RIGHT
RIGHT SKILLS FOR THE RIGHT FUTURE

RIGHT PILOT REPORT

Triple E (Entrepreneurs – Education – Empowerment)

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vitant
PROVINCIAAL CENTRUM VOOR VOLWASSENENONDERWIJS

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Content

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1. Introduction

This document contains 6 parts and reports on the results, findings, outcomes and learnings of the pilot Triple E (Entrepreneurs – Education – Empowerment) in Work package 4 of the Right project ('Bridging the skills gap with pilots').

A pilot report for each pilot in the Right project is a project deliverable, targeted at a number of readers.

All pilots of the Right project use a standard format. The template is set out in a way that tries to show the connectivity (green line) between the work packages, how pilots are linked to skills gaps and SSS. It also aims to show learnings and results of the pilot activity and how this can shape a discussion on policy outputs for work package 5. Each pilot report will act as a key input into Work package 5.

In addition to this, the pilot reports will also provide the basis for communications activity for work package 2. Some or all of the pilot reports will be transferred into stories and presented at events and through media channels.

The key objective of the report is to demonstrate project results and outcomes but another key objective is to tell the story of what each pilot has done. The reports could also be used to validate research and learnings, as input into policy discussions or as proof of concept for ongoing sustainability of the pilot.

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2. Regional/ Strategic Context

In the region of Antwerp and the port of Antwerp, there is a lack of technical skilled staff. In order to bridge the gap between education and labour market, we developed our pilot, Triple E (Entrepreneurs - Education – Empowerment).

CVO[1] Vitant is a centre for adult education under the authority of the province of Antwerp with teaching locations in Stabroek, Kapellen, Antwerp and Hoboken. It offers a wide range of courses with tailor-made programs, including a number of "bottleneck professions", jobs for which employers have difficulty finding sufficient suitable candidates and which are technical in nature. In these courses we pay attention to learning to learn, social skills, citizenship, health education and environmental awareness. CVO Vitant sees qualitative adult education as the key to increasing chances of success at the labour market or in higher education. At CVO Vitant every adult can discover his/her own strengths and fully develop his/her talents.

We focus on the bottleneck profession of electro mechanic (vocational training, level 4 – end secondary school). Our aim is to orient/reorient (unemployed) adults, youngsters, all willing and motivated to work in the sector by

[1] In Dutch = Centrum voor volwassenenonderwijs.

- providing an adjusted curriculum, tailored to the learner (start with intake: needing basic skills, specializations, learning guidance, learning on the work floor, in need of qualification of secondary education, during daytime and/or in evenings);
- upscaling the people already working in the sector, if necessary offer them specializations;
- guiding youngsters who dropped out of secondary school;
- paying special attention/care to people of allochthonous origin;
- paying attention to technical skills, soft skills and work attitudes.

We work together with companies, sectors, labour market regulators, secondary schools, etc. for promotion, curriculum adjustment, internship and workplace learning. In order to create a safe simulation environment, we started building a mini factory on location.

We recruit learners in the wide Antwerp region.

This region is characterized by a wide variety in enterprises: small family businesses, medium sized and large enterprises are in search of the same electro mechanics.

Often, the large companies achieve in hiring the employees because of the advantages they can offer (higher wages, flexible hours, more holidays, use of a company car, etc.). For workplace learning, you would be needing this kind of diversity in your companies, because of the differences in approach:

- In large(r) companies, the employee has a narrow work field, meaning that he will follow up instructions, carry out tasks, and will do what he is told (in order not to damage installations, cause delays etc.).
- In small(er) companies, there is a wider deployment of the employee; the job is more varied, one must be creative, dare to act, take up responsibility.

3. About the pilot

3.1 DESCRIPTION

CVO Vitant trains everyone who is interested/motivated and willing to work as an electro mechanic (vocational training, level 4 – end secondary school). Depending on the profile of the learner (already working as an electro mechanic or/and in the sector or without any knowledge), we provide an adjusted curriculum, tailored to the learner. Attention is paid to technical skills, but also to soft skills and work attitudes.

