

**COUNTRY REPORT OF THE  
RESEARCH AND NEEDS ANALYSIS  
FOR ITALY**



**CREATIVE LEARNING COMMUNITIES**  
2010-3558/001-001

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## Introduction

CLC project aims to give a concrete and effective response to the VET sector's needs in terms of teaching and learning key competences such as entrepreneurship, innovation and sense of initiative (ref. to Key Competences 7 –KC7- in the European Qualification Framework). The project will develop, as final product, a brand new educative tool that will pull together Creative Teaching Techniques and development of KC7 through the creation of Learning Communities: open learning environments. CLC project will support, in this way, the VET sector in empowering disadvantaged learners.

To ensure an effective answer to the VET trainers and VET learners' requests, the partnership has conducted an accurate research through individual interviews, analysis of the needs came to light and elaboration of information on VET system in each country.

This country report wants to give an overview of the VET system in Italy, to explain how the "in field" research has been conducted and to illustrate the results achieved. In the first part, section A, the report focuses on VET Trainers' points of view and in the second part, section B, it highlights the VET Learners' perceptions.

## 1. Overview

The Country Report developed by CEDEFOP (Italy-VET in Europe-Country Report 2009 ([www.libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/eu/pub/cedefop/vetreport/2009\\_CR\\_IT.pdf](http://www.libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/eu/pub/cedefop/vetreport/2009_CR_IT.pdf) ) gives a clear overview of the Italian VET system.

In Italy, the Regions have 'exclusive' legislative powers over vocational education and training, and parallel legislative powers over general education, apart from tasks connected with the European Union, although the State is responsible for deciding the basic principles.

The Italian VET system foresees the distinction between :

- 1) INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (IVET) (*“ISTRUZIONE E FORMAZIONE PROFESSIONALE INIZIALE”*)

The definition includes:

- i) first level (or basic) training pathways, addressed to those who have completed the first cycle of education;
- ii) second level training pathways addressed to those who have completed the upper secondary level of education or who have obtained a first-level vocational qualification.

Two types of institutions provide IVET in Italy:

- i) Public and private VET centers (Centri di formazione professionale), providing one, two or three year study courses.
- ii) Public professional institutes (Istituti professionali statali), with a complex study course lasting five years.

- 2) CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (CVET) (*“ISTRUZIONE E FORMAZIONE PROFESSIONALE CONTINUA”*)

The definition includes training pathways not immediately linked to the productive process, aimed at permanent training and at the improvement of professional and employability levels, involving individuals in a lifelong learning pathway.

CVET is provided by the regions, the ministries responsible for multiregional programmes of the European Social Fund, private companies and other bodies (chambers of commerce, public administration etc.).

Adult participation rates in non formal VET are still below the EU average for all the categories regarding educational attainment and working status.

But, recently, non-formal VET training has observed a substantial growth linked with the increase in demand for training from some sectors of the adult education sphere. This has been provided by a number of public and private actors and by third-sector associations,

In Italy a formalized or institutionalized national validation system is still lacking, but the establishment of a validation system for non-formal and informal learning has become a strong and widely shared priority in the last ten years in Italy.

Recently, initiatives aimed at Vocational Training had a special relevance and have been financed by Regional funds by means of individual vouchers. This tool, that will spread further at national level, allowed in Northern and Centre Italy to set up “*lists of training offer*” promptly available on demand (and widely strategically manageable) and including a number of training opportunities. In these, beyond the linguistic and IT skills, there were also initiatives developing skills linked to entrepreneurship.

For further information, please consult “ A BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE – EUROPEAN POLICY FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING 2002-2010” National Refernet Policy Report-Italy 2010” CEDEFOP 2010; “National system overviews on education systems in Europe and ongoing reforms: Italy” Eurydice 2010; “Structures of Education and Training Systems in Europe: Italy 2009/10” Eurydice 2010.

## 2 General comments on recruitment of interviewees

The recruitment process has been developed following different strategies according to the different targets interviewed.

A large number of Public and Private VET institutions have been contacted via e-mail, by telephone and publishing information about the CLC Project in relevant websites. In this occasion, the CLC Project has been presented and the researching phase, where they have been invited to participate, has been explained. This recruitment strategy also involved many subjects active in the VET sectors, trainers and learners, who directly answered to the announcement and asked to take part in to the project.

