



AUD-rapport 10-19

The future of Europe's kitchens

Recruitment- and skills matching-report
of the Erasmus+ project "Youth4Food"

ABOUT THE REPORT

This report, including data collection and interviews, is by a student intern from the University of Bergen working in Hordaland County Council in the spring of 2019. Therefore, there has been greater capacity in the county council to complete in-depth interviews and data collection than in the other partner cities of the project. Due to this difference of capacity, there will naturally be a bigger focus on Norway's and Bergen's practices compared to the others.

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Summary

This report is part of the concluding activities in the two years long Erasmus+ project “Youth4Food”, which is a strategic partnership between the five UNESCO Creative Cities of Gastronomy of Parma, Gaziantep, Östersund, Dénia and Bergen.

There are numerous jobs and career possibilities in the food value chain, but for some reason young people too seldom look for carrier options in the food value chain. The aim of the Youth4food project has been to identify and bring forth new and better ways to recruit young people to choose food-related vocational education and training (VET). In the case of Bergen and the Hordaland region, insufficient recruitment to chef education has been in focus. Additionally, a report of the restaurant industry in Bergen in 2016 found that some restaurant owners that hired chef apprentices reported that there was a mismatch between the skills the apprentices had learned in school, and the skills needed in the workplace. This is “skills matching”.



This report will focus on these two issues, and the main objective will be **to map and identify best practices in recruitment to – and skills matching within – VET, towards the chef profession**. By identifying different practices that are considered to be relevant in influencing educational choices and skills matching, the report aims to give input on how to improve both recruitment and skills matching. We present *educational systems*, followed by different practices of *developing learning goals*. Furthermore, we present practices of *guidance counselling* and *recruitment*. The input that is given based on these results are simply inputs, and not a formula or answer, to the question of how to improve recruitment or skills matching.

The report maps and compares *educational systems* of the different countries. An interesting finding was that after a reform in Sweden in 2011, the number of applicants to VET programs has decreased. The reform made a few subjects that students needed to qualify for university optional, in order to give more room for practical training in VET. Another finding was that Spain, Italy and Turkey had more opportunities of higher education for students that had completed VET, than Sweden and Norway.

By identifying practices of *developing learning goals*, we found that teachers were included in the process in all countries, but in different ways. Turkey includes a large quantity of teachers by requesting input through e-surveys, while others include them in expert groups. Spain is the only country that include students in the process. In order to ensure skills matching, actors from the business should also be included in developing learning goals.

In practices of *guidance counselling*, one finding was that Turkey and Italy starts advising students at a younger age than the other countries. There are also differences to which degree parents are included. In Sweden for example, parents are systematically included in the conversations with the counsellor and

student. The difference of including parents is interesting, considering that research on the subject suggests that parents have a strong influence on their children's educational choices.

The *recruitment practices* presented here correspond well with what research has shown as the strongest influence on students choosing VET in cookery, namely giving students hands-on experience with cooking and access to people in the VET and in the business in general.

Finally, we held interviews with chef apprentices in order to hear their thoughts on recruitment. This resulted in five categories on input to recruitment strategies: 1) communicate future possibilities after attending VET; 2) improve the information given in school; 3) use the internet as a tool to inform and create excitement around cooking; 4) get chefs and VET students and teachers to visit lower secondary schools; and 5) communicate more of the positive sides of the profession, such as the social aspects.



Photo: Inge Døskeland

1.0 Introduction

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

The last few years the public's interest in gastronomy and cuisine has increased. Food blogs, cooking shows and competitions on TV, social media and foodie communities are just a few of the arenas where gastronomy has had a resurgence. Despite this interest, Vocational education and training (VET) towards the restaurant industry in Bergen is struggling with recruitment and the restaurant industry in Bergen has a demand for more qualified chefs and staff.¹

Restaurants owners that hired chef apprentices have occasionally reported a mismatch between the skills the apprentices had learned in school, and the skills needed in the workplace.² This issue is will be referred to as “skills matching”.

So how can we encourage more young students to make VET in the food value chain their first choice of education, as well as ensuring skills matching? This was the backdrop and inspiration behind the Erasmus + project “Youth4Food: Youth in action for a creative and sustainable gastronomy”. With similar challenges and interests, five cities of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) of Gastronomy: Parma, Gaziantep, Östersund, Dénia, and Bergen, created this project. The UCCN is an initiative UNESCO established in 2004 as an effort to encourage and promote collaboration among “cities that have identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development”.³ The UCCN of Gastronomy specifically focuses on cooperating and sharing experiences about facilitating food, creativity and gastronomy.

