



**SHAPING VOCATIONAL ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**Shape – Shared expertize in provision of adult education  
in 5 European countries**



**Erasmus+**



Shaping Vocational Adult Education and Training

Edited by

Anne Hosio-Paloposki

Keuda adult education, Keuda, Finland

Co-writers

Charlotte Birkshoj

Tietgen Kompetencecenter, Denmark

Luca Boetti

Istituto Formazione Operatori Aziendali, IFOA, Italy

Tanja Mozina

Slovenian Institute of Adult Education, SIAE, Slovenia

Sylvie Rondeau

GIP Formation Continue, GIP FC, France

## **SHAPING VOCATIONAL ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

### **CONTENTS**

#### **1. WHAT IS THE SHAPE PROJECT ABOUT?**

#### **2.2. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF ADULT EDUCATION STAFF**

##### **2.1. Introduction to the theme**

##### **2.2. The state of professional development of adult education staff in partner countries**

#### **3. QUALIFICATION LABELS FOR PROFESSIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION, IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ADULT EDUCATION SECTOR**

##### **3.1. Introduction to the theme**

##### **3.2. The implementation status of the European Qualification Framework (EQF) and European Credit Transfer System in VET (ECVET) in partner countries**

##### **3.3. Use of quality labels in partner countries**

#### **4. QUALITY ASSURANCE IN ADULT EDUCATION PROVISION**

##### **4.1. Introduction to the theme**

##### **4.2. How to ensure quality in educational activities**

#### **5. KEY COMPETENCES AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

##### **5.1. Introduction to the theme**

##### **5.2. Defining key competences and entrepreneurial mindset**

#### **6. COMPETENCE-BASED VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS / YOUNG ADULT AND ADULT UPSKILLING PROGRAMMES**

##### **6.1. Introduction to the theme**

##### **6.2. Principles of vocational qualification system in adult education and training in partner countries**

##### **6.3. Best practices to support the upgrading of young adults' and adults' skills and competences in partner countries**

#### **7. BEST AND NEXT PRACTICES IN VOCATIONAL ADULT EDUCATION PROVISION**

##### **7.1. The most valuable things learnt during the project**

##### **7.2. Good practices to recommend**

##### **7.3. Plans for the future**

## **SHAPING VOCATIONAL ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

### **1. WHAT IS THE SHAPE PROJECT ABOUT?**

The methods and solutions used to provide and organise adult education and training are different in each European country. Despite the differences in systems and methods, a lot of good practices can be shared, adapted and further developed. In the SHAPE project, adult education provision and training has been analysed from six thematic perspectives chosen as innovative and interesting to all partners. The best practices developed and used by partner organisations within these six themes have been studied and taken a step further by identifying possible next practices that partners could put into practice in their own organisations.

The project consisted of five 5-day thematic workshops. Each WS-leader prepared an in-depth presentation of the chosen theme. WS participants prepared a country description including an overview and the main national challenges for the theme in question. All these were presented in the workshops. The presentations were also the basis for analysis and discussions during the workshops.

After the workshops, each WS-leader prepared a report on the workshop theme. Keuda, as the coordinator, compiled a summary of the five WS reports, briefly introducing each theme and including challenges, as well as best and next practices from the five European countries. This paper is a compilation of the reports and an evaluation of the project's contents.

The Shape project involved the collaboration of 5 partners:

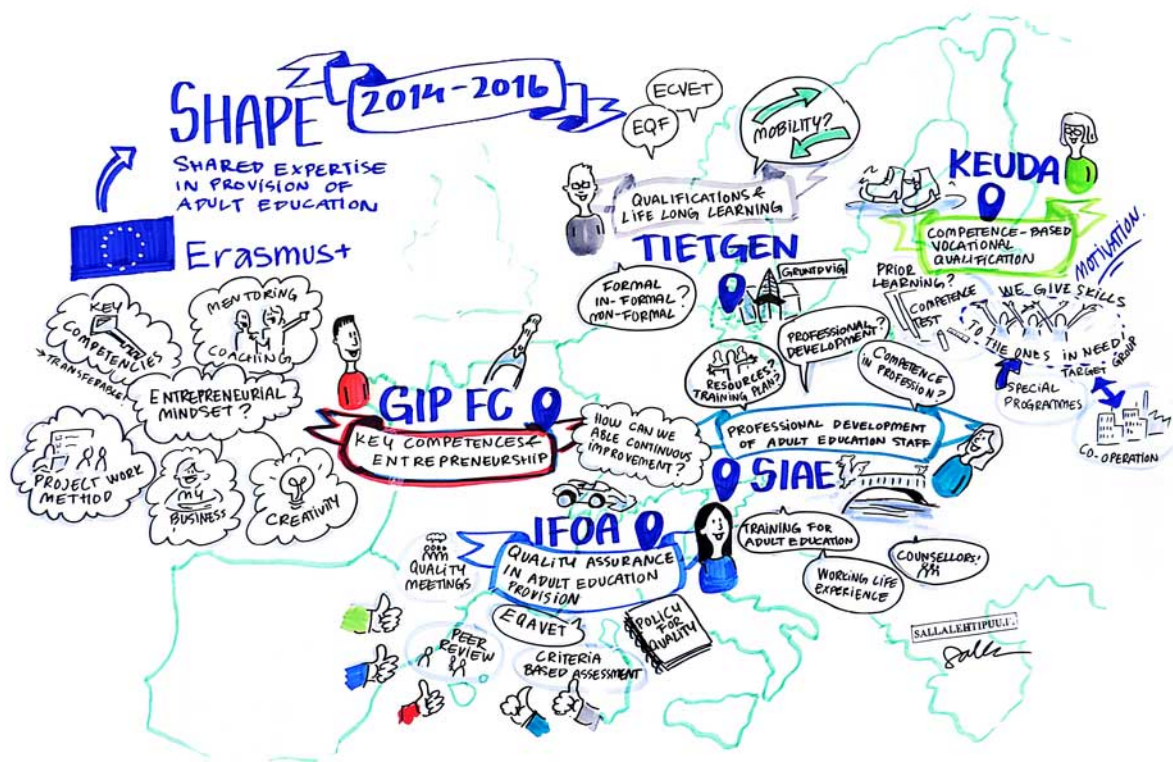
Keski-Uudenmaan koulutuskuntayhtymä, Keuda adult education, Finland.

GIP Formation Continue, France.

Istituto Formazione Operatori Aziendali, IFOA, Italy.

Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, SIAE, Slovenia.

Tietgen Kompetencecenter, Denmark.