VET trainers and learners have been selected for one-hour interviews according to the following criteria:

- Variety of subject areas of interest
- Gender equality
- Age
- Diversity of geographic areas/ contexts

10 VET trainers working with disadvantaged learners have been interviewed, along with 5 VET learners.

A different recruitment process has been developed with potential VET learners. They have been chosen among disadvantaged people that have previously participated in CESIE’s initiatives. Thanks to “face to face” meetings it was possible to explain the project, their role and the contribution they could give. The potential VET Learners have been selected according to the following criteria:

- Relevance of background
- Age
- Ethnicity profile

Five potential VET trainers from “groups at risk” have been interviewed and those interviews lasted on average two hours each.

## Section A: VET Trainers

### 1. General comments on interviews

A great willingness on the part of VET institutions and individuals to get involved was demonstrated. Five VET institutions were chosen, and within those realities VET trainers have been selected for the interviews (six conducted “face to face” and four telephonically).

Individual interviews of approximately one hour each were conducted with trainers with a minimum of four and a maximum of 27 years teaching experience. Each interview was preceded by an accurate clarification of the key concepts: creativity; KC7; Learning Communities etc.

### 2. Orientation to KC7 – Understanding and Attitudes

The major part of VET trainers had some difficulties to recognise Key Competence 7 as described in the European Qualification Framework, but when the content of those competences had been explained in detail the trainers were able to identify their own teaching activities with the development of entrepreneurship.

#### 2a. Importance of KC7 themes/principles to individual trainers

VET trainers generally recognised the crucial importance of KC7 in the VET sector, they considered that nowadays to use a sense of initiative and innovation is extremely important for disadvantaged young people to find a job. Trainers often linked KC7 with job opportunities, as essential competences to overtake the difficulties of the financial crisis and the high rate of unemployment.

#### 2b. Importance of KC7 themes/principles to subject area

VET trainers stated that KC7 are important in their subject areas, underlining different aspects according with the variety of training courses.

In the ICT area, for example, creativity and innovation are essential because they can guide the learners in a very dynamic sector where ideas are easily transformable in marketable products.

In areas like hairdressing and beauty, the development of KC7 is important in terms of capacity to take risks, self-management and entrepreneurship. Those competences can guide learners in opening their own activities at the end of the training courses.

Among the other subject areas, the importance of KC7 was underlined in sectors that are dynamic and that change quickly and have space for new ideas.

#### 2c. Importance of KC7 themes and principles at an organisational level

Generally, KC7 was not recognised as vitally important by the VET institutions.

Some VET trainers stated that it exist a limit in the education system that reflects a limit of the general culture. In fact, technical competences are often developed without introducing transversal competences such as KC7 that are essential to use at the best all the skills acquired.

Some other trainers stated that teaching KC7 is left to the individual initiative of each of them, without any support from the VET institutions.

Few trainers stated, instead, that in their institutions there is a programme addressed to the development of KC7, guiding the trainers in teaching entrepreneurship.

### 3. Focus and Supports for KC7

Generally, a lack of support in developing KC7 is recognised by the VET trainers. They stated that they do not receive support in terms of:

- Introductory and refresher courses on how to teach KC7
- Manuals, websites or any other educative tool
- Suggestions and guidelines by the VET institutions

### 3a. Implementation and Operationalisation of KC7 objectives

Effective strategies have been developed by VET trainers, in developing KC7. Most of those strategies have been elaborated by each trainer without any support. Below some examples:

- No specific module is foreseen to develop KC7 but those competences are built up gradually during the entire VET course. It is transversal and included in several lessons.
- The importance of KC7 is introduced at the beginning of the training course. Then only technical competences are developed and, at the end of the course, a session on how to use the skills acquired includes KC7 again. In this case, KC7 is showed as a tool to enter in the labour market.
- Specific modules on the development of KC7 are introduced in critical moments of the training courses. The theoretical lessons are alternated with exercises of entrepreneurship such as how to elaborate innovative ideas in specific sectors, workshops on strategic marketing or on how to build a business plan. Also in this case, KC7 is linked to job-opportunities and not to daily personal life.