The project is funded by the EU as a strategic Erasmus + partnership, which are “transnational projects designed to develop and share innovative practices and promote cooperation, peer learning, and exchanges of experiences in the fields of education, training, and youth”.⁴ All the participating UCCN cities were interested in increasing recruitment to vocational training, enhancing skill development and skills matching in the food value chain, and exchanging practices through student and teacher mobility. This provided a good basis for a strategic partnership.



Source: <https://pixabay.com/no/vectors/europe-kart-land-stater-gr%C3%A5-297168/>

¹ PwC for Bergen Municipality, “Ståstedsanalyse - Restaurantbransjen i Bergen”, 2.

² PwC for Bergen Municipality, “Ståstedsanalyse - Restaurantbransjen i Bergen”, 2.

³ Creative Cities Network, “About us.”

⁴ European Commission, “Strategic Partnerships.”

1.2 THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE REPORT

This report is part of the concluding activities of this project, and an academic approach to some of the issues raised in the application and initiation of Youth4Food, though not all. The focus will mainly be on skills matching and recruitment to VET towards the chef profession, and not on the dropout rates. For practical reasons and time limitations, we will not discuss the complex and comprehensive issue of dropout.

The report is primarily concentrated around recruitment because the question of sufficient recruitment is a pressing issue for the partner cities, which all have reported that there is a demand for more skilled chefs in their area. However, the report does not aim to address or give answers to any specific hypothesis, but aim to identify different practices in the different partner countries. The intention is that this information will give some input and inspiration in regards to skills matching and recruitment to the reader. The main objective of this report will therefore be ***to map and identify best practices for recruitment to, and skills matching within VET towards the chef profession.***

The report has four main parts, excluding the summary and conclusion. The introductory part presents necessary definitions, method and data collection. The second part shows data on the wage level of chefs and the industry's position in the national economy of each partner country. We are interested in this since there is speculation whether or not these factors influence educational choices.

The third part presents different best practices, chosen because they may be relevant in influencing educational choices and skills matching. The first practice presented is *educational systems*, and directly relates to recruitment in regards to when and how students choose education, and the educational opportunities offered at secondary and tertiary level. When addressing skills matching, we wanted to see if the skills the chef students gain in school are relevant to the needs in a workplace. Therefore, we present different practices of *developing learning goals* as the second practice, to see which actors are included in deciding what students learn. Furthermore, we present practices of *guidance counselling* and *recruitment*. These practices both aim to influence and inform about educational choices.

Finally, we present the results from the interviews. With the goal of obtaining input for new recruitment strategies, we conducted interviews with six chef apprentices in Hordaland, two teachers at IES Maria Ibars in VET in gastronomy, and two students at the same school studying the VET program of waitering. The fourth transnational meeting of the project found place in Dénia in March 2019, and it was therefore convenient to conduct interviews there. That is why we only held interviews in Dénia and Hordaland, and not in the other partner cities.

Since the respondents have been recruited to VET themselves, they are interesting to interview in order to gain new insight on recruitment. Additionally, the apprentices have just made the transition from school to work, and were therefore a valuable source of information in regards to skills matching between school and working life. We approached this by asking them if they felt that there was a skills gap between what they learned in school and what they do as apprentices. The small amount of respondents and data units of this report does not make a foundation for any generalizations, as the purpose of the report is to map and identify best practices, as well as comparing them.

After presenting each of these practices, we identify and discuss differences between them that might have an effect on recruitment and skills matching.

Due to the relatively small amount of respondents, as well as focusing on the five countries and regions of the UCCN cities involved in the project, it is not possible to generalize the results to a larger group or universe. The suggested inputs are nothing more than inputs – not formulas or answers to the question of *how* to make VET in the food value chain the first choice for more students. Things that work in one country might not work in another. The goal of the report is to highlight different best practices, in order to inspire students, politicians, teachers and other UCCN cities to keep working in creative ways to ensure skills matching and recruitment in the future.

1.3 DEFINITIONS

Firstly, it is necessary to define some central concepts in the main objective of this report, and how they are understood in the context of the project.

