

“Concept paper and road map for development of the work-based learning in Armenia for 2019-2025”

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SUMMARY

Work-based learning (WBL) refers to learning that takes place when people do real work which results in the production of real goods and services. It provides individuals with the skills needed to successfully obtain and keep jobs and progress in their professional development. Apprenticeships, internships/traineeships and on-the-job training are the most common types of work-based learning.

Well implemented work-based learning is an example of a win-win approach, with clear-cut benefits for all parties involved, mainly insuring:

- i) **the right skills and experience for learners:** building skills and competences required to operate in a workplace including transversal ones, connecting more directly to the world of employment, and more informed career choices, developing career management skills, improved self-confidence and motivation, increasing social inclusion among disadvantaged groups in the labour market, first working experience which facilities entry to the labour market
- ii) **the right skills for companies** Positive impact on supply of qualified labour, addressing skills' gaps through tailor made training, positive effect on recruitment and retention, improved productivity and performance due to constant learning of new skills and new ways of doing things, positive impact on development of employed staff,
- iii) **VET institutions-company effective partnership:** Improved attractiveness of VET programmes, better quality of VET programmes and learning outcomes, enhancement of relevance and responsiveness of VET, positive effect on teaching staff competences and development, better cooperation between VET institutions and businesses,
- iv) **more relevant and inclusive VET system:** Skilled labour force which responds better to the labour markets needs, positive contribution to youth employment, cost-sharing of VET between the state and employers, combined governance of VET, potential to strengthen social inclusion and equal opportunities, greater use of plant and equipment on employer premises for training, etc.

The European Commission's communication, Rethinking Education recognized it as a strategic priority: "Work-based learning, such as dual approaches, should be a central pillar of vocational education and training systems across Europe, with the aim of reducing youth unemployment, facilitating the transition from learning to employment, and responding to the skill needs of the labour market"¹.

The unemployment of youth is still high in Armenia. The 2017 report on labour market analysis indicates 21.3% and 26.9% of unemployment rate for 15-24 and 25-34 age groups respectively. Moreover, for the same period, the unemployed rate for people having graduated from a VET was 52.4% as a share of the total². According to a more recent study, unemployment of youth within the age group 15-35 is even 70% in Lori, Gegharkunik and Ararat regions³.

Facing the high level of youth unemployment and considering the proven benefits of WBL the development and implementation of appropriate national policy, legal framework and implementation tools for WBL is seen as a key issue to address the problem of relevance and quality of VET in Armenia.

This "Concept paper and road map for development of the work-based learning (WBL) in Armenia for 2019-2025" is aimed at formulating the policy framework necessary for the development of work-based learning (WBL) in the field of vocational education and training (VET) of the Republic of Armenia. Likewise, the concept aims at defining activities targeting the gradual implementation of new forms of WBL. The document has been elaborated by Armenian Working Group on WBL of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sport⁴ with the support of European Training Foundation (ETF) and has been completed and edited by ETF National Expert Arayik Navoyan.

While determining conceptual approaches of development of the WBL and its priority forms, the elaboration and implementation of effective mechanisms aimed at efficient involvement of the main stakeholders; employers in particular, have been underlined.

Preferable approaches of Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Armenia towards WBL implementation in the VET system, the needs expressed by employer representatives, the current state-of-affairs of the country, the best European practice on WBL: in particular the expertise accumulated while implementing pilot projects, as well as the establishment of necessary pedagogical approaches, tools and capacities of VET institutions for the implementation of new forms of WBL have been taken into account. Therefore an approach of the gradual adaptation and implementation of different WBL forms in the Armenian VET system throughout different time slots the way it is suggested :

¹ European Commission, 2012. Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes, p. 7.

² National Statistical Service of Armenia, 2018. Labour Market in the Republic of Armenia, 2016-2017, pp. 186; 188. Available at https://www.armstat.am/file/article/trud_18_9.pdf

³ World Vision Armenia, 2018. SAY YES project Baseline Evaluation, September 2018, Yerevan, p. 4.
https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/Report_eng%2C%20SAY%20YES%20baseline_Final.pdf

⁴ Armenian Working Group on WBL was established by order n° 18U/2 of the Minister of Education and Science of the RA in January 2018, including the main Armenian stakeholders of the WBL.

Timeframe	Proposed WBL form
Short-term	Form 1 - Internship: Programmes, where learners legally have the status of a student. Such kind of programmes can be called differently, e.g. “Internship”, “Production internship”, “Learning in the workplace”.
Mid-term	Form 2 - “Real” companies adjacent to VET institutions (Armenian model to be developed).
Long-term	Form 3 - Apprenticeship/Dual Education: Programmes, where learners are legally employees, they receive a salary, e.g. in case of formal apprenticeship, when a contract is signed between the apprentice and the employer.

In line to this adopted approach, a road map for development of the work-based learning in Armenia for 2019-2025 is suggested, which includes WBL main components related several activities necessary for WBL successful implementation and further expansion:

Improving policy and legal framework	Period
Definition of legal framework for organization of 2 nd and 3 rd forms of WBL	2019-2022
Elaboration of the principles and conditions of financial and fiscal activities of the WBL form 2	2020
Elaboration of mechanisms and procedures for training teachers involved in delivery of WBL	2020
Operationalization of mechanism for certification and recognition of skills developed within non-formal WBL	2024
Involvement of WBL peculiarities in internal and external quality assurance systems	2020-2025
Introduction of internationally recognized WBL definitions in the Law on VET	2019

WBL organization and implementation in the workplace and class-room	Period
Improvement of internship organization and assessment	2019
Elaboration of WBL curricula and modules in VET adjacent trade companies in line with priority specialty per region	2019-2023
Development of necessary knowledge and skills among VET teachers and mentors with the aim of effective implementation of every form of WBL	2020
Implementation needs assessment of different forms of WBL per priority specialty and elaboration of WBL curricula and programmes	2020-2024
Development of monitoring system for WBL implementation	2020

Quality Assurance of WBL	Period
Elaboration of standard for assessment of workplace conditions and capacity of companies for WBL	2020-2022
Elaboration of WBL internal and external quality assurance systems in VET institutions, including standard for determining and assessing teaching outcomes at the workplace	2020-2023
Capacity-building of enterprises involved in WBL implementation, in particular mentor' training.	2019-2025
Capacity building of employers' union staff around the skills of organizing and implementing WBL	2019-2025
Organization of training targeting managerial and pedagogical skills necessary for efficient planning and implementation of different forms of WBL in VET institutions	2019-2025

WBL financing and incentives for companies	Period
Certain allocations from VET state financing to the effective implementation of WBL current forms (internships) with the aim of organizing more practical works at the workplace	2019
Elaboration of regulation on granting targeted subsidies or fiscal, custom and social privileges for the implementation of WBL programs	2019-2022
Elaboration of a model for calculating the cost of the WBL priority forms	2020-2021
Elaboration of a model for state financial allocations targeting WBL implementation	2019-2021

The full text of “Concept paper and road map for development of the work-based learning (WBL) in Armenia for 2019-2025” is available in the site of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport.