions: how to strengthen work-based learning, engage employers, modernise qualifications, use labour-market intelligence, respond to digital and green transitions, improve quality, and make vocational education more attractive to young people.

There is enormous value in learning from those experiences.

But international cooperation should not become an exercise in importing models.

Over the years, I have learned that successful cooperation is rarely about identifying a system that works somewhere else and reproducing it unchanged. TVET systems are deeply embedded in their economic, institutional and social environments. What works in one country may depend on institutional relationships, financing arrangements or labour-market structures that do not exist elsewhere.

The more useful question is: Why does it work?

Once we understand that, we can ask which principles are relevant to Palestine, what needs to be adapted, and what may not be appropriate at all.

That is the kind of international cooperation we want to build: learning globally while designing locally.

From individual partnerships to a partnership ecosystem

This is also why we are seeking to move beyond individual contacts and isolated activities toward a more connected partnership ecosystem.

Our engagement with European and internation-

al VET institutions, development partners, skills organisations and professional networks is intended to create sustained channels for knowledge exchange and practical cooperation. These relationships can support institutional development, work-based learning, qualifications, quality assurance, leadership, labour-market intelligence, digital and green skills, and other national priorities.

But partnership should not be understood as a one-way transfer of expertise.

Palestine also has experiences worth sharing.

Working under severe constraints forces institutions to improvise, prioritise and find ways to continue providing learning and skills development in circumstances that many systems do not face. There are lessons in resilience, institutional cooperation and adaptation emerging from our own experience.

We therefore want to enter the international VET community not only asking, "What can Palestine learn?" but also asking, "What can we learn together?"

Small systems can build strong connections

Being a relatively small TVET system creates obvious constraints. Resources are limited, institutional capacity is uneven, and the political and economic environment creates challenges that TVET policy alone cannot solve.

But being small can also make connections especially valuable.

When resources are scarce, duplication is expensive. When institutions are few, coordination becomes possible. When the distance between policymakers, providers and employers is relatively short, relationships can become an important form of institutional capital.

This is why I increasingly see coordination not as an administrative function, but as a development resource in its own right.

A strong relationship between government, TVET institutions, employers, researchers, communities and international partners can help us use limited resources more effectively, combine different forms of knowledge and create reforms that individual institutions could not achieve alone.

What we are learning

We are still learning how to do this.

Building a coherent TVET system cannot be completed through one policy, one institution, one donor programme or one reform cycle. It requires sustained coordination. It requires trust between stakeholders. It requires evidence and institutional memory. And it requires the willingness to recognise when something is not working and adjust course.

Perhaps most importantly, it requires us to think in terms of systems rather than projects.

What we are trying to build is therefore not simply a collection of better projects. We are working toward a national system in which the different parts increasingly reinforce one another:

- data informs policy;
- policy enables institutions;
- institutions connect with employers;
- employers help shape relevant skills;
- qualifications support progression and mobility;

and international cooperation brings knowledge, relationships and opportunities back into the national system.

For me, connecting local needs to the global VET community begins with recognising our own reality.

Palestine has a relatively small and complex TVET sector operating under extraordinary constraints. But it also has institutions with experience, employers with knowledge, researchers with evidence, international partners willing to cooperate, and—most importantly—young people whose ambitions require us to make the system work better.

Our task is to connect these assets.

That, ultimately, is what I believe a national TVET platform should help make possible: connecting policy with practice, data with decisions, education with the labour market, qualifications with mobility, local institutions with global knowledge, and skills development with the aspirations of young people.

We may be a relatively small system operating in a very complicated environment. But small does not have to mean fragmented, and constraint does not have to mean isolation.

If we can build stronger connections—within Palestine and with the wider VET community—we can build something more important than a collection of institutions and projects.

“We
can
build
a
system
that
learns
together”

Shared Futures: What Can Lifelong Learning Help Us Build Together?



Mohammed Elmeski, PhD

Faculty of Educational Sciences,
Mohammed V University, Rabat Morocco

Co-Chair of the International
Conference on Lifelong Learning in the
Era of Post-Globalization and Artificial
Intelligence.

What does it mean to prepare people well for working lives when the capabilities they need may change repeatedly?

Demographic change, artificial intelligence and changing patterns of work are making this question increasingly difficult to answer. The pressures differ across countries and regions, but increasingly cross borders—and challenge the assumption that education and training acquired at one point in life can remain sufficient. In January 2027, an international gathering in Casablanca will explore what this means for the future of lifelong learning.

Across Europe, demographic ageing and persistent shortages in key occupations are placing new pressures on skills and training systems. Cedefop's 2026 analysis identifies 22 VET occupations that were experiencing EU-wide shortages in 2024. Across Africa, circumstances vary considerably, but demographic growth will bring increasing numbers of young people seeking opportunities to learn, work and contribute. At

the same time, AI is reshaping tasks and occupations, increasing the need to reskill and adapt throughout life. The trajectories differ, but the challenge is shared: *enabling people not only to acquire skills, but to continually renew their capabilities in ways that support economic participation, resilience, agency and dignity.*

These questions are at the heart of the International Conference on Lifelong Learning in the Era of Post-Globalisation and Artificial Intelligence, organised by the Moroccan Center for Civic Education and hosted by Hassan II University of Casablanca, 25–29 January 2027. It will bring perspectives from Africa, Europe, the Arab world, Asia and the Americas into dialogue across adult learning, higher education, TVET, research, policy and practice.

DIFFERENT DEMOGRAPHIES, SHARED QUESTIONS

In a 2017 address to the African Union, His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Morocco described Africa's youth as a potential demographic dividend and highlighted education, higher education and quality vocational training as important to realising that potential. The question is what will enable demographic potential to translate into prosperity and agency. Phuthuma Nhleko explores this in *The Invisible People: How a Quarter of Humanity Can Thrive in Africa by 2050*, examining the institutions, investments and opportunities Africa's demographic transformation will require.

The Mediterranean also reveals the human consequences when opportunity and mobility do not align. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), more than 26,500 people have been recorded dead or missing on the Central Mediterranean route since 2014. These losses make migration a question not only of borders and security, but also of opportunity, inequality and human dignity. Yet the Mediterranean connects societies facing different but increasingly interdependent demographic, skills and labour-market pressures. If our demographic, technological and economic futures are becoming increasingly interconnected, are our systems for learning keeping pace with the world they are being asked to serve?

The EU's Pact for the Mediterranean makes this question particularly timely, linking education and vocational training with skills, employment, youth and mobility. It invites a broader conversation about what societies experiencing different transitions might learn from—and build with—one another.

MOROCCO: CREATING PATHWAYS TO LEARNING

Morocco offers a distinctive vantage point from which to consider these questions. Its African, Mediterranean, Atlantic and Arab connections place it at the intersection of these transformations. Investments in skills and training infrastructure, alongside growing cooperation across Africa, provide important assets. Yet widening opportunity remains a challenge: a 2026 analysis by Morocco's High Commission for Planning (HCP) estimates that around one in three Moroccans aged 15–29 is neither in employment, education nor training (NEET), with young women particularly affected.

Vocational education and pathways between learning and work form part of the response. Morocco's Office of Vocational Training and Employment Promotion (OFPPT) combines initial and continuing training with recognition of competencies acquired through professional experience, regional Cities of Trades and Skills, employer engagement and cooperation across Africa. The questions extend beyond Morocco: How do we connect initial preparation with learning throughout life? How do we make capabilities acquired in different settings visible, trusted and recognised? And how can training systems adapt as technologies and skills evolve? Increasingly, the capacity to learn again may be as important as what we learn today.

Yet lifelong learning is about more than employability. The Marrakech Framework for Action, adopted at UNESCO's CONFITEA VII in 2022, reaffirms education as a fundamental human right and a public and common good, linking adult learning to social cohesion, active citizenship and participation. Resilience therefore concerns not only the ability to renew skills, but also to exercise agency, participate meaningfully and live with dignity.



A Digital Factory & Incubator learning space at an OFPPT City of Trades and Skills (CMC), Morocco. Source: OFPPT.

CASABLANCA 2027: WHERE GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES MEET

Five years after the international community gathered in Marrakech for CONFITEA VII, Casablanca will provide a new meeting place for a lifelong-learning conversation that has become even more consequential.

Casablanca 2027 is built on a simple premise: no region comes simply to teach, and none comes simply to learn. An African and Arab city open to the Atlantic and Mediterranean, Casablanca offers a fitting setting for perspectives from different regions to challenge assumptions, share knowledge and build partnerships around how lifelong learning can expand opportunity, strengthen resilience and preserve human dignity.

None of us has a complete roadmap for what lies ahead. The value lies in bringing our different experiences, questions and ideas to the same table. I invite you to join that conversation in Casablanca, 25–29 January 2027. Further information and opportunities to participate are available on the conference website at mcce-uottawa.ca/home.

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*“No region
comes simply
to teach, and
none comes
simply to
learn”*

The Thematic Team Global VET: “From networking to partnership building”

The Thematic Team Global VET, which was established in 2024, has established itself as a driving force in connecting Vocational Education and Training (VET) professionals across the globe. Through fostering collaborative relationships, facilitating knowledge exchange and establishing meaningful partnerships, the team of coordinators has created a dynamic ecosystem that strengthens VET practice globally. The Global VET Thematic Team was created to enhance EfVET's international dimension and build meaningful connections between European VET providers and vocational education partners across the world. The team aims to support mutual learning, promote innovation and create sustainable partnerships beyond Europe. This strategic initiative recognises that vocational excellence knows no borders and that collaborative partnerships are essential for addressing global challenges in education and training.

In 2025, the Global VET Thematic Team established three essential subgroups to guide its work: Projects, Networking and Advocacy. Each subgroup plays a vital role in advancing the team's mission.

The Project subgroup drives concrete initiatives and outcomes, while the Networking subgroup facilitates meaningful connections among professionals and organisations. The Advocacy subgroup advocates for VET in policy discussions and international discussions, ensuring that the voice of the education sector is recognised and heard at an international level.

The Thematic Team has successfully established itself on the global stage by hosting two significant events. In 2025 in Rotterdam and in 2026 in Bruges, the team hosted major conferences, bringing together leaders in vocational education and training (VET), policymakers, educators and practitioners from across Europe and beyond. These events have been designed to showcase innovative practices and establish new collaborations across Europe and beyond. The Annual Global VET Event is a significant achievement for the Thematic Team. Skillfully organised by dedicated coordinators working closely with the EfVET Secretary General, and EfVET members with venue and on-site support (Zadkine in Rotterdam in 2025 and Catholic Education Flanders in Bruges in 2026), this annual event has become a hub of VET excellence. Each annual gathering brings the VET community together for a programme of activities designed to promote learning, networking

and partnership development. The Annual Global VET Event has a dynamic and diverse agenda to cater for all of the participants' demands. Best-practices sessions showcase the innovative approaches and solutions of VET institutions from various regions and sectors, enabling participants to learn from real-world examples. Panel discussions bring together thought leaders and practitioners to address the key challenges and opportunities facing the VET sector. The whole fosters critical dialogue on important issues such as digital transformation, sustainability and labour market alignment.



In addition to the Annual Global VET Event, the team has played an active role in the EfVET Annual Conferences, organising and participating in workshops and roundtable discussions that present a global view of VET. This demonstrates their commitment to contributing meaningfully to the wider VET community, ensuring that insights and innovations from around the world inform European discussions and policy development.

One of the most successful initiatives has been organising study visits to China and Taiwan. EfVET members visited VET colleges in both countries to experience them directly, meeting local authorities and observing innovative teaching methods and training systems. These international exchanges proved invaluable for the participants, who returned with new ideas and a different view of vocational education. Perhaps more importantly, the visits resulted in formal partnerships being established between European and African/Asian VET institutions. These partnerships have created opportunities for long-term collaboration, student and staff exchanges, as well as student work internships that have concretely benefitted EfVET members and will continue to benefit the entire VET sector.

Beyond face-to-face events, the Global VET Thematic Team has organised a series of online meetings, webinars and training sessions throughout the year. These activities have given members the opportunities to share experiences, explore emerging trends in vocational education

and learn about different models of international cooperation. Topics included global partnership building, international project development, vocational excellence, mobility opportunities and collaboration with organisations outside Europe. Through these regular online activities, the team has succeeded in maintaining an active international community and ensuring continuous engagement between annual events.

In only a short period of time, the annual Global VET Event has become one of the key international meeting points for EfVET members interested in global cooperation and innovation in VET. The team's activities have already resulted in new project ideas, consortium building, mobility opportunities and long-term institutional partnerships between organisations from Europe, Asia and Africa. These tangible outcomes demonstrate the team's effectiveness in transforming networking into lasting, mutually beneficial partnerships. The accomplishments of the Global VET Thematic Team in just two years demonstrate the power of international collaboration in vocational education and training. By bringing together practitioners, encouraging the exchange of knowledge and building genuine partnerships across continents, the team is laying out the groundwork for a more connected and resilient global VET ecosystem.

Looking ahead, the Global VET Thematic Team aims to further expand its global network, strengthen its cooperation with strategic regions worldwide and support the development of international projects. The team also plans to provide new opportunities for EfVET members to engage in global partnerships. The team's vision is to continue fostering innovation in VET, creating sustainable collaboration pathways that benefit learners, educators, and institutions across borders. Together, we are building something truly special: a worldwide community dedicated to excellence in vocational education and training.

Coordinators:



Heidi Jokinen is an experienced International Coordinator, project manager, and international education professional with over 20 years of experience at Keski-Pohjanmaan Ammattiopisto. Holding an MBA and a Vocational Teacher Qualification, she specializes in Erasmus+ programs, international capacity building, stakeholder engagement, and strategic internationalization within vocational education. She has extensive experience in developing transnational partnerships and promoting collaboration between European and global vocational education stakeholders. She has contributed to program development through the Finnish National Agency for Education panel (2019–2023) and was selected to the Erasmus+ VET evaluation pool in Spring 2025.

Oscar Prat van Thiel has been active in the field of vocational Education since 2016, participating and then directing Education Plus, the main vocational education summit and trade fair in China supported by the German Federal Government, German states of Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria and the China Vocational Education Association. Upon his return to Brussels from China, Oscar is presiding over WSDA, an organisation made up of VET providers, schools, private sector in China and with priority mission to connect Chinese and European VET providers optimising opportunities and funding resources from both China and Europe. Oscar now acts as Co-Team Leader of EfVET Going Global Thematic Team.

Martin Huizinga is an International Officer at Zalkine College in the Netherlands, dedicated to bridging education and business to deliver quality hospitality training. With extensive hospitality industry experience, he champions passion, entrepreneurship, and mastery in vocational education. Since 2019, he has served as a senior expert with the PUM organization on capacity building projects in Gambia's hospitality sector, sharing his knowledge to strengthen vocational education globally.

Valentina Chanina the Secretary General of EfVET is a VET and European education expert with over 25 years' experience in EU projects, policy relations, and transnational partnerships. Through this work, she has gained extensive experience in European cooperation. She has also gained experience in stakeholder engagement. Her experience also extends to her work in promoting vocational excellence across Europe. She has worked across Europe, Africa, and Central Asia, collaborating with public, private, and civil society organisations to advance innovative, inclusive, and sustainable education systems.

Beyond Europe: Understanding India and China Matters for the Future of VET



Paolo Nardi

Executive Director, EfVET (European Forum for Technical and Vocational Education and Training)

As vocational education and training becomes increasingly global, understanding developments beyond Europe is essential. Two recent episodes of EfVET's BET on VET podcast explore the rapidly evolving VET systems of India and China, highlighting new opportunities for cooperation, mobility and skills partnerships. Together with insights from European policymaking, these conversations provide valuable perspectives ahead of the EfVET Annual Conference 2026.

The future of vocational education and training (VET) will not be shaped within national borders alone. As skills demands evolve in response to technological innovation, demographic changes, green and digital transitions, and shifting labour markets, VET providers and policymakers must increasingly look beyond their own systems and engage with global developments.

