

Implementation of the FINECVET model to the formal and non-formal education

Wdrożenie modelu FINECVET w edukacji formalnej i pozaformalnej

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RESULT 02 - REPORT

Description of the good practice of the ECVET system in Finland

Opis dobrej praktyki dotyczący systemu ECVET w Finlandii

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1. INTRODUCTION

Description of good practices on implementation of ECVET is an essential part of the project "Implementation of the FINECVET model is the formal and non-formal education TRANS-FINECVET. Description of conditions that allow for the implementation of ECVET, issues of decision-making and the way of developing learning outcomes are to facilitate the implementation of ECVET not only in the partner countries such as Poland and Spain but also in other EU countries.

Subject of the Report

According to the assumptions of "Implementation of the FINECVET model is the formal and non-formal education TRANS-FINECVET" project, the report on the Result 02 includes a description of experiences and new competencies of teachers and trainers acquired during the workshop on FINECVET system and recommendations for the target groups. All participants of the workshop prepared independently descriptions of good experiences.

Purpose of the Report

Descriptions of good experiences are summed up, translated into 4 languages (English, Polish, Finnish and Spanish) and disseminated with a particular focus on target groups.

Scope of the Report

Reflections of teachers and trainers on the education process, ECVET, the school cooperation with the local community on the example of professions "Practical Nursing Child Care Worker" and „Health Care Assistant”.

Method to obtain descriptions of good practice

The method used to obtain descriptions of good practice were workshops organised by Omnia, The Joint Authority of Education in Espoo Region in Finland. Prior to the workshops, both Omnia and the institution leading the implementation of the Result 02 - EDUCATION AND WORK, developed a methodical and information materials for workshop participants. The materials contained information related to the organisation of workshops, education system in Finland and ECVET system known in Finland as FINECVET. The materials were prepared in Polish by the EP, based on the publication "Using ECVET in Finland" by Hanna Autrere - Finnish National Board of Education and on presentation delivered by Maarit Saarenkylä in Omnia. The abovementioned materials, along with the others presented at the workshops are provided in Annex.

The workshop lasted 4 days and realized all established activities and results such as the history of establishing FINECVET, the individual components of FINECVET (agreement between training institutions), the conditions that must be met to be able to implement the system, the system of granting credits in FINECVET. Moreover, the rules for applying the FINECVET in the professions "Practical Nursing Child Care Worker" and "Health Care Assistant" were discussed.

In the practical part of the workshops Polish and Spanish participants, working in teams, described the learning outcomes of selected professional qualifications in terms of knowledge, skills and competences. The teams presented their descriptions that were evaluated by the Finnish teachers who ran the training. In addition, the participants visited the complex of Omnia vocational college. While visiting the complex of Omnia the participants were presented the ideas cultivated in the school and the way of achieving them. These ideas are ecology, intermedia, developing entrepreneurship, aesthetics, new technology and the use of products in the world of work. The means of achieving education objectives are: checking products manufactured by the students, practical assessment of the functionality of the products manufactured and developed solutions for the local community, entrepreneurs and the market. Teachers and trainers attended and observed the lesson within the programme for "Health Care Assistant".

Workshop participants

The workshop was attended by a total of 14 people, including:

1. Seija Heikkinen Omnia, The Joint Authority of Education in Espoo Region; Head of International Relations; Finland Omnia
2. Maarit Saarenkylä Omnia, The Joint Authority of Education in Espoo Region, OMNIA International coordinator; Finland Omnia
3. Liisa Lehermaraa, teacher; Omnia The Joint Authority of Education in Espoo Region; Finland Omnia
4. Ollila Johanna, teacher; Omnia, The Joint Authority of Education in Espoo Region; Finland Omnia
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12. Ewa Wołowik EDUKACJA I PRACA; teacher/profession trainer; Poland EP
13. Olga Glińska EDUKACJA I PRACA, researcher, teacher; Poland EP
14. Bogusława Wojtczak EDUKACJA I PRACA, researcher, teacher; Poland EP

What is more, during the visit at Omnia vocational college workshop participants had the opportunity to listen to several presentations of school staff - teachers, managers, including the person responsible for contacts with entrepreneurs and local society

Expert Team:

People who have been selected to Expert Team are:

