

SUMMARY POLICY AND PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT



CONTENTS

1. Introduction	3
2. Methodology	5
Desk Research / Comparative Analysis	5
Comparative analysis 1	7
Comparative analysis 2	7
Comparative analysis 3	8
Comparative analysis 4	8
FOCUS GROUP	10
3. Policy-level Recommendations	14
Recommendations for Policies in the VET systems:	14
Recommendations for Policies Targeting Young Employees:	16
Recommendations for Policies aimed at CPD frameworks for VET Providers:	19
Recommendations for well-being policies:	22
Recommendations for Businesses towards Supporting Well-being and Mental Health:	24
4. Implementation of Best Practices from Each Country	26
5. Practice-level Recommendations.	46
6. Conclusion	50



1. INTRODUCTION

This **Policy and Practice Recommendations Report** is dedicated to supporting policymakers and practitioners across Europe to adopt the BE-WELL model to support the well-being and mental health of young employees. This is specifically linked to our project objective: to adapt VET to labour market needs and to contribute to innovation in VET. It is one of the core results of work package 4 within the Erasmus+ project “BE- WELL: Smartphone Learning Opportunities to Promote Well-being in Young Employees.” (Project N° 2022-1-ES01-KA220-VET-000086525), co-funded with the financial support of the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Commission.



The discovery of the importance, on one hand of increasing support to young employees in the post-pandemic workplace, by providing a suite of targeted, micro-learning and self-help resources that will support them to manage their mental health and well-being in these uncertain times and on other hand supporting VET professionals in our networks, and beyond, to update their practice skills to integrate micro-learning theory into how the design and present learning opportunities to business learners, especially young employees.

There are many actions linked to the current regulatory landscape and to the scenarios that push in that direction. In this complex process, attention to the training on how to manage the mental health skills of VET professionals and educators who work with young employees, whose task is to facilitate their learning, is proposed as more urgent.

In order to be able to achieve our goal: of defining a framework for policy learning and recommendations, we have addressed these comparative analysis issues and focus groups in the seven different countries (Spain, Austria, Ireland, Portugal, Bulgaria, Greece, and Cyprus) to provide a perfect opportunity to get a BE-WELL approach to supporting the well-being of young employees could be copied by other VET provision and delivered through work-based learning programmes in other regions and contexts.

The partnership has reflected on the impact that the BE-WELL project has had in their national context; engaging VET professionals through focus group sessions to review their engagement in the project to put forward practice-level recommendations; and to promote the BE-WELL approach to enhancing the well-being skills of young employees as a model of best practice.



2. METHODOLOGY

To complete this report, several key activities for partners have been undertaken to ensure the robustness, relevance, and accuracy of the findings promoted in this report, as follows.

DESK RESEARCH / COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

To inform the Policy-level Recommendations, partners undertook a series of comparative analysis research tasks, as follows:

Comparative analysis 1 (CA1) - a comparative analysis between the partner countries regarding VET provision and the inclusion of programmes targeted at young employees specifically.

Comparative analysis 2 (CA2) - a comparative analysis between the partner countries examining national programmes aimed at supporting VET providers to update their digital and pedagogic skills to make VET provision more flexible and accessible to the labour market.

Comparative analysis 3 (CA3) – a comparative analysis between partner countries examining employee well-being policies at a national level.

Comparative analysis 4 (CA4) - a comparative analysis between the partner countries examining the attitudes of businesses towards supporting the well-being and mental health of young employees.

Comparative analyses 2, 3, and 4 followed the same structure with the contents being divided into four sections. In Comparative Analysis 1, Parts A, B, and C were added to provide a general context. The information in these parts is considered applicable to all four analyses since they cover information relevant to the four



topics. However, to avoid repetition, these parts have only been included in Comparative Analysis 1. The data included was taken into consideration when writing the key findings for each analysis. The sections that provided a larger context to the situation in all partner countries were organised under the heading “General Context” and comprised the following information:

Part A. VET actors in the countries including information about government agencies and ministries responsible for overseeing VET in each country, educational institutions that offer VET programmes, qualifications and certification bodies responsible for accrediting and certifying VET programmes and qualifications, training providers involved in VET, funding mechanisms and regulatory framework governing VET.

Part B. General demographics in the countries including information about population size and age distribution, education levels and literacy rates, economic indicators relevant to employment, labour force participation rates, key economic indicators related to employee well-being, employment sectors, and distribution.

Part C. Profiles of Young Employees in the countries include information about age distribution, educational background, employment status and sectors, employment trends among young individuals, challenges faced by young employees, and opportunities for skill development and career advancement.



The specific contents of the four analyses have been organised as follows:

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS 1

Section 1. Existing policies and Best Practices from a National Context

include information about key VET policies and programmes targeting young employees, success stories and case studies of policies and programmes targeting young employees, and stakeholder involvement (government, industry, educational institutions) in policies and programmes targeting young employees.

Section 2. Current statistics and trends include information about enrolment and Participation of young employees in VET programmes, employment rates, and outcomes.

Section 3. Key findings summarising the key data and trends observed in each country.

Section 4. Bibliography

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS 2

Section 1. Existing policies and Best Practices from a National Context

include information about continuous professional development (CPD) frameworks for VET providers and trainers, key themes addressed in large-scale CPD programmes in the last decade, and success stories of CPD programmes carried out.

Section 2. Current statistics and trends including information about CPD programmes for VET professionals carried out on a national level since 2014.

Section 3. Key findings summarising the key data and trends observed in each country.



Section 4. Bibliography

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS 3

Section 1. Existing policies and Best Practices from a National Context including information about key employee well-being policies, healthcare and mental health support policies, work-life balance policies, social benefits and employee assistance programmes, notable initiatives and programmes, success stories and case studies

Section 2. Current statistics and trends include information about health and well-being metrics, work-life balance, and job satisfaction.

Section 3. Key findings summarising the key data and trends observed in each country.

Section 4. Bibliography

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS 4

Section 1. Existing policies and Best Practices from a National Context including information about the **latest** legislation regarding workplace operation and relevant auditing authorities, statistics and other data from auditing authorities on workplace conditions and employee wellbeing, review reports from employees'/workers associations on workplace conditions in the last decade and review reports from employers' associations on workplace conditions in the last decade.