Recognising this reality, EfVET's *BET on VET – Conversations Shaping Vocational Excellence* podcast has recently expanded its international focus with two episodes dedicated to understanding the VET landscapes of India and China, two of the world's most influential and dynamic economies. These conversations offer valuable insights into how vocational education is evolving globally and why stronger cooperation between Europe and international partners is becoming increasingly important.

Building Skills Partnerships with India

In Episode #06, "**Building Skills Partnerships with India: Why and How?**", I had a very interesting dialogue with **Sudharshan Basalaru**, Advisor for International Mobility and Collaboration at the **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) India**.

India represents one of the largest and fastest-growing skills ecosystems in the world. During the conversation, Basalaru explains the scale and evolution of India's vocational education and skills development landscape, highlighting the country's efforts to prepare a young and rapidly expanding workforce for emerging economic opportunities. The discussion also explores mobility pathways, international skills partnerships and new forms of cooperation between India and Europe.

Particularly relevant for European VET providers is the growing importance of structured collaboration in areas such as talent mobility, skills recognition and joint capacity building. As Europe faces skills shortages in several sectors, understanding how partnerships with India can contribute to workforce development becomes increasingly strategic.

Scan the QR code on this page to listen to the full episode and discover why India is becoming a key partner in shaping the future of global skills.



Connecting Europe and China through VET

In Episode #09, "**Connecting Europe and China through VET**", we hosted Oscar Prat Van Thiel, President of the **World Skills Development Alliance (WSDA)** and Coordinator of EfVET's Global VET Thematic Team.

The episode offers a fascinating overview of China's vast and fast-evolving VET system. Oscar Prat explores how China is investing heavily in advanced sectors including artificial intelligence, robotics, new energy technologies and high-tech

manufacturing, with vocational education playing a central role in supporting economic transformation.

The discussion goes beyond institutional structures and focuses on the opportunities for dialogue and cooperation between Europe and China. As global value chains continue to evolve and major international skills events such as **WorldSkills Shanghai 2026** bring the worldwide VET community together, understanding China's approach to skills development becomes increasingly relevant for European stakeholders.

A central question runs throughout the conversation: can VET act as a bridge between cultures, economies and education systems? The answer, according to Prat, lies in greater international cooperation, mutual learning and the willingness to explore new partnerships.

Use the QR code provided to listen to this episode and gain a deeper understanding of one of the world's most influential VET ecosystems.



Thinking Globally, Acting Locally

The lessons emerging from both podcast episodes are clear. Today's VET professionals need to be aware not only of developments in Europe but also of broader global trends that influence skills needs, labour markets, innovation ecosystems and educational practices worldwide.

Whether examining India's large-scale skills partnerships or China's integration of VET with technological innovation, these examples demonstrate how countries are developing different yet valuable responses to common challenges. For European VET providers, schools, colleges and policymakers, staying informed about these developments is essential to remain competitive, relevant and future-ready.

Continue the Conversation at the EfVET Annual Conference 2026

For those interested in exploring these themes further, the **EfVET Annual Conference 2026** will provide a unique opportunity to engage directly

with global VET leaders and experts.

Under the theme **"Global Citizenship Empowered by VET"**, the conference will bring together more than **500 participants** from across Europe and beyond. The programme will include representatives from leading international organisations and networks such as **OECD, WorldSkills Europe, Colleges and Institutes Canada (Cic-Can), UNESCO-UNEVOC**, as well as VET organisations and institutions from **Asia, Africa and the Americas**.

The conference will explore how VET systems can respond to global challenges while strengthening local impact, offering participants opportunities to exchange practices, develop partnerships and better understand the international forces shaping the future of skills.

Among the distinguished guests will be **Brigitte van den Berg**, Member of the European Parliament and guest of **BET on VET Episode #11: "EU Policymaking and the Future of VET"**. In this conversation, she shares her perspective on the role of VET within European policymaking, competitiveness, social inclusion and future skills strategies. Her reflections provide an important policy dimension to the broader international discussions featured throughout the podcast series.

Don't forget to scan the QR code for Brigitte van den Berg's episode and discover how European policy is adapting to the challenges and opportunities of a rapidly changing world.



The message is simple: the future of VET is global. By listening, learning and engaging with international partners, we can build stronger skills ecosystems, develop new opportunities for learners and professionals, and ensure that European VET remains at the forefront of innovation and excellence. The BET on VET podcast and the EfVET Conference 2026 are two excellent opportunities to be part of that conversation.

From Technical Skills to Global Competence



Teresa Damásio

CEO at Grupo ENSINUS

We are living in a period of profound technological, economic, geopolitical and societal transformation that is reshaping the way we learn, work and collaborate. In an increasingly interconnected world, where the boundaries between countries, markets and cultures are becoming progressively less defined, Vocational Education and Training (VET) faces one of the greatest challenges in its history: preparing professionals who are equipped to meet the demands of an increasingly global, dynamic and rapidly evolving labour market.

Today, responding solely to the immediate needs of employers is no longer sufficient. VET institutions must anticipate the skills that will shape the future, preparing learners to thrive in multicultural environments, collaborate across international teams, adapt to constant change and contribute to a more sustainable, inclusive and innovative society. In this context, international cooperation, intercultural learning, sustainability and the development of global competences are no longer complementary ambitions; they have become strategic pillars of modern VET.

Preparing professionals for a rapidly changing world requires moving beyond digital skills alone. It means developing what the OECD (2018) defines as Global Competence: a multidimensional combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that enables individuals to understand local, global and intercultural issues, appreciate different perspectives, communicate effectively across cultures and act responsibly to promote the common good and sustainable development.

In an increasingly international labour market, these competences are becoming essential. Intercultural communication, collaboration within multicultural teams, adaptability, critical thinking, lifelong learning and the ability to operate confidently in digitally connected environments will distinguish the professionals of the future. Rather than simply responding to current labour market demands, these competences enable individuals to anticipate the challenges of economies increasingly shaped by technological innovation, international mobility and the rapid transformation of working practices.

The importance of global competences is also closely aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which recognise education as a key driver in addressing global challenges such as climate change, economic inequality, migration, innovation and the development of more inclusive, equitable and peaceful societies. Preparing learners to understand and engage with this global reality is therefore an increasingly important responsibility of VET institutions and the wider education sector.

Within this context, internationalisation has become a strategic priority for the future of Vocational Education and Training. Beyond promoting the mobility of students and staff, it provides opportunities to establish international partnerships, exchange good practices, develop collaborative projects and enrich learning through engagement with different cultures and education systems. Internationalisation is no longer an added value; it has become a fundamental

condition for ensuring the quality, innovation and relevance of VET within an increasingly globalised world. In recent years, Grupo ENSINUS has significantly strengthened its commitment to this agenda by actively participating in transnational projects that foster collaboration between educational institutions, businesses and learners, creating international learning experiences that bring vocational education closer to the realities of a global labour market.

Consequently, the design of educational provision cannot rely solely on the continuation of existing programmes. It must be underpinned by continuous analysis of labour market needs, technological developments, geopolitical trends and international strategic priorities, ensuring that learners acquire the competences required to meet both present and future challenges. From this perspective, VET institutions must continuously develop innovative and competitive educational pathways that are aligned with the ambitions of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

At Grupo ENSINUS, this vision is reflected in a strategic commitment to an education that is open to the world, founded on the belief that internationalisation is one of the principal drivers of educational innovation and excellence in Vocational Education and Training. Our experience as an international network of educational institutions demonstrates that cooperation between countries, cultures and education systems not only enriches learning experiences but also promotes knowledge exchange, pedagogical innovation and institutional resilience in responding to the challenges of an increasingly interconnected society.

Providing learners with international experiences, fostering intercultural dialogue and developing strategic partnerships with institutions around the world therefore constitute fundamental dimensions of our educational mission. Internationalisation is not regarded as an objective in itself, but as a means of developing the competences that enable learners to act ethically, critically and responsibly within increasingly global professional environments.

This vision is reflected in the many international initiatives undertaken across our schools, which actively participate in networks and forums dedicated to the future of education and skills development, including the OECD Global Forum for Education and Skills. Escola de Comércio de Lisboa represents a clear example of this commitment, placing internationalisation at the heart of its educational strategy. As the school states, “today’s citizens must not only demonstrate competitive-

ness and readiness for a new world of work, but also develop cultural awareness and the ability to understand global and intercultural issues, where social and emotional competences, together with values such as respect, self-confidence and a sense of belonging, are essential for addressing the social, economic, political and environmental challenges of our time” (ECL, n.d.).

Today, as is increasingly the case in Higher Education, VET institutions have responsibilities that extend far beyond the transmission of technical knowledge. They are centres of innovation, citizenship and international cooperation, where learners develop the human, social and intercultural competences required to navigate an ever-changing world. The holistic development of learners as global citizens has therefore become an essential condition for education that is genuinely future-oriented.

The future of Vocational Education and Training will be determined not only by its capacity to embrace emerging technologies, but above all by its ability to cultivate the Global Skills that enable people to understand an increasingly complex world, collaborate across borders and apply innovation in an ethical, critical, creative and responsible manner. Preparing professionals with these capabilities is no longer simply an educational ambition; it is the defining mission of a modern VET system committed to shaping a more sustainable, inclusive and globally connected future.

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Global VET: Shared Challenges, Different Starting Points

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Universal Learning Systems

What Europe can learn from East Africa's evolving skills ecosystems

Global transformations are reshaping vocational education and training (VET). Digitalisation, the green transition, shifting labour markets, demographic change and geopolitical uncertainty are redefining the skills needed for work and developing resilient societies. These trends are influential across Europe and Africa, where VET systems in the post-colonial era are evolving rapidly to address economic transformation, employment, gender imbalance, rural change and social inclusion.

Europe, with one of the world's most established VET ecosystems, just like Africa's diverse 54 countries, shows a wide variety of VET systems. Despite different governance models, labour markets and educational traditions, there is a growing continental momentum on skills development through the African Union's Agenda 2063, the *Continental Education Strategy for Africa* (CESA), and initiatives such as the *African Continental Qualifications Framework* (ACQF), seeking to improve crossborder transparency and recognition of qualifications.

East Africa: where local skills meet global change

East Africa (EA) is one of the world's youngest demographic regions, the median age is 18. Every year, millions of young people enter labour markets changing faster than formal education systems can respond. Simultaneously, digital technologies, regional economic integration, climate pressures and industrial development are creating new opportunities alongside significant challenges.

Much vocational learning in EA is informal, where traditional apprenticeships, community learning and informal enterprises are central to skills development. Policy makers and development partners are increasingly exploring how to recognise informal learning, connected to formal qualifications and institutions. This opens doors to distance learning and micro-credentials.

This shift reflects a broader understanding of VET as an ecosystem rather than a training institution cooperation. Regional organisations such as EAC (East African Community) promote cooperation through qualifications frameworks, skills recognition and labour mobility, recognising that economic opportunities increasingly extend beyond national borders.

For example, Kenya is currently focussing on sustainable agrobusiness with agroforestry and intercropping – produce, flowers, logistics – aimed at European markets. This recent approach allows to address real community issues: basic transport and healthcare.

Shared challenges, different responses

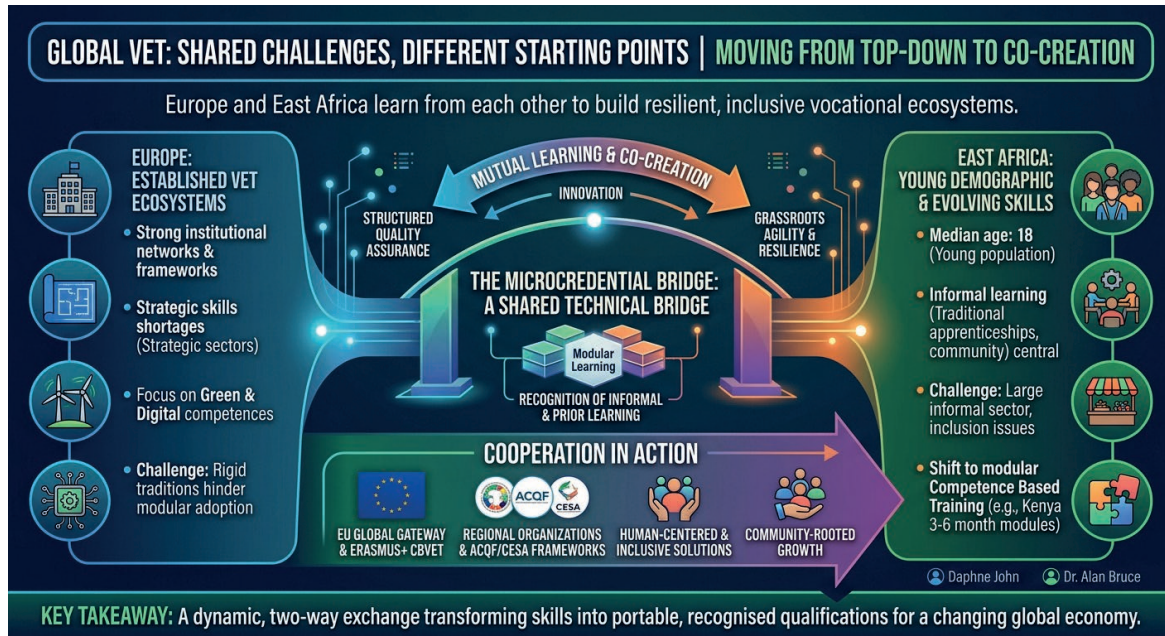
Europe and EA face many of the same global drivers, responding from different standpoints. African priorities, for example, are changing, away from the impact of dependence-creating colonial-era system legacies, inhibiting indigenous responses. European VET systems' current priorities include digital skills, green competences, lifelong learning and responding to skills shortages in strategic sectors.

In EA, priorities often focus on expanding access, strengthening employability, supporting entrepreneurship and improving skills recognition, acquired through both formal and informal pathways. Youth employment remains a central policy objective, while digital technologies are opening new possibilities for flexible learning and regional collaboration. Expanding economic activity, integration into the global system and explosive growth of urban polities mean land flight and profoundly impacted rural economies.

While VET systems adapt to economic and social realities, addressing common global challenges, specific measures are challenged. Kenya has introduced a comprehensive and detailed *Competence Based Education and Training* national policy. Even if addressing standards and quality, it has proven rigid in terms of accommodating difference and inclusion (2019: only 3.5% of trainees with disabilities in VET centres, <1% at technical training institutes). Furthermore, these changes have influenced curriculum delivery, with a focus on learning in student-centred modular training. This system, introduced in 2025, broke down TVET courses into competency-based units to complete within 3 – 6 months. Under this framework, individuals are equipped with practical skills and receive certification at each level, allowing them to either progress academically or transition into employment. While this is positive, specific issues in terms of access and gender balance remain in Kenyan VET.

For Kenya important objectives identified for more impactful VET systems include enhanced access to and participation in STEM subjects for females, improved project management skills and extended development of engineering programmes, e.g. mechatronics, delivered in local learning centres.

Integrating with local community development organisations includes: developing rural learning centres, promotion of Kenyan priorities, use and integration of advanced AI systems, specific STEM initiatives for inclusion of women.



International cooperation as mutual learning

International cooperation in VET is also changing. Partnerships move beyond knowledge transfer towards co-creation, where institutions learn together with respectful curiosity, adapting solutions to local contexts by understanding the need for shared community learning.

European and African institutions are collaborating on curriculum development, teacher training, digital learning, entrepreneurship, green skills and quality assurance where successful partnership innovation flows in both directions.

Europe's experience with qualification frameworks, apprenticeships and institutional cooperation offers valuable lessons. Equally, African approaches to community-based learning, entrepreneurial mindsets, integrating informal skills into national systems provide perspectives that are increasingly relevant in adapting to changes.

