



## WP2 - Best practices and Training Needs Assessment

### Template for Best Practice Documentation (Case Study): SMEs in Apprenticeships with focus on role of intermediary organisations

Title	School-Enterprise
Publication date	September 2011
Source of Information	Cometa Formazione, Oliver Twist vocational training school
Location (Region / Country)	Como (Lombardy/ Italy)
Context (appr. 500 words)	<p>The program School-Enterprise is hugely in connection with the national and local context of education policy: in 2016, dropping out was one of the most severe problems of the educative system, recognized at European level. The path towards Europe 2020 targets (dropping out level under 10%) is still far to get: the number of Italian NEETs, in 2015, increased to 25%, from 22.7% in 2011. Furthermore, at national and regional level, the gap between the education system and the job market is wider and wider, due to both the decrease of public investment in education and the rapid changes in the economic context where new skills are required (i.e.: ICT, knowledge of the English language).</p> <p>The Province of Como, in particular, shows a dropping-out rate higher than 20% in 2015. One of the reasons of this level concerns some youth-related issues which affect the attitude of young people to get maturity and responsibility, often due to poverty or lack of family ties. This problems, unfortunately, can have consequences in terms of poor performances at school and, eventually, dropping-out. At the same time, in 2014, the unemployment rate in the province of Como was 9%, but more than 25% for young people (15-29 years old).</p> <p>Both the presence of youth problems and the youth unemployment rate show the importance to offer new educative and training paths in line with the cognitive and non-cognitive skills required by companies. The economic crisis, to some extent, has shown up its root in terms of cultural and personal crisis: education becomes an essential aspect to generate people responsible and ready to face reality with all its problems.</p> <p>The School-Enterprise offers experiential learning as a means of connect young people with the world of work and introducing a real job experience to the classroom which has a positive impact on students' attitudes to both work and study.</p> <p>The programme is implemented by Cometa Formazione and offers three disciplines: catering, furniture and textiles, led by a Master Craftsman.</p>
Methodological Approach (appr. 500 words)	<p><b>The School-Enterprise is a training method applied in the Oliver Twist vocational training school; it involves in a wide local partnership teachers, tutors, local craftsmen, local entrepreneurs in both planning and formation activities.</b> School-Enterprise aims at <b>youth employability</b> and</p>

**entrepreneurship**, as it develops students' skills involving them in producing real products for the market. On completion of the programme, young people have the chance to take up apprenticeships or start their own business. It is a **flexible program, where each student, according to her/his learning needs, follows a personalized step across several modules** which can be attended according to their personal skills to be developed or increased. Apprentices, after the program, are able to: manage competences in one of the available areas (carpentry, restoration, decoration, fabric, tourism); generate a start-up; be involved in the generational change of local craftsmen.

**The School-Enterprise provides training and education in particular for those students at risk of dropping out**; they can fulfil the legal obligation to attend school until and beyond the age required by the Italian law. **The school also targets students with disabilities, unemployed young adults and young immigrants.** Students, learning by doing with the School-Enterprise method, reach not only the minimum level of education and training in order to receive an official qualification, but, following and developing their talents, they can raise up those non-cognitive skills which are essential for the process of personal maturity and responsibility, at the bottom of the spirit of entrepreneurship.

Cometa Formazione has implemented a **road map** which is yearly reviewed and improved according to the results. The first step concerns the **training needs assessment** which relates to the socio-economic context of the territory where most of the students can, eventually, be employed **according with the competences required by the local industrial sectors: Cometa has a network including more than 500 entrepreneurship.**

This assessment helps in identifying the Maestro (Master Craftsman) who will be in charge of training the apprentices in the School-Enterprise. The **Maestro is selected from local artisans** by a recruitment process where the applicants are interviewed on their experience and competences.

As important as the Maestro, the selection of tutors is crucial: they will accompany apprentices in their needs, and they will assist the Maestro in his/her guidance to the apprentices.

**The educational staff, in accordance with the Maestro, approves a general training plan**, including: the schedule of training (organized into modules), the skills to be developed and the activities to be implemented in order to get the students reach those skills. Activities which can be dangerous or not relevant are clearly identified and prohibited. Besides, for each apprentice, **a personal training plan is realized, identifying a personal path towards the achievement of the training general skills.**

Apprentices are required to share the training plan. The student/ apprentice, under the guidance of the Maestro, carries out all the tasks he has been in charge of. The product to be realized or the task to be reached can be related to either a specific work on external commission or a project work; in any case, the apprentice can develop specific competences, skills and knowledge, according to both the general and his/her personal training plan.