Section 2. Current statistics and trends include information about workplace wellbeing policies and workplace complaints.

Section 3. Key findings summarising the key data and trends observed in each country.

Section 4. Bibliography





To avoid excessive information a limit of pages per section was set.

When researching information resources partners were advised to prioritise peer-reviewed journals, official reports, and reputable sources for information; to verify the credibility of online sources before inclusion; to use the most recent and relevant data available; to ensure that the sources align with the specific objectives of each research task; to seek information from a diverse range of sources to capture different perspectives and to include academic, industry, and government publications.



FOCUS GROUP

To reflect on the impact that the BE-WELL project has had on a partnership national context; to engage VET professionals to review their engagement in the project and to put forward practice-level recommendations; and to promote the BE-WELL approach to enhancing the well-being skills of young employees as a model of best practice, we have resorted to the focus group methodology.

The main objective of a focus group is to collect ideas, considerations and suggestions expressed by a group of individuals belonging to the appropriate target group, invited to freely and spontaneously discuss the four comparative analysis frameworks to synthesise the policy learning that emerges from the project.

Unlike other interview techniques, focus groups eliminate the possibility of a “one-way” interaction between the interviewer and the individual respondent. They also prevent the interview from proceeding in a rigid, codified manner, dictated by the sequence of questions in a questionnaire.

The success of this method relies on two key factors: the activation of group dynamics, where participants engage in intense interactive debates, and the moderator’s ability to guide the discussion, keeping it orderly and aligned with the research objectives. The premise is that participants’ observations and evaluations will trigger reactions, comments, and reflections from others, fostering a spontaneous and intense discussion that leads to the sharing of deeper insights. By utilising focus groups, the partnership has gained a clear understanding of the skills VET trainers need to effectively support young employees in their learning.



The methodology to conduct the focus group took place in two phases.

Recruitment stage:

Each partner recruited 6-8 participants, intending to create a group that is not excessively homogeneous from VET professionals. The subjects represented the reference target, i.e. VET trainers, or anyone who potentially aspires to this role.

Initial Stages and Development:

Once the group was formed, the facilitator began the session by outlining its purpose and methodology. The facilitator presented the four discussion topics from the comparative analysis framework to the focus group participants and explained that their responses would be collected at the end of the session.

These guidelines allowed for the creation of face-to-face or online sessions moderated by a facilitator. To ensure that participants provided complex and detailed answers, guidelines were developed:

Planning and Preparing Questions; Devise questions in advance, involving key VET professionals.

Questions should be:

- *Short and to the point*
- *Open-ended or use a sentence completion format and worded to avoid closed yes/ no answers.*

If any answers were unclear, the facilitator would ask probing questions, such as:

- *Can you talk about that some more?*
- *Help me understand what you mean.*
- *Can you give me an example?*



These discussion points contributed to the development of the BE-WELL Policy Recommendations and Practices Report.

To hear and explore the perspectives of VET professionals on the four key areas of well-being for young employees in the workplace, participants were invited to reflect on their personal experiences. These questions focused on selected areas of well-being highlighted from the comparative analysis desk research:

- *Why should VET provision and the inclusion of programmes targeted at young employees specifically invest more in well-being?*
- *What are the barriers to implementing well-being policies at a national level in the workplace?*
- *What are the strengths and weaknesses regarding national programmes aimed at supporting VET providers to update their digital and pedagogic skills to make VET provision more flexible and accessible to the labour market?*
- *In your opinion, what are the most relevant attitudes of businesses towards supporting the well-being and mental health of young employees?*

Each facilitator has chosen from different options to collect participants' focus group answers;

- The facilitator has collected all the answers and reports them in the National report to be delivered to STP.

- The facilitator asked each participant to report their answers in the Google Form and then report them in a National report to be delivered to STP.



- Google Form available at this link; https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdt6UABPVtmyrm7uc16gHmko0suZeqRw_AnDszosZN_8WgDCw/viewform?usp=sf_link

At the end of the focus group sessions, each partner provided a summary of the national results that emerged from the focus groups and sent this report to STP. These Key Findings have been included in this Policy and Recommendations Report.



3. POLICY-LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICIES IN THE VET SYSTEMS:

- **Expand the scope of dual VET programmes:**

Although dual education is widely introduced in the countries, the system is not equally evolved. The integration of dual VET can be strengthened by increasing collaboration with industries to provide more work-based learning opportunities. This will address the increasing demand for intermediate skills and help reduce both overqualification and underqualification in the labour market. Creating more incentives for businesses to participate in dual training schemes will enhance the attractiveness of VET and will provide VET graduates with skills that match the working realities.

Related good practice(s) - ERSISI Project (SPAIN) & Austrian Dual System (AUSTRIA)

- **Strengthen VET partnerships with the industry:**

Enhancing partnerships with the industry, will ensure VET programmes provide relevant, practical skills and work experience opportunities.

Related good practice(s) Programas de Talento Jovem (PORTUGAL) & ERSISI Project (SPAIN)



- **Conduct regular labour market analysis:**

Taking into consideration the reported in the seven countries mismatch between education and the changing labour market needs, it is recommended that authorities in charge of VET curricula conduct a regular labour market analysis. This will ensure that VET curricula are continuously aligned with the current and future needs of the industry, particularly in growing sectors like ICT, finance, hospitality, and green technologies.

- **Introduce early and continuous guidance in education:**

Introducing vocational guidance from early secondary education onwards will help students make informed career choices that align with labour market demands. This should include career counselling, internships, and exposure to various industries.

Related good practice(s) CPD Qualifications Framework (GREECE) & Uniform Policy for VET (CYPRUS)

- **Promote lifelong learning as an opportunity to reskill and upskill:**

Encourage lifelong learning by offering flexible, modular VET courses that cater to both young people and adults looking to reskill or upskill.

Related good practice(s): Skills to Advance (IRELAND) & PEEMPIP CPD (GREECE)



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICIES TARGETING YOUNG EMPLOYEES:

- **Develop comprehensive youth empowerment programmes:**
Taking into consideration the reported economic struggles of young employees, it is recommended that governments introduce comprehensive programmes to empower the young generation that takes its first steps into employment. Offering holistic support through programmes that go beyond employment, encompassing financial education, affordable housing, health services, and mentorship will improve the overall well-being and independence of young people.

