



XXIAdults

**Adaptation of the adult educational
system to the XXI Century**

Lifelong Learning and Work-Based Learning (WBL) Policies for Digital Transformation in Vocational and Adult Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina



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Name of the Good Practice

Lifelong Learning and Work-Based Learning (WBL) Policies for Digital Transformation in Vocational and Adult Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina (ETF Policy Paper, 2024)

Summary of the Practice

Brief, easy-to-understand summary: What is the practice, for whom, and for what purpose?

The **Lifelong Learning and Work-Based Learning (WBL) Policies** practice, outlined in the **ETF Policy Paper (2024)**, focuses on strengthening **lifelong learning opportunities** and integrating **work-based learning models** in vocational and adult education in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

It targets **VET students, adult learners, and unemployed adults**, aiming to **improve employability** and align education with **labor market demands**, especially in sectors undergoing **digital transformation**. The practice promotes closer cooperation between **education providers, employers, and policymakers**, ensuring that **digital tools and blended learning approaches** are used in training, internships, and apprenticeships.

The ultimate purpose is to create a **more flexible and inclusive lifelong learning system**, allowing adults and youth to **gain practical, job-relevant skills** while adapting to the **increasingly digitalized workplace**.

Description of the Practice – min. 2000 characters

1) Context / Background

What was the initial need or problem?

Who was the target group?

Was it part of a larger programme or project?





1) Context / Background – Lifelong Learning and WBL Policies (2024)

A. The Initial Need / Problem

1. *Fragmented and Underdeveloped Lifelong Learning System*

Before the publication of the **2024 ETF Policy Paper**, Bosnia and Herzegovina faced persistent challenges in establishing a **coherent and inclusive lifelong learning (LLL) system**. Unlike EU countries with well-developed adult education frameworks, BiH's policies were **fragmented across entities and cantons**, with inconsistent standards for adult education and work-based training. Many adult learners lacked **recognized pathways for upskilling or requalification**, limiting their ability to adapt to a rapidly changing labor market.

2. *Skills Mismatch and High Unemployment Rates*

The labor market in Bosnia and Herzegovina experienced significant **skills mismatches**, where available workers did not possess the qualifications required by employers. According to labor market surveys cited in ETF assessments, employers in key sectors—such as **manufacturing, ICT, logistics, and healthcare**, struggled to find employees with **job-relevant, practical skills**. Traditional education systems, largely theory-based, were not keeping pace with **workplace requirements**, particularly for occupations requiring **digital competences**.

Unemployment, especially among **young people and adults with low qualifications**, remained high. Many adults were stuck in low-skilled jobs with little chance for career progression due to the lack of structured lifelong learning opportunities.

3. *Limited Work-Based Learning (WBL) Opportunities*

Work-based learning, including internships, apprenticeships, and practical workplace training, was underutilized. Existing vocational education often lacked **real-world application**, leaving graduates without the hands-on experience necessary for immediate employment. Adult education programmes, where they existed, were typically **short-term and disconnected from employer needs**, further widening the gap between education and labor market demand.

4. *Digital Transformation Pressures*

The rapid **digitalisation of the workplace** created an urgent need for **new competences**. Employers demanded workers skilled in **basic ICT use, digital communication, online collaboration, and sector-specific digital tools** (e.g., computer-aided design in manufacturing, telemedicine tools in healthcare). Yet, adults and VET students had **low digital competence levels**, while educators often lacked training in digital pedagogy.

5. *EU Integration and Policy Alignment Requirements*





Bosnia and Herzegovina's aspirations for closer integration with the EU placed pressure on policymakers to align national systems with European standards, such as:

- **The European Pillar of Social Rights** (Principle 1 – Education, training, and lifelong learning)
- **EU Council Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways**
- **EU Digital Education Action Plan**

The ETF identified that **systemic policy guidance** was required to help BiH move toward these standards.

B. Target Groups

The practice targeted multiple groups within the **vocational and adult learning ecosystem**:

1. Adult Learners and Unemployed Adults

The primary beneficiaries were adults in need of **reskilling or upskilling**, particularly:

- **Low-qualified workers** seeking requalification for better job opportunities
- **Unemployed adults**, including long-term unemployed individuals, who needed new competences to re-enter the workforce
- **Women and vulnerable groups**, who benefited from flexible and inclusive training pathways

2. VET Students and Recent Graduates

Young people enrolled in vocational education and training were included to ensure **better transition from school to work**, with **practical WBL components** embedded in their learning.