We are currently promoting EU-funded project developments under the recently announced *EU Global Gateway Initiative*, a significant strategic effort to develop partnerships between Europe and the Global South. This supports programmes such as *Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE)* and *Capacity Building in Vocational Education and Training (CBVET)* under the Erasmus+ programme. The cooperation in Kenyan VET in-

Looking ahead

The future of VET will not be defined solely by technological innovation or new qualifications. It will depend on the ability of institutions to connect local realities and needs to global developments, preparing learners for today's jobs and evolving economies and societies. This means developing the competence of community building and engaging with local citizens, asking their needs and skills as grass roots growth to guide top-down frameworks. It also means recognising and incorporating rich traditions of familial networking and cooperative enterprise, incorporating authentic African characteristics into VET. For Europe, engaging with Africa provides opportunities for genuine learning around resilience, inclusion, entrepreneurship and skills ecosystems that extend beyond traditional European educational boundaries.

For Africa, continued investment in regional cooperation, qualifications recognition and partnerships with employers will help strengthen VET as a driver of sustainable development where local knowledge and capacities drive the agenda.

Ultimately, VET challenges are increasingly global, yet solutions remain rooted in local communities. Building human-centered bridges between regions, institutions and learners will be essential if vocational education is to support more inclusive, sustainable and interconnected societies.

Recognising Hidden Skills: Multicultural Guidance and Microcredentials in VET

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Responding to a Changing World

Across Europe, vocational education and training (VET) is responding to profound social and economic change. Migration, digitalization, demographic shifts and evolving labor market demands are reshaping expectations of both learners and educators.

Migration is often discussed from the perspective of integration into education and employment. Yet people with migrant backgrounds also bring multilingual abilities, intercultural competence and valuable experience that can enrich guidance, education and support services. Guidance itself is changing, requiring professionals to support learners across educational transitions, employment pathways and increasingly diverse communities.

The Finnish MOPO (Paths of Multicultural Guidance) project was developed in response to these challenges. While the project was implemented in Finland, its central question has relevance throughout Europe: how can VET systems recognize hidden competences and create meaningful pathways into guidance professions?

Building a local skills ecosystem

One of the most important insights from MOPO was that inclusive pathways cannot be created by educational institutions alone. The project brought together vocational education providers, higher education institutions, employment services, multilingual guidance services and civil society organizations. Together, these actors formed a local skills ecosystem that connected learning opportunities, professional expertise and real-world guidance practices.

This collaborative approach was particularly important for participants whose competences had developed through work experience, volunteering, community engagement or migration journeys. Such skills often remain difficult to identify and communicate within traditional qualification systems.

For VET providers, the lesson is clear: effective inclusion is not simply about offering courses. It is about creating partnerships that help learners connect existing competences with future opportunities.

Microcredentials as pathways rather than badges

Microcredentials have gained significant attention across Europe as flexible ways of recognizing learning acquired through different contexts. Rather than treating microcredentials as isolated assessment tools, they were used as structured learning pathways that support reflection, competence recognition and progression towards further education and professional roles. The focus was not on collecting badges but on helping participants understand and communicate what they know and can do. This approach is valuable for learners whose expertise has developed through life experience rather than formal qualifications, helping make invisible competences visible and creating bridges to education and employment. In this sense, the value of microcredentials lies not only in validation, but also in their potential to support learner confidence, professional identity and lifelong learning.

What we learned from the pilot

Participants benefited from clear assessment criteria, guidance and peer interaction. Successful completion depended as much on pedagogical support as on assessment design. The pilot showed that competence recognition is not purely technical; learners need opportunities to interpret and reflect on their experience before demonstrating their skills. A simple but important conclusion emerged: effective microcredentials require effective guidance.

Three lessons for European VET providers

1. Recognize experience as a learning asset

Too often, migration-related experiences are viewed through a deficit lens. Yet experiences of mobility, multilingualism and intercultural participation can represent significant professional resources. VET systems should develop mechanisms to identify and value these competences.

2. Build pathways, not stand-alone credentials

Microcredentials are most effective when embedded within broader progression routes. Their purpose should be to help learners move forward, whether towards further study, employment or professional development.

3. Develop skills ecosystems rather than isolated programmes

Complex challenges require collaborative solutions. Partnerships between education providers, employers, guidance services and community organizations create stronger and more sustainable opportunities for learners than any single institution can provide alone.



Guidance and inclusive learning environments play a key role in recognizing skills developed through migration, work experience and community participation (Tampere University of Applied Sciences (TAMK)).

From local inclusion to global skills

Although MOPO was developed within a Finnish context, the challenges addressed by the project are increasingly shared across Europe and beyond. Labor mobility, migration, demographic ageing and skills shortages require VET systems to develop more effective mechanisms for recognizing competences acquired across borders. At the same time, global labor markets increasingly value intercultural communication, multilingualism and the ability to work in diverse environments. Competences developed through migration experiences contribute not only to integration but also to international cooperation, social resilience and economic competitiveness.

MOPO suggests that competence recognition is not only an inclusion measure but also a strategic response to global change. As societies become more interconnected, VET providers need approaches that help learners translate skills gained in different countries, communities and life situations into meaningful educational and

professional opportunities. By making hidden competences visible, VET systems can strengthen both individual pathways and wider skills ecosystems.

Guidance, inclusion and global citizenship

The theme of the EfVET Annual Conference 2026, Global Citizenship Empowered by VET, highlights an increasingly important question: how can vocational education prepare people to participate in diverse and interconnected societies?

By recognizing multilingual and intercultural competences, supporting participation and strengthening learner agency, guidance contributes not only to employability but also to active citizenship. It helps individuals navigate differences, engage with others and contribute to their communities. As European societies diversify, VET systems need professionals who can work confidently across cultures and learning environments. This requires recognizing competences that already exist within diverse communities. When hidden skills become visible, new pathways become possible.

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Building Bridges in Global VET: 15 Years of Finnish-Japanese Cooperation

Sirje Hassinen

Omnia, The Joint Authority of Education in Espoo Region

A long-term network for Finnish-Japanese cooperation

The HANAKO Network¹ was established in 2010 with support from the Finnish National Agency for Education. It connects Finnish vocational education and training providers and companies with Japanese educational institutions and working-life partners. Its activities have included student and staff mobility, seminars, teaching materials, digital courses and educational development.

HANAKO has continued beyond its original funding period. This shows that country-specific cooperation can be sustained when partners share a clear purpose, maintain institutional and personal relationships and create practical forms of collaboration. Mobility is not treated as an isolated activity, but as part of professional learning, curriculum development and intercultural competence.

This experience is relevant for European VET. Short projects can open doors, but long-term networks preserve country knowledge, trusted contacts and preparation practices. They also enable partners to compare similar challenges without assuming that the same solution will work in every education system.



Finnish delegation in Tokyo, 2024

Vocational education in Japan

Japan's vocational education system differs from the Finnish model. Rather than one unified VET sector, vocational education is delivered through several pathways, including vocational upper secondary programmes, specialised training colleges and Colleges of Technology (KOSEN). Schools provide occupational founda-

¹ Hanako Network | Suomi-Japani | Finland-Japan

tions, while employers traditionally play a major role in developing professional competence after recruitment.²³



HANAKO Seminar in EDUKO, Finland 2025

Compared with Finland, workplace learning is generally less systematically integrated into vocational qualifications. Students may complete observations, school-based practical training, or placements, while extensive clinical training is common in regulated professions such as healthcare. Professional competence is often further developed through employer-led training after recruitment. HANAKO partner organisations such as Smile Yume demonstrate how workplace learning continues through structured in-house development programmes.⁴

Suzuki Academy as an example

Suzuki Academy⁵ represents Japan's specialised training college sector, with a strong focus on professional preparation, qualifications and transition to working life. It operates specialised vocational colleges in healthcare, culinary arts, automotive technology and other professional fields. Its programmes prepare students for specific occupations, professional licences and employment.

The Academy illustrates key features of Japanese vocational education: systematic progression and professional responsibility. Technical competence is closely connected with conduct, service quality and responsibility towards customers, patients and colleagues.

These themes also emerged in an interview with Yasuyuki Suzuki⁶. Mastery develops through repetition, precision, attention to detail and professional pride. He believes that practical education through cooperation with companies helps students develop initiative and the ability to work collaboratively, and that developing these skills at school provides a foundation for students to

² National Information Center for Academic Recognition Japan

³ Terada, M. 2024

⁴ www.smile-yume.com

⁵ <https://suzuki.ac.jp/>

⁶ Yasuyuki Suzuki, 2026

build long-lasting and solid careers after entering the workforce.



Suzuki Academy, 2024

European priorities viewed from Japan

A European study on the attractiveness and future of VET identified six recurring success factors: close links with working life, social appreciation of vocational skills, adequate resources and policy support, practical learning, up-to-date education and teacher competence, and opportunities to progress to higher education. The study was based on 160 responses from 18 European countries.⁷

Through the HANAKO Network, European findings were discussed with Japanese vocational educators. One example was Noriko Oishi⁸ of Suzuki Academy who reviewed these factors from the perspective of Japanese medical vocational education. Her responses represent an institutional and professional perspective rather than the whole Japanese VET system. She found all six factors relevant but showed that their implementation is shaped by national regulation and occupational requirements. What I found particularly interesting was not whether the European success factors were accepted, but how differently they were interpreted in the Japanese context.

⁷ VET2Sustain, 2025

⁸ Noriko Oishi

Links to working life are particularly visible in co-operation with hospitals and clinical facilities. Practical training is central, and workplace feedback can inform educational development. This qualifies the general description of Japanese VET as school-based: practical learning may be substantial in regulated fields, although it is organised differently from Finnish workplace learning.

The responses also reveal different interpretations of flexibility. In Finnish VET, learner-centred education can include individual qualification pathways and recognition of prior learning. In Japanese medical education, it may instead mean individual support within a fixed curriculum, including preparation for national licensing examinations. Modular programmes were considered desirable, but difficult to implement because regulated qualifications leave institutions limited curricular freedom.

Digitalisation is changing both teaching and professional competence. Oishi highlighted electronic health records, telemedicine, AI-assisted diagnosis and XR-based anatomy and nursing simulations. Technology does not replace clinical learning. It prepares students for real situations and enables safer practice before working with patients. Teacher competence therefore requires current professional knowledge, pedagogy and the ability to use emerging technologies.



Finnish and Japanese students during a HANAKO exchange period, learning together in vocational education and training contexts. Omnia, 2025

What can be learned from the cooperation?

Finland can learn from Japan's precision, systematic progression, professional pride and pursuit of mastery. Japanese vocational culture gives weight to service, conduct and the human encounter, not only to technical performance. Structured company training demonstrates how competence development can continue after graduation.

Japan can learn from Finland's integration of practical workplace learning into qualifications, greater curricular flexibility, recognition of prior learning and individual pathways. Finnish VET also provides examples of competence-based assessment and pedagogical experimentation.



Student mobility and professional learning in the Finnish-Japanese HANAKO Network.

For EfVET, HANAKO offers a practical model for cooperation beyond individual projects. The Global Thematic Team could collect country-specific knowledge, preparation materials and partnership practices and support country or regional communities where sustained interest exists. Global VET cooperation should not aim to make systems identical. Its value lies in understanding different practices, testing ideas across contexts and adapting them to local learners, labour markets and communities.

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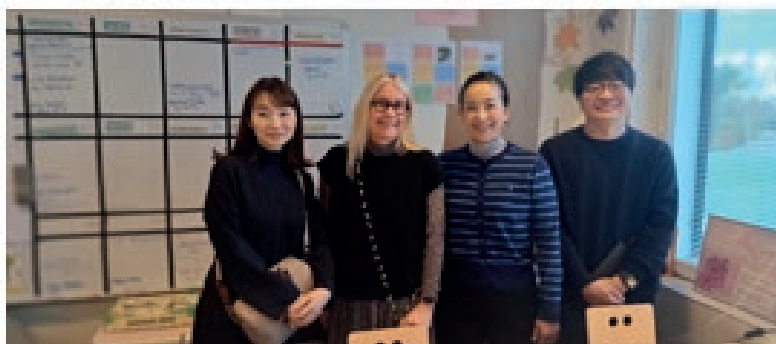
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Fifteen years of Finnish-Japanese cooperation in VET: student exchange, professional learning and intercultural encounters.

*"Short projects can open doors,
but long-term networks preserve
country knowledge"*



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Building TVET for a Changing World

Michela Brancatelli

Project Manager, APRO International

Artificial intelligence, the dual transition (green and digital), demographic change and economic instability are reshaping the skills required worldwide. TVET can no longer simply prepare people for existing occupations. It must anticipate change and reduce inequalities in access to training, connecting local systems to global knowledge networks.

Debates on future skills often focus on automation, data analytics, the Internet of Things and renewable energy. These aspects represent indeed a crucial part of the needed transformation. According to the World Economic Forum's *Future of Jobs Report 2025*, therefore, around 39% of the core skills currently used by workers will change or become obsolete by 2030. Alongside technical competences, analytical thinking, resilience, creativity, leadership and continuous learning will become increasingly important. Eventually, the challenge is the integration of technical skills with soft skills, since the technician of the future will need to use advanced tools, interpret data, collaborate with diverse people and adapt existing knowledge to new problems.

A global transformation marked by inequality

As UNESCO points out, the global skills challenge cannot be reduced to the mere availability of new technologies or to shortage of technical skills. About 20% of young people aged 15 to 24 worldwide are neither employed nor enrolled in education or training (NEETs), and two-thirds of them are women, while 63% of employers identify skills gaps as a major obstacle to business transformation.¹ These inequalities are particularly evident in the dual transition: by 2030, more than 230 million jobs in sub-Saharan Africa are expected to require digital skills, approximately 86 million workers in the Asia-Pacific region will need upskilling or reskilling, and the demand for green skills is already growing faster than their presence in the workforce. It therefore seems necessary to adopt a broader conception of skills, combining technical, digital, artificial intelligence, and green skills with critical thinking, collaboration, intercultural communication, and social responsibility. From this perspective TVET plays a strategic role that goes far beyond preparing people for a specific profession through three complementary functions: developing skills for living and working; supporting inclusive and

¹ <https://www.unevoc.unesco.org/en>

sustainable economies; and contributing to the building of resilient and peaceful societies.²

Capacity Building as an institutional strategy

It is within this framework that APRO Formazione has developed its international presence. Capacity Building has been approached as a progressive and coordinated process to strengthen VET organisations, while consolidating local ecosystems and building cooperation capable of continuing beyond individual funding programmes.

The VET to VET trajectory in the Western Balkans is the clearest expression of this strategy. The first initiative, **VET to VET – Capacity Building in the Western Balkans**, coordinated by APRO from 2020 to 2023, involved ten vocational institutions: five from the European Union and five from Montenegro, Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Twinning between European and Balkan schools was used as the main mechanism for institutional development, combining coaching, staff mobility, pilot student mobility and networking. The aim was to address the factors shaping an institution's capacity to innovate: internationalisation, mobility, dual learning, school-business cooperation, teacher training, entrepreneurship and career guidance were experienced and transferred as part of a comprehensive methodology, not as isolated good practices.

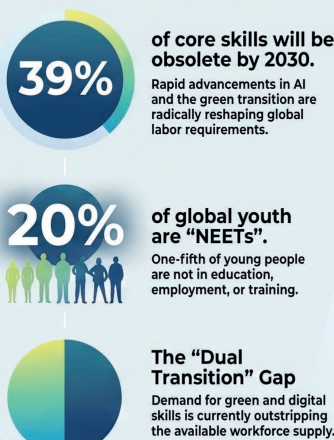
The subsequent **VET to VET – Capacity Building in Albania**, implemented between 2022 and 2024, adapted this regional model to a focused national context. Two Albanian institutions developed tailored internationalisation strategies through organisational analysis, training, job shadowing, coaching, communities of practice and operational tools. This shift from a regional to a national intervention enabled closer work on the strengths and limitations of the Albanian VET system. It also connected institutional development with local ecosystem building through the involvement of companies, stakeholders and policy-makers. Mobility and European cooperation were therefore treated as tools to improve work-based learning, increasing at the same time training relevance and reinforcing the role of VET institutions in local labour markets.

V2V-IDEA – Inclusion, Skills Development and Empowerment for All, launched in 2026, builds directly on the partnerships and methodologies developed through these earlier cycles. This continuity allows cooperation to move from organisational modernisation towards a more ad-

² <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/transforming-technical-and-vocational-education-and-training-successful-and-just-transitions-unesco>

The Future of Vocational Excellence: Building Resilient TVET Systems

THE GLOBAL SKILLS URGENCY



THE APRO CUMULATIVE MODEL

Phase 1: Building Regional Capacity

Establishing basic institutional relationships and internationalization across the Western Balkans.