1. **Wanda Kamieniak** - a certified teacher of vocational subjects in the Complex of Post-Secondary Medical Schools in Radom with a 30-year experience. A graduate of the Medical University of Lublin, Nursing Faculty, methodical adviser, conducted practical classes at the children's ward and the nursery; currently she is a vice-headmistress of the Complex of Post-Secondary Medical Schools in Radom. She organises and supervises the work of practical training teachers in the fields of Health Care Assistant, Massage Technician and cosmetic services.
2. **Ewa Wołowik** - a graduate of medical secondary school and Medical University, Nursing Faculty. Currently working in the Complex of Post-Secondary Medical Schools in Radom. Formerly, she worked in the Capital Rehabilitation Centre in Konstancin, Healthcare Complex in Koźienice, Complex of Vocational Schools in Koźienice as manager of practical training.
3. **Bogusław Wojtczak** - promoter of changes in vocational education, examiner at the Regional Examination Commission, psychotherapist and Gestalt trainer, instructor of prevention programs for children and youth, coach, teacher and longtime headmistress of the Complex of Secondary Schools in Szydłów, an expert on education law.
4. **Olga Glińska** - a medical doctor, doctor of medical sciences, university teacher at the Medical University of Warsaw. She has been lecturing for 18 years for full-time students and for adults (part-time programmes) at medical programme, emergency medical service, nursing, dentistry and pharmacy. He knows the European System of Credit Transfer and Accumulation - ECTS

Other persons representing the Polish and Spanish institutions were managers and researchers.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE GOOD PRACTICE, SUMMARY

Description of the good practices contains the most important fragments of descriptions from individual participants in the workshops (full description of good practices is included in the Annex). The opinions about the organisation of the workshops have been generalised and presented as follows.

Organisation

Participants expressly indicated a very good organisation of the workshops, allowing one to learn the education systems of partner countries, the FINECVET system, a practical training of the system as well as a visit in a vocational school complex. The space prepared - humble but comfortable and highly functional - allowed general discussions to be ran and ideas to be exchanged; such debates taking place each night.

The authors of all descriptions noted a **friendly atmosphere** among group members, early strangers to each other, with the group **transforming into a team**.

Finnish vocational education system

In Finland, vocational education enables learning in the course of 3 following pathways of teaching:

- for youth graduates of primary schools, with education taking 3 years,
- for youth graduates of secondary schools, with education taking 1.5 up to 2 years,
- simultaneous studying in a comprehensive secondary school with matriculation examination and in a vocational school by the employer, with education taking 3 years (vocational training at the employer facility).

Matriculation examination is of a very high rank in Finland. Vocational education is of a very high status, too. In addition to their professional education, teachers have to complete a pedagogical preparing course taking almost a year of studying. For working under EVCET, teachers receive additional remuneration.

The educational programme involves 35% of theoretical studying in school, 10% of individual learning and the remaining 20% of laboratory, professional work and practical workshops.

This division into theoretical and practical learning is difficult, as students have individual learning pathways; every student can build their own way to complete their qualifications. Students can receive knowledge in many different environments, including project work, prolonged job training, school and school workshops, laboratory. Some students may complete their almost entire education in their workplaces and learn only some issues according to traditional studying, i.e. at school. It can be also observed that students can build their theoretical competences through practical activities (as it is very often the case). I would like to emphasise that in Finland there is no separate learning for theory and for practical skills. Both ways to gain professional competencies join and intertwine.

An important issue in the education system is the situation of teachers. The teaching profession is esteemed and valued in the society as one of the most respectable one.

Teachers' wages are satisfactory. Extra work done by teachers gives them extra remuneration. Vocational school graduates are welcome as employees.

Testing knowledge and skills: the teacher/instructor checks their student's competences 2 times in 6 weeks. Following a 6-week period, the student has to pass a practical test. Marks range between 1 and 3. Receiving a 1 is considered a pass.

What follows is the teacher and the student discussing the practice and establishing next goals together. In consequence, it may be observed that constant checking of knowledge, testing students are absent from the school, and that there is a high teacher autonomy and the focus is on the student, not on documenting everything. A Finnish school is not only a building of a beautiful architecture, but also well educated teachers, modern technologies, didactic materials and a student initiative of their own entrepreneurship. Teaching is done through personal experience - empiricism. This may be the reason for low student absenteeism in classes.

