

Identification and assessment of the changing roles and competences of VET teachers and trainers within new paradigms of learning. Results in Lithuania.

The project the coordinator of which was Institute of Technology and Education (ITB), University of Bremen, addressed three main **aims**:

- To explore how VET teachers' and trainers' roles are changing against shifting learning paradigms and changing teaching/training environments and to establish what implications those shifts have in terms of the required skills, knowledge and competences of VET teachers and trainers.
- To determine what influence these shifting learning paradigms have for VET teachers and trainers and how they can be supported in their new roles. This involves an assessment of the adequacy of the current training provisions and the identification of good practice examples.
- To give recommendations for the provision of better and more targeted training of VET teachers and trainers in terms of structure, content, processes and monitoring for optimising training offers for the continuing professional development.

To reach the aims formulated, project consortium was created which extended to 9 European countries: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Romania, Spain, UK. The different natures of the national vocational education and training systems result in VET teachers and trainers facing different realities and challenges. Thus, the selection of the nine countries for conducting the empirical investigation followed the idea of representation of the variety of VET systems within the European Union. In order to deeper understand changes taking place in Europe in the field of VET and VET teachers' roles and competences, each country carried out the analysis of its context which was later assessed by other countries participating in the project from the perspective of processes taking place in Europe.

In Lithuania a qualitative research was carried out during which by means of interview and the method of *focus groups* 12 VET teachers (VET teachers, trainers working in a workplace, mentors in private companies, college and university teachers, trainers of VET teachers, specialists of employment institutions and VET experts) were interviewed.

The summary of the survey results has revealed that from the participants' point of view the greatest changes during the last ten years have taken place in the Labour market (the market itself has been forming and its needs have changed) as well as in training programmes (requirements for programmes and their content have changed). Also it has been accentuated that the learner has become more active during the process of learning and the activity field of VET teacher has expanded. Changes have also occurred in the organization of training (greater integration of practice and theory, the diversity of teaching/learning places has expanded from training institutions to social environment - libraries, cinemas, etc.) and the attitude towards didactics has also changed as the process of learning is considered to be more important than the outcome of learning in the opinion of most interview participants. The research has revealed not only the shifting role and responsibility of VET teachers, but also changes in the areas of administration, professional development, quality assurance and networking.

Considering the future of VET teachers and vocational training the interview participants have expressed different opinions, for example, that links among vocational training, labour market and academic institutions will become tighter, schools will become self-learning organizations themselves, a greater attention will be paid to social skills and the importance of professional career planning and professional development will increase.

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