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## Report of the workshop's outcomes

Workshop 1 focused on the **School-Enterprise approach**: a different learning approach of work-based learning, where students realize real product for real customers in **school-based working** activities. More than 30 people took part in the discussion, covering several countries of the European Union and Hong Kong.

### The aim of the workshop

Rethinking VET for the XXI century, as emerged in the introduction, is more and more crucial for the quality-enhancement of education and training. Current challenges include first of all the need to fill the existing gap between the school system and the real world in terms of skills (professional and life skills) effectively requested by the job market. In this perspective, the role of students evolves into learners, making them nomore a passive groups rather an interactive team, where evaluation is based on final skills rather than learning processes.

To this extent, in a pedagogical perspective, innovations in the VET system are leading to 2 different approaches:

- **The Dual-System and the Apprenticeship**, where the work in companies has the priority in training
- **The School-Enterprise model**, where the work experience is based in a school-based entrepreneurial and production environment.

While the first approach has been clearly recognized and promoted, the second one, notwithstanding its large implementation in EU and beyond, lacks a common framework of understanding and an active advocacy at institutional level.

Some questions have been raised during the introduction to facilitate the discussion:

- What are the advantages of company-school-company combination?
- What are the main obstacles in this system?
- What are the skills teachers need?
- How the society will fit in this (parents, officials, companies, legislation etc.)?

### The results of the discussion

From the active and rich debate into subgroups, the evidence of an existing and successful practice of Entrepreneurial Colleges has clearly emerged. In particular there are two trends which can be considered as examples of the School-enterprise approach:

- **Strictu senso**: Production schools (France; Denmark); Project-based or problem-based learning (Nordic countries; the Netherlands); Scuola-Impresa o Impresa formativa (Italy);
- **In a broader view**: extracurricular activities (Finland) or production activities for special events (holidays; Christmas markets; open days or fairs); “from dating to wedding” projects (Portugal); Junior Achievement learning enterprises have been also mentioned as a positive practice in schools (international)

In terms of impact, this approach has been unanimously recognized as enhancing **Excellence and Quality** in training: professional skills are gained, but the school environment makes also life skills, literacy and numeracy similarly developed and learnt by students. The positive effect of the work experience, even if not in an external company, is safe, but the educational guidance of the school staff makes more effective the process of developing the other skills: **Real challenges for Real learning**

It consolidates **Inclusion and Life skills**: it is an approach where **«studying» becomes «learning»**, to some extent more appropriate for those kids and young people with learning disabilities, at risk of dropout or former early school leavers or even NEETs. This approach is able to raise motivation of learners toward all the skills they need to make their training more complete, because essentially based on a more practical learning but in a protected environment.

Not only positive elements have been pointed out, but also critical issues. The paradigm shift in the teaching activity and the didactics requires an alignment of the contents, methodologies and the same “concept” of teacher: the practical activity should become the starting point of the learning process, and a more learner-centred approach should be introduced. To this extent, teaching becomes a broader activity including also coaching and mentoring, requiring more skills not only on these aspects but also in terms of market trends.

From a management point of view, production can become an important source of funding to increase providers sustainability. However, several delegates have outlined some juridical and organizational issues. Several countries still do not allow such economic activities in a school environment, due to safety restrictions or for the opposition of trade unions: in most of the cases, actually, students are not paid and do not have patents for their original productions.

Another important element of reflection consist of the competition potentially perceived by the business sector, thus creating a dangerous conflict between two essential partners in education and training: the VET provider and the local companies. To some extent, the positive experience of collaboration between most of the practices and the local companies show how mainly positive is the perception of the business sector, due to the recognition of the value of this training for their future employees. Furthermore, as this approach may require huge investments in machineries or spaces for the different production steps, there are examples of effective collaboration between providers and companies in sharing spaces, investments or in-kind resources.

### **A call for action**

School-Enterprise approach can be considered as an important pathway for increasing employability, developing professional and life skills and reducing dropout and the NEET phenomenon. However, in this process of rethinking VET, some actions should be taken into account at micro-, meso- and macro (policy) level:

- Rethinking the role of Teachers and Tutors: they need to develop a guidance role in a shared process of learning. New approaches are requested in **Teacher Education**
- **Investments are crucial** for increasing the quality and updating workshops machineries, technologies, even spaces. Public fundings should be allocated to this extent, as well as policies allowing production for sale, as well as stronger collaboration with companies for co-working areas
- **Research and cultural dissemination** to outline the positive impact of this approach in terms of quality of the training and employability. This action could encourage a different perception on VET in families, trade unions, companies as well as policy-makers

A roadmap for a collective action on the School-Enterprise could consist of:

- **MODELLING:** Mapping the approaches (similarities and differences)
- **IMPLEMENTATION:** Definition of a common framework in different perspectives: pedagogy; law & policy; school management and leadership
- **ADVOCACY:** Production of a policy brief and promotion via EfVET and its members' channels and activities