Related good practice(s): Youth Board of Cyprus (CYPRUS)



- **Implement policies to improve working conditions:**
Promote policies across the EU to enhance job quality for young workers, including fair remuneration, job security, and safe working environments. Encourage businesses to adopt these practices through incentives and recognition programmes.

Related good practice(s) – “Bulgaria wants you” (BULGARIA)

- **Introduce support to unemployed youth through programmes and incentives:**

As reported by the countries there are already some programmes designed to provide support to unemployed young people. However, it is recommended to revise the existing programmes and introduce new ones that combine training with employment opportunities for unemployed and inactive young people to ensure that these programmes offer both job-specific and transferable skills.

Related good practice(s) – Fundación Telefonica (SPAIN) & Iniciativa Empleo Jovem (PORTUGAL)

- **Introduce incentives for youth hiring:**

It is recommended to provide tax incentives or subsidies to businesses that hire young employees, particularly in sectors with high demand, to encourage youth employment.

Related good practice(s) – SOLAS Apprenticeship (IRELAND) & Compromisso Empleo Sustentavel (PORTUGAL)



- **Introduce skills development programmes:**

The country reports highlight the growing digitalisation of the business as well as the changing demands in the work environments. To cater to these changes, it is recommended to introduce programmes that include not only vocational training but also soft skills development, digital literacy, and entrepreneurship to prepare young employees for diverse career paths.

Related good practice(s) – ATIVAR.PT (PORTUGAL) & Basque Vocational Education and Training Plan (SPAIN) & Tech Apprenticeship (IRELAND)



- **Implement policies to mitigate economic pressures:**

The recurring economic crises and inflation were spotted as a major difficulty in front of young employees in the country reports. To address these it is recommended to implement policies to alleviate economic pressures on young employees, such as affordable housing initiatives, financial planning resources, and measures to combat high living costs and inflation.

Related good practice(s) – Relocation agency in Barcelona (SPAIN)



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICIES AIMED AT CPD FRAMEWORKS FOR VET PROVIDERS:

- **Intersectional/multidisciplinary CPD curricula:**

A competent educator needs both technical and theoretical skills (domain knowledge) and interpersonal and social skills (soft skills) to navigate diverse needs and respond to the different perceptions and backgrounds of the people they work with. It is important for the training opportunities to address both sectorial as well as social domains, to better prepare educators to use inclusive and participatory training methods.

- **Build on prior knowledge using microlearning techniques:**

There is a wealth of established knowledge and methods accumulated over the years. While some of this information may be outdated, it remains essential to each field. Transforming this knowledge into microlearning resources is a highly effective way to keep it relevant, allowing focus on the critical aspects of each domain without compromising quality.

Related good practice(s) – Inclusion in early years (SPAIN) & Teacher Training Programme for the Development of Digital Capacity (CYPRUS)

- **Domain-specific curricula based on expressed needs of practitioners/employees:**

Tailoring CPD to the specific challenges and needs voiced by educators ensures they gain directly applicable skills, leading to a more effective and impactful learning environment. This can be achieved through simple - yet comprehensive



- surveys that are taking place regularly and can help determine the perception and attitudes of the trainers within their scope of practice. This approach can also help examine tendencies and changes in the long term, and as such to get an understanding of potentially emerging trends.

Related good practice(s) – PEM (GREECE) & Hospitality Skills (IRELAND)

- **Quality programmes that promote participation and engagement:**

Interactive and engaging CPD programmes motivate participation, leading to deeper learning, improved knowledge retention, and ultimately, a more skilled workforce. These elements in order to be effective, require particular attention to quality, which for the most part consists of nice and understandable language of educational materials, well-structured and formatted sources, comprehensive classification of existing knowledge and external resources, as well as adequate pedagogical guidance for the trainers (and a non-exhausting training schedule).

Related good practice(s) – Professional Training Support Programme (TSP) (CYPRUS) & Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) (IRELAND) & Pacto Local para a Empregabilidade e Empreendedorismo Jovem (PORTUGAL) & PEMPIPP (GREECE)

- **Easy and free access to CPD for all employees:**

Costly CPD programmes mean minimised access. We live in societies where the (non)existence of capital defines the progress of a person, but as long as this progress is limited always to those who can finance their way, that



means that some are left behind while those who increase their knowledge will not necessarily be able to practically implement them as they are constrained by time and energy. Free access leads to more proficient employees, which leads to progress in many ways.

- **Provision for educational / training leaves:**

Dedicated time allows for focused learning beyond daily routines, enabling educators to fully engage with CPD programmes and translate their learnings into improved teaching practices. This provision is also an integral part of well-being policies, as it recognises that the learning process is a work process and recognising it as such it would lead to a lot more effective upskilling of the workforce as a whole.

- **Create centralised CPD hubs:**

A central platform that streamlines access to diverse CPD opportunities, simplifies recognition processes, and empowers educators to make informed choices for their professional growth. Indicatively it could collect and promote all available CPD opportunities, either regionally or state-wide. All providers could describe their offers and users could also assess the CPDs after participating in them, as a way to improve the upcoming versions. Additionally, this platform can contain all possibilities covered by the state and the law, that clarify issues of recognition of CPDs, cost and subsidies, as well as information about companies on the mechanisms that allow them to make use of them.

Related good practice(s) – BAMCO CPD (BULGARIA) & Springboard+ & Skillnet Ireland (IRELAND)



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WELL-BEING POLICIES:

- **Promote flexible work options and work-life balance:**

Taking into consideration the changing needs and priorities of young employees as compared to previous generations, it is recommended to implement policies that support flexible working hours and remote work opportunities to accommodate young employees' preferences for better work-life balance. Introducing benefits that support work-life balance such as enough days of paid leave, mental health support, and career development opportunities will contribute to the well-being of employees.

Related good practice(s) – “Home Office” (BULGARIA) &

- **Introduce policies that encourage financial well-being:**

In response to the reported economic difficulties faced by employees, it is recommended to introduce policies that enhance their financial well-being. Promoting equal pay for equal work regardless of gender, region, and sector through enforcement of equal pay legislation is one step in this direction. Additionally, it is recommended to provide financial education programmes to help employees manage their finances better, plan for the future, and reduce economic stress.

