

# THE VALUE OF ITALIAN VET PROVIDERS NETWORK IN SPORT SECTOR

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## Keywords

training providers, labour market, soft skills.

## Aim

According with EU strategies training providers play an head role within the human resources development policy. The objective of the study is to measure collaboration within VET (vocational education and training, Terminology of European education and training policy, Cedefop) providers network in sport sector. Providers are public and private institutions and companies that supply VET and related services.

The proper functioning of VET network could represent a value for quality of life: network could develop teambuilding, facilitating meetings, encouraging innovation, solving problems, making decisions, planning, delegating, observing, instructing, coaching, encouraging and motivating (“soft skills”, Cedefop, 2010). Soft skills improve flexibility in part time workers, help reoccupation of unemployed people, speed up first employment for youth.

## Context

Recent economic crisis showed sport as a new modern market swept by changes. Dynamism of sport labour market is characterized by increasing global and local competition, growing complexity and demands for efficiency and accountability. In this context sport organizations are quickly working to modernize and improve themselves (Houlihan and Green, 2009). The new European strategy, named Europe 2020, resumes and underlines principle of subsidiarity: “helping people to help themselves”. Vocational (competence based) education and training is the main tool to improve new requested skills fit on new jobs,. VET providers in sport sector have the opportunity and challenge to develop their programs oriented on lifelong career. Investment in human capital is a necessity: sport workers, as well as in other not regulated job sectors, are living a changing context and will not commit their studies to hard skills (technical skill). Meanwhile learning outcomes need to be aligned with labour market requests (Favre, 2011), therefore for VET providers is crucial to identify, manage and improve their core programs in order to get an efficient placement of their students (Lucassen and Kalmthout, 2010).

## Methodology

The survey identifies 20 VET providers, include sport science universities, national sport federations e sport high schools working at national level in Italy. They were identified according to ILO guidelines (ILO, 2009). They responded to an open ended questionnaire addressed six dimensions:

- background of person in charge of programs development (VET manager)
- level of collaboration with other VET bodies (network)
- human resources (HR) shared within network
- projects shared within network
- consciousness of national and international VET policies
- consciousness of national and international VET projects

Data are elaborated through Social Network Analysis (SNA) to draw a map of bodies involved in sport VET; In that network *nodes* represent providers and *ties* represent relationships between six dimensions. First quantitative analysis gives the frequency of links between nodes; qualitative analysis focus on range of dimensions (Delphi method). Understanding the value means measuring how many and which kind of links there are in network.

## Results

Preliminary results of the study highlight the sharing of HR and VET projects between National Sport Federations (NSFs) and Universities. VET managers have experiences in other bodies of network. Universities promote their courses through NSF partnership. NSFs engage university HR at all level of their courses. Collaboration within Universities, as within NSFs, seems poor. European policies seem well known in Universities and high schools. The consciousness of reference national laws is not clear. High schools work closely with local authorities. The selection of VET manager is usually domestic and skills are developed on “field”. National VET projects in sport sector are known in NSFs’ group thanks to the role of National Italian Olympic Committee (CONI). The results and conclusions will be presented at the conference.

## References:

- Cedefop (2008) Terminology of European education and training policy. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities
- Cedefop (2010). Skills supply and demand in Europe.