“**VET**” is an abbreviation of vocational education and training. According to the European Commission’s website, VET is a learning system that provides people with skills and competences needed for specific “occupations or more broadly in the labour market”.⁵ In this report, the focus will be on upper secondary VET towards the chef profession, and not higher VET. Upper secondary school corresponds to ISCED level 3, which is an “international classification for organising education programmes and related qualifications by levels and fields”⁶ implemented in the EU, developed by UNESCO.

“**Best practices**” is in this context understood as practices with well-evidenced successful results. The best practices in this report are based on what the different partners have reported as best practices from their own cities and regions.

The EUs “Skills Panorama website” defines “**skills matching**” as a representation of “the degree of successful utilisation of skills” and “the extent to which skills are effectively matched in the labour market”.⁷ Skills matching can be assessed by the degree of unemployment, shortages and surpluses of jobs, or underutilisation of skills in the labour market.

The New Skills Agenda was launched in 2016 by the European Commission, and focuses on the importance of skills matching in Europe now and in the future. It revolves around three strands: 1) improving the quality and relevance of skills formation, 2) making skills and qualifications more visible and comparable, and 3) improving skills intelligence and information for better career choices.⁸

⁵ European Commission. “EU policy in the field of vocational education and training (VET).”

⁶ Eurostat. “International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED).”

⁷ Skills Panorama. “European Skills Index.”

⁸ European Commission. “A New Skills Agenda for Europe”, 3.

1.4 METHOD

The objective of this report is quite descriptive. Therefore, a qualitative approach is sensible, in order to get a deeper understanding of the different practices. Consequently, most of this report is based on qualitative data in the form of text.

We conducted informal interviews and questionnaires continuously from February through April of 2019. Informal interviews are a sensible approach when assessing skills matching and recruitment practices, where potentially very relevant information can be collected through open questions and follow-up questions.⁹ The questionnaires were necessary to get practical information about the different partner countries' systems and practices, and is a practical approach when cooperating across five different countries.

The five countries that are the data units of the report were chosen due to the nature of the project as a strategic partnership between five UCCN cities. To search for chef apprentices to interview, we contacted the training office for the hotel and restaurant business in Hordaland, *Reisos*. They suggested six restaurants that had chef trainees in the region. Out of the restaurants that answered the request, six chef apprentices were willing to be interviewed.

The small amount of respondents and data units does not make a foundation for any generalizations, as the purpose of the report is to map and identify best practices, as well as comparing them.

1.5 DATA COLLECTION

The different cities have answered two questionnaires in cooperation with their local partners. The questionnaires requested information about the different systems and practices of education, recruitment to VET, guidance counselling in lower secondary school and practices of developing learning goals. Some relevant statistics on the recruitment and employment in the food and gastronomic sector were requested as well.

In the Bergen region, six chef apprentices were interviewed as an approach to assess skills matching in a qualitative way. To get input for new recruitment strategies, the subjects were asked about what made them choose VET.

At the project's transnational meeting in Dénia this spring, we conducted interviews with two waitering students at the IES Maria Ibars School's VET program, as well as two teachers of the school. The students and teachers answered questions about the students' motivation for choosing VET, recruitment to VET in the food value chain, and the school system. The interview in Dénia with the students was done as a group, since a translator was needed. The interview with the teachers was also as a group, but in English without a translator.

Other sources were used to add to the information as well, for example UNESCO's International Bureau of Education to supplement the information from the questionnaires, and research on the subject of educational

⁹ Grønmo, *Samfunnsvitenskapelige metoder*, 141.

choices. Additionally, some informal conversations and e-mail correspondence with relevant actors have been methods of collecting information about the different practices. Quotes from the interviews conducted as part of the report are in italics.

1.6 CHALLENGES OF DATA COLLECTION

There have been a few challenges in the process of data collection, because of the geographical distance between the partners. In addition, a lot of material online is not available in English. Communication is of course another challenge. For instance, when interviewing the Spanish students there had to be a translator present, which might have had an effect on the information. This was also a challenge when designing the questionnaires, where some might not interpret the questions in the same way. As an attempt to avoid misunderstandings, examples of answers were included in the second questionnaire. Still, this has naturally been a challenge when none of the participating countries have English as their first language.