- **Ensure accessible mental health care:**

It is recommended that there are policies in place to ensure comprehensive mental health services that are accessible to all employees, including those in rural and underserved areas. It is also recommended that policymakers promote the integration of mental health care into primary health care systems.



Related good practice(s) - Healthy Workplace Framework (IRELAND) & LiveWell app (PORTUGAL)

- **Implement workplace mental health programmes:**

It is recommended to introduce policies encouraging employers to implement workplace mental health policies that include prevention, early detection, support, and reintegration. Encourage companies to offer employee assistance programmes that provide confidential counselling and support services for employees dealing with stress, anxiety, and other mental health challenges.

Related good practice(s) – Healthy Ireland at Work (IRELAND)

- **Introduce policies regulating flexible working arrangements:**

Flexible working hours and remote work are already common practices, but not all countries have regulated them. Therefore, it is recommended to develop policies that promote the adoption of flexible working arrangements, including remote work options, flexible schedules, and part-time work. Companies should be encouraged to offer these options to help employees balance work and personal responsibilities. Additionally, regulations should be implemented to limit out-of-hours work engagement and ensure employees have adequate breaks and rest periods, fostering a culture that respects the boundaries between work and personal time.

Related good practice(s) – “Home Office” (BULGARIA) &



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUSINESSES TOWARDS SUPPORTING WELL-BEING AND MENTAL HEALTH:

- **Invest in employee development:**

Work-based learning and continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities can greatly benefit employees, management, and the entire field of work. As new needs and opportunities arise, addressing and preparing for them effectively can significantly enhance collective efforts, improve activities, and increase overall impact.

- **Promote good leadership - invest in good leadership development:**

Regarding CPD from a management perspective, we live in an era rich with initiatives, documented knowledge, and opportunities, enabling management to be more open, democratic, direct, and supportive. Coupled with the pressing need for environmental sustainability and health consciousness, this is an ideal time to move beyond profit-oriented mindsets and take progressive steps forward.

- **Encourage healthy work-life balance:**

Sometimes legislation does not adequately address the needs of work-life balance, leaving issues open to interpretation. This can harm relationships between employees, employers, the state, the labour market, and society as a whole. Good leadership can promote a healthy work-life balance by going beyond the minimum requirements set by legislation and setting positive examples for other businesses. By implementing measures that are co-decided with employees and maintaining transparency about the workplace's needs,



limitations, resources, and options, impactful practices and mentalities can be developed, resulting in a lasting positive impact.

Related good practice(s) – EY Cyprus (CYPRUS) & Healthy Workplaces Award (PORTUGAL)

- **Provide access to mental health support:**

While a workplace is a dynamic environment, much like a microcosm of society, it cannot meet all possible needs on its own. Engage in discussions with your employees, document their needs, and identify institutions and professionals who can provide quality mental health support. Since work can be challenging for everyone, it is crucial to have access to mental health resources, ensuring that both employees and management can effectively meet work demands and maintain healthy relationships with one another.

Related good practice(s) – Mind you Mind (PORTUGAL)



4. IMPLEMENTATION OF BEST PRACTICES FROM EACH COUNTRY



Through the comparative analysis that the Be Well partnership carried out, the project team reviewed the available literature and good practices from their context of work and related institutions. We indicatively share some of these practices from each country, some of which are also referenced as “related good practice(s)” in the above recommendations.



SPAIN

Good Practice 1: Fundación Telefonica's young employability programme

Fundación Telefónica's Young Employability Programme helps young people in need by covering their vocational education expenses. It targets students who are socially excluded and enrolled in technology-related programmes. The programme was successful, with a high completion rate among assisted youth.

Learn more about Fundación Telefónica's "LANZADERAS CONECTA EMPLEO" at <https://en.fundaciontelefonica.com/employability/lanzaderas-conecta-empleo/>

Good Practice 2: ERSISI project

The ERSISI project combines social services and employment aid in Navarra, Spain, targeting high-unemployment municipalities. It aims to help 500 young people at risk of social exclusion find jobs. Partners include local governments, banks, and a university. Success will be measured by youth participation and job placement. This project is promising because it offers a comprehensive approach to integrating young people into the workforce.

Learn more about ERSISI PROJECT at <https://web.archive.org/web/20230330153942/https://ersisi.navarra.es/es/el-proyecto>



Good Practice 3: Inclusion in early years

A study in Andalusia, Spain, highlights a gap between teacher needs and formal training. Pilot programmes showed limited collaboration between universities and schools. Additionally, surveys revealed only a small portion of teachers felt prepared for diverse classrooms or had recent training in special needs education. This suggests teachers require more support beyond traditional training methods. The research aimed to address this by providing a platform for teachers to share experiences that influenced their professional development.

Learn more at: <https://gpseducation.oecd.org/revieweducationpolicies/#!node=41732&filter=all>

Good Practice 4: Basque vocational education and training plan

The Basque Government approved a plan in 2014 to update vocational education and training (VET) in the Basque Country. The plan aims to prepare workers for the 4th Industrial Revolution by focusing on digital skills and new technologies. An important part of the plan is the Ikanos project, which provides resources to help people develop the skills they need for jobs in Industry 4.0.

Learn more at: <http://www.bibliotekak.euskadi.eus/WebOpac>



Good Practice 5: Relocation agency in Barcelona

Relocation agency in Barcelona, who specialise in making your relocation process as smooth and stress-free as possible.

These comprehensive services ensure that your transition to the vibrant city of Barcelona is seamless, contributing to your overall wellness. Offer a wide range of services, including housing assistance, school search support for children, visa and immigration services, and cultural training to help you adjust to your new environment.

Community-oriented policing services (COPS) have proven to be an effective approach in fostering a safer and healthier community environment, which indirectly contributes to the wellness of employees and their families.

Learn more at <https://www.eresrelocation.es/relocation-immigration/>



BULGARIA

Good Practice 1: “Bulgaria wants you”

A good example is the initiative “Bulgaria wants you” which is mainly targeted at young graduates/professionals who have left the country. Through rich video and media content, the initiative presents the leading companies operating in the Bulgarian market as a good place for career development and gives detailed information about the standards, environment, lifestyle, and job vacancies in different regions of the country. The platform offers a calculator to help young employees estimate if the desired salary would be enough for to keep their desired lifestyle.