The Maestro and the tutor help the apprentice to recognize and interiorize those skills he/she gains: regular meetings are organized for an on-going assessment. At the end of the program, Cometa Formazione and the Maestro evaluate whether and to what extent the apprentice has reached those goals identified in the training program (employability, qualification or specific level of competences).

Impact and key success factors (appr. 500 words)	<p>Key learning points for training providers and policy makers from this good practice are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>combination of working and learning and commercial aspect of all activities</b>. The learning element is directly related to the working element of the programme and in most cases learning and working produce a product or service that is commercially sold.</li> <li>• The <b>very personalised learning path for each student</b>: ratio of teachers to students is currently 1:5</li> <li>• The <b>establishment of a pedagogic resources centre</b> where teachers/mentors and entrepreneurs work closely together.</li> <li>• <b>Customised career guidance</b>: after graduating, each student knows what he likes to do in terms of vocation and if he or she wants to become a young entrepreneur or not</li> <li>• Cometa Formazione, jointly with Università di Bergamo, develops a <b>research program for its staff</b>, offering them the opportunity of a <b>PhD course for teachers, tutors and other staff</b>; the research emerged in the PhD theses, strictly connected with their tasks, is a contribution for the school and the community.</li> </ul> <p>Moreover, the program School-Enterprise caused the following positive effects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the academic year 2015-2016 Oliver Twist School registered 402 pupils, of which 47 students, before enrolling in the School-Enterprise programme were dropout pupils; 106 pupils with disability or learning disorder; 188 linked to social services or with unknown problems; 61 without manifested problems.</li> <li>• Development of non-cognitive skills (high rate of students which conclude the programme) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ More than 95% of the students believe they grew humanely thanks to participating in the programme.</li> <li>○ More than 75% of them think they were helped in being more welcoming and in accepting diversity.</li> <li>○ More than 80% of the pupils believe to be assisted in engaging more easily with others.</li> <li>○ 18% of the students does voluntary work, in respect to 10% on national level.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Good results in terms of professional skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 94% of the pupils passed the year (2014-2015);</li> <li>○ More than 90% of the students, which before were dropouts, attended classes;</li> <li>○ More than 93% believes to be grown professionally.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Development of specific skills related with the selected training area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Students developed a good practical experience, because 41% of the learning hours were unrolled in workshops or in internships.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Good results regarding professional placement (regarding students who finished school in 2012, 2013, 2014): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ More than 60% of the students got a job, almost 20% decided to keep on studying;</li> <li>○ 18% got a job in the company where they unrolled the internship;</li> <li>○ More than 60% does <i>not</i> completely depend economically on their family.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
--	---

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Their average salary is 900€ per month.</li> <li>○ Almost 70% got a job that is coherent to their studies. (84% catering, 50% carpentry, 57% textile)</li> <li>● Good results for the student's family welfare: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 29% of former students with a job contribute actively to their family's expenses.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>The School-Enterprise is a good practice for the Region Lombardia with regard to the 'learning by doing' approach and the strong connection with the businesses in the region and around the school.</p> <p>The school liaises directly with the regional councillor and this has led to a change in the directive with regard to work-based learning in the region. Eventually, the School-Enterprise model has been finally included in the national Law "La Buona Scuola" last July 2015.</p>
Stakeholders and Partners (appr. 500 words)	<p>Cometa Formazione, along its almost 15-years experience, has developed a huge network of artisans and companies which have been and still are partners in the planning of our training and internships. Both the number of companies and the level of their commitment with Cometa Formazione is increasing year after year, making possible a more and more coherent training needs assessment in line with the concrete needs of the economic local context; the same companies have been positively impressed by the program, encouraging students to apply for their opportunities of internship. Since 2014, 677 companies are partners of Cometa Formazione, operating in all the more relevant sectors in Como: handicraft, hospitality, textile, tourism. At the same time, partnerships include international companies such as Inditex Group (Zara and Bershka), IBIS Hotel, Gi.Group, DHL, Zurich Group Italia.</p> <p>The relationships with Corporate Foundations (i.e. Vodafone, AC Milan, De Agostini) or Bank Foundations (Cariplo, Credito Valtellinese), has been growing and deepening, not only for fundraising activities; Cometa Formazione has been always promoting partnerships in win-win projects, where the economic and social impacts affect Cometa Formazione and its students, the partner, the local community.</p> <p>Public Administration, at national, regional and local levels, as well as public schools, are necessary and important partners: the social impact Cometa Formazione generates requires an adequate legal framework which has allowed the introduction of the apprenticeship in the form of the program School-Enterprise (in particular Regione Lombardia has introduced this possibility since 2008); a strong connection with Public Administration, local schools and other educative institutions has been essential to coordinate policies and tools to face dropping-out.</p>
Conditions (appr. 500 words)	<p>The School-Enterprise has an autonomous budget, and any eventual profit is reinvested in education as provided by law. The general costs are approximately 7000 € per each student a year.</p> <p>As a Vocational Training School recognized by the region of Lombardia, it receives public funds. In addition, it also receives external funds through several projects and sponsoring and therefore the school is gaining a stronger economic independence.</p>
Materials / Tools	It is crucial to prepare teachers and trainers to change their teaching