2.0 Backdrop of the partner cities and countries

“If you really love doing what you are doing, I don’t see any negative things about working in a kitchen. You might not make as much money as a doctor, but you are making other people happy with what you do” (Norwegian chef apprentice)

Many questions have been raised in regards to why some countries have more trouble recruiting to VET in the food value chain than others. There have been speculations if recruitment to VET might be affected by the industry’s position in the national economy, wage levels and so on. It is therefore interesting to look at the differences in wage levels of chefs, and if “chef” is a protected title.¹⁰

GDP

Spain's restaurant industry equates to 8% of GDP, and the agri-food industry in Italy equates to 9%. In the region of Valencia, where Dénia is located, more than 13% of the regions GDP is related to tourism. In the Emilia-Romagna region, where Parma is located, 36% of the regional GDP comes from the food industry. While as in Swedish GDP and Norwegian mainland GDP, the restaurant industry equates to respectively around 1,3% and 0,6%.¹¹ Accommodation, food and beverages equals to 2,7% of Turkey's GDP.

Wage level

In Italy, the average wage level of chefs corresponds to the average wage level of all professions. Spain reports that chefs earn the same as middle-level workers, such as clerks, delivery workers, mechanics,

¹⁰ Dyvik, «Restaurant og Matfag – Omdømme og rekruttering», 3.

¹¹ PwC for Bergen Municipality, “Ståstedsanalyse - Restaurantbransjen i Bergen”, 22.

nurses etc. In Norway and Sweden, the wage average of a chef is lower than the average of the whole workforce. Turkey reports that the general average of chefs is slightly above the minimum wage. Nevertheless, a few of the partners also expressed that this is a profession with great wage variabilities.

“Chef” as a protected title

Spain is the only country of the five where “chef” is a protected title.

2.1 NATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN WAGE AND GDP

GDP and wage levels might have an effect as to why for example Norway struggles more with recruiting students to VET in the food value chain, than in Italy and Spain. In the regions where Parma and Dénia is located, the amount of GDP related to food is quite significant. In Italy, the average wage level of chefs corresponds to the national average of all professions, and in Spain “chef” is a protected title. In Norway, Sweden and Turkey, the amount of GDP related to food and gastronomy is significantly smaller, and the average wage level of chefs are lower than the general average. This might affect the status of the profession, which again might pose as a challenge when recruiting to food related VET.



Photo: Inge Døskeland

3.0 Presentation of best practices and results

3.1 EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS – THE FORMAL EDUCATIONAL PATH TO BECOME A CHEF

When mapping educational systems, we have particularly focused on how much practical training is involved in VET and opportunities of higher education, in addition to simply presenting how the systems are composed.

Primary and lower secondary education

Norway, Italy and Spain have ten years of compulsory school, from age six to 16. In Sweden, there are nine years of compulsory school for children in the age of seven to 16 years. It is up to the parents if they want their children to start at age six or seven. Turkey has eight years of compulsory school, from age six to 14. After completing these ten years (or nine in Sweden), the students in Norway, Sweden and Spain choose upper secondary education. In Turkey and Italy, the students choose upper secondary school after eight years, at age 14. This means that the first two years of Italian upper secondary school are compulsory.¹²

Upper secondary VET to become a chef

In all of the countries addressed, the students have a choice of a general, more academic approach in upper secondary school or VET. All five countries offer VET programs in gastronomy or cooking, which qualifies for the chef profession.

In Spain, Sweden, Turkey and Italy, it appears that the VET programs have the same length as the academic programs in upper secondary school, respectively two, three, four and five years. In Norway this is not the case: the students that choose the academic approach have three years of schooling, while VET programs consists of four years: two years of schooling and two years of apprenticeship with salary.

In Italy, VET courses of three years duration also exist. The regional government manages the VET courses, and offers these in accredited training centres or in schools that integrate education and vocational training. At the end of the third year in VET, the students obtain a diploma in their specialist subject, which enables them to work, or they can continue to take the two-year course in order to earn their upper secondary school diploma, either at the vocational school or at a technical school.

Practical training as part of VET

In Italy, during the three years there are 400 hours of work-alternation. In the first two years, about one third of the hours of subjects every week relate to cooking, while the other two thirds are languages, economy and law, and other theoretical subjects. In the third year, the specialist practical training increases to more than 50% of the education.

¹² International Bureau of Education, "National Reports."