We work together with companies, sectors (Agoria, Volta – sectors of electricity and mechanics), labour market regulators, secondary schools, etc. for promotion, curriculum adjustment, internship and workplace learning , etc.

When successfully ending the trajectory, the learner receives a qualification/an educational certificate 'Electro mechanics' in adult education – level 4, valid throughout Europe, in public and private organizations. Extra certificates useful to the companies, for example working on aerial platforms, with a forklift, etc. are added.

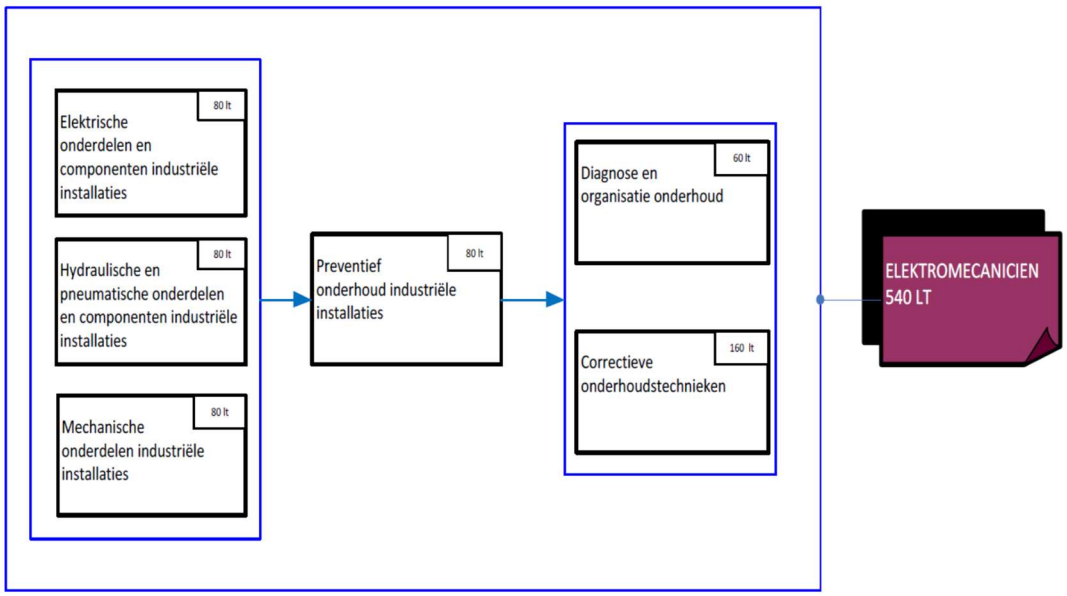
The pilot started September 2019 and ended July 2021.

3.2 METHODOLOGY

With every candidate learner, we start with an intake procedure: who is this learner?

- What are his/her talents, skills and competences already acquired, expertise, expectations?
- Is this person in need of basic skills or specializations?
- Does this person need learning or other guidance?
- What about working on the work floor and doing an internship? What are the possibilities?
- Is this person in need of a qualification? Is the qualification of secondary education already acquired or is this still needed?
- When can this person follow the courses (day time, in the evening)?
- Is this person sent by the public employment service?

Official trajectory:



The trajectory was developed in co-operation with companies and sectors (which competences are best acquired in school or on the work floor? in which order? in which kind of company? etc.)

According to the needs of the learner, extra modules can be added (e.g. basic technical skills, welding, electrics, metals, mathematics, Dutch for foreigners, physics, etc.) or modules can be skipped when the learner proves the competences are already acquired.

Remediation and individual guidance are essential in the individual trajectory of the learner.

The learning on the work floor is organized in rotation between companies:

- Phase 1: the learner observes on the work floor
- Phase 2: the learner acts on the work floor under supervision of a mentor
- Phase 3: learning in a safe simulated environment in the school → building of a mini factory on site

- Phase 4: learning on the work floor in a team (=workplace learning and internship)

Tasks:

Learners are dealing with assignments in the different stages of their learning process;

- on a permanent basis in the school;
- in the mini-factory of the school: small scale assignments to learn the basic competences/basic skills (electric and mechanic) and the basic components and circuits in a bigger installation.
- integrated test: small projects involving problem solving in which the learner describes an electric/mechanic problem, names and draws the components , describes the functioning of the components, looks up information (for example about controlling automatic barriers, about controlling and repairing metal detectors), poses a problem, writes down the possibilities for repairing and describes the actual reparation/replacement (process and results).