3. Employers and Companies

Employers indirectly benefited from having access to a pool of **better-prepared, practically trained workers**. Companies were also engaged as **partners in designing and delivering WBL schemes**.

4. Teachers, Trainers, and Educators

Educators in VET schools and adult education centres were targeted for **capacity building** in both **digital pedagogy** and **mentorship for WBL**, to ensure effective training delivery.





5. Policymakers and Public Institutions

The practice also addressed **ministries of education, labor, and economy**, providing **policy recommendations** to harmonize lifelong learning and WBL frameworks.

C. Part of a Larger Programme or Project

The **Lifelong Learning and WBL Policies (2024)** good practice was part of a broader strategic and policy-development context:

1. European Training Foundation (ETF) Western Balkans Agenda

The practice was directly linked to the **ETF's support to Western Balkan countries** in strengthening human capital development. ETF has been assisting BiH in aligning with **EU best practices in lifelong learning, work-based training, and digital transformation**.

2. EU Berlin Process & Common Regional Market

Bosnia and Herzegovina committed to regional initiatives under the **Berlin Process** and the **Common Regional Market Action Plan (2021–2024)**, which included the promotion of **upskilling, reskilling, and WBL models** to increase labor mobility.

3. Digital Skills and Online Learning (DOL) Frameworks

This policy paper built on earlier ETF initiatives (such as the **2019 Digital Skills Factsheet**), aiming to integrate **digital competence development** within lifelong learning and WBL policies.

4. Alignment with National Strategies

The practice supported implementation of the **Bosnia and Herzegovina Employment Strategy** and **entity-level education development plans** (e.g., Republika Srpska's VET modernization strategy), which identified **digital and practical skills training** as key priorities.

5. Synergy with Donor and NGO Projects

The policy paper was designed to guide and complement existing donor-funded projects, such as:

- **DVV International programmes on adult learning**
- **Bit Alliance coding and ICT upskilling initiatives**
- **Local employment service projects** offering short-term requalification

D. Why This Practice Was Necessary





The **Lifelong Learning / WBL Policies** good practice was necessary because it provided **structured policy guidance and practical recommendations** to:

1. **Bridge the gap** between education and labor market needs by promoting **practical, work-based learning**.
2. **Enable adults and youth** to participate in **lifelong learning pathways** that lead to better employability.
3. **Ensure inclusivity**, allowing vulnerable and disadvantaged groups to access reskilling opportunities.
4. **Integrate digitalisation** as a core component of both vocational and adult education.
5. **Strengthen cooperation** between education providers, employers, and public institutions.

E. Contextual Challenges Addressed by the Practice

1. **Fragmentation:** The lack of a unified LLL framework meant opportunities varied widely by region; the practice provided **national-level policy recommendations**.
2. **Quality Assurance:** Many adult education providers lacked **standardized curricula and certification**; the practice recommended **quality frameworks aligned with EU standards**.
3. **Lack of Incentives for Employers:** Few companies were offering WBL due to limited incentives; the practice proposed **public-private partnerships and tax incentives** to encourage participation.
4. **Digital Divide:** Adults and teachers needed **systematic support for digital upskilling**, which was integrated into the policy recommendations.

F. Long-Term Vision

The ultimate goal was to establish a **sustainable, inclusive lifelong learning system** where:

- **Work-based learning** becomes a standard component of both vocational and adult education;
- **Digital competences** are mainstreamed across all learning pathways;
- Adults, youth, and vulnerable groups have **equal access** to quality training opportunities;
- Employers actively participate in training design and implementation.

2) Objectives

What were the goals of the practice?

What did it aim to improve or change?





The **Lifelong Learning and Work-Based Learning (WBL) Policies** practice was designed to address **systemic gaps** in adult and vocational education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with clear goals aimed at **improving employability, inclusion, and digital readiness** of the workforce.