A significant aspect of the Finnish education system is the attractiveness of vocational education and training in Finland.

- The high rank of vocational education in the society is a meaningful aspect of the Finnish education system. Omnia is participating in the Euroskills and Word Skills competitions, in order to increase the value of education and professional training.
- A high percentage of time is dedicated for practise in enterprises. In the profession Practical Nurse/Children's and Youth Care and Education, learning modules consist of 3 working timescales, each amounting to 6 weeks.
- Students take part in the assessment process and they are required to perform self-assessment. Therefore, trust for the performed self-assessment is one of the key elements of assessing learning and professional training.
- High elasticity of the Finnish education system: students can select among various education pathways. Each learning module has defined competence (skill) points. This allows learning to be interrupted without losing already gained competences. This way, with both students gaining 180 points each, one may differ from the other.

Cooperation with entrepreneurs

Employers and local communities serve an important role in the process of education and skill shaping. Entrepreneurs visit the school; they know the learning process well and they participate in professional skill shaping process. Employers and visitors to the school have been designated a special place for meetings, albeit integrated with lecture halls and ateliers. The school has modern ateliers for job trainings at its disposal. In addition, students do their internships at employer sites, private companies mostly; this allows employers to get well acquainted with the future graduates - their future workers. In consequence, employers have credence for graduates' skills which translates into credence for Omnia's diploma. The graduates usually find work in the region, or they start their own businesses.

The school teaches environmental care, development of entrepreneurship, aesthetics, employment of modern media, new technologies, use of products in the realm of work as well as ethics and coexistence in the society and the local community.

Implementation of FINECVET and the conditions of its implementation

Implementation of FINECVET¹

- 13 ECVET Experts in Finland² from different parts of the country and from different fields of Education
- The experts were delegated to:
 - inform about the ECVET system;
 - collect questions and worries from the school personnel and from staff at other workplaces; the questions were sent to CIMO (Centre for International Mobility and Cooperation); CIMO administers education and is responsible for putting EU programmes to do with all aspects of education and training to life, as well as promoting and organising international exchange) and FNBE (Finnish National Board of Education) in order to receive the answers;
 - sent the answers by e-mail;
 - send information on implementing ECVET with examples received in pilot projects;
 - in 2012-2013, 10 large seminars and 30 smaller seminars for managers, managers, principals, teachers and personnel in schools and companies were conducted;
 - the seminars gathered an audience of over 2500 in total.

The implementation of ECVET, known in Finland as FINECVET, began in 2004. Pilot projects were conducted over several years; following them, National Qualification Framework were implemented. Finally, credit points were established (2013) and educational programmes were assessed, including individual learning pathways. FINECVET formally commences from August 1st, 2015.

ECVET benefits to students are: individual learning pathways allowing a student to freely choose their learning outcomes units (to a limited extent); broadening the content and specialisation of their qualification; passing the already assessed issues which were already assessed positively (not repeating the assessment process); recognition of previous achievements; higher mobility level; increased chance for employment abroad owing to the common concept of education; improved descriptions of education effects, assessment process and documenting the educational process is to effect in an increase in education quality and student mobility.

Benefits to schools and training entities are: improved quality of learning outcomes being the base for education and trainings; focusing education on individual students and their

¹ Based on a presentation by Maarit Saarenkylä "ECVET – implementation in Finland ECVET Experts", from a member of National Ecvet Expert Team, Finland.

² National Ecvet Expert Team, Finland. The team consists of : Riitta Karusaari, Rovaniemi Municipal of Federation; Risto Virkkunen, Kainuun ammattiopisto; Kirsi Lounela, Seinäjoki Joint Municipal Authority for Education; Arja Pietikäinen, Savo Vocational College; Anne Tyynelä, Pirkanmaa Educational Consortium; Auli Haapajärvi, Kouvola Region Vocational College; Vesa-Antti Iltola, Jyväskylä College; Juha-Ville Mäkinen, Vantaa Vocational College Varia; Maarit Saarenkylä, The Joint Authority of Education in Espoo Region, Omnia; Kari Koskela, Omnia Vocational College; Sari Turunen-Zwinger, City of Helsinki, Apprenticeship; Virpi Pikkuaho, Oulu Vocational College, Adult Education/Apprenticeship; Susanna Vestling, Yrkesakademin i Österbotten. And experts from the Finnish National Board of Education and CIMO (Centre for International Mobility and Cooperation).