Phase 2: Embedding National Ecosystems

Deepening local impact in Albania through school-business cooperation and tailored organizational strategies.

Phase 3: Scaling for Inclusion & Sustainability

Using established infrastructure to tackle complex challenges like social entrepreneurship and green skills.

VET to VET (2020-23) Western Balkans Basic Institutional Capacity

VET to VET (2022-24) Albania Local Ecosystem & Business Links

V2V-IDEA (2026) Regional Community Inclusion & Green Transition

The Future of Vocational Excellence: Building Resilient TVET Systems (Notebook LM)

vanced focus on inclusive and sustainable VET. Teacher training, innovative pedagogies, inclusive mobility, green skills and social entrepreneurship are used to improve access for vulnerable students, people with special educational needs and NEETs. The project also consolidates a regional learning community: previous partners continue to cooperate, while new stakeholders broaden its capacity to address inclusion, the green transition and the link between training and employment.

The three projects form a cumulative process. The first created relationships and basic institutional capacity across the Western Balkans; the second adapted and embedded the model within Albania; and the third uses this cooperation infrastructure to address more complex challenges and consolidate results territorially.

For APRO, this continuity has enabled a deeper understanding of Western Balkan VET systems, long-term relationships with schools and stakeholders, and a shift from a project-based approach towards a strategic regional presence. The value lies the cumulative and complementary effects of the projects, as active relationships, reusable tools, circulating competences and increasingly autonomous local organisations. Building on this experience, APRO has extended its Capacity Building approach to other sectors and regions. In Moldova, **MPATS** applies it to tourism by integrating sustainability, digital skills, entrepreneurship and teacher professional development. In Morocco and Tunisia, **FOOD**

ROUTES follows a similar logic in food tourism. In Armenia, **IMPROVET** connects healthcare training with territorial accessibility and employer cooperation. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the same approach supports the green and digital transitions. In Cameroon, renewable energy became a field for strengthening technical training and institutional capacity. In Zimbabwe, Namibia and Rwanda, with **SUSTAIN-IT**, digital technologies and environmental monitoring are combined to develop green skills, problem solving and community-based innovation.

The sectors and regions may change, but the principle remains constant: a project has lasting impact when it strengthens institutions, consolidates territorial networks and creates the conditions for more ambitious cooperation. The true outcome of this approach is a VET system able to observe and to anticipate change, work with its ecosystem and respond autonomously to future transformations.

WordPress.com Education: Preparing the Future of the Open Web

100,000 students around the world will learn professional skills to build websites through this free program.

Education and employment: a global challenge

Vocational education and training no longer responds only to local needs. Digitalisation, artificial intelligence, international mobility, the green transition, and new models of production and communication have made preparing people for employment a global challenge.

What happens in a vocational classroom affects far more than students: it influences companies' competitiveness, countries' ability to adapt, and people's opportunities to build strong careers.

These challenges require collaboration among educational institutions, businesses, public authorities, and international organisations. Vocational education and training occupies a key position: it is close to students, employment, and the transformations reshaping professional sectors. Better training means preparing people to work, learn, and adapt in a connected world.

Employment, entrepreneurship, and real-world practice

Vocational education and training makes it possible to test the future. In its classrooms, students learn by doing, correcting mistakes, and applying knowledge with real tools. That is why it is essential for improving employability and encouraging entrepreneurship.

Website creation is one of those skills. Businesses, agencies, media outlets, and digital projects need professionals who can create, publish, maintain, and improve websites. WordPress.com Education was created to bring those tools into the classroom and help students enter the job market with practical experience.

During its first pilot year, WordPress.com Education has already reached over 5,000 students across 130 educational institutions in nine European countries. This interest confirms a clear need: teaching web creation through practice, not theory alone.

Vocational education and training is strategic. Nearly 50% of Europeans aged 15 to 19 currently

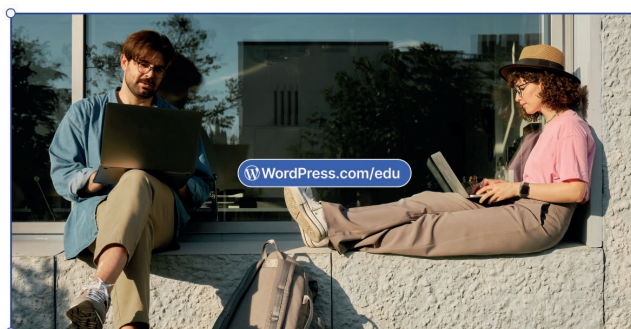


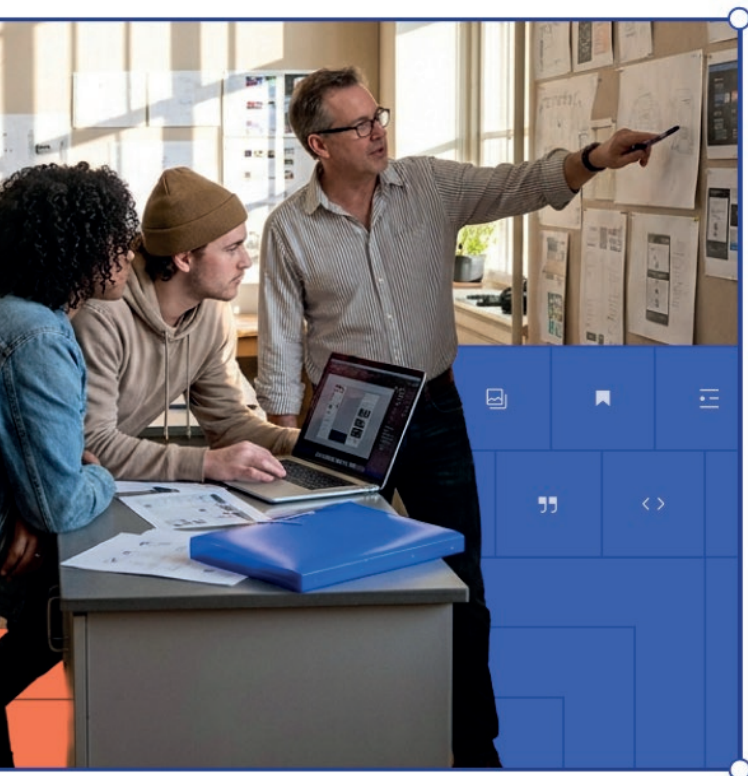
participate in this type of education, according to European Commission data cited in the original text. Its growth and relevance make it essential for institutions to have access to current, accessible technology resources.

WordPress.com Education and the open web

WordPress.com, powered by Automattic, is a leading platform for working with WordPress, the world's most widely used open-source content management system. WordPress powers approximately 43% of websites on the internet and holds nearly two-thirds of the CMS market, according to W3Techs.

For many students in programmes such as Web Application Development, Cross-Platform Application Development, Marketing and Advertising, International Trade, or Sales Management and Commercial Spaces, WordPress will be part of their professional future. They will be able to use it to build an AI-assisted website, publish a digital publication, create a portfolio, or launch an online store with WooCommerce.





WordPress.com Education gives teachers and students free access for the first year to the Student plan, which includes:

- WordPress.com and a custom .blog or .art domain
- Plugin installation
- 6 GB of storage
- Backups and staging sites
- SFTP/SSH and phpMyAdmin access
- Studio Sync integration

After the first year, students can renew the plan for €2 per month and keep their site with these features. If they choose not to renew, their content is not deleted: the site moves to a free WordPress.com plan with a subdomain, while retaining its pages, posts, comments, and media files.

Working with teachers and schools

The program supports educators with professional, up-to-date tools designed to incorporate artificial intelligence capabilities. Its goal is to modernise teaching without adding administrative burdens, while allowing students to work from day one in an environment similar to the one they will find at companies and agencies.

It also helps reduce inequality. Free access to hosting, a domain, and professional publishing tools helps level the playing field between public

and private institutions, as well as between students with different levels of resources.

The experience of one Spanish school reflects the program's impact:

"Access to WordPress.com accounts for students and teachers has been fundamental: everyone has worked in a real environment from day one, and that has made an enormous difference to the final result."

"Of the 30 enrolled students, more than 20 have passed the course and are now completing work placements at companies. The companies have been surprised by the level the students bring, both in SEO/SEM strategy and in their use of WordPress."

— Joaquín Pece Montenegro, Head of Adult Studies, IES Luís Seoane

When a company welcomes interns with real WordPress experience, the value is immediate. It reflects both students' preparation and teachers' commitment to incorporating useful, relevant tools. WordPress.com Education aims to help classrooms and companies evolve together by sharing technologies and professional practices.

The program is also connected with other educational initiatives in the WordPress ecosystem:

- **WordPress Credits**, which enables students to contribute to real WordPress projects, usually through curricular placements.
- **WordPress Campus Connect**, which brings hands-on workshops to universities, campuses, and educational institutions to teach web creation, develop projects, and explore professional opportunities within the WordPress community.

Vocational education and training must look beyond the next academic year and prepare people for a working life that is constantly evolving. WordPress.com Education aims to go beyond free access to tools: it is working toward skills certifications, dual vocational education projects, micro-credential pilots, and new pathways for collaboration between education and industry.

If you are a teacher, educational institution, company, or organisation involved in vocational education and training and would like to collaborate, email education@wordpress.com or visit [WordPress.com Education](https://WordPress.com/Education).

When Mathematics Meets the Workshop: Contextualising General Education for Automotive VET in Moldova

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At the Centre of Excellence in Transports in Chişinău, a curriculum-development initiative has connected mathematics, physics, chemistry and foreign languages with the realities of automotive occupations. Developed in 2022–2023 and approved by the Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova in 2023, the guidelines have been implemented in 24 VET institutions since 2024. The experience shows how general education can become more meaningful when learners recognise its purpose in the workshop, workplace and future profession.



A curriculum question rooted in the workplace

For learners preparing to become Auto Mechanics or Auto Electrician-Electronics Technicians, general education subjects are essential. Yet when Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry or Foreign Languages are taught without a visible connection to the profession, learners may struggle to see where this knowledge fits into working life. In 2022, the Centre set out to contextualise the national curriculum rather than replace it: required subject content was retained, while concepts, examples and learning tasks were linked to authentic situations from the automotive field. This matters increasingly in a sector shaped by

electrification, digital diagnostics, complex vehicle systems and technical information that crosses national and linguistic borders. Mathematics, science and languages therefore form part of the foundation learners need to understand and adapt to technological change. This approach also reflects the 2020 Council Recommendation on VET, which emphasises responsiveness to economic change and preparation for technological and green transitions.



Building the guidelines together

The development process was deliberately interdisciplinary. Twenty-three teachers worked in separate groups for Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Foreign Languages, supported by eight consultants from automotive specialist disciplines.

Six VET institutions participated in developing the materials, while teachers from other institutions contributed through review. The process included curriculum analysis, exchange-of-experience sessions, round tables, debates, brainstorming and joint planning. Specialist teachers identified occupational situations and professional needs; general education teachers determined how curricular content and teaching time could be connected to them.

The Centre facilitated this cooperation. EU4Moldova and CONSEPT5 supported the process through financial assistance, training sessions and methodological support.





The Foreign Languages guideline turns English and French into tools for professional communication. Content includes automotive occupations, repair manuals and professional documents, bodywork repairs, workplace health and safety, battery recycling, repair estimates and returning a vehicle to the customer. Learners also work with terminology for braking, steering, suspension, transmission, cooling, lubrication and electrical systems, as well as internal-combustion, hybrid and electric engines.

Physics follows the same logic. Teachers contextualise curricular content through examples linked to automotive occupations, including a proposed STEM/STEAM project on electric means of transport. Chemistry creates another bridge by connecting hydrocarbons and petroleum, their properties and uses, with automotive professional contexts.

From local implementation to international knowledge transfer

The guidelines were completed and approved in 2023 and have been implemented in 24 VET institutions since 2024. Long-term planning documents and methodological guidance were also developed to support teachers in moving towards contextualised teaching.

No formal quantitative impact evaluation has yet been conducted. Professional observations nevertheless indicate practical benefits: teachers have a clearer framework for connecting theory with vocational practice, learners encounter general subjects through recognisable professional situations, and institutions share a common methodological resource for interdisciplinary teaching.

The wider value of the initiative is also emerging through the Centre's international cooperation. Within the project "Vocational training in the Eastern Partnership", the Centre acts as a role-model institution in a knowledge-transfer process supporting Ukrainian VET schools in their

transformation into Centres of Vocational Excellence. The project connects VET institutions from Ukraine, Moldova and Armenia with EU partners and addresses areas including curriculum modernisation, digitalisation, teacher development and cooperation with employers.

During a 2026 study visit to Austria, the Centre also shared its contextualised approach at the Berufsschule für Baugewerbe in Vienna, where it was positively received as an example of making general education more meaningful through vocational applications.

For VET centres beyond Moldova, the transferable element is not the replication of the same automotive exercises, but the method behind them: general-subject teachers and vocational specialists identify authentic occupational situations together and redesign learning contexts so that theoretical knowledge supports professional competence.

The same process could be adapted to construction, energy, agriculture, hospitality, manufacturing or other sectors. Each context requires different examples, but the underlying principle can travel: VET can remain rooted in local labour-market needs while sharing, adapting and improving practices through international cooperation.

In a changing and increasingly interconnected world, vocational excellence does not require identical solutions across countries. It requires VET institutions able to turn local experience into knowledge that can be shared, adapted and improved across borders.

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From mobility to transformation: How a public VET centre connects local skills with global challenges

Jaime Carmona López

CIPFP Vicente Blasco Ibáñez

From mobility to institutional transformation

Technological acceleration, the green transition and changing industrial value chains are creating skills needs faster than traditional curricula can accommodate. The challenge for VET is not simply to respond once change has occurred, but to anticipate it and translate it into accessible learning.

At CIPFP Vicente Blasco Ibáñez in València, internationalisation initially developed through Erasmus+ mobility. Over time, mobility remained essential but became just one part of a broader strategy: Erasmus+ Key Action projects, membership of a European Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) network, and regional and national innovation programmes.

As a public integrated VET centre and a member of Spain's State Network of Centres of Excellence for Vocational Training in the Chemical Sector, we work in areas directly affected by the green and digital transitions: industrial chemistry, environmental safety, energy storage, manufacturing, automation and maintenance.



The Blasco Battery Lab: turning a global transition into local skills

The Blasco Battery Lab was born from collaboration between PowerCo, the Instituto Tecnológico de la Energía, Quimacova, the Universitat Politècnica de València, the Ayuntamiento de València and the Generalitat Valenciana's Dirección General de Formación Profesional, driven by Efrén Forcada Gallén, the centre's Chief Innovation Officer, who brought it from concept to reality.



The trigger was concrete: PowerCo's new gigafactory in Sagunt, a multi-billion-euro investment expected to create thousands of jobs, was generating demand for qualified profiles in applied chemistry, materials analysis, quality control and advanced industrial processes that did not yet exist locally. Rather than waiting for that gap to widen, the centre built a curriculum response. The wider pattern is a European one: the transition towards electrified mobility and industrial autonomy is creating similar demand across the battery value chain well beyond this region, a challenge other VET providers are likely to recognise.

From September 2026, the Lab welcomes its first cohort in the adapted Laboratory Analysis and Quality Control cycle, redesigned for lithium battery manufacturing. Teaching staff trained first, completing specific instruction in battery manufacturing before bringing it into the classroom: proof that innovation in VET starts with teachers, not only equipment. Learners now work hands-on with battery cells, modules and packs, developing skills in manufacturing, assembly, characterisation, quality control, safety, battery management systems and second-life applications.

The Lab was officially inaugurated at CIPFP Vicente Blasco Ibáñez on 16 July 2026. As our centre's director, Carles Mora Escrig, described it that day, it is "a space to learn, train technical talent and build a stable relationship between the school and its industrial environment."