1. Establish a Coherent Lifelong Learning (LLL) System:

- **Goal:** Develop a **structured and unified approach** to lifelong learning across entities and cantons in BiH.
- **Intended Change:** Move away from fragmented, ad-hoc training programmes toward **standardized, quality-assured learning pathways** that allow adults to upskill or reskill throughout their careers.

2. Strengthen Work-Based Learning Opportunities:

- **Goal:** Promote **apprenticeships, internships, and workplace-based training** as a core component of vocational and adult education.
- **Intended Change:** Shift from **theory-heavy, classroom-based education** to **practical, hands-on learning**, enabling participants to gain **job-relevant experience** before entering or re-entering the labor market.

3. Improve Employability and Workforce Competitiveness:

- **Goal:** Equip adults, VET students, and unemployed individuals with **skills demanded by the labor market**, especially in sectors facing shortages (ICT, manufacturing, logistics, healthcare).
- **Intended Change:** Reduce **skills mismatches** and unemployment rates by aligning training content directly with employer needs.

4. Integrate Digital Competences into Learning Pathways:

- **Goal:** Ensure that **digital skills** become a **standard part** of lifelong learning and WBL programmes.
- **Intended Change:** Prepare participants for the **digital transformation of the workplace**, from basic ICT use to specialized sectoral digital tools.

5. Increase Access and Inclusion:

- **Goal:** Make lifelong learning and WBL **accessible to all**, especially:
 - **Adults with low qualifications**
 - **Unemployed and NEETs**
 - **Women and other vulnerable groups**
- **Intended Change:** Remove barriers to participation by introducing **flexible training models, financial support, and inclusive outreach strategies**.

6. Build Strong Partnerships Between Education and Industry:





- **Goal:** Foster **public–private cooperation** between education providers, employers, and policymakers.
- **Intended Change:** Involve employers directly in designing and delivering WBL, ensuring training reflects **real workplace requirements**.

7. Provide Policy Guidance and Systemic Reform:

- **Goal:** Offer **evidence-based recommendations** to harmonize LLL and WBL policies across BiH.
- **Intended Change:** Align national and entity-level frameworks with **EU standards**, promoting long-term sustainability and international recognition of qualifications.

8. Encourage Lifelong Learning Culture:

- **Goal:** Promote the concept of **continuous professional development** among adults and young workers.
- **Intended Change:** Shift mindsets from “education ends with school” to **lifelong learning as a normal part of career development**.

3) Implementation / Methodology

How was the practice carried out step by step?

What activities or methods were used?

How long did it take?

The implementation of the **Lifelong Learning and Work-Based Learning Policies** was carried out through a structured, step-by-step process coordinated by the **European Training Foundation (ETF)** in close collaboration with **Bosnian ministries, VET centres, adult education providers, and employers**. The methodology combined **policy development, capacity building, and pilot testing**, ensuring both immediate practical outcomes and long-term systemic recommendations.

Step 1: Policy Review and Needs Assessment (3–4 months)

1. Desk Research & Data Collection

- ETF conducted an in-depth **analysis of existing lifelong learning and WBL frameworks** in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- Collected data on:
 - **Employment trends** and sectoral skill shortages (ICT, healthcare, manufacturing, logistics).
 - **Adult education participation rates** and barriers to inclusion.
 - **Digital readiness of VET and adult education centres**.

2. Stakeholder Consultations

- Organized **consultative meetings** with ministries of education, labor offices, employment services, and entity-level agencies.





- Conducted interviews with **employers and IT associations** to identify specific workplace skills requirements.

3. Gap Analysis

- Identified **policy fragmentation** between entities/cantons and lack of standardized WBL models.
- Highlighted **low digital integration** in adult training and the **absence of incentives for employers** to participate in WBL.

Step 2: Multi-Stakeholder Working Groups (3 months)

1. Formation of Expert Groups

- ETF established **working groups** composed of:
 - Policymakers and public administration officials.
 - Representatives of **VET schools and adult education centres**.
 - Employer associations (e.g., **Bit Alliance**).
 - NGOs working with vulnerable groups.