Learn more at <https://bulgariawantsyou.com>

Good Practice 2: BAMCO CPD

The Bulgarian Association of Management Consulting Organisations (BAMCO) offers a successful Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme for management consultants and business professionals. This programme utilises workshops, conferences, and networking events to enhance participants' skills and knowledge in areas like strategic management, leadership, and industry trends. By engaging with experienced practitioners through interactive discussions and practical exercises, participants can stay updated on the latest tools and methodologies used in management consulting. Ultimately, BAMCO's CPD programme helps professionals maintain their qualifications, stay competitive, and better serve their client's evolving needs.

Learn more at <https://bamco.bg/resources/competence-development/>



Good Practice 3: Bulgarian Labour Code - “Home office”

The Bulgarian Labour Code allows remote work, agreed upon through contracts or collective bargaining. Employers can't mandate remote work except in emergencies. Remote work hours are set similarly to office work, but individual contracts may exclude overtime, night shifts, or national holiday work. Remote workers manage their schedules but must be available during employer communication times. Performance standards are the same as office workers. Recording work time is required, with employees responsible for data accuracy.

Learn more at: <https://eurofast.eu/labor-code-and-remote-work-in-bulgaria/>

GREECE

Good Practice 1: Panhellenic Association of Translators (PEM)

The PEM provides CPD programmes to its members, aiming to enhance client services through ongoing education and professional growth. These programmes encompass various topics of particular interest to translators, interpreters, subtitlers, and editors. Members can participate in the programme at minimal or no cost, ensuring their skills and knowledge remain current and aligned with industry trends. The programme's success is underscored by its diverse subject matter, esteemed speakers, and accessibility across different membership tiers.

Learn more at <https://pem.gr/giati-na-ginete-melos/synechizomeni-epangelmatiki-katartisi-cpd/>



Good Practice 2: Mediterranean Professional Studies at Mediterranean College

This Centre for Lifelong Learning offers a variety of CPD courses accredited by international organisations and awarding bodies. The courses focus on personal development in response to rapid changes in the workplace, ensuring graduates and professionals have updated employability and academic skills. The success of these programmes lies in their quality assurance, accreditation by reputable organisations, and division into three main scientific fields, catering to different professional domains such as health & social studies, executive education, and STEM studies.

Learn more at <https://www.medcollege.edu.gr/en/cpd-courses/>

Good Practice 3: Association of Valuers of Greece (SEK.E)

SEKE provides Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes to its members as part of their accreditation renewal procedures. The CPD offerings consist of online seminars and workshops tailored for members. These sessions cover a wide array of topics relevant to property evaluation, including themes like "Contemporary European Appraisal Practices and Challenges During the Pandemic," "Valuation of Hotels, Commercial Real Estate, Warehouses, Industrial Areas, and Short-term Leases in External Residences," "Valuation of Enterprises," and "Real Estate Appraisal," among others.

Learn more at <https://avag.gr/cpd-2023/>



Good Practice 4: Panhellenic Association of Professional Translators Graduates of the Ionian University (PEEMPIP)

PEEMPIP offers a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme for translators since 2014. This programme ensures members stay updated and competitive by providing various learning methods like seminars and workshops. Members who complete 18 credits over three years are recognised as “continuously developing translators.” PEEMPIP offers certificates for these programmes to be used in job applications.

Learn more at <https://peempip.gr/el/continuous-professional-development/>

Good Practice 5: CPD Qualifications Framework

The CPD Qualifications framework, developed by EOPPEP in collaboration with the Trade Union of Employees and the Trade Union of Employers in 2017, stands as one of the few systematic efforts to define the educational and training requirements for workplace counsellors. It addresses the qualifications and skills needed, considering perspectives from both employers and employees. Although its impact has not been officially documented since its inception, the framework is highly comprehensive and adaptable across various contexts. It is designed to accommodate the diverse realities within Greece's economic and labour sectors.

Learn more at https://www.eoppep.gr/images/SYEP/perigramma_SEP.pdf



CYPRUS

Good Practice 1: Youth Board of Cyprus

The Youth Board of Cyprus launched two programmes in 2017 to fight youth unemployment. The Active Youth Program uses an information campaign and ambassadors to connect young people with job opportunities. The Youth Entrepreneurship Development Programme helps unemployed youth aged 15-29 explore business ideas and become entrepreneurs through seminars and mentoring.

Learn more at <http://onek.org.cy/>

Good Practice 2: Professional Training Support Programme (TSP)

The Ministry of Education in Cyprus is enforcing a policy requiring all schools to develop a professional training plan for their teachers during the 2023-2024 school year. This plan should be integrated into the existing Unified Development and Improvement Plan of each school. The Pedagogical Institute offers a limited number of schools the opportunity to participate in a special Vocational Learning Support Programme (VLSP) for year-round, in-depth professional development support. More details about the VLSP can be found on the Pedagogical Institute's website.

Learn more at https://www.pi.ac.cy/pi/files/anakoinoseis/2022_2023/20230523_yem.pdf



Good Practice 3: Teacher Training Programme for the Development of Digital Capacity

The Ministry of Education launched a digital capacity development programme for teachers in March 2021. Designed based on teacher needs, the programme offers online modules and self-assessment tools. Teachers can set personal learning goals and choose from various resources to enhance their digital skills. This programme reflects the government's focus on digital education in schools.

Learn more at https://www.pi.ac.cy/pi/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3149%3A2021-02-15-07-33-16&catid=34%3A2010-06-02-08-27-34&Itemid=65&lang=el

Good Practice 4: Implementation of the Uniform Policy for Vocational Learning

This Uniform Policy for Vocational Learning reminds schools about submitting a report on their teacher professional training following the Uniform Policy for Vocational Learning. The report details implemented actions and their effectiveness. This is done electronically and helps decide on continued participation or seeking further professional development support.