Global strategies acquire real meaning only when they become practical: building and test-



ing a battery cell, or working out how a used battery can be safely reused, turns an abstract transition into something concrete and personal for a seventeen-year-old learner.

The challenge behind the Lab is not exclusively European: battery manufacturing hubs are growing just as fast in North America and Asia, facing the same race to train technical talent before industry outpaces the classroom. A small, specialised lab built on real industrial partnership is a model worth sharing with VET providers everywhere.

Connecting the laboratory with a wider ecosystem

The ambition extends beyond a single lab: the Generalitat Valenciana is already adapting related cycles in Mechatronics and Automation and Robotics, extending battery-related specialisation to other professions as industry needs evolve. The Lab itself sits within a wider network of partnerships spanning clean energy, advanced manufacturing, water resilience and digital healthcare, all demanding the same response: interdisciplinary knowledge and hands-on experimentation.

This exchange runs both ways: European projects and vocational excellence networks give our teachers access to knowledge otherwise confined to research institutions, and in return we turn it into learning outcomes and training that neither companies nor universities alone could deliver to the classroom.

Remaining rooted in the local community

Internationalisation should strengthen, not weaken, the relationship between a VET centre and its territory, improving opportunities for local learners, supporting teachers and helping companies respond to skills shortages.

For our centre, this means listening to the Valencian industrial ecosystem while participating in European conversations about future skills. Not every learner will take part in physical mobility, but every learner should benefit from the knowledge and opportunities it generates. When a partnership leads to a new laboratory activity or microcredential, its impact reaches well beyond the students directly involved.



A new role for VET centres

The experience of CIPFP Vicente Blasco Ibáñez suggests that public VET centres can play a more ambitious role, rather than waiting for technologies to mature. As Daniel McEvoy, the region's Secretary for Education, said at the Lab's launch, public VET must give industry "the technical talent, innovation and capacity for anticipation the industry of the future requires".

With clear specialisation, strong partnerships and the ability to turn cooperation into practical learning, a VET centre can become an innovation hub, connecting local companies with international expertise and helping learners shape, rather than endure, industrial change.

Internationalisation should be assessed not in kilometres travelled or projects completed, but in transformations achieved. In our case, the Blasco Battery Lab is only the first step: it will feed directly into the future Battery Campus de Sagunt, planned for 2027, extending dual VET, advanced laboratories and industrial infrastructure across the region. That is how mobility becomes transformation: student by student, partnership by partnership.

From Local Food Skills to Global Resilience: EU FOODPACT and the Future of VET

Andreas Vasileiadis

Project Manager and Researcher,
Eurosucccess Consulting



Training, mentoring and certification pathways for a greener and more adaptable agri-food sector

EU FOODPACT examines how vocational education and training can help agri-food MSMEs respond to changing sustainability and skills requirements through practical training, mentoring, certification support and collaborative learning. The article highlights early stakeholder mapping and consultation activities with agri-food MSMEs in Cyprus, showing how local evidence can shape later learning activities. The project illustrates how locally grounded VET approaches can contribute to more sustainable and resilient agri-food value chains.

The agri-food sector shows clearly how global change is reshaping local work. Farmers, food producers and small businesses are expected to respond to climate pressures, resource constraints, changing consumer expectations, new sustainability requirements and more complex value chains. For vocational education and training (VET), the challenge is not simply to add “green” content to existing courses. It is to help people translate sustainability goals into practical decisions about production, management, skills and business development.

EU FOODPACT, a 36-month European project involving ten partner organisations, addresses this challenge by linking training with workplace support. The project aims to strengthen the sustainability capacity of agri-food micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), while also supporting future professionals, training providers, certification bodies and public authorities. Its approach combines leadership training, a self-assessment tool, mentoring, certification support and Community Food Education Hubs. This reflects a broader VET principle: skills development is more effective when learning is con-

nected to the environment in which those skills will be used.

The project also places current workers and future professionals within the same learning ecosystem. This is significant for VET because the green transition is not only about reskilling people already in employment; it is also about ensuring that learners entering the sector encounter sustainability as part of normal professional competence. Bringing education providers into dialogue with enterprises can help curricula reflect current operational challenges while giving businesses a clearer route to structured learning support.

This matters because small agri-food businesses often face a particular implementation gap. Sustainability requirements may be clear at policy level, but applying them can be difficult when companies have limited time, small teams and uneven access to specialist expertise. The skills required are also becoming more hybrid. Technical knowledge remains essential, but managers and workers increasingly need digital confidence, systems thinking, communication, resource awareness and the ability to understand standards and evidence progress. VET therefore has a role not only in transmitting knowledge, but in helping learners interpret change and act on it.

EU FOODPACT’s planned learning pathway starts with this practical perspective. Its training activities aim to support managers, workers and future professionals in understanding sustainability standards and translating them into everyday business practice. A self-assessment tool will help participants identify gaps and priorities rather than assuming that every enterprise begins from the same point. Mentoring is intended to provide a second layer of support, helping participants test ideas in their own organisations, reflect on results and adapt actions to their operational context.

Certification support is another important element. Green labels and sustainability standards can improve transparency and provide a framework for organisational improvement, but the process can appear complex to smaller enterprises. The project aims to help MSMEs understand relevant requirements and prepare more systematically, while linking learning with evidence of acquired competences. From a VET perspective, this is useful because it connects training with workplace application and skills recognition rather than treating learning as an isolated activity.

The project is already using stakeholder engagement to ground these future tools in local realities. In Cyprus, for example, Eurosucccess Consulting and the Cyprus Certification Company



(CyCert) have been carrying out mapping and consultation activities with agri-food MSMEs and relevant organisations. The purpose is to identify existing practices, skills needs, barriers to sustainability and examples that can inform later training and support. This early-stage work is important because it gives local businesses a role in shaping the learning offer before the main training activities begin. It also helps distinguish between needs that are common across countries and those that require a more specific national or sectoral response.

This local evidence is expected to feed into the Community Food Education Hubs, which are designed as spaces where MSMEs, education providers, chambers of commerce, certification bodies, public authorities and other stakeholders can exchange knowledge and work on practical challenges. The value of such hubs is not simply that they host training. They seek to create a continuing relationship between education and the agri-food ecosystem, allowing VET providers to receive clearer signals about emerging workplace needs while giving companies easier access to learning, mentoring and peer exchange.

EU FOODPACT therefore illustrates a useful interpretation of “Global VET”. Global relevance does not require every solution to be identical across countries. Agriculture is strongly shaped by local climate, production models, company size and regional markets. What can be shared are methods for identifying skills gaps, structuring learning, supporting certification readiness and exchanging practices across territories. The project’s transnational partnership creates an

opportunity to compare experiences and adapt approaches without assuming that one model will fit every context.

This is particularly relevant as agri-food value chains become more interconnected. A decision taken by a small producer can be influenced by European standards, customer expectations, supply-chain requirements and climate conditions far beyond the immediate workplace. VET can help learners understand these connections while keeping training grounded in tasks they can influence directly. In this sense, sustainability competences include both practical know-how and the capacity to see how individual business decisions relate to wider environmental and economic systems.

The project is still in development, so its longer-term value will depend on implementation and evidence from participating MSMEs and learners. The key question is whether the combination of assessment, training, mentoring, certification support and local collaboration leads to changes that businesses can realistically maintain. EU FOODPACT does not offer a single solution to the green transition, but it provides a practical model for testing how VET can respond to changing skills needs in a sector where global pressures are experienced through very local decisions.

Regarding the AI declaration, AI-assisted tools were used only for formatting and proofreading.

From Access to Agency: How Augmented Training Can Make Global VET More Inclusive

Jaime Zaforas

Marketing Director, Seabery

Global VET must respond to skills shortages and technological change without leaving learners behind. Drawing on Seabery's experience in more than 80 countries, this article explores how augmented reality and the Augmented Training methodology can make skilled trades education safer, more flexible and more inclusive.

Vocational education is being asked to do more than prepare people for a first job. In a world shaped by rapid technological change, skills shortages, demographic shifts and the green and digital transitions, VET must also strengthen social participation, resilience and opportunity. This is closely aligned with EfVET's vision of a connected VET community capable of responding to local needs while contributing to a more inclusive and globally minded society.

For Seabery, this challenge has a practical dimension. Its augmented reality training technology is now implemented in more than 80 countries, particularly in welding and spray painting education, where institutions face a common question: how can we open the door to skilled trades to more learners, while maintaining the safety, quality and professional standards demanded by industry?

The answer is not technology alone. It is how technology is integrated into pedagogy.

Seabery's Augmented Training methodology connects three environments: structured theory, intensive simulator practice and real workshop experience. Learners can acquire knowledge, practise technical movements with real welding torches and physical workpieces in augmented reality, receive objective feedback, and progress to real welding when they are ready. Mistakes become part of the learning process rather than a source of wasted material, unnecessary risk or discouragement.

This approach reflects an important principle for the future of VET: equal opportunity does not always mean identical learning pathways. People learn at different speeds, arrive with different levels of confidence and experience, and may face very different barriers to participation. Digital simulation can give instructors more flexibility to adapt the route without lowering the destination.



Students build welding skills through augmented reality practice before progressing to the real workshop, creating a safer, more flexible and inclusive learning pathway. Institut

Jaume Huguet, Spain.

This becomes particularly relevant when we consider neurodiversity. Seabery has developed an autism-aware approach to welding training based on a calm, structured and predictable learning environment. During simulator practice there is no real welding heat, fumes or arc flash, and learners can repeat exercises without time pressure. Objective data on variables such as work angle, travel speed and arc length creates clear feedback, while readiness-based progression allows the transition to the real workshop to happen gradually. For autistic learners, and for others who benefit from reduced sensory load and consistent routines, this can make the first contact with a demanding technical trade more manageable.

The same principle can help widen participation among groups that have historically been less represented in welding and other industrial occupations. For many young people, the traditional workshop can feel like a high-threshold environment: unfamiliar equipment, visible risk, noise, heat and the fear of making mistakes in front of others. For girls and women, these barriers can be reinforced by long-standing perceptions of welding and spray painting as a predominantly male occupation. Simulation does not solve representation on its own, but it can create a safer and more approachable first experience, allowing learners to discover aptitude and interest before stereotypes or anxiety close the door.

There is also a broader social dimension. In communities where training resources are limited, every hour of physical workshop practice carries

costs in consumables, energy, extraction, maintenance and instructor time. A simulator-first model cannot replace the real workshop, nor should it. What it can do is make real workshop time more purposeful by allowing foundational practice to happen beforehand. This can help training providers extend practice opportunities, support learners who need more repetition and use physical resources more efficiently — particularly important when VET is expected to contribute simultaneously to inclusion and sustainability.

Seabery's international experience also shows why global VET cannot be based on a one-size-fits-all model. Skills need to be locally relevant, but they also need to be portable. Training centres using augmented simulation can adapt exercises, difficulty and progression to their own learners while working with recognised welding frameworks and industry practices. Examples from vocational institutions such as Institut Jaume Huguet in Spain and REDU, a leading vocational training center in Finland, show how traditional practical training can be combined with augmented methods rather than displaced by them.



A student practices with Seabery welding simulator. An instructor teaches an apprentice how to use the spray-painting simulator. REDU Vocational Training Center, Finland.

This is where Seabery's experience strongly connects with the role EfVET promotes for vocational education: linking education, industry, innovation

and society. A welding simulator may appear to be a specialised piece of technology, but its wider purpose is human. It can give an instructor better information, give a learner more opportunities to practise, make a first step into an industrial career less intimidating, and help institutions build bridges between local communities and global skills needs.

As EfVET gathers its community in Brussels under the theme "Global Citizenship, Empowered by VET", the question is not simply how digital VET should become. It is how deliberately we use digitalisation to expand participation, confidence and progression.

The most meaningful innovation in vocational education is therefore not the simulator itself. It is the learner who, because the training environment was designed to include rather than exclude, can see a realistic path towards a skilled profession.



Apprentices are using Seabery Augmented Reality simulators to learn how to paint car parts.

Sources

Institut Jaume Huguet, Spain: <https://youtu.be/4YW09jFLrtI?si=igRluuurXdEAKlNK>

REDU Vocational Training Center, Finland: <https://youtu.be/mMSInOg5kCA?si=d3WiFuBVRliES-F>

Seabery case studies: <https://seaberyat.com/case-studies/>

From Local Airports to Global Skills: How Serbia's Aviation Academy Is Preparing Learners for a Changing World

Marija Josipović

Aviation Academy Belgrade

Aviation Academy Belgrade is the only specialised institution of its kind in Serbia and the surrounding region. Through Erasmus+ accreditation and international cooperation projects, it connects aviation education with sustainability, meteorology, digital learning and authentic professional practice. Two recently completed projects coordinated by Aviation Academy, *Ecometeo* and *AviWaste*, show how international cooperation can become part of everyday teaching and remain useful beyond the formal project period.

Aviation is international by nature. Aircraft cross borders, professionals work according to common standards, and decisions made at one airport may affect operations thousands of kilometres away. For a vocational school preparing future aviation professionals, a global perspective is integral to professional education.

Aviation Academy Belgrade combines secondary vocational education with access to Vršac Airport, aircraft hangars and its own practical training facilities allowing students to connect classroom knowledge with the realities of the profession.

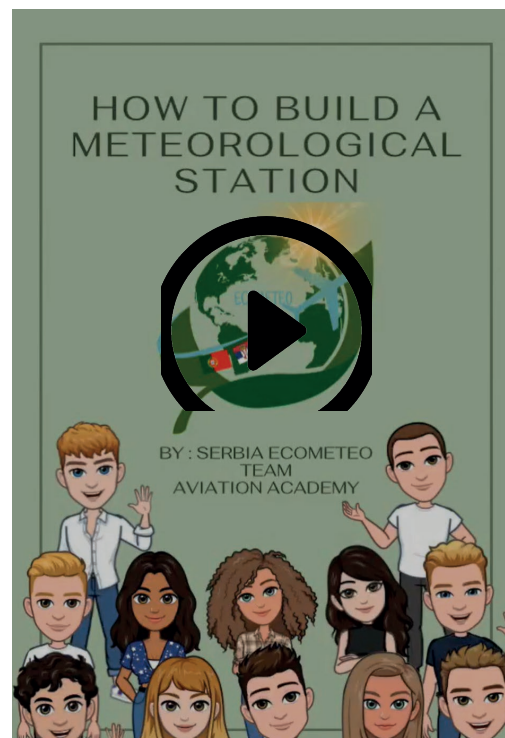
Our Erasmus+ accreditation, valid until 2027, also provides an important framework for this work. Student and staff mobilities expose participants to different professional and cultural environments, while presentations, workshops and peer exchange help new knowledge reach beyond those who travelled.

The same approach can be seen in the Erasmus+ cooperation partnerships coordinated by the Academy. Over the past several years, Aviation Academy Belgrade has coordinated three transnational VET projects linking aviation education with digital innovation and environmental responsibility. The two most recently completed projects, *Ecometeo* and *AviWaste*, continued this direction.

Understanding weather in a wider context

Ecometeo project, finalised in February 2026,

linked ecology and meteorology with aviation education. Weather is essential to aviation training, but the project encouraged students to look beyond its immediate operational role and consider climate, environmental responsibility and the relationship between aviation and the natural world.



Ecometeo in practice: a short video showing how the project team assembled and installed the meteorological station at Aviation Academy Belgrade. (Ecometeo project / Aviation Academy Belgrade)

Together with partners from Türkiye and Portugal, we developed the online course *A Leap into Meteorology*, research materials and practical educational resources. Another project result, *Companion to Environmental Protection*, was designed for learners who wanted to explore environmental topics in greater depth and extend the learning experience beyond the core course.



Close-up of the Ecometeo meteorological station and its analogue instruments during installation. (Ecometeo project / Aviation Academy Belgrade)

The interdisciplinary nature of *Ecometeo* was especially valuable. Meteorology could be discussed in Aviation English lessons, technical subjects and environmental education. Language teachers, aviation teachers and technical experts worked together to explain complex concepts clearly and develop a shared professional language.