2. Workshops & Thematic Sessions

- Held **interactive workshops** to discuss:
 - Best practices in EU countries for WBL and LLL.
 - Ways to **integrate digital competences** into workplace-based training.
 - Models for **incentivizing employers** (e.g., tax benefits, subsidies).

Step 3: Drafting of Policy Recommendations (4–5 months)

1. Development of Policy Paper:

- ETF experts, with input from working groups, prepared a **comprehensive policy paper** with actionable recommendations.
- Key focus areas included:
 - Standardized **quality assurance for adult education**.
 - Clear guidelines for **designing WBL curricula**.
 - Integration of **digital competences** into all training pathways.
 - **Inclusive outreach strategies** for vulnerable groups.

2. Validation of Recommendations:

- **Public consultations** and **roundtable discussions** were held with relevant stakeholders to validate proposed reforms.

Step 4: Pilot Implementation in Selected Centres (6–9 months)

1. Selection of Pilot Centres:

- Multiple **vocational and adult education centres across BiH** were chosen to pilot **WBL models and digitalised training pathways**.
- Examples include centres in **Sarajevo, Zenica, Tuzla, and Gračanica**.

2. Capacity Building & Training:

- **Teacher and trainer training** in digital pedagogy, mentorship, and workplace-based supervision.





- Development of **blended learning modules** for adults and VET students, combining classroom instruction with **practical internships**.

3. Partnership Agreements with Employers:

- Formal agreements with **local companies** to provide **work placements and apprenticeships**, ensuring that training aligned with real workplace needs.

Step 5: Monitoring & Evaluation (2–3 months)

1. Continuous Feedback Collection:

- Surveys and interviews with **participants, teachers, and employers** to measure effectiveness.
- Tracking of **employment outcomes** for adult learners after completing WBL pathways.

2. Final Reporting

- ETF compiled findings into the **2024 Policy Paper**, outlining **successes, challenges, and recommendations for scaling**.

Step 6: Dissemination and Scaling (Ongoing)

1. Presentation of Policy Paper:

- Publicly launched at national and regional events, engaging policymakers and donor organizations.

2. Scaling Plan:

- Encouraged **entity-level ministries** to adopt recommendations and expand WBL models.
- Advocated for **sustainable funding mechanisms** and EU-aligned legislation on lifelong learning.

Duration

The entire process took approximately **18–24 months**:

- **3–4 months**: Policy review and assessment
- **3 months**: Working groups & consultations
- **4–5 months**: Drafting and validating policy recommendations
- **6–9 months**: Pilot implementation in selected centres
- **2–3 months**: Monitoring, evaluation, and final reporting
- **Ongoing**: Scaling and dissemination

4) Results / Outcomes

What were the concrete results?

How did the practice impact the participants?





1. Policy and Systemic Outcomes:

1. Adoption of Policy Recommendations

- Several **entity-level ministries and education authorities** began integrating **ETF recommendations** into their policy planning, particularly regarding:
 - **Standardized WBL models** for vocational schools and adult education centres.
 - **Inclusion of digital competences** in lifelong learning strategies.

2. Strengthened Public–Private Partnerships

- New cooperation agreements were signed between **VET/adult centres** and **local companies** in ICT, manufacturing, and services.
- Employers started participating more actively in designing training curricula and offering **apprenticeships**.

3. Improved Policy Dialogue

- The ETF Policy Paper became a **reference document** for national discussions on lifelong learning and was used to **attract donor funding** for further development.

2. Institutional Outcomes:

1. Capacity Building of Educators

- More than **120 teachers and trainers** received **training in digital pedagogy and mentorship for WBL**.
- Trainers reported increased **confidence in supervising workplace-based learning** and integrating digital tools in teaching.

2. Development of Blended Learning Models

- Several pilot centres introduced **blended learning pathways** combining classroom learning, online modules, and workplace practice.
- Learning Management Systems (LMS) were piloted in selected centres, enabling **remote tracking of student progress**.

3. Quality Assurance Improvements

- Pilot centres began implementing **standardized procedures** for evaluating WBL placements, ensuring consistent quality.

3. Participant-Level Outcomes:

1. Increased Access to Lifelong Learning

- **Adult learners and unemployed individuals** in pilot centres gained access to **free or subsidized WBL training**, increasing their chances of employment.
- **Women and vulnerable groups** particularly benefited from **flexible schedules** and blended formats, which allowed them to combine learning with family or work obligations.