In Spain and in the region where Dénia is located, a VET course in Culinary Arts is offered at Maria Ibars. The two-year program includes 380 hours of practice in the second year, beginning in March and ending in June, where the students get to experience what they learn in practice. You can either specialize in Culinary Arts or Food and Beverage Services.

In Norway, the first year of VET consists of about a third of subjects that directly relate to cooking, while 17% of time spent in school is vocational specialization. The vocational specialization might include work placement, but is organized differently depending on the school. The second year the vocational specialization increases to 25% of the time spent in school. Additionally, 50% of the subjects in the second year relate to cooking, and the last 25% are theoretical subjects unrelated to cooking. The vocational specialization in the second year entails a minimum of 5 weeks of apprenticeship in a workplace, but is organized differently depending on the school. After completing these two years, the students can apply to work as apprentices in a workplace, where they will work full time for two years while receiving pay. After apprenticeship, they must pass a practical exam in order to obtain the professional qualification.

In Sweden, the students have a minimum of 15 weeks of apprenticeships during the three years, and it is up to each school if they will offer more than that. In VET, it is also possible to choose an option where over the three years you have a minimum of 50% school and a maximum of 50% apprenticeship.

Opportunities of higher education

Sweden:

In 2011, a reform of the Swedish upper secondary school system was completed. Before the reform, students that had completed VET were qualified to apply for university. The reform included adding more time for apprenticeship and practical training in the VET programs, and excluded some theoretical subjects from the curriculum. In practice, this means that students that complete VET now do not qualify for further studies at university. If a student wants to be able to qualify for university, they have the option of taking two additional subjects in Swedish and English during their three years in upper secondary school. These subjects used to be a mandatory part of the curriculum in VET before 2011, while they now are optional. As mentioned, it is also possible to choose an “apprenticeship option” of 50% school and 50% apprenticeship. Students that complete VET or the “apprenticeship option” can apply for higher VET, but not university.

Turkey:

After completing the 12 years of general education, you receive either a general, technical or vocational school diploma, which all grant access to higher education entrance examinations. The University of Gaziantep offers an associate degree of cookery of two years, or an undergraduate education of four years. Both students who have completed VET in cookery and students with other upper secondary school diplomas are able to apply for these programs. In the associate program, you work 60 days in an internship. In these programs, education in for example Turkish cuisine, marketing, professional English, business law and entrepreneurship is included. After completing the four years of undergraduate course, you can apply for a master’s degree in culinary arts.

Italy:

After completing the five years of upper secondary school, you are qualified to continue post-secondary studies at the university, higher technical education and training, and institutes of higher technicians. All students can enter university, provided they complete the five-year course at secondary school and acquire their upper secondary school diploma.

Spain:

After completing two years of VET in IES Maria Ibars in Dénia, the students can apply for a two-year course in Restaurant Management at the school, which would complete the first stage of tertiary education studies related to gastronomy. In the Valencian educational system, the further possibilities after two years of VET in gastronomy are in total 12 degrees. The University of Valencia and the University of Alicante each offer four courses in Gastronomic Sciences, while Castelló: Cardenal Herrera University offers four courses in Gastronomy and Culinary Management.

Norway:

After completing VET to become a chef, the students are not qualified to apply for university. They can study some supplementary subjects in order to apply for higher education, most commonly by completing one more year of upper secondary school specifically designed for those who have attended VET and wants to apply for university. As in Sweden, VET qualifies for some higher vocational training programs as well.

It is also possible to apply to a college program based on relevant work experience as well as the certificate of qualification. Chefs specifically have the opportunity to apply for a Bachelor program of Hotel Management at the University of Stavanger. If completing the bachelor, they may apply for a Master's degree in International Hospitality Management, also at the University of Stavanger. With relevant work experience in the field, it is also possible to become a teacher in VET.¹³

Differences in practical training and opportunities in higher education

Norway is the only country where the students who study VET and the students who choose the academic approach do not consist of the same amount of years, respectively 4 and 3 years. However, one can note that during the last two years of VET, the apprentices earn in total 50% of the starting salary of a skilled worker. Thus, even though VET takes longer, the students enter the paid workforce sooner.¹⁴

Another significant difference, which might affect the students in their choice of education, is that in Turkey, Italy and Spain, there is a possibility to apply for tertiary education after attending VET in cookery, either with the diploma from secondary school or by passing an entrance exam. Completing VET programs in these countries does not necessarily qualify to every program of higher education, but there are more options than in Norway. In Turkey and Spain there are multiple university degrees in the field of gastronomy, while in

¹³ Oslo Metropolitan University, «Yrkesretting av programfag og yrkesfaglig fordypning (Yrkesfaglærerløftet).»