achievements; shorter education timespan; developing discussion between different employees of the education system (teachers, carers, advisors, assistants); increased transparency of education; improved mutual trust between partner schools in Finland and abroad; improved documenting of the education process which will present a "clear picture" of the processes agreed upon; fulfilling a service function for the education and cooperation team by ECVET.

Benefits to the labour market are: education will answer more to the needs of the labour market; labour market partners can be more involved in the education development; ECVET allows increased professionalisation of the work of specialists from entire Europe; arising question: will businesses find a little time to assess students?

Frequently asked questions by their teachers concerned: individual learning pathways, change in working hours and in the level of teacher wages, changes in the role of the teacher (will the future teacher be more of a coach or a tutor educating students according to their individual educational pathways), course schedule and education timescale, school financing, ECVET credit system.

Credits Points

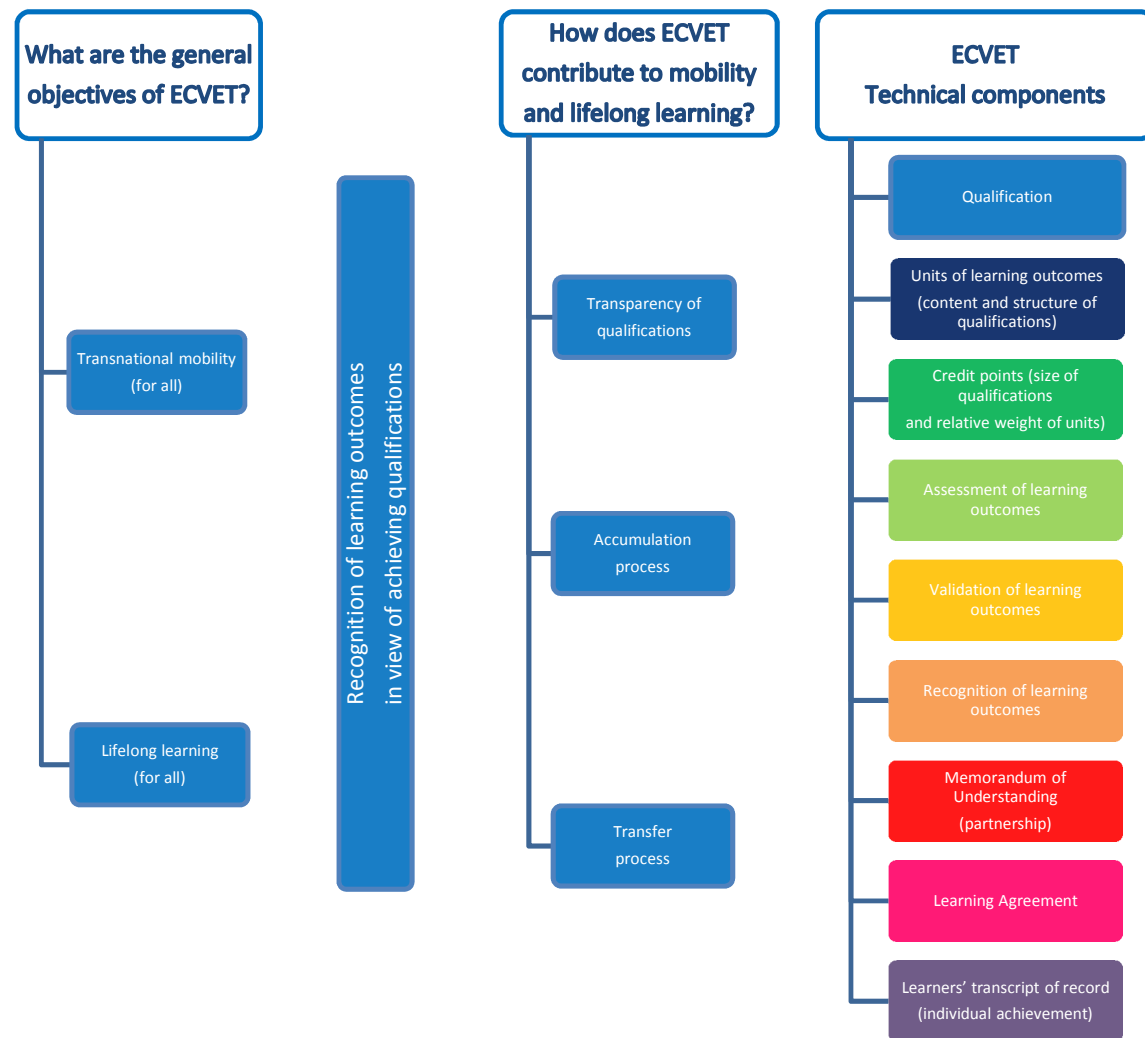
Implementation of ECVET, namely the system of education and professional training qualifications accumulation and transfer, would create a chance for development in vocational education, but most of all it would allow a larger mobility of people in the labour market. It is however not as easy as in university education, where the European System of Credit Transfer and Accumulation – ECTS has been already in operation for some time. The problem of specific determination of ECVET is partly due to differences in formal vocational education systems across countries, as well as to the need to overcome stereotypes and recognise the outcomes of learning from non-formal and informal education. The Finnish system of ECVET is the outcome of 10 years' work. In a way, it encompasses the experience of universities, e.g. it has been decided that learning outcomes from 1 year in formal education give 60 ECVET credits. This means that to receive a certificate in Finland, a student has to receive 180 points. Such a number was defined on a top-down basis, agreed upon by the Ministry. The starting point to establishing ECVET has been the National Qualification Framework defined on the basis of the European Qualification Framework (EQF). However, countries where the National Qualification Framework or ECVET credits have not been determined, can also in a way make use of experiences in graduating courses, skills, acquired by the student in another country. An example of such a partial qualification transfer from another country may be professional trainings for Polish students performed under European projects (eg. Leonardo da Vinci, Erasmus+). This is possible owing to changes introduced in the Polish vocational education from 2012. The current core curriculum of teaching professions has been composed in a learning outcome language, which means that it has been adapted to the recommendations of the European Parliament and the Council of Europe of April 23rd, 2008, on establishing qualification frameworks for lifelong learning, and in consequence, ECVET credits will be easier to determine.