### 3b. Organisational (and other supports and tools)

VET trainers stated that in general there is a theoretical approach, but they underlined the importance of the working experience foreseen as part of many VET courses. The working experience in the field of the course undertaken is generally unpaid but very useful to develop KC7.

### 3c. Best Practice RE: KC7

Most of the VET trainers had experience of good practices linked to the development of KC7.

Below some examples:

Job-experience during the VET course

Study-visit in work-places during VET course

Team-work in developing new ideas

Meetings between students and entrepreneurs that have put KC7 in practice

### 3d. Additional supports

Considering the shortage of support received by VET trainers, they generally listed the kinds of support they would like to have in teaching KC7:

- Use of case-studies
- Better use of internet resources
- Better communication and sharing of experiences with VET institutions of other countries

### 3e. Existing resources and handbooks (list)

Most of the VET trainers stated that they do not know any Manual, Handbook, websites etc. that they can use in teaching KC7.



## 4. Blockage and Problems

### 4a. Problems experienced (by practitioners) re: KC7

Several problems have been experienced by the VET trainers interviewed. Most of those difficulties are linked to the disadvantaged condition of their students, the wide range of backgrounds and linguistic limits.

Other relevant obstacles identified are:

- Lack of support provided by VET institutions
- Public Institutions do not support the VET system enough and do not encourage it to include the development of those competences

### 4b. Solutions and workaround

Several solutions have been proposed by the VET trainers. Below some examples:

- To create “Centres of Excellence” in each specific VET subject area in order to create the ideal environment in which to develop KC7
- *“ A more focused and less “dogmatic” approach should be defined and used in the enhancement of KC7 among trainees. By “dogmatic” I mean that entrepreneurial spirit is perceived as a purely “private sector attitude”, while it is an attitude that should be spread across sectors. Efficiency and innovation are key to sustain public sector (in the provision of services for the greater public good) as well as the third sector (to empower organizations to achieve goals and implement activities in an increasingly resource constrained environment)” (Interview N.1)*
- To involve students in a job-experience first and in a training course later
- To create some tools to support the development of KC7
- To have experts in developing KC7 assigned to each VET course

## 5 Evaluation

### 5a Measurement systems

Generally, VET trainers consider that it is quite difficult to measure the development of KC7. Some of them stated that there are no tools to measure them and some others think that it is possible to verify if a student has developed KC7 just after a couple of years, when he/she has already used the skills acquired in the labour market.

### 5b. Ideas for improvements

VET trainers came up with some ideas, but it is interesting that in their general view the measurement of acquisition of KC7 should follow the end of the training course. Below some ideas:

- Monitoring of the students’ careers by each VET trainer
- Reporting the students’ results in their professional lives by a National or Regional Commission “ad hoc”, which provides macro-analysis of the development and use of KC7

## 6. Trainers’ perceptions of learners in relation to KC7

### 6a. Learners’ understanding of KC7 aims

Trainers provided interesting answers on the Learners’ understanding of KC7, that was considered by and large in a positive way. Some examples:

- In classes where students are mostly from non-EU countries, KC7 are used first of all to facilitate communication. In this occasion students demonstrate a good understanding of KC7

- The degree of understanding of KC7 depends on the students' age. Generally it is recognized that young people start valuing KC7 when they are 20 yrs old.

### 6b. Learners' desire to improve capabilities

VET trainers registered a big learners' desire to improve competences such as entrepreneurship, capacity to take risks, self-management etc. This willingness is expressed in different ways:

- Asking for new educative methods, different from the frontal and classic ones
- Asking for specific sessions on how to use the technical skills acquired to develop a sense of initiative

### 6c. Perceived needs of learners re: KC7

Perceived needs are strongly linked to the VET learners' disadvantaged contexts. VET trainers stated that the main problems are: lack of self-esteem, financial problems, lack of autonomy when building or re-inventing their future (criminal environment: "mafia"), lack of opportunities and above all the extremely high rate of unemployment (42,9% in Sicily).