¹⁴ The Municipalities of Buskeruds training office, "Lærlinglønn".

Norway, there is only one bachelor and one master degree, as well as the possibility to become a teacher in VET with enough relevant work experience.

Both the option of having more theoretical subjects in VET in order to qualify for higher education, and having more practical subjects in VET, have been discussed in Norway. Therefore, the Swedish system is an interesting middle ground, where it is up to the student to choose whether he or she wants more or less of apprenticeship and practical training.

After the reform in Sweden in 2011, the statistics show that there are fewer students that make VET their first choice. The figure below shows the percentage of students applying for VET (orange line), and students applying to programs preparatory for university (blue line), from 2005 to 2016.

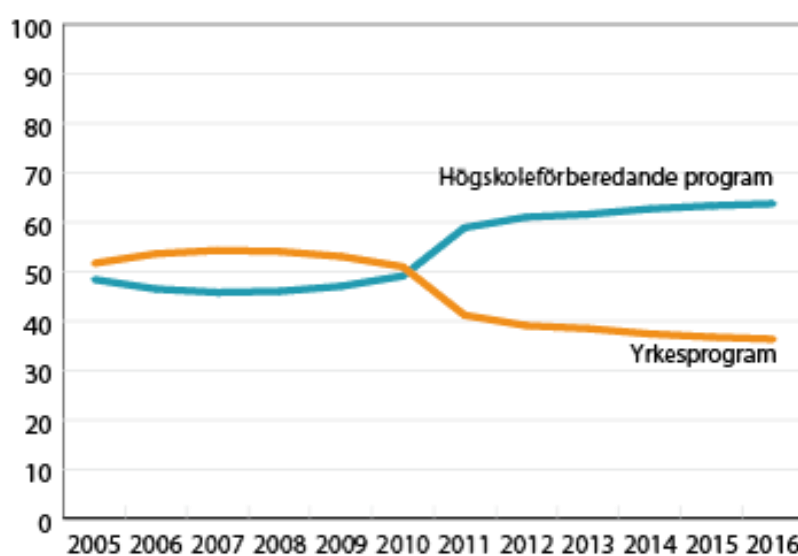


Figure: Helsing & Snöliilja, "Minskat intresse för gymnasiets yrkesprogram"

There can be many reasons for this decrease in VET applicants. A Swedish career counsellor at Jämtland upper secondary school suggested through e-mail correspondence that a part of the explanation could be uncertainty of the students and parents. Even though it is possible to obtain the qualification to apply for university by taking extra subjects, it is not a mandatory part of the VET programs anymore, which creates uncertainty when choosing between programs in upper secondary school.

The decreasing numbers of applicants for VET after the reform might indicate that the possibility of higher education in the future does make a difference in educational choices. Numbers also show that the biggest change after the reform is that the students who stopped applying for VET are those students with higher grades,¹⁵ which one might guess are those that are most interested in higher education.

¹⁵ Helsing & Snöliilja, "Minskat intresse för gymnasiets yrkesprogram"



Photo: Inge Døskeland

3.2 PRACTICES OF DEVELOPING LEARNING GOALS

In order to approach skills matching in a more systematic way, we decided to look at how learning goals in VET education are developed. The learning goals set the premise for what skills the students will develop, and activate when starting work.

All countries set the learning goals at the national level, while different actors are involved in different ways during the process. Spain establishes an expert group with teachers, students and professionals with experience from the specific industry and education. There are own curriculums decided at regional levels, following the same procedure as on the national level. Spain is the only country reporting to include students in this process.

In Norway, the process is similar. The expert group consists of actors from the relevant industry. They assess the need to make changes in the learning goals to match the needs in the business. If the expert group observes a need for new goals, it suggests a curriculum group. The curriculum group consists of professionals that have experience with both education and businesses in the field, similar to the Spanish

system. The curriculum group formulates new goals, and proposes drafts that are up for hearing with the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training and the expert group, as well as online, where anyone who is interested can comment. The goals are adjusted following the hearings: After three drafts and hearings, the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training determines the new learning goals.¹⁶

Turkey collects teacher's opinions in another way: The Ministry of National Education collects feedback on the curriculum from active teachers by e-surveys. Experts of the ministry, along with academics and active teachers, groups into an organ that formulates the goals. NGOs and universities also give their opinions.