  The learner will make a presentation and a report and will keep a logbook; the result is presented in front of a jury (see evaluation).

Evaluation:

- On a permanent basis in the school and while working in the mini-factory: learners are evaluated on the basis of observations (checklist of the learning goals that have to be achieved) of the teachers (for example working safely, work preparation, work method);
- workplace learning: the learners are evaluated both by the teachers and mentors in the CVO (side education) and by the mentors in the companies who supervise the workplace learning;
- integrated test: the learners are evaluated on the report and the presentation in front of a jury (director, teachers, company director)
    - evaluation on the presentation: technical content/technical aspect → understand how components work, how processes and reparations/replacements come about.

A learner is successful if he succeeds for every end evaluation/every module.

3.3 STAKEHOLDERS

Learners are

- willing and motivated to work in the sector and with an interest in technics:
    - working in the sector/job and in need of upscaling/specialization/(re)training
    - (unemployed) adults, youngsters in need of orienting/reorienting towards a job in electro mechanics
- active in school and on the work floor.

SME's and companies are

- in need of inflow of suitably technically skilled personnel with a work ethos and a heart for the company and the work
- in need of retention of qualified people, which is strengthened by specialized and personalized training and guidance
- supported by CVO Vitant in order to
    - keep up with innovation and increase their innovative character
    - be able to recruit, retain and train/specialize their technical staff
    - be competitive and be/become a pioneer

3.4 RESULTS/OUTPUTS

Organization of 2 cycles (September 2019 until June 2020 and September 2020 until June 2021):

Cycle 1:

- 9 learners:
    - Profile: all males
        - 2 secondary school leavers
        - 2 job seekers, send by the local labour market service
        - 5 working (and doing the trajectory because of upskilling/on demand of the boss of the company)
    - Diploma:
        - 3 have a diploma of secondary school
        - 6 only have a diploma of elementary school
            - 2 Learners combine the trajectory of electro mechanic with a trajectory of additional general education in order to obtain a diploma of secondary school
    - Results:
        - 5 graduated
        - 1 found a new job/ 4 promoted in their own company (internal promotion)
- Companies involved: Van Bouwel kranen, Luyckx kranen, Engie Axima, Engie Fabricom

Cycle 2:

- 9 learners + 3 learners who did not succeed in previous cycle
    - Profile: all males

        - 3 secondary school leavers
        - 4 job seekers, send by the local labour market service
        - 4 non-working
        - 1 working
    - Diploma:
        - 2 have a diploma of secondary school
        - 10 only have a diploma of elementary school
            - 5 learners combine the trajectory of electro mechanic with a trajectory of additional general education in order to obtain an diploma of secondary school
    - Results:
        - 6 graduated
        - 4 found a job/1 promoted in their own company (internal promotion)
- Companies involved: Van Bouwel kranen, Luyckx kranen, CNH, Engie Fabricom

3.5 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In overall, the pilot could be delivered in time and without major problems.

We made some adjustments/improvements to the original trajectory:

In cycle 1, we had an evening and a daytime trajectory, because we wanted to make it accessible for working and non-working candidates. Cycle 2 we organized only in the daytime, because we discovered that even working people (who want to upskill/reskill) want to follow the intensive (and thus quicker) trajectory during the day; in order to do this, they make arrangements with their bosses, make shifts in their working schedules, etc.