Project participants setting up the Ecometeo meteorological station at Aviation Academy Belgrade.. (Ecometeo project / Aviation Academy Belgrade)

Learning about waste in real aviation environments

AviWaste – Waste Management in Aviation Education, completed in July 2026, addressed a subject still insufficiently represented in aviation education. Waste management at airports and in aircraft maintenance includes technical and hazardous waste, oils, chemicals, catering waste, obsolete aircraft components and the responsible use of materials.

The partnership developed an online course and a range of OERs, including quizzes, teacher resources and nine virtual-reality scenarios, each corresponding to one of the nine course topics. The scenarios covered airport waste streams, aircraft recycling, sustainable ground handling practices and the environmental impact of air travel, while drawing on authentic aviation settings from all three partner countries.

An important part of *AviWaste* was training teachers and students to create educational scenarios themselves. They learned to select reliable content, define learning outcomes, develop interactive hotspots and questions, and connect digital activities with vocational practice



Testing one of the virtual-reality learning scenarios developed as part of the AviWaste project. (AviWaste project / Aviation Academy Belgrade)

During the project's learning, teaching and training activity (LTT), Vršac Airport and its hangars were used as an authentic case study. Participants examined waste generation and disposal at a smaller training airport and considered how practices from larger airports could be adapted locally.

The international dimension was also built into the VR materials. The scenarios drew on examples and input from several aviation environments across the three partner countries, including Vršac, Naples, Antalya, Rome Ciampino and Rome Fiumicino airports, as well as the Turkish partner's aviation school facilities. Learners could therefore compare practices across major international airports, a smaller training airport and an aviation school setting.

One scenario takes students around a retired *Jastreb J-21* aircraft and pinpoints which materials and components could be reused, recycled or treated as specialised waste. Digital tools were used to make processes visible that students cannot always observe directly and to bring several aviation environments into the same learning experience.

Turning international experience into institutional practice

Ecometeo and *AviWaste* were different projects, but they shared the same approach. Both connected aviation education with environmental responsibility, required cooperation across different subject areas and produced resources

designed to remain useful beyond the formal project period.

The courses and supporting materials are hosted on a shared learning platform coordinated by Aviation Academy Belgrade. They can be revisited, downloaded, reused and adapted to different learning contexts. Teachers can use complete courses or select individual resources for their own classes, while guest access and self-enrolment make the platform available to a wider audience.

Our Erasmus+ accreditation helps us connect mobility, staff development and cooperation projects and transfer international experience into regular teaching.

For us, global VET does not mean losing connection with the local community. Vršac Airport and a wide local network of aviation stakeholders provide students with an authentic professional context, while international cooperation brings new ideas, standards and perspectives into that environment.

The most sustainable result is not a single mobility, online course or virtual-reality scenario. It is the ability to turn international experience into better learning opportunities for future students.

In a rapidly changing aviation sector, technical knowledge remains essential but it must be accompanied by environmental awareness, digital confidence, communication skills, adaptability and professional responsibility.

That is how local airports can lead to global skills.

Explore the learning resources

Ecometeo and AviWaste courses and materials are available at <https://www.erasmus-projects.org/> with guest access and self-enrolment options.

AviWaste LTT at Vršac Airport: project participants discussing waste management in the authentic setting of an aircraft hangar



Scaling XR in Vocational Education: Basque VET Network Use Case

Maria Madarieta

CSM, Virtualware

For vocational education providers, adopting XR goes far beyond acquiring equipment. The real challenge is turning the technology into a practical training resource that teachers can use consistently and that learners can benefit from. The experience of Basque VET centres demonstrates how a shared XR platform can support practical training across institutions while remaining flexible enough to accommodate different devices, development models and vocational fields

Vocational education and training (VET) systems are increasingly expected to prepare learners for work in environments shaped by technological change, industrial transformation and growing skills demands. In this context, extended reality (XR) is attracting significant attention. However, adoption is rarely straightforward. The challenge is not only gaining access to immersive content but implementing it through a model that is operationally viable for centres, teachers and learners alike.

Educational centres need a way to manage devices, deploy content and keep applications up to date. To support this work, the Basque VET network uses the VIROO XR platform. Beyond delivering immersive experiences, it provides infra-

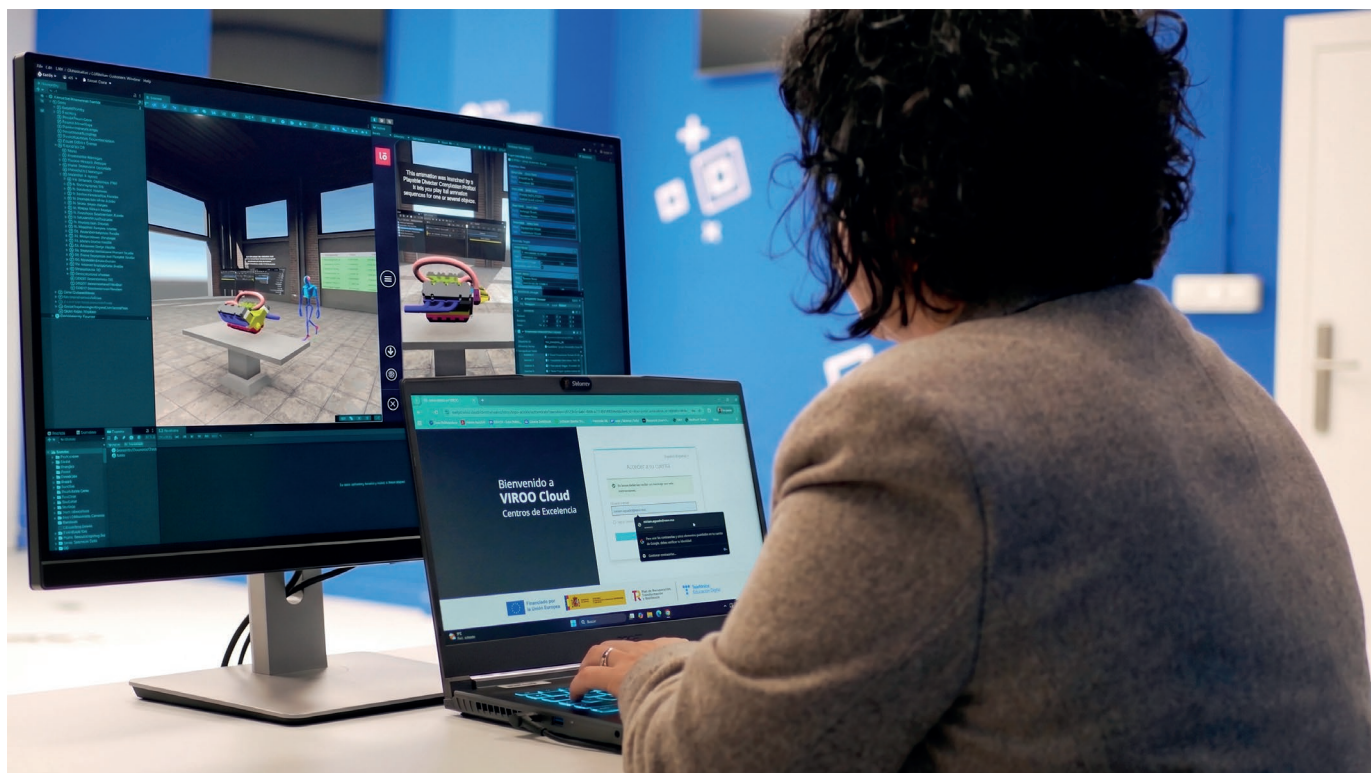
structure for managing and deploying XR across immersive rooms, VR headsets and desktop systems.

The platform also supports content creation through Unity-based tools, templates and reusable components, while enabling collaboration with external development partners when required. This flexibility is important because institutions vary significantly in their technical capabilities and available resources.

XR does not replace hands-on learning, but it can help learners prepare more effectively for practical activities. Students can rehearse procedures, familiarise themselves with professional environments and repeat training scenarios that may otherwise be difficult to access. This is particularly valuable in sectors where equipment is expensive, mistakes are costly or training opportunities are limited.

In the Basque Country, this approach has been incorporated into a coordinated network of VET institutions. Aligned with the Basque VET 2030 Strategy, the initiative operates within a system comprising 184 coordinated VET centres. VIROO is currently deployed across 27 centres, supporting more than 25 immersive rooms and 15 applications developed for different vocational specialisations.

Rather than treating XR as an isolated pilot project, the network is building a shared infrastructure through which immersive experiences can be deployed, accessed and reused across institutions. The application catalogue reflects this





diversity, with XR experiences covering areas such as electrical systems, industrial refrigeration, logistics, machining, occupational safety and care-related training.

A key lesson from the Basque experience is that the challenge is no longer demonstrating the potential of XR through isolated pilots. The more difficult step is scaling its use across multiple centres, teachers and programmes while ensuring that content, devices and learning experiences remain accessible and manageable over time.

For many VET providers, practical training is constrained by the cost of equipment, safety requirements and limited workshop availability. XR helps address these constraints by allowing learners to practise procedures before working in real environments. By arriving better prepared, students can make more effective use of valuable workshop time.

Another lesson is that effective XR training does not always require a perfect digital replica of reality. In many cases, the educational value comes from helping learners understand workflows, safety procedures and decision-making processes. This enables institutions to focus development efforts on learning outcomes rather than simulation complexity.

Shared digital environments also make training less dependent on the physical availability of equipment. Learners can continue practising beyond scheduled workshop sessions, reinforcing knowledge and confidence before engaging with real machinery and tools.

EASO Politeknikoa in San Sebastián provides a practical example of this approach. The centre uses immersive experiences to help students practise mechanical manufacturing procedures before entering physical workshops. At the same time, the platform supports training activities in social and care services, demonstrating how the same infrastructure can be applied across very different vocational disciplines.

The platform enables collaborative multi-user sessions in which learners and teachers participate in the same virtual environment, whether from the same physical location or remotely. The EASO experience illustrates that the greatest value of XR comes when it is integrated into everyday teaching rather than treated as a stand-alone technology initiative.

The Basque network also demonstrates that scaling immersive learning requires more than developing applications. Centres need a practical way to manage content, support teachers, share resources and maintain access over time. Some institutions may create their own content while others work with specialist partners, but both approaches can coexist within the same ecosystem.

The relevance of this approach extends beyond the Basque Country. This aligns closely with the broader challenge facing VET systems worldwide: preparing learners with practical skills for rapidly changing industries while making efficient use of limited training resources. Many VET providers face similar constraints, including restricted ac-

cess to specialist equipment, growing demand for digital competencies and pressure to scale high-quality training.

The international adoption of the VIROO platform illustrates how a shared XR infrastructure model can help address these challenges across different contexts. Beyond its deployment in the Basque VET network, the platform has also been used by institutions such as Ohio University, the University of Lethbridge, McMaster University and the University of El Salvador, demonstrating its applicability across different educational, cultural and organisational environments.

Because the platform is device-agnostic and supports both internally developed and externally commissioned content, the underlying model can be adapted to different educational systems, industrial sectors and national contexts. As skills requirements continue to evolve globally, shared XR infrastructures offer a practical way for VET providers to expand access to hands-on learning, support workforce development and prepare learners for a changing world.

For other VET systems, the most transferable lesson is not a specific application or device but the idea of treating XR as shared training infrastructure. By making content reusable across centres and allowing learners to practise procedures before entering workshops, the Basque network offers a practical example of how immersive learning can create lasting value when aligned with educational needs, organisational capacity and long-term planning.





From Local Environmental Challenges to Global Green Skills: The Award-Winning SUSTAIN-IT Experience

Anabel Menica and Sheila Larrabaster

Politeknika Txorierri

Vocational education and training is increasingly expected to respond to global challenges while remaining rooted in local communities, labour markets and learners' realities. Climate change, digital transformation, skills shortages and the need for more inclusive learning pathways are reshaping the role of VET systems across the world. These challenges are global, but their effects are experienced locally: in schools, training centres, communities and workplaces.

SUSTAIN-IT, an Erasmus+ Capacity Building in VET project, was created precisely at this intersection between global transitions and local action. Coordinated by Politeknika Txorierri, the project brings together partners from Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa to strengthen the capacity of TVET educators and institutions in Rwanda, Namibia and Zimbabwe. Its aim is to support teachers and learners in using digital tools for environmental monitoring, climate awareness and green skills development.

The relevance and innovative character of this approach have recently been recognised through the Quality Innovation Award at both national and international level. This recognition highlights SUSTAIN-IT as an example of educational innovation that connects African TVET, teacher training, IoT-sensor-based environmental monitoring, Challenge-Based Learning and sustainability. For the consortium, the award confirms that VET can play a central role in preparing learners and institutions to respond to global transitions through practical, inclusive and locally meaningful solutions.

The project starts from a simple but powerful idea: environmental education becomes more meaningful when learners can observe and measure what is happening around them. Through accessible technologies such as IoT devices, Arduino, sensors and low-cost do-it-yourself monitoring systems, students can collect and interpret environmental data related to topics such as air quality, water quality and solar energy. In this way, digital skills and green skills are not taught as separate concepts, but as connected competences that help learners understand and respond to real environmental challenges.

During the first phase of the project, the consor-

tium worked closely with African TVET partners to identify needs, barriers and opportunities. A Study Visit in Rwanda, design thinking sessions, questionnaires and local consultations helped partners understand how sustainability, digitalisation and environmental awareness are currently addressed in different TVET contexts. This co-creation process was essential to ensure that the project resources would not simply transfer European practices, but adapt them to the realities of African TVET institutions.

One of the first concrete results was the development of the SUSTAIN-IT e-Toolbox, a pedagogical resource for TVET educators. The e-Toolbox focuses on three complementary areas: Challenge-Based Learning for Environmental Awareness, Social Entrepreneurship and Personal Competences, and Inclusive Teaching Strategies. These areas reflect the project's belief that future green and digital professionals need more than technical knowledge. They also need creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, initiative and the ability to work with others to solve complex problems.

The e-Toolbox was presented and tested during an Expert Training in Spain, hosted by Politeknika Txorierri. Teachers and staff worked on practical methodologies, exchanged experiences and explored how challenge-based approaches can be applied in vocational education. The programme also included a visit to the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve in Bizkaia, connecting the project's work on environmental awareness and sustainability with a real local example of biodiversity protection and environmental learning. After this training, local workshops were organised in the African partner countries to transfer the methodology to teachers and stakeholders in their own contexts.

The second major result is the MOOC for the Digital Empowerment of TVET Trainers for Green and Smart Environments. This online course supports teachers in developing competences related to data-driven STEM, green technologies, IoT, Arduino programming, environmental sensors, data visualisation and data analysis. The MOOC is hosted on the Smart Step Knowledge and Exchange Platform, which makes the learning materials accessible beyond the immediate project partnership. Open Badges have also been developed to support the recognition of learning achievements.

A second Expert Training took place in Alba, Italy, hosted by APRO Formazione. This training focused on the MOOC, Smart Step platform, Open Badges and technical modules. It also included practical examples of digital and green innovation, such as environmental sensor technologies



SUSTAIN-IT partners and Expert Training participants during the visit to the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve in Bizkaia, Spain

and a study visit focused on photovoltaic systems, energy storage and smart energy management. These activities helped connect classroom learning with real applications in industry and environmental monitoring.

The next phase of SUSTAIN-IT will focus on the development and piloting of practical use cases in African TVET centres. These use cases will focus on solar energy, air quality and water quality. They will provide teachers with step-by-step guidance, technical explanations, Arduino programming support, safety procedures and classroom implementation materials. Through these activities, learners will be able to collect, visualise and interpret environmental data, while developing skills relevant for future employment and active citizenship.

SUSTAIN-IT also contributes to the global dimension of VET by creating a space for mutual learning between European and African partners. European organisations bring experience in VET innovation, digital learning, international cooperation and sustainability. African partners bring local knowledge, community links and direct un-

derstanding of the educational, environmental and social challenges faced by their learners. This exchange helps create resources that are both internationally relevant and locally meaningful.