## 2. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF ADULT EDUCATION STAFF

### 2.1. Introduction to the theme

The main subject of the workshop was the professional development of adult educators and counsellors, including the role of education and training in enhancing their professional development. Regarding adult educators, the focus was placed primarily on the role of directors/organisers and teachers in adult education. The role of counsellors in adult education and training was also discussed.

An important aim of the seminar was to learn about the education and training systems for adult educators and counsellors in the partner countries, in addition to exchanging good practices.

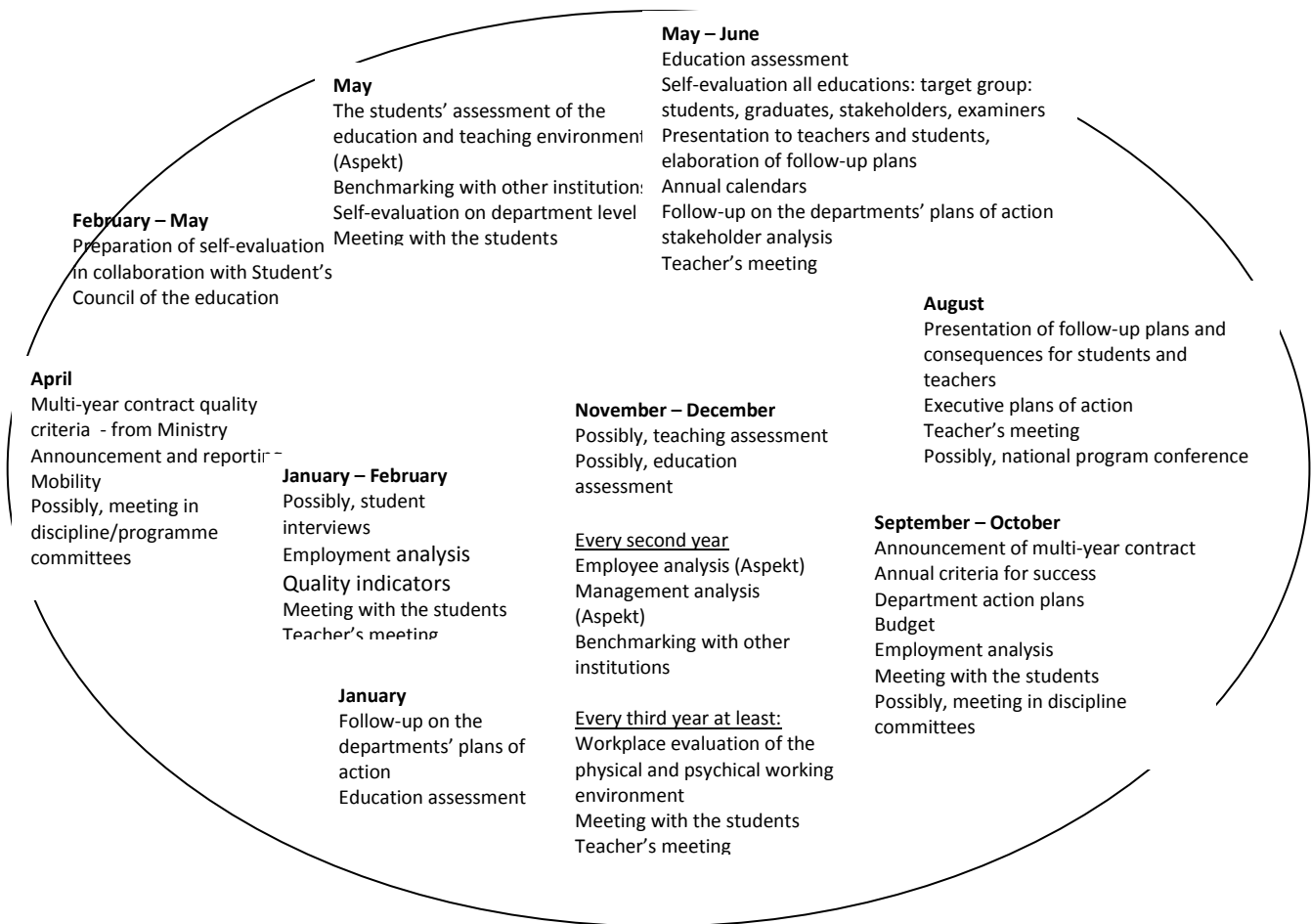
### 2.2. The state of professional development of adult education staff in partner countries

#### Denmark

In Denmark each educational institution must be accredited by the Ministry of Education. Following this, the institutions evaluate themselves, with only sporadic intervention from the Ministry. This is the most significant difference when compared to the other partner countries.

When you evaluate yourself and your colleagues you learn to address issues with a respectful and constructive attitude. This ensures that the findings of an evaluation can be incorporated during the next teaching period without any problems. It also allows for changes and debate throughout the ongoing semesters.

At Tietgen we have an annual quality wheel for full-time educators. Every month we focus on assessment. The tool kit for the quality assessment looks like this:



**Finland**

The profession of teacher/educator is regulated and the qualifications required for teachers are defined in the legislation. Vocational teachers must have a Bachelor's or Master's degree and pedagogical training. If there is no Bachelor's or Master's degree qualification in the field in question, the highest possible qualification is sufficient. The education providers set the remaining criteria for the teachers they employ.

These criteria aim to select people who are qualified and suitable for both the specific position and the school community.

Organisations in Finland have to make a basic plan outlining how they will develop human resources and professional training for their whole staff. This plan must be done yearly. The plan must describe their professional training objectives for the main staff groups and each part of the organisation. The next year's main goals for skills development are outlined in this basic plan. In Finland, it is possible to apply for the compensation of professional training costs from the state, to cover part of the expenses of said training. The training needs must be identified in the basic plan. In Keuda, this plan is done during the autumn, in preparation for the next year. It is drawn up at the same time as the budget. This programme provides a framework for the next year's professional training.

### **France**

In GIP Formation Continue teachers have a yearly interview. The professional development of teachers is guaranteed by training programmes for the training advisers. These programmes include seminars and training modules which last between 1 and 5 days. For example, they can include training in answering calls for tenders, management consultancy consulting, selling training services to professionals, communication and management.

ARIFOR (Regional programme for the professionalisation of adult educators) provides a regional service for trainers and advisers in public and private training institutions. Professional development programmes are also offered by external institutions.

In GIP Formation Continue the importance of ongoing training for professionals has been emphasised. They also acknowledge skills requirements for trainers in adult education, for now and the future.