Learn more at <https://epaggelmatikimathisi.pi.ac.cy/index.jsp?pnum=PUB001>



Good Practice 5: EY Cyprus

EY Cyprus is pleased to announce the successful completion of its highly anticipated webcast event, where the results of the Cyprus Workplace Wellbeing Survey were presented. The event, held on November 20th, brought together industry leaders, professionals, and stakeholders to discuss and dissect the findings of this significant survey. The Cyprus Workplace Wellbeing Survey, conducted across various sectors. This initiative, spearheaded by EY, seeks to unravel companies' perceptions of wellbeing, existing initiatives, and the readiness to implement wellbeing practices.

Learn more at https://www.ey.com/en_gl/newsroom/2023/09/pay-well-being-and-flexibility-prolong-workplace-tensions-as-more-than-a-third-of-employees-likely-to-quit-ey-survey-finds

AUSTRIA

Good Practice 1: Austrian dual system

The Austrian dual system is a success story in itself and in particular, the apprenticeship guarantee.

"Vocational training in Austria takes place either as part of a (full-time) education in school or the dual system (ISCED 354, EQF 4). The dual vocational education and training with currently 227 different apprenticeships (as of May 2022) takes place at two learning locations - in the training company and the vocational school. It offers on-the-job training that is close to the economy and the labour market, with a direct link to entrepreneurial activity."

Learn more at <https://www.bmaw.gv.at/en/Topics/Vocational-Training-and-Skills.html>



Good Practice 2: SkillsWeekAustria

An example is the SkillsWeekAustria organised by the Federal Economic Chamber. The Chamber of Commerce's Skills Initiative, together with the Skills Austria Association and Austrian Skills, is effectively demonstrating to the public how attractive vocational training is - and what can be achieved with it. The new Skills Week Austria is intended to mobilise young people across Austria for the opportunities offered by vocational training.

Learn more at <https://www.wko.at/skillsweekaustria/start>

Good Practice 3: Austria's welfare system

In Austria, a robust social welfare system ensures the well-being of individuals and families through various benefits and assistance programmes. Unemployment benefits, family allowances, and childcare support provide financial stability and assistance to those in need, while employee assistance programmes offer confidential counselling, mental health resources, and support services to employees. Health and wellness initiatives in workplaces, alongside occupational health services, prioritise the physical and mental well-being of workers. Additionally, employee representation through works councils and advocates ensures that employees' rights and interests are upheld in the workplace, fostering a supportive environment conducive to overall well-being.

Learn more at <https://www.sozialministerium.at/Themen/Gesundheit/Nicht-uebertragbare-Krankheiten/Psychische-Gesundheit/Nationale-Strategie-zur-psychischen-Gesundheit.html>



IRELAND

Good Practice 1: SOLAS apprenticeship

The SOLAS Apprenticeship Support Programme provides financial incentives and support services to employers, apprentices, and educational institutions involved in apprenticeship training. Through this programme, employers receive grants to offset the costs of training apprentices, while apprentices receive financial support to cover expenses such as travel and accommodation.

Learn more at <https://www.apprenticeship.ie/>

Good Practice 2: Skills to Advance

The Skills to Advance Initiative offers upskilling and reskilling opportunities for individuals currently employed in low-skilled occupations. It provides tailored training programmes designed to enhance participants' skills and qualifications, enabling them to progress in their careers and access higher-paying jobs.

Learn more at <https://www.solas.ie/programmes/skills-to-advance/>

Good Practice 3: Tech apprenticeship

The Tech Apprenticeship Programme, developed in partnership with leading technology companies, offers young employees the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in areas such as software development, cybersecurity, and data analytics. Graduates of the programme have secured employment with top tech firms and contributed to Ireland's reputation as a global technology hub.

Learn more at <https://fit.ie/tech-apprenticeships/>



Good Practice 4: Hospitality skills

A collaboration between educational institutions and the hospitality industry, this programme provides young employees with specialised training in areas such as culinary arts, hospitality management, and customer service. Graduates have gone on to pursue successful careers in hotels, restaurants, and tourism-related businesses.

Learn more at <https://hospitalityskillsireland.com/>

Good Practice 5: Skillnet Ireland

Skillnet Ireland (a state-funded network) plays a pivotal role in fostering enterprise-led workforce development. Skillnet provides training opportunities across various sectors, with an emphasis on VET. Through Skillnet networks, VET providers can access programmes aimed at honing digital competencies and refining pedagogical methodologies to better serve learners and align with labour market demands.

Learn more at <https://www.skillnetireland.ie/>

Good Practice 6: Springboard+

Springboard+ provides free or heavily subsidised higher education and training opportunities to upskill or reskill individuals in high-demand areas, such as digital proficiency. VET providers may participate in offering courses under Springboard+ or leverage the programme to enhance their own staff's competencies, thus bolstering the quality and relevance of VET provision.

Learn more at <https://hea.ie/skills-engagement/springboard/>



Good Practice 7: Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL)

The Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) support services in many tertiary-level educational institutions offer invaluable assistance to VET providers in integrating technology into teaching and learning processes effectively. These services equip VET educators with the necessary guidance, resources, and strategies to leverage digital tools optimally, thereby fostering enhanced learning experiences and making VET provision more accessible to a diverse range of learners. Through concerted efforts across these programmes and initiatives, Ireland underscores its commitment to advancing VET provision in alignment with the evolving needs of the labour market.

Learn more at <https://www.ucd.ie/teaching/resources/technologyenhancedlearning/>

Good Practice 8: Healthy Workplace Framework

Ireland's Healthy Workplace Framework offers guidance for employers to create healthier workplaces. It aligns with existing health and safety laws but doesn't mandate participation. Benefits exist for both workers and businesses. The framework's development involved multiple government departments and stakeholder consultation. A training course supports its implementation.

