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Vocational Training Conference

«The value of competences in VET»

WORKSHOP1

**Learning outcomes and
qualifications frameworks**



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Key messages (1):

- The use of learning outcomes (LO) is a cornerstone of the **new culture** turning students into the core of the training process.
- The use of LO is not new in VET. What is new is the main role they play now due to the EQF and their **extension to all educational levels and lifelong learning (LLL)**.
- In the definition of LO, **the context where they are developed according to their purpose is the most important aspect** - there is no single approach.
- Progress in the use of LO is inherent in the development of National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF). The tendency to establish global frameworks including all levels is an **opportunity to achieve permeability among the different training levels**.

Key messages (2):

▪ Characteristics identified in the two national cases (Lithuania, Spain):

-In both cases there is an **extensive experience of VET using LO**, as well as an intention to have general education move forward in the same direction.

-In **Lithuania**, the competence approach arises from a reform process of the socioeconomic and education system, initially aimed at training the unemployed. In the development of its NQF, **the key question was to decide which type of competences are required to practice a profession with autonomy in a changing environment.**

-In **Spain**, the new UE trends have been integrated into the **experience gained since 1990** in developing a VET system. The result has been a **comprehensive model**, including training standards and professional, personal and social competences. In this model, LO are a basic integrated unit (observable and measurable in order to enable their validation).

Priorities:

- **All the stakeholders must be involved** (workers, employers, the society in general...), so that establishing NQFs based on LO does not turn into a mere formal change.
- **It is urgent to set up mechanisms allowing to make the most of the system coherence emerged from the modular training based on LO**, both to guide teachers, students and other social agents, and to facilitate student and worker mobility and to optimise citizens' lifelong learning pathways.
- **The application procedure of LO to be carried out by trainers must be clearly specified.**
- **It is peremptory to establish and consolidate Quality Assurance Systems (QAS)** that are transparent, efficient and agile, which support mutual confidence.

Challenges and Objectives:

- How to define the frameworks, based on LO, taking into account each country's training tradition and the lack of experience with LO, except for VET.
- To take advantage of the fact that LO will allow NQFs to integrate non-formal and informal learning, facilitating their validation.
- Specific characteristics of the two countries:
 - In **Lithuania**, the collaboration with stakeholders was complicated. A long time is needed to develop the NQF and improve the socioeconomic conditions taking advantage of the cross-curricular nature that the framework bestows upon the relationship among general education, VET and HE.
 - In **Spain**, teachers' approval has given strength to the process, which they have seen as an aid to their work. One of its weaknesses has been the slowness of the necessary cultural change in the groups designing VET.

Conclusions:

- The NQFs are being developed very fast, but there is a long way ahead. **It is important that the development is steady, since NQFs are a long-term success.**
- The connection between NQFs and LO is tight.** They are complementary and need each other.
- QAS** allowing to measure the achievement of LO **are essential**, as well as providing **mutual confidence** at national and transnational levels.
- The main objective of the frameworks is transparency.** The possible confusion of terminology used in developing NQFs and LO must not hinder transparency, but be an opportunity to improve communication with society (employers, workers, etc.).