Conditions for FINECVET implementation

The goals and technical components of ECVET were indicated in EU regulations. The goals and elements of ECVET are presented in Figure 1. General goals are transnational mobility

for all and lifelong learning for all. Recognition of learning outcomes in view of achieving qualifications are a key feature, encompassing: transparency of qualification; accumulation process of confirmed learning outcomes and the achievement transfer process. The elements of the system are: qualification, units of learning outcomes, credit points, assessment of learning outcomes, validation of learning outcomes, recognition of learning outcomes, partnership agreement, learning agreement and learners' transcript of record.

Figure 1. ECVET objectives and its technical specifications (components)



Source: Using ECVET to Support Lifelong Learning. ECVET Users' Group. European Commission. Education and Culture. November 2011 ; p.8.

In Omnia school, all system features are employed under FINECVET, including:

- Qualification descriptions for knowledge, skills and competences (qualification description and structure)
- Formal education learning outcomes transfer and recognition
- Non-formal education learning outcomes transfer and recognition
- Informal education learning outcomes transfer and recognition
- Accumulation learning outcomes
- Credits points (qualification size and their relative importance)
- Partnership agreements (Memorandum of Understanding)
- Learners' transcript of record
- Agreements on curriculum
- Transfer, recognition and, where applicable, accumulation of individuals' learning outcomes
- Establishing individual learning pathways
- Validation of units of learning outcomes

The implementation of FINECVET was a process taking several years. The process was managed by the Finnish Ministry of Education, and the implementation of FINECVER accompanied preparing teachers to their new administrative and educational tasks.