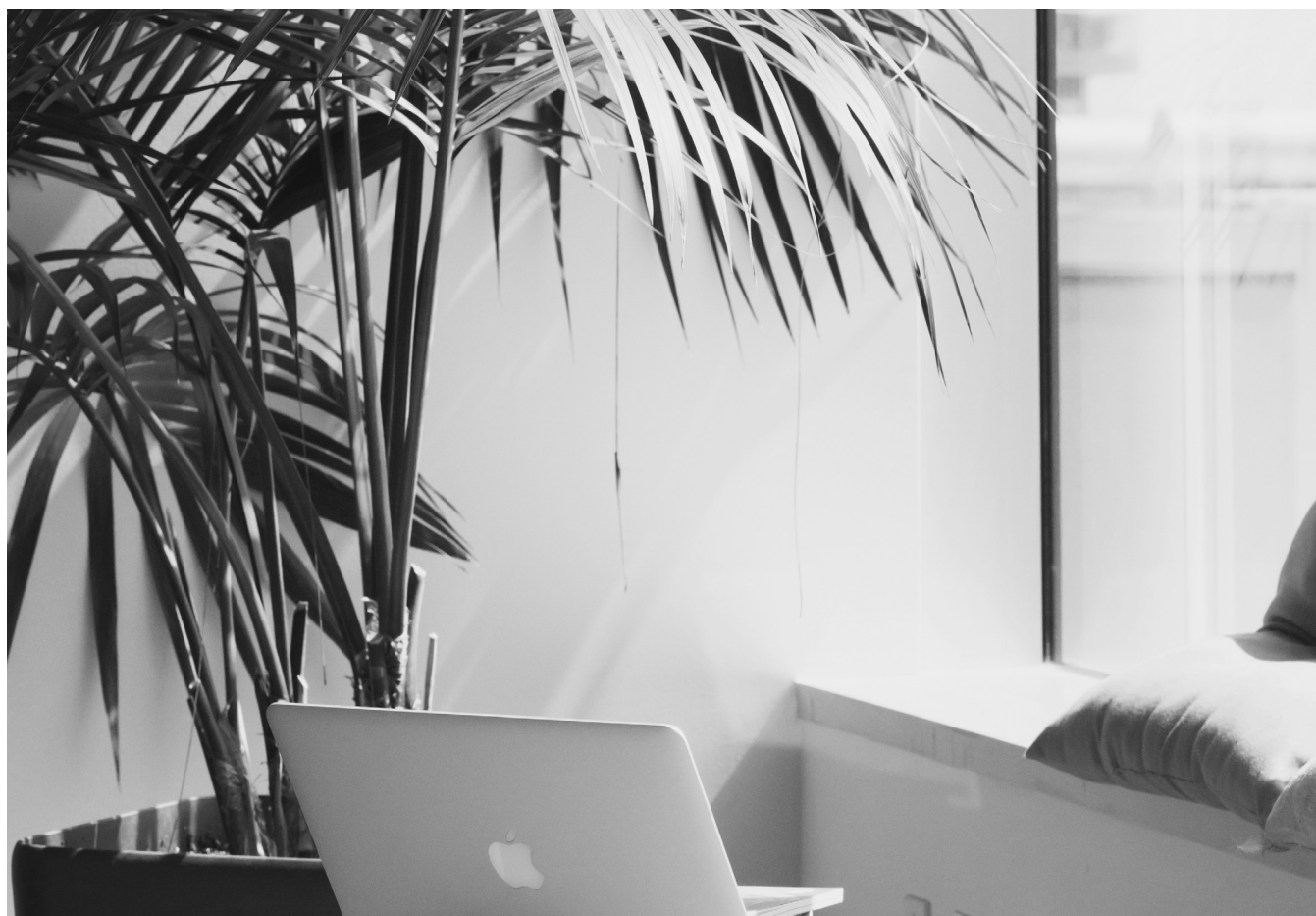
Learn more at <https://healthyworkplace.ie/about-irelands-healthy-workplace-framework/>



Good Practice 9: Healthy Ireland at Work

The Healthy Ireland at Work framework (2021-2025) promotes employee well-being in Ireland. It offers guidance for workplaces to create healthy environments through initiatives like mental health support, physical activity programmes, and healthy eating options. The framework highlights the benefits of a healthy workforce, including increased productivity and reduced absenteeism.

Learn more at <https://assets.gov.ie/207313/1c6a20c9-dcd9-4e17-aa9d-d9e4889dd28d.pdf>



PORTUGAL

Good Practice 1: Measures promoted by IEFP (public initiatives)

Compromisso Emprego Sustentável (Sustainable Employment Commitment) – Exceptional and transitional support for hiring with mechanisms for the positive differentiation of young people:

- Reduction of the minimum enrolment period for people up to the age of 35.
- A 25% increase in support when it comes to hiring young people aged 35 or under.
- The employer is obliged to provide appropriate training.

Learn more at <https://iefponline.iefp.pt/IEFP/medCompromissoEmpregoSustentavel.do>

Estágios ATIVAR.PT (ATIVAR.PT Internships) – Practical work experience for young people, lasting 9 months:

- Eligible candidates are, as a general rule, young people (aged 18 or over and under 30).
- Remuneration for traineeships depends on the young person's qualifications.

Learn more at <https://iefponline.iefp.pt/IEFP/medida/estagioemprego/descEstagiosAtivarPT.jsp>

Emprego Jovem Ativo (Active Youth Employment) – 6-month practical work experience with teams of young people, to improve their socio-professional integration conditions.



Learn more at [https://www.iefp.pt/documents/10181/1379158/Ficha+Sintese+Emprego+Jovem+Ativo++\(vf+17-01-2022\).pdf/4a34cbb9-b008-4e7d-b169-12be78b2fee0](https://www.iefp.pt/documents/10181/1379158/Ficha+Sintese+Emprego+Jovem+Ativo++(vf+17-01-2022).pdf/4a34cbb9-b008-4e7d-b169-12be78b2fee0)

Iniciativa Emprego Jovem (Youth Employment Initiative) – Programme to support the training and employability of NEET: Young people Not in Employment, Education or Training.

Learn more at https://portugal2020.pt/wp-content/uploads/sumario_executivo_pt_avaliacao_iej_2018_fevereiro2021.pdf

Good Practice 2: Pacto Local para a Empregabilidade e Empreendedorismo Jovem

Pacto Local para a Empregabilidade e Empreendedorismo Jovem – Is a networking initiative between Portuguese municipalities committed to offering their young people better opportunities for their future, creating improved conditions for their personal, social, and professional development. Following the guidelines of the European Commission and the principles of the European Year of Youth in 2022 and the European Year of Skills in 2023, the Local Pact for Youth Employability and Entrepreneurship aims to serve as an informal sharing platform so that municipalities can facilitate opportunities to develop the skills essential for quality employability and youth entrepreneurship, and thereby support the retention of their young people.