Differences in inclusion of teachers

Teacher's opinions are included in different ways in the systems presented here. In Turkey, teachers answer e-surveys, and in Norway and Spain, teachers take part in expert and curriculum groups. Turkey seems to get the opinion of a larger quantity of teachers through their practice, while in Norway it is possible to give feedback and remarks when the proposed goals are on hearing. Nevertheless, Norway does not involve large quantities of teachers as actively as Turkey.

One might presume that the more the industry is included in developing learning goals, the better the skills they learnt in school will match the skills they will need in a workplace. In Turkey, mostly teachers are included, and in Norway, professionals with experience in both education and the industry are involved. In Spain, both students and professionals are included, in addition to teachers. Teachers might be in frequent contact with the industry, but this it is not necessarily a guarantee.

This suggests that actors of the industry should be, in some form or another, more included in this process, in order to improve skills matching. This could for example be through e-surveys, through participation in expert groups, or in some other way. Nevertheless, it is important to note that in the end, schools and teachers interpret the learning goals. This makes nationwide differences in gained skills across students and schools almost inevitable.

3.3 PRACTICES OF GUIDANCE COUNSELLING

Guidance counselling is a relevant practice when looking at recruitment practices towards VET. Therefore, the partners have collected information about how guidance counselling is conducted in the choice of upper secondary school.

Of the information gathered from the questionnaires, there are not substantial differences in practices regarding guidance counselling. All countries have guidance counselling as a part of their formal education system in some form, and students may see a guidance counsellor before choosing upper secondary education.

Still, there are some differences: In Turkey, the students receive counselling already from kindergarten, and throughout their schooling. In Italy, the students, during the three years of lower secondary school, receive different types of counselling. Many "laboratories" are organized in the first year of middle school with the

¹⁶ The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, "Læreplansgrupper - yrkesfag"

help of a psychologist who works with kids on how they imagine their life after school, for example with drawings. In the third year, the school of belonging expresses individual guidance regarding the choice of upper secondary school to the students.

Östersund, Parma and Gaziantep mention including parents and family in counselling. In Sweden, during the three years in lower secondary school, the students have a number of individual conversations with the counsellor, and parents take part in some of these.

Dénia, Östersund and Bergen report that the students may visit study programs they are interested in, and may have workshops there. In Sweden, many schools also offer the students visits to different workplaces before choosing.

Norway has a way of practicing counselling that differentiates from the other countries: when students are in lower secondary school, they have one hour each week of a mandatory subject that informs them about the different paths of upper secondary education. As part of this subject, the students in tenth grade get the opportunity to visit and participate in the study program they are interested in for two days. Individual counselling in Norway is not mandatory, but the students can ask for it.¹⁷

Differences in involvement of parents

In 2016, the Norwegian social science research foundation Fafo, released a report about recruitment to VET in restaurant and food business in Norway. Fafo found that parents have strong influence over students' educational choices.¹⁸ The FEED project, which aimed to strengthen recruitment to skilled workers to the food industry, also found this in a quantitative study with 600 respondents in Norway. Out of 12 categories to choose from, the family's opinion had the most influence, while guidance counsellors in school had little influence.¹⁹

An interesting difference found in the practices presented, is the degree to which parents and family were included in counselling. Considering counsellors' small influence on educational choices and the families' big influence, it might be desirable to include parents in counselling in a more substantial way. This will give the counsellor the opportunity to inform both students and families of career possibilities of VET that they might not know of. On the other hand, in the end, the student will choose, and might not wish the opinion of their family to persuade them. However, if one creates an environment that informs the parents of the many career possibilities in VET, as well as further educational possibilities, they might be more positive to their children choosing that path. This might help make VET a first choice for more students.

Another difference between the practices are that students start to receive counselling at different ages. Italy and Turkey start earlier, which might be because of their educational system, where students choose upper secondary school at a younger age.

¹⁷ The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, "Læreplan i utdanningsvalg."

¹⁸ Andersen & Andersen 2016, 31

¹⁹ FEED. «Omdømme og Kompetansebehov: rekruttering for fremtidens matindustri», 24.