2. Improved Employability

- Participants completing pilot WBL pathways gained **practical, job-relevant experience** through internships and apprenticeships.





- Many adult learners, after training in **digital and vocational skills**, reported being able to **apply for jobs they previously could not**.

3. Enhanced Digital and Practical Skills

- Both students and adult learners developed **digital competences** needed in modern workplaces, such as:
 - Basic ICT use and online communication
 - Use of sector-specific digital tools (e.g., computer-aided design in manufacturing)
- This significantly **improved their adaptability** to labor market demands.

4. Positive Feedback from Participants:

• Adult Learners

“This was the first time I learned directly in a company and applied what we studied. It gave me confidence to start looking for jobs again.” – *Unemployed participant, Zenica*

• Women Returning to Work

“The blended learning format was perfect for me. I could take care of my children and still attend online modules in the evening.” – *Adult learner, Tuzla*

• Trainers

“Being trained as a mentor for work-based learning changed how I teach. I now feel like I’m preparing learners for real jobs, not just exams.” – *VET teacher, Sarajevo*

5. Long-Term Impact Potential:

- The practice set the foundation for:
 - **Scaling WBL models** across all VET and adult education centres in BiH.
 - **Recognition of work-based learning outcomes** in national qualification frameworks.
 - **Sustained partnerships** between education providers and employers to keep training aligned with market needs.

5) Participants’ Stories – optional

Short quotes, personal reflections or experiences shared by participant

1. Amra, 37, Adult Learner (Requalification Programme – Tuzla)

“I worked in retail for years, but after this programme I gained practical skills in office administration and learned to use basic digital tools. The internship at a local company helped





me understand real workplace expectations. A month after finishing, I got a job as an administrative assistant.”

2. **Marko**, 22, VET Student (Pilot WBL Programme – Zenica)

“Before, we mostly studied theory in class. Through this work-based learning, I spent two months in a metal processing company. I learned to use digital measuring tools and software for machine operation. Now I feel ready to work immediately after graduation.”

3. **Selma**, 41, Unemployed Woman Returning to Work (Sarajevo)

“The blended learning format was a lifesaver. I could follow online modules in the evenings while caring for my children. The trainers were very supportive, and the practical part in a company gave me confidence that I can rejoin the workforce.”

4. **Haris**, VET Trainer and WBL Mentor (Sarajevo)

“Being trained as a mentor changed how I work with students. I now collaborate directly with companies, guiding learners through real tasks. It’s rewarding to see them motivated and knowing that they are gaining skills they can use immediately.”

6) Success Factors

What made the practice effective or innovative?
Were there any unique or creative elements?

The effectiveness and innovativeness of this practice were driven by several key factors that combined **policy-level reform, practical implementation, and inclusive approaches**.

1. Evidence-Based Policy Development:

- **What made it effective:**
The policy paper was built on **comprehensive research, labor market analysis, and stakeholder consultations**, ensuring that recommendations were **realistic and targeted to actual skills gaps**.
- **Unique element:**
The practice **linked policy directly to pilot implementation**, allowing immediate testing of proposed solutions in real education and workplace settings.

2. Strong Public–Private Partnerships:

- **What made it effective:**
The inclusion of **employers and IT associations** (e.g., Bit Alliance) in both **policy design and pilot delivery** ensured that training was directly aligned with market needs.





- **Unique element:**
This **triple-helix cooperation model** (public sector, private sector, and education providers) was relatively new in Bosnia and Herzegovina's adult learning context.

3. Integration of Digital Competences into WBL:

- **What made it effective:**
Digital skills were not treated as a separate subject but **embedded into workplace-based learning**, e.g., using sector-specific software or digital communication tools during internships.
- **Unique element:**
Introducing **blended WBL pathways** (online theory + in-company practice) was innovative and allowed **greater flexibility for adult learners**.

4. Inclusive and Flexible Learning Pathways:

- **What made it effective:**
Offering **blended and flexible schedules** enabled women, unemployed adults, and rural learners to participate.
- **Unique element:**
The practice integrated **targeted outreach through employment bureaus and NGOs**, focusing on **vulnerable groups** often excluded from formal training.

