

MAKING INCLUSION WORK

How work-based learning can bring excluded groups closer to the workplace

NEW SKILLS AT WORK

JPMORGAN CHASE & CO.

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60-SECOND SUMMARY

Helping marginalised groups into stable, rewarding, productive jobs is a key priority for European governments, and work-based learning can and should be a significant element of any successful pursuit of this goal. To address skills shortages and reduce unemployment among groups such as young people (particularly NEETs), disabled people and immigrants, labour markets must become more inclusive, which means providing relevant training alongside support tailored to the specific needs of the target groups. Work-based learning initiatives, if they are focussed, flexible and in receipt of adequate public and private backing, can meet these requirements whilst also bringing tangible and intangible benefits to businesses and giving participants valuable real-world work experience.

We looked at seven case studies documenting initiatives in five European countries. These demonstrate the possibilities, practicalities, successes and struggles of various approaches to work-based learning as a means of achieving greater inclusivity in labour markets.

Work-based learning can deliver increased labour market inclusion in the context of a pan-European agenda that stresses the importance of vocational skills, but the mechanisms currently in place do not provide sufficient opportunities for young people and other vulnerable groups to gain access to the training and work experience they need to progress.

Work-based learning programmes are necessarily varied in their duration, composition and specific desired outcomes, as well as in terms of the groups they seek to benefit, but all are focussed on combining education and work in ways that allow newly acquired skills and knowledge to be applied in a real-world setting.

The outcomes of work-based learning programmes are positive both for participants, who increase their employability and gain workplace experience, and for businesses, which acquire employees whose skills match existing needs. However, further development of standardised evaluation methods is necessary if the impact of these initiatives is to be truly measurable.

KEY THEMES

While the case studies describe initiatives which differ in many ways, close analysis reveals that certain common factors are crucial to the ongoing success of any programme seeking to enhance employment opportunities for disadvantaged sectors of society:

Work-based learning initiatives must foster **commitment and motivation** at all levels and stages. They must harness political will and serve the needs of society at large. By adopting, promoting and sharing best practice and empowering beneficiaries they enable them to take an active role in their learning and career development.

Employer engagement is vital and can take many forms. Initiatives should cultivate mutually beneficial relationships with businesses, involving them in such activities as project planning and selection of candidates and making use of their resources for mentoring, job shadowing and skills development.

A **personalised and holistic approach** focusses on the needs of the learner, encourages involvement among participants, and increases the probability of successfully matching candidates to vacancies. This requires individual analysis of beneficiaries' needs to inform both curriculum design and pedagogic strategies, a dual focus on practical and soft skills and complementary support for cultural orientation and job-seeking activities.

An appreciation of the importance of **career journeys and recognition** helps to create an explicit connection between work-based learning and continuing progress in the labour market. This in turn increases a programme's perceived value to its participants. This can be accomplished by linking initiatives to national qualifications frameworks and using labour market analysis to identify – and train for – high-demand sectors and occupations.

Sustainability and scalability are of increasing concern as a project matures. Funding models must be developed to incorporate public, private and third sector sources of support, and political commitment must be secured. At the same time, care must be taken to ensure that the personalised nature of a successful initiative is maintained as it grows.

CONCLUSION

Although the initiatives have certain aspects in common, it is important also to acknowledge their differences, as these are fundamental to understanding the complexity of the challenges inherent in making work-based learning successful. When designing a work-based learning programme, providers must consider circumstances and requirements which are markedly different depending on the target group, whether it be young people, the low-skilled, the long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, immigrants or refugees. This consideration, along with the social and political situation of the time and place, will have an effect on the methods and resources available to a project. Accommodating these differences, while working to demonstrate to stakeholders the overall value of these initiatives, must be central to the development of a practical, flexible and effective work-based learning strategy.

Main features of the case studies featured in the full essay collection

	Country	Year of establishment	Target group	Selected themes
Case 1: Centro di Formazione Professionale e Inserimento Lavorativo (CFPIL)	Italy	1971	People with disabilities (mental disabilities in particular)	Career journeys and recognition
Case 2: Écoles de la deuxième chance (E2C)	France	1997 (first E2C school) 2004 (network)	Young people (16–25)/NEETs who are unqualified/low qualified and (long-term) unemployed	Career journeys and recognition
Case 3: Talent Match	UK	2012	Young people (18–24)/NEETs, with a particular focus on 'hidden NEETs'	Motivation, commitment and engagement
Case 4: Webforce3	France	2014	Open to all, but particularly used by young people (16–30) who have dropped out of school and adults (30–55) made redundant from ICT jobs due to skills obsolescence	Sustainability and scalability
Case 5: First professional experience (FPE)/Pinardi	Spain	2015	Low-qualified young people/NEETs without professional experience	Information, guidance and mentoring
Case 6: INSerimento Integrazione Nordsud inclusionE (INSIDE)	Italy	2016	Asylum seekers, refugees and beneficiaries of international humanitarian protection (accommodated in the SPRAR network‡).	Personalised, holistic approach
Case 7: Targeted VET & work-based learning for newly arrived refugees and migrants	Germany	2016	Refugees and immigrants	Information, guidance and mentoring

For the full report, including all references, data sources and notes on methodology, see:
<http://www.ippr.org/publications/making-inclusion-work>

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The JPMorgan Chase New Skills at Work programme aims to identify strategies and support solutions that help improve labour market infrastructure and develop the skilled workforce globally. The initiative brings together leading policymakers, academics, business leaders, educators, training providers and non-profits with the goal of connecting labour market policy with practice, supply with demand and employers with the workforce – all to strengthen the global economy.