### **Italy**

Compared to the well-defined, regulated-by-law rules that exist for school teachers, there are no statutory or official requirements for adult trainers in Italy, nor any specific job profiles with set roles, tasks or skills. From time to time, public calls for proposals for the funding of adult VET training programmes set a number of criteria that trainers must fulfil. Besides that, trainers are usually chosen either because they are former school/university teachers/professors or because they are/were professionals with a sound and

acknowledged experience, or by word of mouth, recommended by others who have been happy with their previous work.

At the same time, the training of trainers is usually a self-managed process: trainers learn on their own, through their profession or by attending seminars or courses, reading and studying, depending on their possibilities and time. Except in the case of trainers for health and safety at the workplace (regulated by law), there is no specific national professional qualification for trainers in Italy.

This is why IFOA developed its own quality procedures for the selection, appointment, assessment and rating of trainers in its courses. In fact, IFOA does not employ any trainers as part of the permanent staff. It may so happen that we ask some of our staff to deliver training sessions on our courses but this is quite exceptional. Rather, we “buy” training skills in the labour market. Selection and appointment are based on previous outcomes/ratings, if any (see below), or on the trainer’s CV and an interview (if the trainer is not already included in our database). A trainer’s performance is evaluated by the students, the course tutor and the course coordinator. We consider our system to be a good practice as it has proved its value over many years. Currently, all trainers are assigned a score, ranging from 1 to 5, and grouped into three categories, depending on this score and the number of training hours they have already delivered in our courses in the past. This group determines the hourly salary paid to each trainer. Moreover, trainers belonging to the lowest group and scoring less than 3.5 out of 5 or new trainers scoring less than 3.5 on their first course cannot be called up again.

### **Slovenia**

In Slovenia the profession of adult educator, especially those who work in official certified education programmes, is strictly regulated. The Organisation and Financing of Education Act prescribes staff qualifications for all areas of education, including adult education. The staff in adult education, including counsellors, must have higher education qualifications in the relevant field of expertise, pedagogical-andragogical studies and a professional exam certificate, as prescribed for the particular field of education. Additionally, adult education staff who perform special adult educator roles (such as counsellors in guidance centres for adults, mentors in programmes for young adults, counsellors in self-managed learning centres financed by public funds) must enrol on non-formal training programmes in order to acquire specialist skills.



### **3. QUALIFICATION LABELS FOR PROFESSIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION, IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ADULT EDUCATION SECTOR**

#### **3.1. Introduction to the theme**

This workshop looked into the implementation of EQF (European Qualification Framework) and ECVET (European Credit Point System) in vocational education in the partner countries. Particular attention was paid to the findings regarding specific quality indicators and quality labels for Professional Higher Education and the implications for vocational adult education.

The purpose of the EQF is to create a European translation system for qualification levels and also the education and training courses required for such qualifications. The core element of the EQF is a description of eight reference levels which states what learners of a certain level should know. Such a system contributes to increase mobility in the European labour market, between and within education and training systems. It improves transparency and makes it easier for employers and education and training institutions to assess the skills acquired by citizens. The EQF aims to relate different countries' national qualification systems to a common European reference framework. Individuals and employers will be able to use the EQF to better understand and compare the qualification levels of different countries and different education and training systems.

ECVET aims to support the mobility of European citizens, facilitating lifelong learning (formal, informal and non-formal learning) and providing greater transparency in terms of individual learning experiences, making it more attractive to move between different countries and different learning environments.

#### **3.2. The implementation status of the European Qualification Framework (EQF) and European Credit**

##### **Transfer System in VET (ECVET) in partner countries**

###### **Denmark**

Transparency and the recognition of formal and non-formal adult education must be guaranteed within the perspective of lifelong learning. In Denmark, a national qualification framework has been developed in order to ensure the clear identification of knowledge, skills and competences. There is a system in place for the recognition of non-formal and prior learning.

How are quality criteria and indicators defined for quality improvement in VET? The Danish Ministry for Children, Education and Equality has developed a system called 'Viskvalitet' ('Show Quality') which publishes all indicators, as well as the results of a survey carried out among providers and participants.

**Participant indicators:** Usability of course, own contribution, level, teacher's planning and structure of the course and achievement of learning objectives.

**Employer indicators:** Course administration and availability, usability and indicators as to recommendability of the course.

[www.Viskvalitet.dk](http://www.Viskvalitet.dk) is Denmark's first nationwide tool and its use is mandatory for measuring and improving the quality of educational areas, in this case VET. All participants are asked to evaluate their course using this tool. The Ministry has decided to make the survey results available to the public. This decision has been taken because the Ministry believes that the results will be of interest to other parties, not only the accredited institutions and participants themselves, and because it is believed that the transparency of the courses will foster constructive dialogue and thereby help to further improve quality.

## **Finland**

The national qualification framework in Finland has been prepared in accordance with the European EQF system by setting different levels for the appropriate corresponding EQF levels. The Finnish framework system is divided into three separate training levels: basic education, secondary education, which includes general education and vocational training, and higher education, which includes vocational colleges and universities. This framework describes the requirements of Finnish qualifications and learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and competencies, which are based on the EQF levels. Vocational upper secondary qualifications and further vocational qualifications are included on level 4 and specialist vocational qualifications on level 5. A vocational qualification may be placed at a higher level if the qualification clearly has higher requirements than other qualifications of the same type.

ECVET is a technical framework for the transfer, recognition and, where appropriate, accumulation of an individual's learning outcomes with a view to obtaining a qualification. The purpose of the credit transfer system is to enhance mobility, use learning achievements acquired abroad as part of a qualification and increase the transparency of qualifications. In Finland, the ECVET framework is not formally applied to competence-based vocational adult education, even though vocational education and training for young students is organised according to said framework.

## **France**

The French NQF, as defined by the RNCP, covers all vocational and professionally-oriented qualifications, including all higher education qualifications with a vocational and professional orientation and purpose.

The framework was referenced to the EQF in October 2010, using the original five-level structure as a reference point. The types of qualifications are vocational and HEVET-HE. The routes for obtaining them are initial training, ongoing education and non-formal and informal learning recognition (VAE) and apprenticeship. There are 5 level grids and both private and public authorities are in charge of the process (from building to delivering the qualifications). The five-level structure needs to be changed into an eight-level structure more closely aligned with the EQF and the labour market (for example, there is no equivalence for migrants with level 1 or 2). Debate is evident at a national level in France.