	<p>methodologies, to learn how to update their knowledge and to develop a growth mindset attitude. Teachers, namely for VET organizations, often have a concrete experience in the various sectors of their specialization, although all these competences need to be regularly updated with the continuous changes of the market.</p> <p>Cometa Formazione since its beginning considers research and development a crucial condition for the quality of the training and of the professional development of its staff. To this extent Cometa has developed a special <b>PhD program in Human Capital and Labour Policies with the University of Bergamo</b>. 15 members of staff work on their tasks and develop an applied research on their topic. Several PhD thesis has been already discussed with positive results on tutoring, teaching in VET (namely Math and Italian), social impact bond in educational sector.</p> <p>Besides, Cometa Research (<a href="http://www.cometaresearch.org">www.cometaresearch.org</a>) is the new centre for research and development in the fields of education and training, supported by Cometa Formazione. Already some scientific papers are published on the website. Moreover, we are working on the creation of e-books regarding teaching methods of mathematics and languages in VET schools.</p>
Replicability and/or up-scaling (appr. 500 words)	<p>In the last years, Cometa staff has been working in modeling the School-Enterprise approach. We believe that modeling is the step before implementing its transferability (which will always be conditioned to the environment where it will be introduced). We plan to produce some guidelines in order to share and discuss the main steps of the approach. There are 3 main pillars:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Education planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of the work processes</li> <li>• Modeling of the value chain of the different workshops</li> <li>• Matching between the didactic goals and activities and the value chain</li> <li>• Identification of the organizational structure</li> <li>• Analysis of the monitoring and evaluation processes</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Testing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring of the activities</li> <li>• Evaluation and reporting</li> <li>• Analysis of the outcomes and impacts</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Final revision and reprogramming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of success and failures</li> <li>• Review of the model</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
Conclusion (appr. 500 words)	<p>Cometa Formazione started in 2003 as a training center focused on NEETs. This educational challenge required the introduction of innovative learning approaches which are now at the core of the VET school “Oliver Twist” and its School-Enterprise Model (SEM).</p> <p>The SEM offers experiential learning as a means of connect young people with the world of work and introducing a real job experience to the classroom which has a positive impact on students’ attitudes to both work and study. The programme offers three specializations: catering, carpentry and fashion.</p> <p>Since 2014 Cometa Formazione has also been promoted an EQF Level 5 organization, the International Academy of Tourism and Hospitality, to train young people for Management in Tourism and Hospitality and Culinary in</p>

	<p>partnership with some of the most important world hotel chains operating in the area of Lake Como and Milan.</p> <p>Cometa can be now considered a Laboratory of Innovation and Social Inclusion, offering an example of solutions to the main challenges that education and training have to face in the XXI century, as recently pointed out in the Riga Conclusions and the EU Skills Agenda.</p> <p>A new approach to work-based learning has been realised through the School-Enterprise model. The SEM implies bringing the job experience into a classroom/office and vice versa.</p> <p>This innovative approach, started in a VET school program, has been the starting point for the training program for NEET, the Liceo del Lavoro, with great certified results. Now it has been adapted and implemented in the new high-school promoted by Cometa Formazione: the Liceo Artigianale, an academic path mixed with vocational skills. Excellence in VET shows that its programs can be inspiring also for general educational programs.</p> <p>The “Learning through experience” approach is a situational learning, as the pupil is set in a practical working environment, populated by peers, teachers and customers. It is rooted on the principle of personalization: each student receives a personalized formative training program. Everyone is in charge to realize a single project design and prototype of products/services; afterwards in a comparison among peers and teachers, the proposals are finalized to the market. In order to encourage a systemic training and thinking, students are engaged in a job rotation program, so that they can have experience in all the different aspects of the value chain to discover their specific talents in action.</p>
Other remarks:	<p><b>Further details</b>  <a href="http://www.puntocometa.org/home/english-area/what-we-do/school/">http://www.puntocometa.org/home/english-area/what-we-do/school/</a></p> <p><b>Contact details</b>  Paolo Nardi, <a href="mailto:paolo.nardi@puntocometa.org">paolo.nardi@puntocometa.org</a>  Laureen De Palma, <a href="mailto:laureen.depalma@puntocometa.org">laureen.depalma@puntocometa.org</a></p>