COVID-19 also forced us to make some adjustments in the trajectory; the learning on the work floor and internship was partly replaced by learning in school in site/simulation. We let our learners do electro mechanical renovations in our school and even got media attention (see news articles in Flemish on national and regional TV and radio).

https://www.vrt.be/vrtnws/nl/2021/03/22/studenten-elektromechanica-gaan-eigen-eigen-school-renoveren/

https://radio2.be/luister/select/start-je-dag-antwerpen/cursisten-elektromecanicien-renoveren-eigen-school#houvol#houvol

https://atv.be/nieuws/stages-weggevallen-dan-nemen-cursisten-schoolgebouw-maar-onder-handen-115484?fbclid=IwAR2NM-3dvuTc35zFVnGYNQPiBK2SgeF1VSH4TrBIjQkkkXfDF6S_L4EkDno

Because of the COVID-19 adjusted situation and COVID-measures we also faced some delays. They affected

- the learners: graduated in July instead of in May (because of difficulties workplace learning and internship)
- the infrastructure: there are delays in het building of the mini factory on site.

The learners confirm that dual trajectory of electro mechanic offers opportunities to

- get a certificate needed for the job
- obtain a secondary school diploma
- really practise on the job
- get a job in electro mechanics of to promote internally

to people who did not have the opportunity or missed the opportunity earlier. It is an adult way to have an individual tailor-made trajectory based on the skills, knowledge, competences and talents of the learner and at the same time aiming at a qualitative high level 4 certificate.

The candidates are motivated and get stimulated by teachers, mentors and co-learners, despite of age, knowledge, skills. They are motivated to learn because the can practise and learn in companies, on the work floor, in teams with colleagues and see what everything means 'on the job'. The practice and the diploma increases job opportunities.

We notice that our candidates, because of earlier problems or situations that obstructed them to obtain a diploma or because of wrong choices, lack some soft skills or working attitudes; we individually guide them in their (irregular) school career and focus on flexibility, problem solving, co-working with colleagues, dealing with setbacks, etc.

The learners appreciate the adult and individual way of learning and the guidance and support they get from teachers and mentors. They get confidence about their talents, skills and competences and discover where they would like to work and which specific job they would like to do.

The SME with which we collaborate are happy with the trajectory and the candidate-learners they receive for the workplace learning and the internship because

- they have the opportunity to send personnel to the trajectory that need upskilling/reskilling/specializations which is stimulating for the innovation capacity of the enterprise;
- they have the opportunity to observe candidate employees when training on the job and, when having a positive match, they can recruit and 'fill the gaps' in their technical staff.

3.6 STORIES

As success stories, we categorize the successful attempts of working employees who thus combine study and work in order to make promotion in their own company (for example production workers who want to do maintenance, who want to repair malfunctions).

These employees are really motivated, have a clear goal and already have some basic technical knowledge and skills. They performed the workplace learning on the job (in another function/in another part of the company/with other colleagues).

Their boss/mentor could already observe them during the workplace learning and see and experience if the employee is suitable for the new job/for promotion. All the employees who successfully finished the trajectory of electro mechanic, got promoted in their own company; one employee got a promotion in another company.

In CVO Vitant

In the companies

4. Conclusions

4.1 CHALLENGES

The challenges we faced doing the pilot (and when taking further steps) have to do with

- the legal framework of dual learning (learning in school and on the work floor) in adult education; uncertainties about funding, the status of the learner, the commitments of the SME and sectors etc.
- the organization of a realistic trajectory for every candidate learner (depending on his/her own situation): length, intensity, gravity, financial implications. It is also a puzzle to fit the individual trajectory in the official modular trajectory which is imposed by the government.
- the intensive guidance and support of the candidate learner from the side of the CVO; there is no extra funding to do this.
- collaboration with sectors and enterprises:
    - in need of qualitative working places for workplace learning and internship → there is no official control regarding the quality of working places.
    - in need of a mentor on the work floor for every learner → training of the mentor depends on the nature and the goodwill of the enterprise.
    - in need of collaborations for the development of the trajectory, the sharing of infrastructure, the use of machines/equipment, etc.

Challenges obviously also had to do with the COVID-19 situation (also see 3.5 Discussion of findings).