ECVET itself still remains largely limited to transnational partnerships. If ECVET only operates as a transnational transfer system allowing the mobility of vocational students, its impact may remain limited. As it should contribute to the recognition of learning outcomes and allow the accumulation of credits towards qualifications, ECVET should be firmly and fully integrated into national lifelong learning policies and aligned with evolving validation practices.

## **Italy**

The EQF was adopted in Italy on 20th December 2012, with a document classifying all Italian diplomas and qualifications into the 8 EQF levels. While the situation is well-established for the education system (Bologna Process), the vocational one (Copenhagen Process) is still undergoing harmonisation. At present we have 21 qualification systems, one per region. The process of comparing and unifying all the regional qualifications has been carried out by ISFOL (National Agency of the Italian Ministry of Labour, acting also as Erasmus+ agency for VET) and is almost completed.

At present, a system based on modular qualifications and learning outcomes (ECVET model) has been partially adopted. Some subsystems give citizens the opportunity to achieve partial qualifications after the assessment of prior learning or the accumulation of units and related value in terms of credits, changing from one pathway to another. Two relevant ongoing issues are:

- Companies do not really care about the value of ECVET points yet.
- It is uncommon for people to move from one training pathway to the same/another one in a different region; hence, apart from in a few sectors, ECVET is not widely perceived as a really meaningful tool yet.

IFOA is an accredited VET provider in 5 Italian regions, delivering courses which lead to regional qualifications (in the near future it will be recognised at a national level, as soon as the NQF is completed). Our publicly funded programmes generally lead to qualifications ranging from EFQ level 3 to EQF level 5. ECVET is used specifically for European learning mobility carried out within the framework of Erasmus+ KA1 projects.

### **Slovenia**

The first national debates on the European Qualification Framework were conducted in the year 2005. The main result of the national debate was an agreement between ministries and social partners for the establishment of a Slovenian Qualification Framework (SQF). Since then, a lot of work has been done in this field. An SQF national coordination point has been established (more information available at <http://www.nok.si/en/>) and the Law on the Slovenian Qualification Framework has been passed by Parliament. The SQF is an instrument for classifying qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved. Due to the fact that the SQF establishes a slightly different relationship between formal education and the qualification structure, SQF changes the number of levels from eight (with two sublevels) to ten (without sublevels).

ECVET is not yet widely established in Slovenia. It is used primarily for the mobility of international exchange students for placements in vocational and professional education. For this reason, the manual entitled "A manual for using ECVET tools in mobility projects for vocational and professional education" was published in 2014. Within the manual we tried to contribute to foreign qualifications being more clearly constructed from activities that increase the qualification of students and raise their chances of employment. Therefore, the plan for the future is to connect the tool ECVET more with lifelong learning in Slovenia and to encourage wider use of it for different opportunities in adult education.

### **3.3. Use of quality labels in partner countries**

#### **Denmark**

The Danish Ministry of Education has created an accessible system called 'Viskvalitet' (Show Quality) where all indicators are published, together with the results of a survey among providers and participants. This is to ensure the possibility of comparing different institutions which provide similar courses.

Indicators (participants): usability of course, own contribution, level, teacher's planning and structure of course, achievement of learning objectives; Indicators (employers): course administration and availability, usability, recommendation to others.

### **Finland**

In Finland, the main labels used for the purpose of quality labelling are clearly divided into two levels: Firstly, models that promote the general awareness and image of VET and improve its quality management systems and, secondly, labels that target competence, safety, trust and professionalism in vocational qualifications. The first group includes labels such as Quality Awards in Vocational Education and Training, ISO certification in the field of processes, environment and health and the Balanced Score Card model. The second group includes typical professional labels such as The Occupational Safety Card, Food Hygiene Proficiency License, First Aid Certificate and Hot Work License. These labels certify skills in a specific field and are usually those required for professional duties in the field in question.

### **France**

The GRETA Plus Standard is used at a regional level and is coordinated by academies, which are local educational establishments that provide training for adults and work together in local educational groups called GRETAs. To guarantee quality standards, these groups use 'GRETA Plus', a national educational quality standard which describes course design, development and implementation and has been registered by AFNOR as a "best practice".

There are also several labels used by the National Ministry of Education. The labels used to certify skills in ICT and languages are as follows:

B2I: *Brevet Informatique et Internet* for adults, an ICT skills assessment.

DCL : *Diplôme de Compétences en Langues* (Language Skills Diploma), available for 13 languages.

VAE Plus: This label is based on the guide to VAE+ "best practices". This quality label evaluates organisations, validating prior experience in 15 skills (ensuring individualised welcome, providing accurate and up-to-date information about the validation of prior experience, providing all useful documents, guiding candidates to appropriate structures, advising people on their VAE project, etc).

### **Italy**

Besides publicly funded courses leading to qualifications, IFOA delivers several training programmes linked to vendor qualifications, especially in the ICT field: our programmes can lead to CISCO, Microsoft or Autodesk certificates.

## **Slovenia**

The quality label called the “Green Quality Logo”: The SIAE awards the Green Quality Logo to adult education organisations which prove that they are systematically working in the field of quality and that they have implemented internal quality systems (more information available at [http://kakovost.acs.si/incentives/green\\_logo/](http://kakovost.acs.si/incentives/green_logo/)).

Expert external evaluation: Expert external evaluations are used to independently confirm the quality of adult education in selected fields within educational organisations. These expert external evaluations provide organisations with quality feedback about where they are already doing well and any opportunities for further improvement. Evaluations also help to upgrade the organisation’s existing internal quality systems.

## **4. QUALITY ASSURANCE IN ADULT EDUCATION PROVISION**

### **4.1. Introduction to the theme**

EQAVET is a reference instrument designed to help EU countries promote and monitor the ongoing improvement of their vocational education and training systems on the basis of commonly agreed criteria. The framework should not only contribute to improving quality in VET but also make it easier, by building mutual trust between the VET systems, for a country to accept and recognise the skills and competences acquired by learners in different countries and learning environments.

The partners’ quality assurance systems were analysed in relation to the EQAVET (European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training) recommendations, including a look at the implementation of internal quality assurance in partner organisations, quality assurance policies and tools in use.

An essential part of this theme was the discussion and comparison of the quality indicators and management systems used by the partners.

### **4.2. How to ensure quality in educational activities**

#### **Denmark**

In Denmark, every educational institution must be accredited by the Ministry of Education. After this the institutions evaluate themselves, with only sporadic intervention from the Ministry. Tietgen, just like any other accredited institution, carries out quality control in order to improve, striving to provide the best

possible courses and education, maintain a dynamic organisation and ensure organisational growth. It works to keep up with or stay ahead of the competition.