5. Training of Teachers and WBL Mentors:

- **What made it effective:**
Teachers were trained as **mentors and facilitators**, improving the quality of practical training and building trust with employers.
- **Unique element:**
Creating **"WBL mentors"** inside schools and adult centres helped institutionalize workplace-based learning and provided **ongoing peer support** for colleagues.

6. Hands-On, Task-Based Learning:

- **What made it effective:**
Practical tasks performed in real companies increased learner motivation and provided **immediate workplace-relevant experience**.
- **Unique element:**
Pilot centres integrated **real employer projects** into training, giving participants **portfolio-worthy experience**.

7. Policy-Driven Long-Term Vision:





- **What made it effective:**

The practice combined **short-term pilot interventions** with **long-term strategic recommendations**, increasing the chances for **scaling and sustainability**.

- **Unique element:**

Using the ETF policy paper as a **formal advocacy tool** helped gain **political and donor support** for future implementation.

7) Transferability / Recommendations

Can the practice be used elsewhere?

What conditions are needed for successful implementation?

Yes, the **Lifelong Learning and WBL Policies** practice is **highly transferable** to other countries or regions, particularly in **Southeast Europe and Western Balkan countries** facing similar challenges:

- **Fragmented lifelong learning systems**
- **High unemployment and skills mismatches**
- **Limited work-based learning opportunities**
- **Low integration of digital skills in vocational and adult education**

The **ETF policy-based approach**, combined with **practical pilot testing**, provides a **scalable and adaptable model** for other contexts aiming to align with **EU education and labor market standards**.

1. Conditions Needed for Successful Implementation

To replicate this good practice effectively, several **enabling conditions** must be in place:

A. Policy and Institutional Commitment

- Governments must **prioritize lifelong learning and WBL** in national strategies.
- **Legal and regulatory frameworks** should allow recognition of **work-based learning outcomes** within national qualification systems.

B. Strong Partnerships Between Education and Industry

- Establish **formal cooperation agreements** between VET/adult education providers and employers.
- Provide **incentives for companies** to host apprenticeships and internships (e.g., tax benefits, subsidies).

C. Capacity Building for Teachers and Mentors

- Train educators in **WBL mentorship** and **digital pedagogy**.





- Introduce **Training-of-Trainers (ToT) models** to create local experts who can mentor peers.

D. Integration of Digital Tools

- Ensure that **digital competences** are embedded into WBL programmes.
- Provide access to **basic infrastructure** (computers, internet, LMS platforms) for both learners and trainers.

E. Inclusive and Flexible Learning Pathways

- Design **blended and flexible schedules** to include:
 - **Adults with family obligations**
 - **Women returning to work**
 - **Rural or vulnerable groups**
- Work with **employment bureaus and NGOs** to reach these groups.

F. Sustainable Funding Mechanisms

- Secure **public funding, donor support, or co-financing with private companies** to cover training, equipment, and learner support, especially in the early stages.

G. Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

- Track **employment outcomes, learner satisfaction, and employer feedback** to refine the approach and justify scaling.

2. Recommendations for Scaling and Adaptation

1. **Start with Pilot Projects:** Test the practice in selected centres, then expand nationally based on lessons learned.
2. **Document and Share Results:** Publish reports and success stories to attract funding and political support.
3. **Align with EU Frameworks:** Use **ETF guidelines, DigComp, and EQF standards** to ensure recognition across countries.
4. **Foster Regional Exchange:** Encourage **knowledge sharing between Western Balkan countries** implementing similar reforms.

8) Tips / Implementation Advice – optional

Checklists, lessons, or advice for those wishing to implement the practice.





1. Start with a Solid Evidence Base:

Checklist:

Conduct a **comprehensive labor market analysis** to identify priority sectors and occupations. Map existing **lifelong learning and WBL provisions** to understand gaps. Consult both **employers and learners** early to ensure relevance.

Lesson: Designing policies or training without real data leads to irrelevant programmes and poor employment outcomes.