## 7. Creative Learning Communities

### 7a. Value of the concept

All the VET trainers interviewed have welcomed the idea to create learning communities that can facilitate them in transmitting KC7 to the students. The most interesting aspect for them was the opportunity to take part in a mutual enrichment with the participation of different stakeholders, from different countries and contexts, with different educative methods and knowledge of Creative teaching tools. Then, they underlined the potentiality of CLC in terms of an innovative and multidisciplinary approach which is appropriate to new generations of learners.

To conclude, it is interesting to report that some VET trainers underlined the potential difficulties in maintaining CLCs in the future.

### 7b. Existing CLC

The majority of VET trainers stated that CLCs currently do not exist. Few of them provided examples of Learning Communities:

- "Development gateway" ([www.developmentgateway.org](http://www.developmentgateway.org)), a international no-profit organisation which provides a web-based platform that makes aid and development efforts more effective around the world
- A learning Community among a professional group of beauticians (IDEA: [www.nuevabeauty.com/idea\\_associazione.htm](http://www.nuevabeauty.com/idea_associazione.htm))

### 7c. In what ways can CLC address problems and gaps

Considering the shortage of concrete examples of CLCs experienced, VET trainers gave just some ideas of how CLCs could address the above mentioned problems:

- Through engagement in an inclusive process they can involve disadvantaged learners in co-creating a teaching and learning tool
- Through a process that connects public and private sectors, coordinating their works in the VET sector

## 8. Further observations and comments on VET interviews: insights from validation focus groups

The validation process was conducted through a survey. Five VET trainers of the group of ten already interviewed, were contacted by telephone and asked five questions on the main findings of this country report. The aim of this process is to verify that the main results of the research correspond to the real thoughts of the VET trainers.



The first question was: “The report brings out the fact that VET trainers place a big importance on the development of KC7, but they have little knowledge of the concept of “Entrepreneurship” as it is presented by the European Commission. Do you agree with this result?”. Four VET trainers said “yes” and just one “No”, underlining the fact that the development of KC7 often is not considered one of the aims of the VET course.

The second question was: “The report brings out the fact that VET trainers often are not supported in the development of KC7 by the VET Institutions. Do you agree with this result?”. All of them said “yes”, stressing the fact that generally the development of KC7 is left to the VET trainers’ initiative, which is often inadequate.

The third question was: “The report brings out the fact that VET learners generally associate the development of KC7 with the professional sphere and not with the personal one. Do you agree with this result?”. All of them said yes. In particular a VET trainer gave an interesting input: “despite a clear definition of KC7 there seems to be a misconception that “entrepreneurship” is merely and purely related to placement, employment and career development – which are ultimately end results and long-term by-products of KC7 as defined by the Commission. Such misconception is due to two main factors:

- On the supply side (i.e. trainers): trainers themselves (and often training providers, e.g. companies, schools, etc) are not properly empowered to convey key messages about KC7. In other words, KC7 is at times misinterpreted by the trainers/training providers
- On the demand side (trainees): the KC7 as defined is misinterpreted mainly due to lack of experience and unclear expectations.

The best way to address this misconception is to act on both sides, mainly by better equipping trainers in the provision of proper solutions pertaining to the KC7 domain”.

The fourth question was: “The report brings out the fact that VET trainers register a lack of tools to measure the development of learners’ KC7. Do you agree with this result?”. All of them said “yes” and important issues arose: “KC7 should be shared (and not merely transferred!) using standard training material (reading material, handouts, etc) but with a clear need to complement them with more straightforward tools, i.e. case studies, examples, role play, coaching – which are, by the way, more adequate for the target audience of youngsters.

As for the assessment and monitoring of KC7 acquisition, the issue is tricky because of the need to have a monitoring system that accompanies the students/trainees for the medium term: surveys and questionnaires could be developed to monitor the acquisition and use of the KC7”.

The last question was: “The report brings out the fact that VET trainers positively view the creation of the CLC. Do you agree with this result?”. All of them said “yes”, underlining the main risks of a brand new Creative Learning Community” stating: “there are self evident issues pertaining to:

- Structure: the structure should be flexible and dynamic so as to prevent yet another layer or “apparatus” that in the end may be counterproductive;
- Sustainability: operational and financial sustainability of such structures are key issues: how do such structures operate, who manages them, what are the incentives to participate (from the supply side, I am thinking of universities, research centers, social facilitators, private sector)”

Thanks to the correspondence between the research findings and the validation focus group’s answers, this country report could be considered a source of information which accurately reflects the reality.