4.2 OPPORTUNITIES

Because of the new dual trajectory of electro mechanic, we are able to

- profile our CVO in the region (because this trajectory is new and rare);
- recruit new learners (new target groups);
- give the possibility to our learners to
    - have a realistic insight in the job and job content of electro mechanic (thanks to the rotation between companies during workplace learning, which is unique in adult education)
    - experience working and learning in different (working) places → bringing the practice in the school and the school in the practice
    - obtain a diploma of secondary education and thus diminishing the number of school leavers that drop out of secondary school without a diploma;
    - find (another) job.
- collaborate with sectors and enterprises in order to 'deliver' electro mechanics that are ready to take their place in the labour market and the enterprises.

A lot of the above challenges are, at the same time, opportunities, for example

- the shared mentorship in school and enterprise
- the individual trajectories, tailored to the learner.

4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Centre for adult education: in need of
    - clarity about the legal framework on dual trajectories in adult education
    - Extra finances/personnel for the guidance and support of the learners (intake, individual trajectory, workplace learning)
    - Specific dual trajectories for adults that can be used and adjusted tailored to the needs of the learners
- Enterprises for workplace learning: in need of
    - clarity about the legal framework on dual trajectories in adult education
    - advantages to join dual learning and to collaborate with an educational partner
    - control on the quality of the work places
    - training for mentors in the workplace
- Learner: in need of clarity about
    - statute (learner/worker)
    - compensation for workplace learning/internship

We recommend a clear and transparent communication about dual learning in adult education, the legal framework, its strengths and opportunities to all stakeholders (learners, companies, sectors, labour market regulators, public centers for social welfare etc.) in order to reach full potential.

4.4 NEXT STEPS

We would like to take the following steps in order to strengthen and confirm the unique position of our CVO in dual learning in adult education:

- strengthen existing collaborations (with sectors, enterprises, labour market regulators, public centers for social welfare);
- search new collaborations (with sectors, enterprises, labour market regulators, public centers for social welfare);
- work closely together with industrial training centers in relation to
    - innovations
    - the use of infrastructure
    - the connection with the labour market
- widen the regional scope of our CVO by acquiring new educational authorization;
- work within the frame of adult education with an eye for innovation;
- further expand infrastructure;
- make further progression in the mapping of companies, workplace and internship in function of the matching process;
- develop a uniform evaluation system for learners.

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5. Outputs for new strategy and policy for Skills education and SME innovation

For our pilot and our specific situation, we reckon the following elements are important to consider as a strategy or policy for Skills Education and SME innovation (also see 4.3 Recommendations):

- to promote adult education as a fully-fledged way to obtain a diploma of secondary education;
- to stimulate/promote technical fields of education and working in technological environments, by
    - focusing on the innovative, dynamic, problem solving character of technical profiles, instead of on the nature of the education (not high education, and so not good; doing 'dirty' jobs)
    - making the learning and working in technological environments attractive
- to stimulate enterprises to invest in dual learning in collaboration with adult education in order to
    - offer opportunities to their own personnel (offer professionalization, education) = retention of personnel
    - reorient their own personnel within their company = retention of personnel
    - acquire the necessary recruitment of personnel (technically skilled employees = bottleneck professions)
    - be able to innovate

6. Potential for upscaling/learning Transfer/Internationalization

This pilot creates opportunities for the upscaling, professionalizing and reorienting of employees for internal promotion. This offers possibilities for enterprises which propose jobs in "bottleneck professions", jobs for which employers have difficulty finding sufficient suitable candidates and which are technical in nature.

This is an answer to the problem regarding the retention of qualified technically skilled employees, which should be strengthened by

- specialized and personalized internal training and guidance
- measurements taken for the enhancement of the physical and emotional well-being of employees

The pilot also provides an inflow of suitably technically skilled personnel in the profession of electro mechanic; sometimes the employer hires the learner he observed during the workplace learning. In this case, he can select an electro mechanic with the proper qualifications, with a work ethos and a heart for the company and the work.

The 'instrument/tool' (see Toolbox of all pilots) used by CVO Vitant to offer the trajectory is the modular built trajectory of 'electro mechanic' (=official trajectory in adult education) which is organized in a dual formula (school learning combined with workplace learning) and completed with additional certificates (linked to safety and requirements on the work floor).

This certainly has a potential for international learning transfer.