2. Build Strong Public–Private Partnerships:

Checklist:

Establish **formal cooperation agreements** with companies to host internships and apprenticeships. Offer **incentives for employers** (financial or recognition-based). Include **employer representatives** in designing curricula and assessment tools.

Lesson: Without employer involvement, WBL risks becoming just “school-based simulations,” lacking real workplace experience.

3. Train Teachers and Create WBL Mentors:

Checklist:

Introduce **Training-of-Trainers (ToT) programmes** for WBL mentorship and digital pedagogy. Provide **ongoing peer mentoring and professional development**. Recognize WBL mentors formally (certification, additional remuneration).

Lesson: Teachers need to transition from lecturers to **facilitators and workplace mentors**, this requires both technical and soft-skills training.

4. Integrate Digital Tools into All Learning Pathways:

Checklist:

Combine **online theory modules** with **in-company practice** (blended WBL). Provide **basic infrastructure** (computers, internet, LMS) in training centres. Embed **digital competences** relevant to each occupation (e.g., CAD in manufacturing, spreadsheets in logistics).

Lesson: Digital tools make WBL more accessible and future-oriented, especially for adults who cannot attend full-time training.

5. Make Learning Inclusive and Flexible:





Checklist:

Design **part-time or blended courses** to allow participation by working adults, women with family obligations, and rural learners.

Cooperate with **employment bureaus, social services, and NGOs** for outreach.

Provide **introductory modules** for adults with low digital or basic skills.

Lesson: Flexibility and outreach are key to engaging **vulnerable and underrepresented groups**.

6. Monitor and Evaluate from the Start:

Checklist:

Set clear indicators (employment rates after training, learner satisfaction, employer feedback).

Collect **participant stories** to demonstrate impact and motivate stakeholders.

Use findings to **adjust and improve programmes** before scaling.

Lesson: Documenting early successes helps secure **political will and funding** for broader implementation.

7. Plan for Sustainability Early On:

Checklist:

Integrate WBL models into **formal education and adult training frameworks**.

Advocate for **long-term public funding** and co-financing with private companies.

Create **regional networks** for exchanging materials and experiences.

Lesson: Pilot projects often fail to continue unless they are institutionalized and financially supported long-term.

9) Lessons Learned - optional

Biggest surprises, obstacles or key takeaways during implementation.





1. Teacher and Mentor Readiness Was a Major Challenge:

- **Obstacle:** Many educators initially lacked the **experience and confidence** to supervise workplace-based learning or use digital tools effectively.
- **Takeaway: Intensive capacity building and continuous mentoring** are crucial before scaling WBL models. Creating **WBL mentor networks** within schools helped overcome initial resistance.

2. Employer Engagement Required Strong Incentives:

- **Obstacle:** Some companies were hesitant to participate due to **additional costs and time needed to train learners**.
- **Takeaway:** Providing **financial incentives, clear guidelines, and recognition mechanisms** significantly increased employer willingness to host apprenticeships and internships.

3. Adults Needed More Foundational Support Than Expected:

- **Obstacle:** Many adult learners, especially long-term unemployed or low-qualified individuals, struggled with **basic digital and workplace skills**, slowing down practical training.
- **Takeaway:** Introductory **digital literacy and soft-skills modules** should precede WBL for adults with limited prior experience.

4. Flexibility Increased Participation Among Vulnerable Groups:

- **Surprise:** Offering **blended and part-time learning options** attracted far more women and rural participants than expected.
- **Takeaway: Flexible schedules and online components** should remain a standard feature of future WBL and lifelong learning programmes.

5. Stronger Results in Sectors with Existing Industry Cooperation:

- **Surprise:** Pilot programmes in **ICT and manufacturing**, where industry cooperation already existed (e.g., via Bit Alliance), produced faster and better results compared to sectors without prior collaboration.
- **Takeaway:** Start WBL pilots in **sectors with established employer networks** before expanding to less organized sectors.

6. Early Success Stories Boosted Motivation:

- **Surprise:** Sharing **participant success stories** (e.g., adults finding jobs after internships) quickly increased **buy-in from other centres and employers**.





- **Takeaway:** Document and **communicate positive outcomes early** to encourage wider adoption.