The main characteristic of our institution's internal quality assurance system is that it is carried out to ensure that both our stakeholders' and our own quality criteria are met. We try to identify areas for improvement and share all our findings with the entire organisation. We constantly strive to improve.

### **Finland**

Quality assurance in Keuda consists of two different self-assessments, as well as student and staff feedback. Both of the internal assessments are criteria-based and done yearly. The first is done using the Peer Review method with its national quality criteria. The annually-chosen quality areas focus on the main phases of the competence-based VET process. The second self-assessment is laid down in the Finnish national quality strategy which states that each VET provider must perform a self-assessment of their quality assurance system each year, from 2015 onwards.

Student feedback is collected in several different ways. There is a national feedback system (AIPAL) by which feedback is collected from the students twice during their study period. Keuda also has its own feedback system, through which feedback is collected every year. In addition, there is a separate feedback system for students who study on VET courses purchased by employment offices (once or twice during the training). A students' forum is also organised once a year to collect feedback from the students.

Feedback is also systematically collected from the Keuda personnel once a year. Additionally, each superior has a developmental discussion with each staff member once a year. These discussions are standardised and have a reporting system of their own.

All the feedback and results of various assessments are collected and analysed by the management team of Keuda Adult Education at a yearly event called the Managerial Review. After the Managerial Review, the management team holds a development workshop for two days where topics are chosen to be the focus of development work for the following year. Action plans are made for these topics, establishing schedules and deciding who will be in charge of the different actions. This forms the "review" and "planning" sections of the EQAVET cycle.

### **France**

Since 2011, the GIP Quality Management System (QMS) has been certified according to the ISO 9001:2008 standard, with a revision in October 2014. Our certification covers the provision of consulting, engineering,

training and validation services. A strategic vision is shared by the whole staff and includes explicit goals, actions and indicators. Each process must respect the implementation plan that is checked and agreed during the management review twice a year. At the moment, there are 4 GRETA units and our academy is the one which is closest to being certified with the ISO 9001-9008 standard.

To ensure quality in the adult education system, the GRETA network uses the GRETA + label for quality policies regarding “customised training and service”. This consists of:

- rapid and supervised access to information
- personalised advice
- a complete range of services
- implementation of solutions for the customer and trainees
- signed contract with trainees (goals, content, process)
- support and customisation of the process
- flexibility of methods, resources and tools for each trainee
- assessment and certificate of what has been learnt during the training
- sufficient skilled and competent lecturers
- responsiveness in administrative and financial follow-up
- commitment to constant improvement

The GRETA+ label requires the following commitments: exam pass rate, customer satisfaction survey for jobseekers, employment rate, skills upgrading and adjustments (e.g. digital skills), exchange of good practices between trainers and stakeholder assessments. Regular internal audits are carried out to get a clear view of working processes at all training sites. The implementation of Internal Quality Assessments is an area for development within the academic strategy of GRETA for the period 2015 - 2018.

### **Italy**

Since 1996, the IFOA Quality Management System (QMS) has been certified according to standard EN ISO 9001:2000 and subsequent modifications (currently EN ISO 9001:2015).

Our certification covers the design, delivery and monitoring of training services relating to:

1. Individual and/or class training programmes (both publicly and privately funded), whoever the beneficiaries and whatever the delivery methods.
2. Information, guidance and individual counselling.
3. Work placement activities: internships, job searches, assistance in matching job demands/offers



in all our ten sites in Italy.

This QMS means that a Quality Manual, several Quality Procedures and many Quality Assurance documents are of regular use in our organisation. All processes are described and staff at all levels are required to comply with the QMS. Fields covered by the QMS are:

- Company policy on quality
- Needs analysis and training overview
- Detailed design and planning; start of project.
- Communication and recruitment
- Training delivery
- Relationships with trainers
- Monitoring and evaluation, data collection and storage
- Resource management
- Financial management
- Safety and environment

We consider a good practice to be our shared commitment to quality (each and every staff member) and the yearly review of the QMS, which encourages us all to constantly rethink our way of performing, with a view to continuous improvement.

IFOA's training programmes do not have any regular funding. We must constantly apply for grants and make offers in order to set up and deliver training courses. So, the quality of our project/programme design is crucial to our survival and performance. To this end, a few years ago we created a community, grouping together project designers and project managers. Indeed, we apply for funding through many different channels: the ESF, private companies, EU programmes etc. Project applications vary greatly from one type to another. Nevertheless, there are common parts that may be repeated or reused to gain effectiveness and efficiency. So, the community meets regularly to pool and share practices, tools and ideas in order to improve our success rate.

### **Slovenia**

At SIAE we use some parts of the **Offering Quality Education to Adults (OQEA)** system that SIAE developed and implemented at a national level for the providers of adult education in Slovenia (more information is available at <http://kakovost.acs.si/oqea/>). When implemented in adult education organisations, the main characteristics of the system are as follows: quality circle philosophy, the importance of including

employees in quality assessment and quality improvement, the appointment of a quality group and in some organisations also a **quality counsellor** to advise employees and management on quality issues (for more information see <http://kakovost.acs.si/counsellors/>), a clear methodology, the use of quantitative and qualitative assessment methods and a discussion of quality standards – what does quality mean to us and to our institution?

## **5. KEY COMPETENCES AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

### **5.1. Introduction to the theme**

The key competences provide a reference framework to support national and European efforts to achieve defined objectives. This framework is mainly intended for policy-makers, education and training providers, employers and learners. Key competences should be acquired by young people by the end of their compulsory education and training, equipping them for adult life, particularly working life, whilst forming a basis for further learning. Key competences are also very much related to adult education. These competences can be developed throughout adult life, through a process of developing and updating skills.

The workshop consisted of presentations on entrepreneurship policies and strategies in each of the partner countries, as well as a discussion on developing an entrepreneurial mindset and ways to prepare trainees to create enterprises. Partners compared how they carry out their education and training and shared good practices.

### **5.2. Defining key competences and the entrepreneurial mindset**

#### **Denmark**

According to instructions given by The Ministry of Education, innovation and entrepreneurship must be incorporated as a theme in all compulsory state school subjects, e.g. as a central part of the ‘Crafts and Design’ subject. Students must acquire knowledge about innovation, entrepreneurship and creativity, in order to be able to convert this knowledge into products which will be of value to real-life enterprises and society in general.