## Section B: VET Learners

### 1. General comments on interviews

Ten individual interviews have been conducted with ten VET learners, of whom five engaged learners and five potential learners, all of them unemployed. A relevant difference between the two types of targets and interviews has been observed.

Engaged learners, all Italians, were generally more familiar with the concepts related to KC7, they needed some clarifications on the project but then they could easily answer to all the questions.

Potential learners, three migrants and two Italians, needed of a couple of hours for each interview, with accurate explanation of the project, of the key concepts and of each question. It was necessary to make references to daily life and concrete examples to reach a common understanding.

The following table illustrates the age groups, backgrounds, gender and course related information.

Age groups	3 (16-25) 5 (26-35) 2 (36-45)
Ethnicity Background	Italian, French, Moroccan, Ivorian
Gender	5 female, 5 male
Current training course/subject area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Health management and Public Policies</li> <li>- Energy and environment</li> <li>- Company secretary</li> <li>- Beautician</li> </ul>

Engaged and potential VET learners showed slightly different approaches to the education system, but the two target groups showed a common strong interest for KC7.

### 2. Orientation to Learning

#### 2a. Why and how did individuals get involved in training – what was the attraction of courses

Engaged VET learners stated that generally they were involved in trainings to complete study-pathways (for example at the end of secondary/high schools or university) because the current society requests very specialized workers, and they need to enter or re-enter the labour market.

#### 2b. What are interviewees goals in relation to training and careers

Engaged VET learners generally considered the training experience strongly linked to their future professional careers. In particular, they want to develop those specific competences they need to find exactly the job they like. Some of them decided to attend the training course in order to acquire the accreditation needed to open their own activity.

Potential learners have mostly not a clear idea of which job they are looking for, and the training experience is seen as desirable because it can develop new competences that they can use to

adapt themselves in different contexts, to be economically independent from their relatives or to support their families. The subject area of a potential training course is not relevant as it is for the engaged learners interviewed.

## 2c. Potential learners – opinions on the value of learning

According to potential VET learners, learning processes are generally valuable because education is considered the tool to develop and diversify skills and competences in order to improve personal and professional life. Potential learners stated that an essential aspect of attending a training course is to achieve a final qualification/accreditation that can demonstrate the competences developed.

## 2d. Potential learners – opinions re: return to learning

All the potential learners interviewed considered positively their return to learning pathways. Some of them have already applied to take part in VET courses and are waiting to start, others consider it a concrete possibility in their future. Few of them stated that they could have the opportunity to return to learning only attending evening courses.

## 3. Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Creativity

Most of the learners interviewed asked for a detailed explanation of the EIC concepts before answering, above all the word “Entrepreneurship” was the cause of some misunderstandings.

### 3a. Self-ascribed level of entrepreneurship

A great part of the VET learners interviewed proceeded for a positive self assessment of their own entrepreneurship/creativity etc, using a Likert scale – 4 = very; 1 = not at all.

Engaged learners consider themselves, on average, more entrepreneurial, innovative and creative than potential learners do.

Self assessment	Engaged learners (Average)	Potential learners (Average)
Entrepreneurship	3	2,5
Innovation	3	2,8
Creativity	3,4	2,8
Risk taking	3,3	n.a.

### 3b. Perceived importance of building EIC skills

Generally, the VET learners consider building EIC skills of crucial importance for their future. Also in this case, they used a Likert scale – 4 = very; 1 = not at all.

Perceived importance of	Engaged learners (Average)	Potential learners (Average)
Entrepreneurship, Innovation, Creativity and Risk taking	4	3,6

### 3c. Benefits of EIC capability building

Engaged VET learners gave some examples of the benefits of EIC capacity building:

- Strengthening self confidence and flexibility in work environments.
- Personal satisfaction in acquiring competences fundamental in many aspects of the life

- Equilibrium in the daily life

### 3d. Impacts of recent learning re: EIC capability

Engaged VET learners registered by and large little opportunities to develop EIC capabilities. Some of them highlighted the impact of recent learning in terms of opportunity to share ideas, to have an open confrontation with peers and to stimulate creativity.