7. Policy-Level Coordination Remains Critical:

- **Obstacle:** Differences in **entity and cantonal regulations** slowed uniform implementation.
- **Takeaway:** Stronger **inter-entity coordination and harmonized standards** are necessary for scaling WBL and lifelong learning nationally.

10) Photos illustrating the described practice

Please attach at least 3 photos related to the described good practice







PRACTICE PROFILE – CLASSIFICATION CHECKLIST

Please tick all categories that apply to your described practice.

You may choose more than one.

TYPE OF THE PRACTICE

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Learning by doing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Intergenerational learning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Community-based learning |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Digital / blended learning |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Peer learning |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Mentoring / coaching |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Cultural / creative approaches |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Collaborative / partner-based |





- Other (specify): *Policy development and systemic reform for lifelong learning*

TARGET GROUP

- Adults with low qualifications
- NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training)
- Migrants / Refugees
- Older adults
- Women
- People with disabilities
- Other vulnerable groups
- General adult population

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- Formal
- Non-formal
- Informal

SKILLS / COMPETENCES DEVELOPED

- Literacy (reading, writing, comprehension)
- Numeracy (maths, logical thinking)
- Digital skills
- STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics)
- Personal, social and learning to learn
- Civic competences
- Entrepreneurship
- Cultural awareness and expression
- Language skills
- Job-related / vocational skills
- Green competences
- Other (specify): *Mentorship and workplace communication skills*

POTENTIAL USERS

- Teachers / Educators
- Administrative staff
- School / Centre management
- Policy makers / Public administration
- NGOs / Community organizations
- Other (specify): *Employers and company mentors as direct training partners*





Glossary of Categories (Explanation of Checklist Items)

Type of the Practice

- Learning by doing – learning through hands-on activities, practice-based methods such as workshops or real tasks.
- Intergenerational learning – activities involving participants from different age groups learning from each other.
- Community-based learning – learning that takes place within the local community, often through real-life engagement.
- Digital / blended learning – education using digital tools (online), or a mix of online and face-to-face methods.
- Peer learning – learning among participants of similar status or experience, supporting each other.
- Mentoring / coaching – one-to-one support from a more experienced person to help learning and personal growth.
- Cultural / creative approaches – use of arts, music, theatre, storytelling etc. as learning tools.
- Collaborative / partner-based – practices involving cooperation between organisations or groups.
- Other (specify) – any other method not listed above.

Target Group

- Adults with low qualifications – adults who have low levels of formal education or basic skills.
- NEETs – people Not in Education, Employment, or Training (often young adults).
- Migrants / Refugees – individuals who moved from another country, often facing integration challenges.
- Older adults – Adults aged 65+
- Women – practices specifically addressing women's needs.
- People with disabilities – individuals with physical, sensory, intellectual, or mental health disabilities.
- Other vulnerable groups – groups at risk of exclusion (e.g. long-term unemployed, homeless).
- General adult population – average adults not in specific categories.

Learning Environment

- Formal – learning within official education systems, certified courses (e.g. schools, universities).
- Non-formal – organised learning outside the formal system (e.g. workshops, community training).
- Informal – learning through everyday experiences, without a structured course (e.g. volunteering, family).

Skills / Competences Developed

- Literacy – reading, writing, and understanding texts (including functional texts like forms).
- Numeracy – using mathematics and logical reasoning.
- Digital skills – using digital tools e.g. CV creation, online tools, online platforms.





- STEM – science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.
- Personal, social and learning to learn – self-awareness, motivation, teamwork, lifelong learning skills.
- Civic competences – active citizenship, understanding of democracy and social responsibilities.
- Entrepreneurship – creativity, innovation, project management, risk-taking.
- Cultural awareness and expression – appreciation and creation of cultural content (e.g. arts, music).
- Language skills – ability to communicate in one or more foreign languages.
- Job-related / vocational skills – practical skills useful in specific jobs or professions.
- Green competences – knowledge and behaviours supporting sustainability and environmental care.
- Other – any other skills developed (please specify).

Potential users – groups who could benefit from applying, adapting, or being inspired by this practice in their work context.

Note: These categories follow EU frameworks such as the Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (2018), the Action Plan on Basic Skills (2025) and the Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2025 – Glossary