Guidance and counselling activities for adults and enterprises vary greatly and many players are involved: teachers at school, informative meetings at the work place, local authorities in ‘Job Centers’, trade unions etc.

In September 1997, the Danish Minister of Education launched a government initiative called “National Competence Development, Business Development through Competence Development”. This initiative was established by means of round-table discussions between Industry and Education and private sector representatives.

The initiative had five aims. The enhancement of:

1. Danish education, to be among the best in the world.
2. Development of personal skills.
3. Partnerships between educational institutions and industry.
4. Life Long Learning (LLL).
5. Enrichment of teachers’ and students’ roles and the use of new technologies in education.

VET Business was represented by Tietgen Business. The focus area for Tietgen was:

- Establishment of partnership between universities and industry.
- Internationalisation.
- Information Technologies.
- Entrepreneurship.
- Skills development in companies.

Tietgen’s mission and motivation is to educate future entrepreneurs. Teamwork, responsibility, career commitment, commercial awareness, decision making, communication, leadership, results orientation and problem solving are some of the key competences necessary in order to promote entrepreneurship.

### **Finland**

In Keuda, adult education entrepreneurship is linked to studies throughout the whole training program. Entrepreneurial studies can be found in the content of each qualification as internal entrepreneurship (attitude to life and lifelong learning) and entrepreneurship (acting as an entrepreneur).

Key competences for lifelong learning are an essential part of entrepreneurial skills. They reflect an individual’s ability to cope with different situations and increase professional education and civic skills.

The key competences for lifelong learning are:

- lifelong learning and problem-solving
- interaction and collaboration

- professional ethics
- health, safety, security and performance
- sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
- sustainable development
- aesthetics
- communication and media skills
- mathematics and natural sciences
- technology and information technology
- active citizenship and different cultures

In basic vocational degree qualifications you will find many words which describe the entrepreneurial mindset. Words such as innovative, sustainable development, independence, teamwork, activity and effectiveness are understood as attributes of internal entrepreneurship.

### **France**

Lifelong learning has become a necessity for all citizens. We need to develop our skills and competences throughout our lives, not only for personal fulfilment and in order to actively engage with the society in which we live but also to be successful in a constantly changing world of work. Growing internationalisation, the rapid pace of change and the continuous roll-out of new technologies mean that Europeans must not only keep their specific job-related skills up-to-date but must also possess generic skills that will enable them to adapt to change. People's competences also contribute to their motivation and job satisfaction at the workplace, thereby affecting the quality of their work.

Key competences are necessary for self-fulfilment and personal development, active citizenship and social and professional integration. We see 8 key competences:

- Communicating using one's own language
- Communicating using a foreign language
- Mathematical competence and basic skills in science and technology
- Digital literacy
- Learning to learn
- Social and civic competences
- Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
- Cultural awareness and expression

**Main aims**

- Motivation
- Personal development
- Social inclusion
- Active citizenship
- Employment
- Competitiveness
- Quality
- Satisfaction

**Italy**

We consider as key competences those listed in Recommendation 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 18 December 2006, which are as follows: communication in the mother tongue, communication in foreign languages, mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology, digital competence, learning to learn, social and civic competences, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, cultural awareness and expression. Plus, environmental sustainability.

From our point of view, the most efficient ways to foster an entrepreneurial mindset are:

1. Generally speaking:
  - starting at an early stage, encouraging young people to listen and observe, get involved, take (reasonable and proportional) risks and accept failure as a driver for improvement;
2. Regarding our specific training activities:
  - involving local business actors in the design, delivery and evaluation of training programmes;
  - using active educational methods: visits and interviews with young and older entrepreneurs, learning by doing, peer education, business simulation, serious games etc.;
  - favouring the use of co-working spaces;
  - favouring team working;
  - favouring inter-generational learning;
  - getting accustomed to regular self-assessment and performance review;
  - supporting learning with an on-line platform, not only to deliver training but to share projects, search for partners, deliver tools and products, brainstorm and create community areas;
  - exchanging training practices with other EU countries.

## **Slovenia**

We define key competences as competences which are transferable between occupations. Irrespective of specific circumstances, they provide a functional response and performance for a variety of activities. In Slovenia we adopted the model of 8 key competences that was defined at the European level: digital competence, learning to learn, mathematical competence and basic competence in science and technology, communication in foreign languages, communication in the mother tongue, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, cultural awareness and expression and social and civic competence.

## **6. COMPETENCE-BASED VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS / YOUNG ADULT'S AND ADULT'S UPSKILLING PROGRAMMES**

### **6.1. Introduction to the theme**

The European Commission underlines that adult education is a vital component of a lifelong learning policy. It plays an essential role in achieving and sustaining competitiveness and employability, social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development. As the Commission notes, the challenge for Europe is to provide learning opportunities for all, especially those groups which are marginalised or in need of special support. According to the Commission, adult education systems should be flexible and high-quality, characterised by excellent teaching and reinforced by the contribution of local authorities, employers, social partners, civil society and cultural organisations. The Commission also underlines that there is an increasing demand for adult learning.

(4.11.2015, [http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/adult-learning/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/adult-learning/index_en.htm))

In the workshop, the partners gave a description of their vocational adult education policies and systems at the national, regional and VET-provider level. The individualisation/personalisation process and its relation to recognition and validation methods was also closely examined during the workshop. Furthermore, specific attention was given to upskilling programmes to support special target groups.

### **6.2. Principles of vocational qualification systems in adult education and training in partner countries**

#### **Denmark**

The overall answer can be divided into two aspects. Firstly, in Denmark we have an educational structure called 'AMU' which is mainly funded by the government. From the 1970's onwards this was a popular way of upskilling employees. Over the last 10 years, since around 2005, less people have been using this

method. Secondly, companies concentrate on quicker skills improvement and find this in non-formal training for employees. This way of upskilling is winning in today's market.

### **Finland**

Competence-based qualifications provide adults with a flexible way to enhance and maintain their vocational skills. In addition to the 53 vocational qualifications offered, there are over 300 further and specialist qualifications available in different fields. Vocational modules are defined in collaboration with representatives from the business world and are directly based on real work tasks. In order to complete a competence-based qualification, candidates must demonstrate certain skills and competences required in the profession. These skills are outlined in the Requirements of Competence-based Qualifications defined by the Finnish National Board of Education. The qualification requirements are the same as for vocational upper secondary education and training (for youth).

There are three levels of competence-based qualifications:

- Vocational qualifications indicating competence to enter employment in the field.
- Further vocational qualifications indicating vocational skills required of skilled workers in the field.
- Specialist vocational qualifications indicating a command of the most demanding tasks in the field.