### 3e. Impact of enhanced EIC capability on prospects

Engaged VET learners linked the potential impact of enhanced EIC to the opportunity to find a job.

### 3f. Potential learners – involvement in EIC activities and perceived benefits of EIC related learning

Potential VET learners, with very little experience in EIC activities, underlined the benefits of EIC related learning in terms of more opportunities to get a job, financial stability and, as someone said, “freedom”.

## 4. Learning Experience re: EIC

### 4a. Priority (in current learning) of EIC

Learners generally considered that in their current training courses any priority is given to EIC, but most of them think that the development of EIC is one of their own personal priorities.

### 4b. How have trainers worked to build EIC skills

According to VET learners, trainers do not generally develop a proper programme to build EIC skills and the use of appropriate tools, such as new ideas creating processes or web-based games, depends just on the trainer’s initiative.

### 4c. What tools have been used (re: EIC skills/KC7 goals)

VET learners underlined again that all the tools used are provided from the single trainer and not from the VET institution. They provided some other examples of tools used to develop EIC skills:

- Mutual learning through dialogue, participative trainings, elimination of any kind of hierarchy inside the classroom.
- Confrontation with relevant testimonies (who is successful in a specific sector having developed KC7)

### 4d. What factors have impacted positively on EIC skills building

Most of the learners stated that considering the shortage of training sessions addressed to EIC skills building, any factor had impressed them so far. Some of them, consider as a positive factor the use of “learning by doing” methods.

### 4e. What factors/approaches would best aid the development of EIC skills

VET learners proposed some ideas on approaches aimed to develop EIC skills:

- Exchange of good practices on development of EIC among VET institutions
- A six-month job-experience after the training course
- Delivering more information on EIC skills and on the existing tools to develop them

#### 4f. How is progress measured (re: EIC skill development)

Some of the learners stated that they do not know any measuring tool for EIC skill development. Some others affirmed that they proceed with self-assessment through their managing both professional and personal lives. Few of them, consider the confrontation with their peers as a form of EIC skill development assessment.

#### 4g. What blockages or problems have been experienced

Those who have never experienced the development of EIC skills in training courses, could not register any kind of blockage. The others gave some examples of problems in acquiring EIC skills:

- Lack of knowledge of EIC skills and of their potentialities
- Lack of support from VET institutions
- National public bureaucracy is a system that discourages risk-taking in individual initiatives
- Lack of entrepreneurial and innovative mindset in the general culture

### 5. Potential Learners – future engagement in learning

All the potential learners interviewed stated they would like to re-enter to learning processes, but most of them need to work at the same time and they would prefer evening courses.

#### 5a. Goals with respect to re-entry to training/learning

The main goal for disadvantaged potential learners is to use the results of a training experience to find a job.

In second place, they stated that other goals are pursued:

- Improve linguistic competences (English or Italian)
- To be better included in the society (meeting other people, improving their knowledge of the context where they live etc.)
- To achieve a certificate which can prove their competences

#### 5b. To what extent is a focus on EIC skills attractive

To be entrepreneurial, innovative, creative and risk-taking is attractive for potential learners in order to enhance their job opportunities and to improve their self-confidence

#### 5c. What basis for learning is most appropriate, and what supports would be required

Disadvantaged learners have demonstrated to have clear ideas on which supports they do need:

- Equal access to learning system
- Evening training courses which allow them to work during the day, to acquire specific competences in those sectors where it is easier to find a job, to obtain a recognised final certification.
- Access to the use of new technologies
- Building a no-formal relationship between student and trainer in the learning environment, where the trainer is a guide, a support a person with whom to share experiences.

## 6. Creative Learning Communities

### 6a. Current learning community participation

Engaged VET learners generally consider their learning environments as their learning communities, the classrooms, the courses and the VET institutions represent their communities.

Potential VET learners with migrant backgrounds stated that their learning communities are first of all some social centres of Palermo, where activities for immigrants are organised and services provided, and where most of them are actively involved. Secondly, they individuated in their own National Communities in Palermo another learning community, where they can talk about their home countries, can ask for advice, can share experiences and find assistance in case of difficulties.