Learn more at <https://pactoemprego jovem.pt/>



Good Practice 3: Private initiatives

Iniciativa Nestlé Emprego Jovem (Nestlé Youth Employment Initiative) – enabled access to employment and training opportunities for young people up to the age of 30, helping to combat unemployment in this age group.

Learn more at <https://ods.pt/caso-de-estudo/iniciativa-nestle-emprego-jovem/>

Programas de Talento Jovem - Jerónimo Martins' Operations Management Trainee Programme is their main programme for attracting young talent. It offers a one-year combination of real-world work experience and a customised training programme in the food distribution business. This programme aims to develop both business knowledge and practical skills. Jerónimo Martins also offers other youth-oriented programmes like internships and academic thesis support.

Learn more at <https://www.jeronimomartins.com/pt/carreiras/estudantes-e-recem-licenciados/trainee-programme/>

Good Practice 4: Healthy Workplaces Award

The Portuguese Psychologists' Association (OPP) promotes the "Healthy Workplaces Award", the aim of which is to recognise and distinguish Portuguese organisations with outstanding and innovative contributions to safety, well-being, and health (physical and psychological) in the workplace.

Learn more at <https://maisprodutividade.org/healthyworkplaces/>



Good Practice 5: LiveWell App

This is an app called LiveWell that Zurich offers to its employees. The app promotes a healthy lifestyle and encourages employees to make positive changes. Employees can track their activity and set goals. The app offers tips and suggestions to help employees reach their goals. Zurich launched LiveWell as part of its commitment to employee well-being.

Learn more at <https://livewell.zurich.com/>

Good Practice 6: Mind your Mind

EDP, an energy company, runs the "Mind your Mind" campaign to promote mental health awareness among its 13,000 employees. The campaign offers talks by experts and workshops on healthy habits for a better work-life balance, all part of the company's broader well-being strategy.

Learn more at <https://www.edp.com/en/edp-yes/mind-your-mind>





5. PRACTICE-LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS.

Overall, one obvious but necessary lesson from the policy briefs is that well-being matters to policy, and policy matters to wellbeing. This is a crucial point if connected to the potential for policy to shape culture. Policy can impact, influence, and affect the culture of people, and things that are part of policies at some point become part of culture as well. There is a critical opportunity here for policy to underscore the importance of taking care of mental-emotional and physical health, both within and outside the workplace, and change the current culture about wellbeing to break the stigma that still surrounds mental health topics nowadays, especially in work and organisations.



Recommendations have been developed and produced about the following topics:

- **Recommendations on digital interventions for employee well-being and teamwork.**

The digital age, these interventions, characterised by their flexibility and accessibility, outshine traditional approaches. The design of engaging digital platforms is essential to maintain user interest, and data security cannot be compromised. In this digital transition, specialised staff should be on board to oversee the seamless rollout and management of these interventions. The ultimate vision is a harmonised digital workspace where user privacy is respected and proactive participation is championed, aiming for a holistic, healthier work environment.

- **The importance of ensuring participation and selecting interventions based on workers' needs.**

Central to its core recommendations, is championing a participatory approach, ensuring that every voice is heard and considered. The process was initiated with a focus group interview that not only facilitates open conversations on mental health but also aids in identifying areas of intervention. Participants collectively analyse the results, translating them into practical recommendations. The result is a detailed action plan tailored to fit the organisation's specific needs, challenges, and goals. This thorough and inclusive approach ensures that interventions are not merely proposed but customised for maximum effectiveness and relevance.

- **The needs of SMEs in intervention design and implementation when it comes to mental health and well-being.**

A focus on clear cost-benefit outcomes is essential, given the prevalent "cash is king" philosophy in smaller firms. Engaging top-level management, often the owners, and ensuring active employee participation are paramount. The utility of online resources, accessible



outside regular working hours, is underscored. The development of SME-specific case studies, supported by adequate funding, is crucial. Tapping into SME-focused business networks, including chambers of commerce and other business service organisations, can amplify reach and impact. The brief suggests offering external support, both in terms of human and financial resources, especially to micro-enterprises, enhancing the efficacy of workplace health promotion interventions.

- **The role of social partners in mental health and well-being promotion in SMEs.**

Social Partners have a historical role in workplace health policy and are well-suited to address emerging mental health issues. Improved mental health can benefit employers by reducing absenteeism and enhancing morale.

Advocating for mental health awareness, supporting policy development, conducting research, providing training, and launching information campaigns.

- **The role of policymakers in improving workplace wellbeing.**

The importance of adopting a comprehensive approach to mental health at work, encompassing prevention, promotion, treatment, and care. The report also proposes incorporating mental health into the European Framework Directive on Safety and Health at Work. At the national level, the recommendations call for the development of national action plans on mental health, including a focus on mental health at work.



- **Training for workplace wellbeing promotion.**

These recommendations are aligned with statutory health and safety requirements and best practices for managing wellbeing at work, consistent with the European Commission's recent Communication. The policy targets a wide audience, including organisations, HR professionals, managers, occupational health specialists, workers, their representatives, and policymakers at both European and national levels. The recommendations include the following: incorporating statutory responsibilities (e.g., training content should encompass the statutory obligations related to managing stress risks in the workplace), ensuring comprehensive health and safety knowledge and skills, providing training to a broader audience, considering certification of wellbeing promotion training and tailor these to meet the specific needs of young employees and employers, addressing their unique challenges.



6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this report represents a crucial component of the BE WELL project's mission to enhance well-being strategies and provide valuable training resources for young employees in SMEs and various workplaces. The insights and evidence-based guidance contained within aim to assist employers, health professionals, national policymakers, and EU policymakers in driving positive change. By fostering healthier work environments, we aim to improve the mental well-being of young employees across Europe.

The BE WELL project remains dedicated to its commitment to training staff in the workplace, prioritising well-being as a fundamental aspect of organisational culture. This focus not only benefits individuals by enhancing their mental health and overall job satisfaction but also contributes positively to society at large by creating more supportive and productive work environments. Through continued efforts and collaboration, the project aspires to set a benchmark for well-being practices in workplaces throughout Europe, ensuring that young employees receive the support they need to thrive both personally and professionally.





BE WELL



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