Competence-based qualifications provide eligibility to study further at universities of applied sciences or other universities.

Individualisation is a key element in vocational adult education and training. An individual plan is prepared for each student to help them acquire the required vocational skills. The plan takes into account the individual's life circumstances, competences, identified learning needs and opportunities for on-the-job learning.

### **France**

The main characteristics of the French vocational education and training system are:

- A system based on several sources of funding: the regions, the state and companies.
- A complex system with many alternatives and many players.
- A system offering individualised and personalised education in order to gain professional skills, acquire qualifications or graduate.

The aim is to help people to adapt to technological developments or new working conditions and improve their chances of social and professional advancement.

The law defines the funding obligations of companies. In France, social partners play a key role in negotiating the rules, methods and funding and their decisions then become the law.

Vocational training for employees is financed by the employer. Companies can organise their own training or ask Approved Joint Collecting Bodies (OPCA), in which case they can obtain more money.

Vocational training for unemployed people is organised by the regions.

There is a wide variety of training providers in the market (companies, OPCAs, regions, the state, households) and many public training bodies, e.g. National Education training centres such as GRETAS, universities and CNAM, semi-public bodies and private bodies.

### **Italy**

In Italy, adult VET is done mostly through two channels: either publicly or privately funded. Publicly funded adult VET in Italy is governed by Law no. 845/78 and is controlled by the Ministry of Labour which implements its policies either directly or, most often, through regional authorities. For many years the regions have developed their own Qualification Systems in an independent way. Italy is in fact the last EU member state to adopt a National Qualification Framework, with a process that is still ongoing at present. The state and the regions use EU (ESF) and national funds to finance calls for proposals and tenders. Providers must obtain accreditation (different for each region and the state) in order to access such calls and tenders. When they succeed with their application, they can deliver Initial and/or Higher and/or Continuous VET courses, leading to qualifications ranging from EQF level 3 to 7.

There are two main categories of privately funded training:

- a. “Fondi Paritetici Interprofessionali”, governed by Law no. 236/93, which uses 0.3% of workers’ salaries as a “wallet” that companies can use to set up training courses for their staff. Training objectives must be agreed upon between the management and the trade unions, programmes must be delivered by an accredited VET provider and courses can (but do not necessarily) lead to official qualifications.
- b. Non-accredited training, which companies buy from providers of their choice and pay for directly using their own funds. Such courses generally do not lead to qualifications.



## **Slovenia**

The Slovenian qualification system consists of three sub-systems: (1) Qualifications obtained through educational programmes at formal education levels which end with the awarding of a certificate, diploma or other evidence of officially recognised education; (2) A certification system of national vocational qualifications (NVQ) which provides working vocational or professional training and recognition of non-formal knowledge with an officially recognised document; (3) further and complementary education by which an individual deepens their knowledge and develops competences for life, work, mobility and career promotion and by which he or she obtains a certification which may be a condition for employment or for continuing to perform work. Adults can acquire vocational or professional qualifications by enrolling on formal education programmes that are not specifically intended for adults, as well as those that have been specifically prepared with adults as the target group. They can acquire national vocational qualifications by validating their previous formal and non-formal knowledge. When the complementary qualifications have been developed, adults will also have the opportunity to acquire this type of qualification.

### **6.3. Best practices to support the upgrading of young adults' and adults' skills and competences in partner countries**

#### **Denmark**

In our opinion, it is important to focus on the upskilling that the employers want. We therefore provide courses that are short (Akademi training) instead of degrees that require longer periods (Diploma). We also provide team coaching whose specific focus is set by the company that requests it. When it comes to language courses, we provide both longer courses and individual branch-specific terminology courses (again motivated by the companies' needs for fast upskilling).

#### **Finland**

Over recent years, there has been some concern about skills shortages among young adults and adults in Finland. Certain programmes have been planned primarily for those who lack qualifications. The so-called youth guarantee is set to ensure that young people have access to education, training and employment, as well as preventing social exclusion. The cross-administrative youth guarantee started in 2013. The Finnish youth guarantee is to be based on a Public-Private-People-Partnership model in which young adults are themselves the actors and take responsibility for their own future. Youth guarantee is a primary goal of the Government Programme and will be implemented throughout the government's term of office.

For unqualified people aged 20 to 29, a young adults' skills programme has been set up to improve opportunities for applying for vocational education and training leading to a degree or other qualification. This programme has been in place between 2013 and 2016. In addition, there is an adults' upskilling programme for those aged between 30 and 50 which is basically very similar to the young adults' programme, the only difference being the age of the target group.

The most important thing when it comes to helping students is that the trainer must have a positive attitude towards those individuals who need support. The strengths of each student can be found through respectful co-operation. Personal meetings and interviews are very important. Humanity and helpfulness are also important aspects when building the path towards a positive attitude to learning, even towards life-long learning.

### **France**

We think that the best way to support young adults and adults, in order to upgrade their education level or to give them new competences and skills, is to take into account their initial level of qualification, their professional and personal experience and what they would like to do. Their training must be organised so that they first learn skills in a company (internship, apprenticeship) and when they come back to the vocational training centre, they can then try to understand what they did, learned and achieved. They should learn from work experience rather than applying theory when they go for an internship. The qualification system should be flexible enough to allow the modification of training programmes (contents, methods, tools), according to the needs expressed by the companies. Also, upskilling programmes should be attractive to students and training should be personalised. It is important to pay attention to the educators' attitude. Students are future colleagues who need to be treated with humanity and understanding.

### **Italy**

In our opinion, the best tools to support the upskilling of young adults and adults are:

- "clever" and widespread recognition of prior learning
- making widespread use of learning-by-doing, group learning and peer learning
- exploiting company training/experts from the labour market
- adapting timing to people needs
- certification of learning
- acknowledging/rewarding upskilling (e.g. linking it to better reputation/visibility or salary increase)

- reducing tuition fees

### **Slovenia**

In order to support adults' and young adults' upgrading, it is important to develop education and training programmes that suit the target group of young adults. The programmes should be attractive to them and the methods should be appropriate (project work, etc.). In addition, international, national and local financial schemes must include incentives for young adults to enter education and training, as well as incentives for the providers of young adult training.

It is important that the teachers who work with the target group of young adults be carefully chosen and properly trained. They must understand the most important features of this target group, especially when it comes to drop-outs from the educational system, etc. They must also have training from an educational point of view regarding which methods to use when working with young adults, which content is interesting for the target group, etc.