### **6b. Benefits of learning community membership**

Disadvantaged learners recognised many benefits of learning community membership. Below some examples:

- Opportunity to share ideas and points of view among peers
- Opportunity to be supported and stimulated in the learning pathways by class-mates and trainers
- Feeling of being part of a group, improving self-confidence and self-esteem
- Opportunity to gain new experiences, to meet new people, to develop interpersonal, communicative and intercultural competences.

### **6c. Desirability of learning community membership**

Most of the VET learners interviewed stated that they would find it more interesting to take part in a learning community rather than to attend a classic, frontal training course.

### **6d. Potential learners – extent of current participation in community activity**

Most of the potential learners said they would like to continue taking part in community activities. Generally, the migrant potential learners decided to give their own contribution to those centres, working towards a suitable welcome and integration process for all immigrants, which supported them at their arrival in Italy.

### **6e. Potential learners – perceived value of learning communities**

High value of learning communities is perceived by potential learners, also by those who do not consider themselves part of a learning community. They often linked the learning community membership with the opportunity to express themselves and their creativity.

## **7. Further observations**

The validation process was conducted through a survey. Four VET learners of the group of ten already interviewed, were contacted by telephone and asked five questions on the main findings of this country report. The aim of this process is to verify that the main results of the research correspond to the real thoughts of the VET learners.

The first question was: “The report brings out the fact that VET learners only see the development of KC7 in relation to the prospect of finding a job. Do you agree with this result?”. All of them said “yes” and no-one mentioned the personal sphere in their answer.

The second question was: “The report brings out the fact that VET learners generally believe they have already developed KC7 but at the same time they need to develop those competences further on. Do you agree with this result?”. All of them said “yes” and they underlined the responsibilities and faults of VET trainers’ work.

The third question was: “The report brings out the fact that VET learners are unsatisfied with their past experiences in developing KC7. Do you agree with this result?”. Three VET learners



said “yes” and just one “no”. The one who disagreed gave an interesting input: “Entrepreneurship is a mindset that the learner can develop, but not acquire”.

The fourth question was: “The report brings out the fact that VET learners registered a lack of tools to measure their acquisition of KC7 and a lack of certifications to prove the acquisition of those competences. Do you agree with this result?”. All of them said “yes”, underlining the importance of getting a certificate in order to find a job.

The fifth and last question was: “The report brings out the fact that VET learners view the creation of the CLC positively. Do you agree with this result?”. All of them said “yes”, stressing the importance of Creative Learning Communities for sharing information, experiences and learning methods.

Thanks to the correspondence between the research findings and the validation focus group’s answers, this country report could be considered a source of information which accurately reflects the reality.

## Summary and conclusion

Thanks to the enthusiastic participation of ten VET trainers and ten VET learners, this report analyzes the needs expressed by the target groups on the national VET system in Italy, the opportunity to develop KC7 and the potential of efficient learning communities.

First of all, it is essential to keep in mind that the difficulties of the context where the target lives, works and learns:

- Unemployment rate in Sicily in 2011 is 42,9%
- VET system registers often difficulties due to a shortage of funds
- Equal access to vocational education is not always guaranteed for people from disadvantaged contexts

Having said that, the national report collects and summarizes the different points of view, has underlined some crucial results:

- 1) Teaching and developing KC7 is generally considered fundamental by both trainers and learners but the shortage of existing tools and/or methods make them difficult to be achieved
- 2) Generally VET trainers consider their teaching techniques able to develop KC7, but generally VET learners do not perceive this acquisition of KC7
- 3) The lack of a recognised certificate to prove the acquisition of KC7 is seen as a problem for most part of the target
- 4) To be part of a learning community is generally seen as a positive and desirable opportunity
- 5) For both VET trainers and learners KC7 and EIC are closer to the professional sphere than to the personal one.

The results above mentioned represent a step in the analysis of the VET sector’ needs, which will find a tangible answer with CLC project. For this reason, each contribution, each interview and each experience is essential to achieve the final aim: thanks to all who took part in to the research!