In a changing world, VET has a crucial role to play in preparing learners not only for jobs, but also for participation in more sustainable and resilient societies. SUSTAIN-IT shows how vocational education can connect local environmental challenges with global skills needs. Its award-winning approach demonstrates that green skills, digital tools, inclusive pedagogy and international cooperation can work together to help teachers and learners become active agents of sustainable change.

Beyond the Certificate: How Learner-Controlled Digital Credentials Can Empower Global Citizenship Through VET

Annalisa Dicataldo

Pomiager

Being a global citizen today means being able, but also having the need, to move between countries, fields and roles while always carrying a clear and trusted account of what your actual skills and achievements are.

For learners in vocational education and training this is a daily challenge to address, especially because there's never been a lack of skills in the field, but more of a lack of a coherent way of demonstrating them.

This very gap between what people have learned and what they can prove is what needs to be addressed in order for genuine mobility and lifelong learning to spread and improve across Europe.

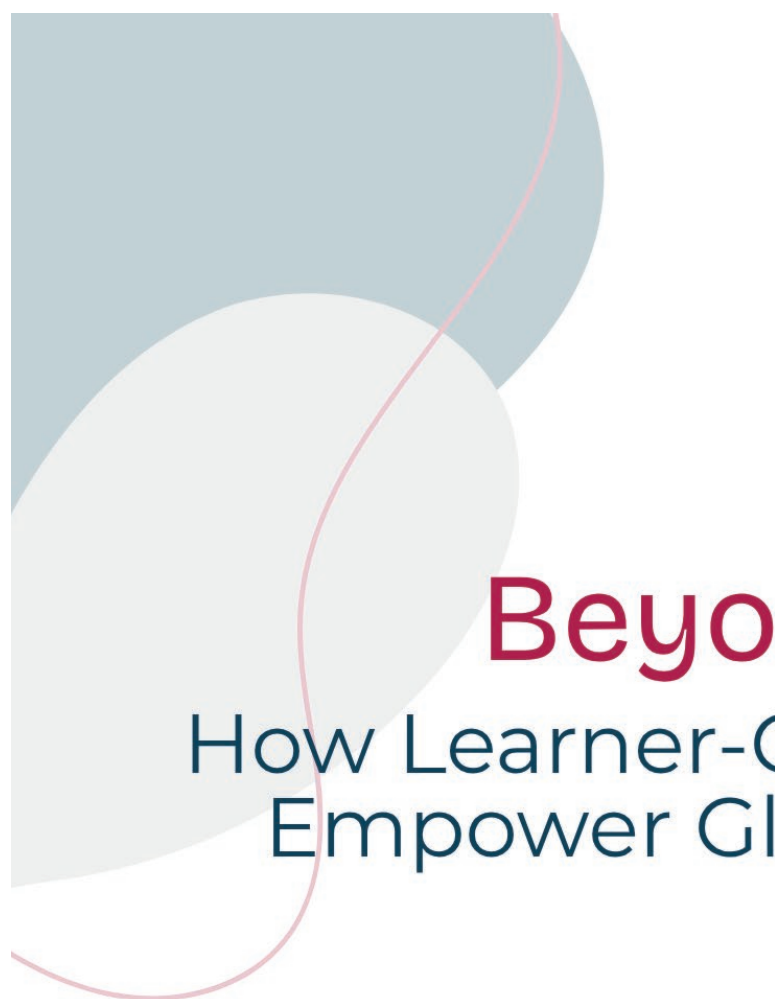
Learning happens everywhere, but proof does not travel with it

People build their skills through a patchwork of experiences: school and university courses, workplace training, international exchanges, self-directed study or volunteering.

The real problem is that each of these activities may or may not produce its own record, and when it does, that record will be unfortunately disconnected from the others and will also fail to offer a complete overview of which specific skills were developed or the standards and frameworks applied by the provider. This makes it difficult for an employer or institution abroad to interpret, verify or even trust the certificates, which is why it's become very urgent for VET providers to find a solution that could solve the problem.

Digital credentials as a structural answer

Digital credentials can be the perfect mean to solve this fragmentation problem. These kind of certificates, in fact, carry more than just a name or a date and can describe the specific skills acquired, the level reached and other evidence that normal certificates often cannot provide. Moreover, they can be automatically verified, shared across different kinds of platforms and translated across borders, institutions and employers.



However, real portability implies the ability for individuals to hold their own verified credentials in a digital wallet and being able to share them whenever and wherever they choose. The necessary shift from institution-held records to learner-held credentials is what allows lifelong learning to function as it should and it's exactly what makes digital credentials the future for skill recognition.

This structural evolution also needs to be supported by a credentialing system, in which open standards allow the VET providers across Europe to issue certificates that reflect their individual educational models and ways of working. It's only with this approach that we can prevent the creation of closed, proprietary formats that will bring further fragmentation in the field.



and the Certificate

Controlled Microcredentials Can Global Citizenship Through VET

The Credemia approach

Credemia can provide exactly what VET issuers need: a space where learners control their own digital credentials, built them on open, interoperable standards while remaining flexible enough to preserve their own models.

The platform combines learner ownership, robust technology, regulatory compliance and structural flexibility, so that providers can issue credentials that are genuinely theirs, while learners gain a trusted, portable record they can use anywhere.

Our approach is built around trust and the need for providers to issue verifiable and well-built certificates, and for their students to be able to share what they've learned without having to

worry about the ownership of their own achievements. Essentially this means a VET provider does not have to change its teaching style to benefit from Credemia, but instead it simply gains a reliable, standards-based way of putting what its learners already achieve into their own hands.

We believe that giving people trusted, portable ways to demonstrate what they can do is not a peripheral technical detail: it is central to what it means to support global citizenship through VET.

The New Learner: Why VET Must Rethink the Learning Experience

Leonardo Hermoso

Education Marketing Manager,
ReadSpeaker



Two young male students working side by side on a car, using tools to fix the engine on a classroom-like environment.

Digital transformation, demographic shifts, migration and changing labour-market needs are reshaping the learners entering vocational education and training. Their expectations, habits and needs are increasingly different from those of previous generations. For VET systems to remain relevant and attract the skilled workforce of tomorrow, adapting to these changes means looking beyond what learners need to learn and considering how they expect to learn it.

A changing world is creating changing learners

Today's learners are accustomed to consuming information across a wide range of platforms, devices and formats. They move between video, audio, short-form content, interactive experiences and traditional written content as part of their everyday lives, and these habits increasingly influence their expectations within education.

At the same time, demographic change and migration are contributing to more diverse learner populations, with differences in language, background, abilities, preferences and learning needs.

As a result, the needs and expectations of today's learners are not necessarily the same as those of the generation before them. Yet the media, formats and approaches used to deliver educational content have not always evolved at the same pace.

This creates an important challenge for VET. **Traditional ways of delivering learning content are no longer enough for a new generation of learners. If VET wants to attract, engage and retain them, the learning experience needs to reflect the way they increasingly expect to interact with information.**

Adapting without losing what makes VET valuable

Adapting the learning experience does not mean reducing the importance of theory. The theoretical knowledge that supports practical training is just as essential to effective vocational education as hands-on experience. The opportunity (and challenge) is to update, adapt and transform how that theory is delivered so that it better supports today's learners.

This is particularly relevant in TVET, where theoretical content can include manuals, instructions, online courses, assessments and other text-heavy resources that underpin practical learning.

The solution is therefore not to remove this content, but to make it easier to access, more flexible and more engaging. By doing so, VET providers can create a stronger connection between theoretical and practical learning, while making the overall experience better suited to the expectations of a new generation.

Technology can play an important role in this transformation. Rather than replacing established teaching approaches, **it can provide new ways for learners to interact with existing content, preserving the practical nature of VET while making the theoretical component more accessible and interactive.**

Technology as an enabler of more inclusive and engaging learning

One example is text-to-speech technology. By adding a listening layer to existing learning content, text to speech can give learners another way to access and revisit theoretical information without requiring providers to completely re-edit or rebuild their content.

Learners can listen while following the written content, helping them maintain attention and engage with the material in a different way. Specific features such as page masking can further support focus by highlighting the section currently being read. Learners can also listen to theoretical content while travelling to a training centre, preparing for a practical session or revisiting material outside scheduled learning time.



A group of three students collaboratively operating a large industrial machine in an automotive workshop setting.

This provides a new and potentially more efficient way to access theoretical content that may otherwise feel tedious for learners who are primarily motivated by practical, hands-on experiences.

These possibilities can be particularly valuable for learners who experience barriers when working with text-heavy content, including neurodiverse and multilingual learners. But the benefits extend beyond specific groups. Giving all learners more choice in how they access content can increase autonomy and flexibility, making the learning experience more inclusive and engaging.

When learners feel more comfortable accessing and understanding content, they can become more confident and engaged with their training. Greater autonomy and engagement can support learner success, while helping providers retain learners and reduce dropout.

From accessibility to a better learning experience

Accessibility has traditionally been introduced into education as a resource or accommodation to support learners with specific needs, and in many contexts as a legal requirement. With legislation such as the European Accessibility Act further raising the importance of accessibility across digital products and services, meet-

ing compliance requirements remains essential. However, accessibility is increasingly becoming more than a regulatory obligation: it is becoming a fundamental part of the learning experience for everyone

This shift matters for the future of VET. A learning environment designed to provide different ways of accessing and engaging with content does not only make education more accessible for learners who need additional support. It can make the experience more flexible, comfortable and effective for the wider learner population.

For VET providers, this creates an opportunity to rethink accessibility, engagement and learner success as connected objectives. The goal is not simply to remove barriers, but to create learning experiences that reflect the needs and expectations of the people VET needs to attract and retain.

Technology will not solve every challenge facing VET, and digitalisation should not become an objective in itself. But technology can be a powerful enabler for adapting the learning experience to a changing generation.

If VET is preparing learners for a changing world, the learning experience must be prepared to change with them.

Putting VET in the spotlight: Exploring Five Years of Vocational Education and Training Reform in Greece

Evanthia Siemou

Psychologist- Adult Education Trainer to
Public Higher Vocational Training – VET
(SAEK)

Driven by global market integration, technological shifts, and the transition toward a green economy, the vocational education and training (VET) landscape in Greece is undergoing significant restructuring. These macro-level shifts are redefining employment needs and elevating the demand for adaptable, eco-friendly, and digital competencies. As a result, training systems must offer adaptable upskilling mechanisms, expand hands-on learning models, and align more tightly with evolving industry requirements (Cedefop, 2022, 2023).

Within this wider context, Greek VET reforms reflect European priorities concerning digital transformation, sustainability, lifelong learning, employability and stronger links between education and the labour market. The current Greek VET

strategy explicitly emphasizes the development of digital and green skills, the modernization of curricula and infrastructure, the strengthening of apprenticeships and cooperation with social partners (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2026). Thus, the ongoing transformation of Greek VET can be understood as part of a broader European process of adapting vocational education to the changing economic, technological and social environment.

Since the 2020/21 academic year, efforts have been underway in Greece to improve vocational education and training. The challenge is twofold, as the aim of education policy is both to attract young people to VET and to promote lifelong learning through upskilling and reskilling. This challenge is considerable, as Greece has gone through a difficult economic period – the COVID-19 crisis – and is a country where, for decades, vocational training has not enjoyed the same prestige as university studies (Cedefop, 2024).

Since 2020, Greek governments have sought to reposition vocational education and training (VET) as an attractive alternative to university education rather than a last resort for disadvantaged students. The economic crisis and high rates of graduate unemployment have further

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Learn. Train. Succeed.
SAEK: The path to a better tomorrow.

Central picture of Greece's VET. Source: Image created with AI assistant.

encouraged a shift towards VET, where employment prospects are often more immediate. According to recent data from CEDEFOP (2025a), the employment rate of IVET graduates has improved significantly, rising from 37.5 per cent in 2015 to 69.5 per cent in 2024.



Source: Based on statistics from 2026, as published by the Ministry of Education, here are the 10 SAEK specializations with the best prospects. The data was sourced from the website <https://ieklab.sch.gr/katataktiries/> and processed using AI.

It is well known that cultural changes take time (Gogas, 2022); however, let us briefly look at some of the most significant innovations implemented in Greece that are already having a positive impact:

1. Upgrading and renaming the Institutes of Vocational Training (I.E.K.) as Schools of Higher Vocational Training (S.A.E.K.) (Law 5082/2024). This change follows the European Union directive stipulating that vocational training graduates should have flexible learning prospects (Law 4957/2022). The list of university faculties that accept up to 5 per cent of their available places to be filled through placement examinations is constantly growing, currently totalling 126. Recently, the General Secretariat for Vocational Education, Training and Lifelong Learning published on its website an official application through which certified graduates of SAEK and EPAS apprenticeship programmes can immediately identify the university departments to which they may be admitted. (<https://ieklab.sch.gr/katataktiries/>)
2. Introduction of a parallel computerised admissions process following the Panhellenic Examinations. This option lends greater prestige to the admission of trainees, as success in the Panhellenic Examinations has historically been a defining moment in the lives of Greeks (Zagkos & Tzafea, 2025). In a recent study using semi-structured interviews, 17 out of 20 SAEK students stated that the fact that 'passing' the exam brought them great joy, and this appears to be linked both to their psychological well-being and sense of self-efficacy, as well as to the quality of their motivation for this new educational chapter (Siemou, 2025). Following the completion of enrolments via the Parallel Application Form, the traditional enrolment method—which is based on specific criteria—still exists, of course, and allows older people to gain access to vocational training.
3. Tuition at both EPAL (secondary vet) and public SAEK is free of charge, whilst SAEK students who study in a city other than their place of residence and meet specific income criteria are now eligible for a housing allowance, as is the case for higher education students, thereby bridging social inequalities between the different levels of education and vocational training.
4. The extroversion of VET is strengthened through the implementation of cooperation and mobility programmes with European Union countries. The most widespread programme at the level of EPAL, SAEK and SDE is the Erasmus programme, which offers learners the opportunity to visit their destination country for up to two weeks and broaden their horizons.
5. As part of efforts to promote international engagement, this year, for the first time, VET graduates have the opportunity to apply to take part in the European Commission's Blue Book Traineeship Programme through the new ADMIN-VET strand. This initiative recognises the value of different educational pathways and broadens access for VET graduates to high-quality European traineeships. The opportunity is open to people aged 18 and over, with no upper age limit, and offers them the chance to undertake a five-month paid work placement.
6. With regard to the internal operations of the SAEKs, EOPPEP proceeded in 2024 to develop new study guides and teaching materials for all 130 disciplines offered by the SAEKs, whilst in 2025 the same authority proceeded to clearly determine 253 occupational profiles.
7. One of the most important steps towards reforming VET so that it keeps up with the modern needs of the workforce is to increase the number of apprenticeship hours and paid work placements. According to CEDEFOP data (2024), in 2023 apprenticeship places for EPAL graduates increased by 46 per cent to 6,567, whilst in 2024 they rose by a further 45 per cent to 9,550. Similarly, for public SAEKs alone,

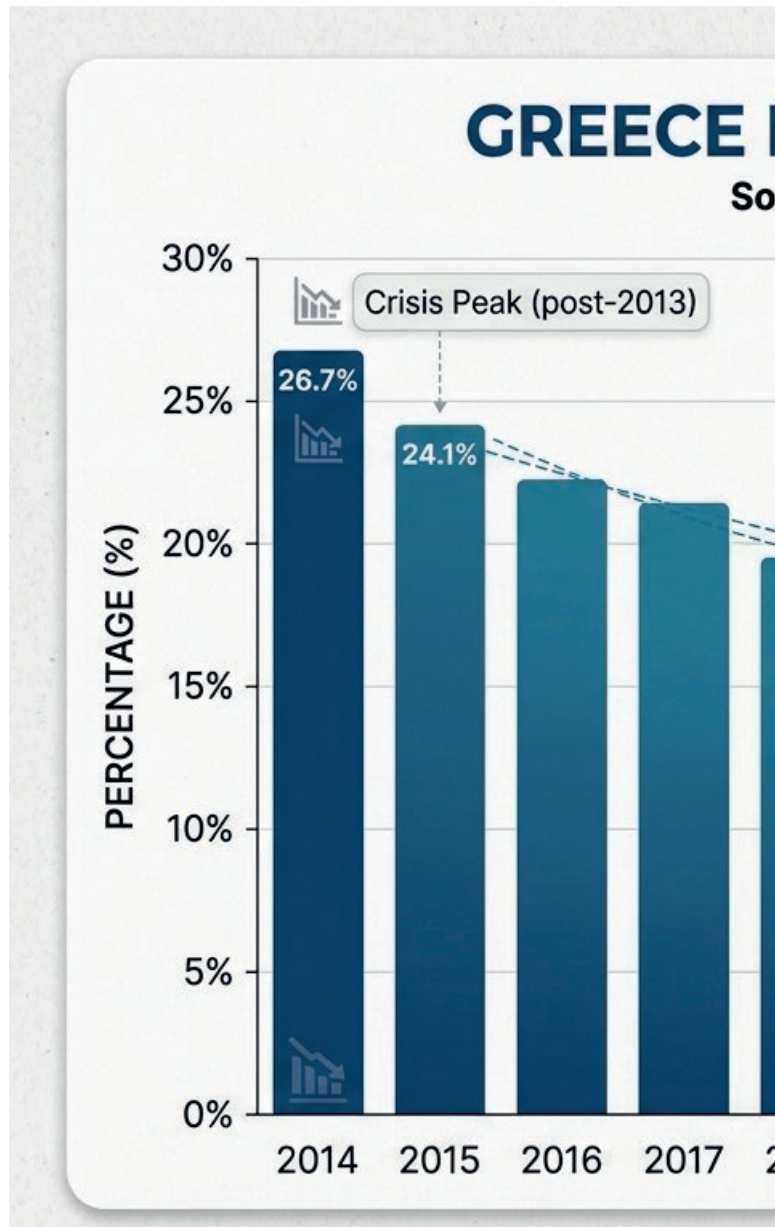
the number of work placement positions rose from 5,400 in 2023 to 6,500 in 2024, confirming the steadily rising trend.