## **7. BEST AND NEXT PRACTICES IN VOCATIONAL ADULT EDUCATION PROVISION**

### **7.1. The most valuable things learnt during the project**

While Europe suffers political and social unrest, the Shape project has improved links among Europeans as members of the same continent, with the understanding that we are building a shared future. This is not only in the field of education but also by increasing our common understanding of the other partner countries' cultures and societies. The experience of meeting a lot of people with the same interests, working in different situations and in other countries but still sharing the same vision of excellent adult education and training, helps to support the ongoing development work going on in each partner organisation.

One of the most valuable outcomes of the project has been an improved understanding of the VET systems in the partner countries and the chance for each to compare their own situation with others. We have become more aware of common aims and differences between education and training systems in different European countries, as well as similar challenges that can be addressed by applying successful solutions learnt during the seminars.

The strongest points of the project have been:

- the chance for mutual learning arising from the exchange of practices;

- the possibility to involve colleagues from all departments in a true transnational activity, even those not usually involved in EU projects. This provided the chance to open their minds, learn, compare and be inspired;
- the decision to combine peer training sessions with visits to educational, training, business and institutional sites in partner territories. This gave us a much deeper understanding of contexts and systems;
- the opportunity to get to know each other better and discover possible ways for closer future cooperation;
- the good practices introduced by partners have been transferable or applicable to other organisations, including those abroad.

The working method used in the project supported an analytical and evaluative approach when handling the themes, which were all related to vocational adult education and training. Furthermore, the working method promoted co-operation between the participants. Indeed, attending the workshops, visiting sites and companies, discussing and building understanding together gave quite a different perspective to VET provision than one might get from reading official documents. The workshop method, combined with company visits and lectures given by experts, gave everyone a chance to “feel” how things are dealt with in practice in the partner countries.

## **7.2. Good practices to recommend**

### **Take care of professional development of adult education staff**

The Shape project started by comparing education systems and the provision of adult education in partner countries. It became obvious that the regulations and instructions differed a lot and the qualifications required for adult educators were not the same in the partner countries. Despite the differences, the need for professional development was clearly recognised in each country and the good practices observed were suitable for all countries and organisations. In Slovenia in particular, counsellors seem to be highly appreciated and special care is taken regarding their professional development, by organising particular programmes for them within the field of adult education.

- Participants agreed that a “Human resources and professional training plan” is a practical tool for all organisations.

- Adult education needs well-trained staff. We have to ensure that adult educators and counsellors obtain competences in the field in question, with training for adult education, experience from their working life and also guidance and counselling know-how.
- Additionally, it is important for the staff to be able to develop their professional skills regularly.

### **Support lifelong learning**

The main question in the workshop was how to take care of the whole lifelong learning path, both within the system itself and also in practice. The recognition of prior learning was identified as a key element in the provision of adult education. Therefore, there exists the need for practical and effective tool(s) for prior learning recognition in each partner organisation. Tietgen (Denmark) introduced one such a tool for competence measurement called “my competence folder” ([www.minkompetencemappe.dk](http://www.minkompetencemappe.dk)).

- Adults gain competences via several paths. It is important to validate their prior learning and experiences.
- In addition to official learning outcomes, it is important to recognise the competences obtained through non-formal and informal learning.
- European level frameworks are formulated to support the ambition of lifelong learning, the mobility of European learners and the flexibility of learning pathways to achieve qualifications.

### **Improve quality, do not control activities**

European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET) provides a framework for quality assessment and a theoretical tool to ensure the quality of vocational adult education. Working life partners have an important role in defining the quality of adult education and training and, at the same time, they are co-workers in creating quality. IFOA (Italy) showed how essential businesses are in the field of vocational adult education. Businesses provide practical learning environments for students in order to improve their skills but they also introduce new aspects regarding how we understand education and training and vocational education and training concepts, e.g. competences. This understanding also helps us in our work on quality.

- Quality assessments should be used to develop and improve the quality of vocational adult education. They are not intended to limit or control activities.
- Every educational organisation should have a quality policy. Regarding assessments, criteria-based assessment has been found to be a very useful method.
- Peer review has been a practical and supportive method for assessment in many cases.
- Regular quality meetings with staff are a useful activity for ongoing improvement.

### **Foster an entrepreneurial mindset and key competences**

Entrepreneurship is seen as a driver for economic growth. Key competences are seen as an essential part of the entrepreneurial mindset. What is more, key competences, such as communication skills and mathematical skills, are significant for lifelong learning. The GIP FC (France) showed how close co-operation between educational institutions and the working world increases the students' understanding of entrepreneurship.

But how can we foster an entrepreneurial mindset?

- First of all, make entrepreneurship interesting and familiar by:
  - using project work methods in training.
  - helping students to run their own “mini” companies.
  - participating in national and international competitions.
  - maintaining a close network, peer support and mentoring relations with regional entrepreneurs.
- Also, develop key competences. These are necessary for human self-fulfilment and personal development and are transferable between occupations, irrespective of specific circumstances.

### **Recognise prior learning and make personalised education plans**

The target for vocational adult education and training is to solve the problem of skills shortages among the adult population. Through competence-based systems and programmes, which are designed to support specific target groups, it is possible to upgrade the education level of those who lack qualifications or need to update their skills in a changing labour market.

In Keuda (Finland), special programmes for young adults have proved successful. In addition to obtaining qualifications through education and training, the students who have taken part in these programmes have become motivated to study and learn.

- It is important to develop educational and training programmes for specific target groups.
- The upskilling programmes for adults and young adults who have not completed their previous studies need to appear attractive and be planned individually.
- The importance of guidance and counselling must also be recognised.
- Recognition of prior learning and experience needs to be the basis for adult education and training.
- Close co-operation with companies and on-the-job learning gives motivation and relevance to studying, in terms of competences.

### **7.3. Plans for the future**

The working method developed in the Shape project will be put into practice in a new project called Reshape the future – education and training for immigrants and refugees. This topic will be analysed from five different perspectives: recognition of non-formal and informal education, competences and continuous training for educators and counsellors, guidance and counselling, quality assurance relating to education activities and social integration, entrepreneurship education and training.

The understanding, knowledge and results obtained during the Shape project provide a strong basis for themes concerning the provision of vocational education and training for migrants and refugees. All the experience and know-how obtained from the co-operation of the Shape partners will be used when dealing with the contents of the new project. Partners from the Shape project (Denmark, Finland, Italy and Slovenia) will carry on with Reshape, together with two new partners from the Netherlands and Sweden.