3. CONCLUSIONS

In the course of the workshops, the participants gained:

- A deeper insight into the ECVET system, the glossary and terms accompanying it (e.g. Memorandum of Understanding).
- A deeper knowledge of the ECVET implementation process based on the specific example of Finland.
- Requirements about the implementation of ECVET, especially the roles of the interested parties in the involvement in the process, the schedule and timescale, steps taken, etc.
- How to define the learning outcomes and describe them for the knowledge, skills and competences.
- Functioning of the ECVET credit point system.
- A deeper insight into national education and training system in Finland, Spain and Poland.

As indicated in the Result 01 Report, "A comparative research analysis of the vocational competence standards or existing solutions in the professions Practical Nursing Child Care Workers and Health Care Assistant", in all three partner countries the competency requirement descriptions for the compared professions are defined on the central level, in documents equivalent to the "professional training core curriculum". Basic professional tasks, skills and competencies show high convergence, as do the professional modules characteristic of the education/training for these professions.

When comparing capabilities of acquiring specific qualifications across countries, it should be noted that in Poland the Ministry defines core curriculum on a top-down basis, while the teaching programme for a given school is autonomously decided upon by the school and can vary across schools, also when it comes to names of courses. A teaching programme has to contain the entire core curriculum for teaching a given profession - such is the formal requirement defined in the Education System Act. Therefore, it would be easier in Poland to transfer Finnish experiences while implementing ECVET. The introduction of ECVET would be also beneficial for adult education in extramural forms, and it would grant a larger possibility of confirming qualifications in the extramural system to adults.

It is proposed, that in order to meet Result 05 - "Base of the descriptions of the qualification, units of the learning outcome and learning outcome for "Practical Nursing Child Care Workers and and Health Care Assistants in according to requirements of the ECVET system", Finnish experiences are used to describe in detail a selected part of the unit of the learning outcomes for qualifications in a given profession, which would mean to selected several learning outcomes described in a given profession, which would form a closed entity. e.g. in the "Practical Nursing Child Care Worker" profession, in the qualification Z.11 (providing child care and development services) one can select part 4 (higenic-nursing operations in accordance to current rules and procedures) from unit 1 (Healthy child nursing). In accordance with the model proposed in the workshops, higenic-nursing operations can be

enumerated and described learning outcomes in categories: knowledge, skills and competencies. One can also extend the description of hygienic-nursing operations performed on a suffering child - unit 2 (Nursing a suffering or disabled child) in the qualification Z.11. Such a form of a detailed reporting would provide a model for a description of an entire profession across countries, which could help comparing the manner of education, and most importantly, provide a starting point for defining ECVET credits. The above-cited profession descriptions and the simultaneous use of the ICT tool presented by the Institute for Sustainable Technologies in Radom could serve the teacher, but also the students as a manner for the acquired skills self-assessment.

Another proposal recommended for defining the qualification description base (Result 05) is the key skills description employing the content of the core curriculum for the Health Care Assistant profession. Here though, the learning outcomes common for medical professions, like work health & safety, running and starting a business enterprise, professional use of a foreign language, personal and social competencies, or small team work organisation, should be ignored. Comparison should involve the most important professional skill group, characteristic for a given profession.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Recommendation for educational policy

Recommendations for partner countries - Poland and Spain - focus on the conditions for implementing ECVET. One of them is good acquaintance, on the part of teachers and managers in schools and training facilities, with the European Qualifications Framework and the National Qualifications Framework, and with the ECVET system combined with them. This knowledge is scarce in Poland, regardless of trainings and spreading knowledge on Polish Qualifications Framework. Therefore, the ECVET needs to be implemented gradually. Moreover, an implementation of such a system is expensive and demands from school teachers and management additional work, an effort which will possibly have to be paid for. On the other hand, the core curriculum is described in the categories of knowledge, skills and social competences, so that the implementation of the system of achievement assessment, accumulation and transfer will be relatively easier.

Another recommendation concerns the contacts between schools and their local and regional environments. A good example is the appointment of places in schools for meetings with employers, and making employers participate in the skill-building process.

Combining the education system with the system of employment results from the tradition of Finnish employers, who hire workers with confirmed qualifications. In Poland there is no such practice, and employers are happy to hire people without proper qualifications to pay them less (see Report 01).

In Finland, vocational education enjoys a high rank in the society. Students participate in Word Skills and Euroskills competitions. The profession of a teacher ranks high, too, including the teacher in a vocational school.