8. Model Vocational Lyceums (PEPAL) are established under Law 4763/2020. Six new PEPALs are established in the 2021/22 academic year, whilst their number rises to 19 the following year. In 2021/22, Greece launched five experimental institutes of vocational training (SAEK) to promote quality, excellence and innovation in post-secondary VET, alongside five thematic SAEK focusing on STEM, health and welfare, the natural environment, sport and leisure, and sustainable development.
9. Pursuant to Law 5237/2025, the first Vocational Training Academy was established in Tripoli in February 2026. The Ministry of Education collaborated with the Panhellenic Union of Pharmaceutical Industries, which in turn partnered with two of its largest member pharmaceutical companies, WinMedica, part of the ELPEN Group, and DEMO – which are jointly undertaking the necessary commitments, including the provision of the required logistical and laboratory equipment. Finally, they have committed to employing 40 per cent of the certified graduates.

Although Greece still has some way to go before VET fully meets EU requirements, it appears to be on an upward trajectory, with new agreements being signed with social partners on an ongoing basis. Improvements in vocational education and training have already helped to reduce the NEETs rate in Greece, which has fallen from 26.7 per cent in 2014 to 13.6 per cent in 2025 (Cedefop, 2025b). In the 2026–27 academic year, 95 specialisms and 860 departments will be running at public SAEKs.

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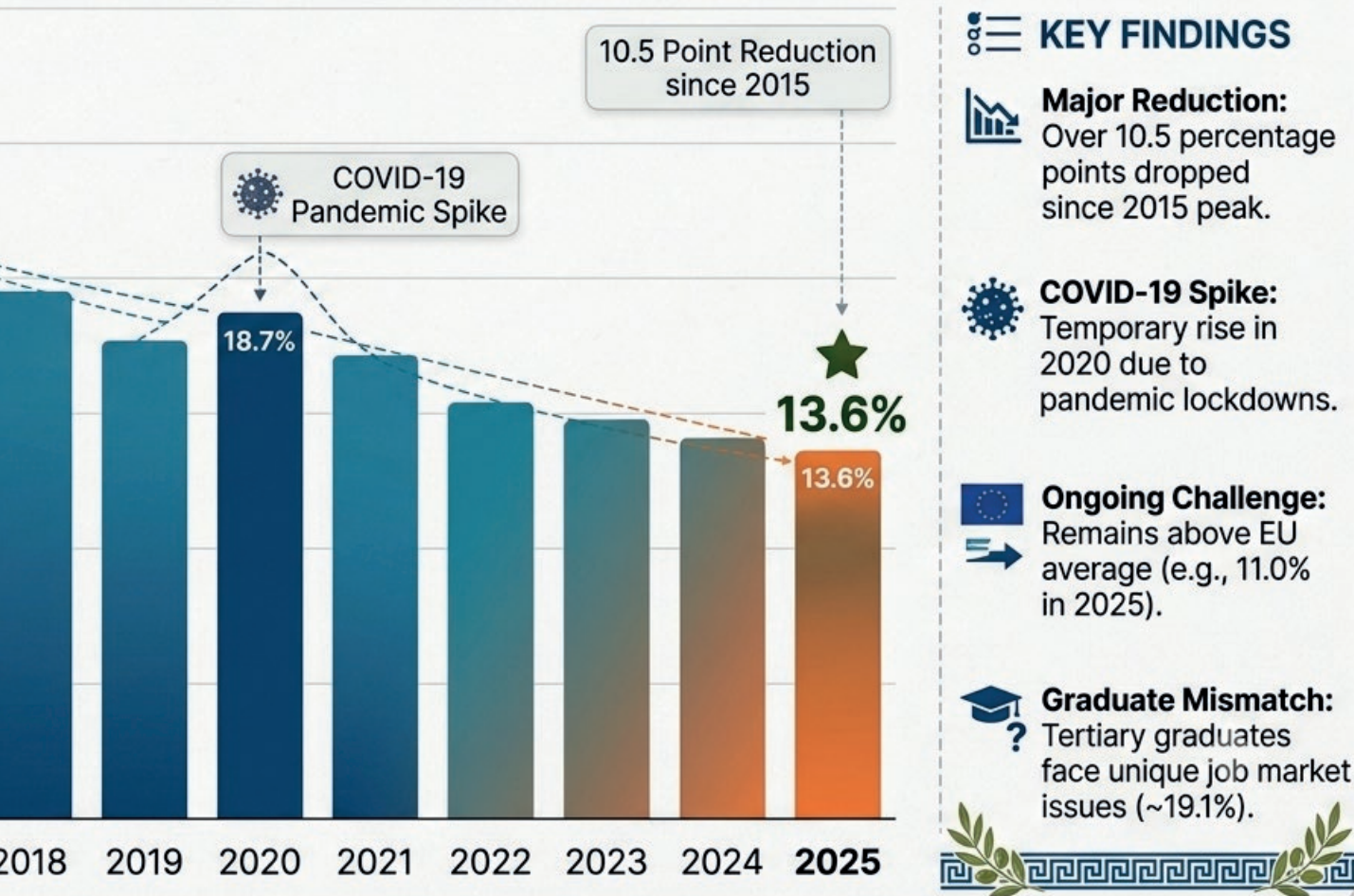
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NEET RATE (15–29), 2014–2025

Source: Eurostat Data & 2024–25 Estimates



Data visualization created with AI & presenting NEET Rate in Greece 2014–2025 (Source: Eurostat).

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EfVET Magazine

Submission Guidelines

Issue 39. December 2026

Theme: «Trainers, Teachers, Tutors:
The VET Frontliners»

Teachers, trainers, tutors, mentors and workplace instructors are the **frontliners of VET**. They support learners, collaborate with employers, adapt to innovation and help individuals acquire the skills needed to thrive in changing labour markets.

Across Europe and beyond, **VET professionals are facing increasingly complex challenges**. They are expected to respond to rapid technological developments, integrate new pedagogical approaches, embrace diversity and inclusion, and prepare learners for occupations that are continuously evolving. At the same time, they must navigate growing expectations regarding lifelong learning, innovation, wellbeing, internationalisation and the use of artificial intelligence in education and training.

The importance of strengthening the VET teaching and training profession is receiving increasing attention at European level. The forthcoming European Commission **Teachers and Trainers Agenda** is expected to place renewed focus on attracting, developing and retaining education professionals. At the same time, the **CEDEFOP European Vocational Teachers Survey** is providing valuable evidence about the realities, expectations and needs of vocational teachers across Europe.

For this issue, EfVET wishes to explore the role of teachers, trainers and tutors as the **driving force behind vocational excellence**. How can we support their professional growth and recognition? What policies, strategies and initiatives contribute to their empowerment? How can institutions create working environments that foster wellbeing, resilience and innovation? What new competence profiles are emerging as VET responds to technological, environmental and societal transformation? How can VET professionals be equipped to act not only as educators, but also as facilitators, coaches, mentors and agents of change? We welcome **contributions presenting concrete practices, institutional initiatives, research findings, policy reflections, case studies and innovative approaches** related to VET professionals.

Manuscript Deadline: 22nd of November 2026 to be sent to the Publications Team (publications@efvet.org).

VET Pulse - The EfVET Magazine is an official publication of the European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training. It is issued four times per year. EfVET Magazine is available to EfVET members as part of their dues and to other interested stakeholders. It is published digitally on the EfVET website. EfVET readers are professionals in the domain of Technical and Vocational Education and Training, Adult Education, Lifelong Learning, representatives from different economic sectors, all with one common interest: learning about what is happening in the VET world, at different levels.

Editorial Guidelines (read carefully, articles should respect all directives).

Article submissions should be:

- No less than 500 words and no more than 1000 words
- Submitted as attachment in a .docx format – No PDF is accepted.
- Written in English (British)
- Original work by the Authors or Co-Authors

Images submissions should be:

- Please enclose at least one high-resolution picture pertinent to the article content (not the author's portrait picture) to your email, instead of including in your document
- Formatted as a .jpg or .png file
- Please give a short description of the picture, if it is not yours, please include the credits
- Please ensure that all photos submitted have been approved by the individuals who appear in them.

Your submission email article should include the following information:

- Title & 3-4 lines of summary/introduction to the subject
- Your Name [the name under which you would like to be published] and Name of your organisation. Only the name of your organization is not sufficient.

Editing

- All submissions will be reviewed by the VET Pulse - EfVET Magazine Editorial Committee
- If any of the above mentioned elements are missing, the Editorial Committee can decide not to proceed with the publication.

On a voluntary basis, a **complementary multimedia asset** that could strengthen their article, which includes:

- Videos & Short Videos
- Larger Pictures (one-paged or two-paged)
- Links
- Charts
- Social Media Links (if relevant)
- Captions

While these assets can enhance the visibility and engagement of the magazine, as well as strengthen the storytelling of the article, please note that their inclusion is not guaranteed. The Editorial Committee will assess all the materials received individually and determine the feasibility of their publication based on quality, relevance and overall coherence.

VET Pulse – EfVET Magazine

Editorial Committee

Call for Members – 2027–2028

The Board of EfVET aims to appoint 3 experts in VET, selected among EfVET Members, to constitute the Editorial Committee of the VET Pulse – EfVET Magazine, in charge for 2 years, since the 2027 series starting in March 2027.

The Editorial Committee members, in collaboration with the EfVET President as Editor-in-Chief and the Executive Director as co-Editor, with support from the EfVET Secretariat, will be in charge of designing the strategy of VET Pulse: topics, editorial guidelines, but also the frequency of issues and consolidation of the achieved target. The Editorial Committee members can also propose and be involved in other publications and cultural initiatives.

The Editorial Committee members are VET experts and passionate, from different perspectives: training, management, policy-making, research; it is crucial they show deep understanding of the Magazine's focus area, trends and audience interests, showing a strong ability to contribute unique insights and perspectives. They have strong editorial and writing skills in English; critical thinking and analytical skills; ability to manage multiple tasks and meet deadlines; strong organizational skills to coordinate various aspects of the editorial process; ability to work collaboratively and lead discussions during editorial meetings. Their work will be exclusively carried out on a voluntary basis; interactions within the Committee and the authors will always be online.

If you are interested, please send your CV to publications@efvet.org by 1 November, with subject "Editorial Committee". The selection will be coordinated by the President and the Co-Editors. Interviews can be possible during the selection process, until 13 November 2026. The selected Editorial Committee Members will be informed by 27 November 2026.

For any further clarification, do not hesitate to contact us at publications@efvet.org.



About EfVET

The **European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (EfVET)** is an EU nonprofit umbrella organisation, established in 1991, with the purpose of building a network of VET stakeholders, to secure a voice across Europe in European policymaking and practice arenas. EfVET represents 450+ members from 60+ countries (including Africa and Asia), reaching 5K+ VET providers, 200K+ VET practitioners and 2M+ learners.

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- **Co-Editors:** Paolo Nardi, EfVET Executive Director and Emilio Dogliani, Advocacy and Project Manager
- **Editorial Committee:** Essi Ryymin, Justina Pluktaite & Sanna Ryökkynen
- **Coordinator & Graphic Designer:** Jaime Rivas, Communications Officer
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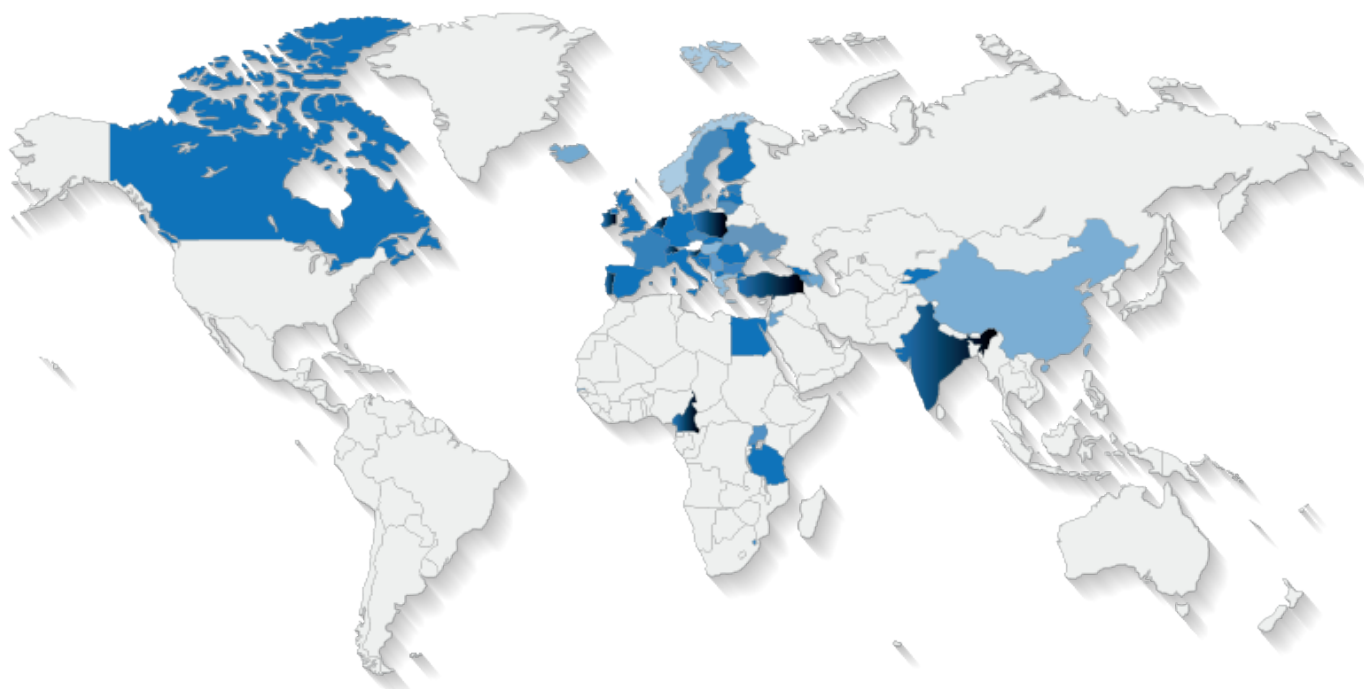
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