An important aspect of the vocational education system is the elasticity of the vocational education system allowing also an individual learning pathway.

From the point of view of particular target groups, it is recommendable to implement ECVET in stages, with each stage being defined operational goals. The Finnish example shows, it is a good and already tested method. In Finland, three stages were established for implementing FINECVET. Similar stages can be recommended to central authorities in Poland and Spain, including:

Stage I. ECVET prior to implementation

Designing the implementation of the system, and defining learning outcomes and learning outcomes units (in Finland, qualifications were established, these qualifications were divided into learning outcomes units, units were grouped around the function of a qualification in the labour market; in case of the Child Care Assistant profession, it was established what skills are required from a nursery childminder, which from a hospital nurse, or from a house childminder). At this stage it was defined: what is to be implemented, who is responsible for specific activities, how it is to be done, and the manner of achievement documentation was

determined. In addition, the system implementation costs and manners of its financing were determined for each stage of its functioning.

ECVET Stage II is pilot implementation, as well as determining assessment methods (including self-assessment) and validation.

ECVET Stage III is the certification/recognition of the achieved learning outcomes and training teachers.

Recognition of previous educational stages is broadly practiced in Finland. Moreover, a single certificate is granted, certifying both the knowledge and the practical skills.

In this context, it is recommended to introduce compulsory examination confirming professional qualifications in Poland. The optionality of taking part in exams confirming professional qualifications works against those who choose not to take it, and later regret doing so. This harms the labour market, and in consequence, the Polish economy. An employer hiring e.g. a "mechanic technician" may not even know that this person lacks proper skills, because they did not take the exam confirming professional qualifications. In general, it may be deemed a nonsense.

As for credit points, it is recommended that the Ministry of National Education, arbitrarily, define the level of credit points, where 60 points reflect 1 year of education, like it was done in Finland and following the ECTS. It seems that the attempts of defining the effort for achieving specific learning outcomes in Poland showed that it was both hard and not precise. In accordance with the regulations in EU documents, it is recommendable that the ECVET system be coherent and complementary with the European system of transfers, as well as with the achievements of ECTS implemented in university education.

In this context, it is worth to mention, that universities in Poland tend to overrate their ECTS points and include courses present in the curriculum to the point awarding system, but with no attention paid to a course's difficulty nor to the number of hours of learning, disregarding the learning outcomes. This leads to the conclusion, that a similar mistake should be avoided in the Child Care profession, which in the school year of 2017 has been transferred from the level of vocational school to the one of the university.

4.2 Recommendations for schools and teachers

The school in Espoo is a perfect example of a multi-vocational school in Finland. The school is perfectly designed architecture-wise, the equipment of the ateliers and the employment of new technologies, give students optimal resources for skill learning. The school contains also a school of entrepreneurship, where students can learn running a business in practice ("The Entrepreneurship Incubator"). Moreover, there is a shop in the school, where one can purchase products made by the students. Items produced by the students form a part of the equipment of some ateliers, too. The school serves also as a meeting point for business people, townsfolk, students, senior citizens - it is open for the needs of many social groups, but most of all, it promotes a multi-directional development of its students.

In Finland, a large focus is on teaching skills for certain jobs - the education and skill learning is performed in natural conditions. The student learns from the "master", who is responsible for proper preparing one for the job. Moreover, the group of students whom the instructor deals with is minimal - 1 or 2 persons (hardly a realistic prospect in our schools?). During the class, the tutor checks, together with the student, the strong and weak sides of the possessed skills; in consequence, students take part in the assessment process, and they are required to perform self-assessment.

A very important feature of vocational education in Finland, is the low absenteeism of students during classes. The classes are interesting and they have much to do with real conditions in their future working environment. What is cultivated are ideas for aesthetics, new technologies and searching new uses for products and services, both locally and in the broader marketplace.

It is recommended that schools participate more in EU projects, such as Erasmus+. The participation of schools in student exchange, and their participation in other programmes, would allow the teaching staff to get acquainted with the elements of ECVET such as e.g. partnership agreement, learning agreement, transfer and the recognition of learning outcomes, accumulation of learning outcomes and validation of learning outcomes. In consequence, the future implementation of ECVET will be much easier.

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