Photo: <https://www.facebook.com/Youth4Food/photos/a.2120630961286652/2634426433240433/?type=3&theater>

3.4 RECRUITMENT PRACTICES

Guidance counsellors are not the only actors that directly aim to inform of educational choices. We have collected a few best practices from the partners of the project, directly aimed at informing about upper secondary education. In addition to these, all countries use “open days” and fairs as recruitment venues.

In the region of Hordaland, one current recruitment project is the project «Food is fun». This is an effort to establish a more long-term solution for sustainable recruitment to VET related to cooking and waiting. The training office for the hotel and restaurant business in Hordaland, Reisos, organizes it in cooperation with the schools in the region. They arrange for students from VET and/or chef apprentices to visit students in lower secondary schools, mainly in the ninth grade. Together they cook a three-course meal with the students, and share their passion for food. The ninth graders can ask questions about the study program and the profession.

IES Maria Ibars has a similar initiative called “Jornadas de Puertas Abiertas”, though instead of the chef students visiting schools, they invite lower secondary schools to visit. Teachers and students from lower secondary schools in the region can come to the school’s kitchen and restaurant, and observe different classes. The chef students cook with the younger students, and inform them of the possibilities of working as a chef.

In Parma, there is a project founded by The Cariparma Foundation and the Municipality of Parma called “OrientaMente”. The project aims to guide the children in the choice of upper secondary school, through for example individual interviews about their own interests, interviews in a small group or class, tests and informative meetings with the parents. The project also offer training for the teachers on the education and

training system. The project has a website that specifically informs about school opportunities in the area of Parma and neighbouring territories.²⁰ The website is available for students, families and teachers.

Initiatives with the right focus

In a research article from Oslo and Akershus University College (now Oslo Metropolitan University) in 2013, Ledsaak and Spetalen have analyzed six bachelor theses that all focused on recruitment to upper secondary VET in restaurant and food business. With 387 respondents from six different regions in Norway, they find that the factor that influences students to choose or not choose this program, is their sense of achievement with the subject “food and health” in 9th grade.²¹ In the FEED-project, different practical experiences with cooking, such as practical training in school or out in businesses, was the second biggest influence in career choices. The third was impact from people with experience in the professions.²² A report from the Norwegian Hospitality Association (2018) addressed how to meet the competence and labor needs of the hospitality industry towards 2022. The report states that practical experience, as well as contact with people in the industry and professions, are the most important factors when recruiting.²³

The two first practices mentioned give students direct experience with cooking, as well as access to teachers and students of the VET program. This corresponds well with the factors that influences students the most, and the initiatives seem to focus on the right factors. When asking about recruitment, none of the countries reported to have any specific organ or organization with the superior responsibility to ensure recruitment. This might be favorable to establish in the future, in order to institutionalize the good practices in a more organized way, and include actors from the business, guidance counsellors, teachers, students and chef apprentices in this potential organ or organization.

OrientaMente has, among other initiatives, made a website specific for the educational opportunities that exist in the region. The FEED study also mentioned information on the internet as the fifth biggest influence on career choices, and that 67% of the students used the internet as a source for information about professions and education.²⁴ Ledsaak and Spetalen suggest a more systematic use of social media in recruitment as a measure.²⁵ Initiatives like OrientaMente might be a step in that direction.

²⁰ <http://www.comune.parma.it/orientamente/it-IT/home-orientamente.aspx>

²¹ Ledsaak & Spetalen 2013, 8.

²² FEED. «Omdømme og Kompetansebehov: rekruttering for fremtidens matindustri», 24.

²³ Opinion AS for the Norwegian Hospitality Association, “Kompetanse og arbeidskraft 2022”, 30-31.

²⁴ FEED. «Omdømme og Kompetansebehov: rekruttering for fremtidens matindustri», 27.

²⁵ Ledsaak & Spetalen 2013, 11.



Photo: <https://youth4food.wpcomstaging.com/2017/12/12/featured-content-2/>

3.5 RESULTS FROM INTERVIEWS

Interviews in Hordaland

In a report about the restaurant industry in Bergen from 2016, some of the respondents working as chefs expressed that the chef apprentices were missing basic knowledge.²⁶ To investigate this potential mismatch between chef education and the chef profession, we conducted interviews with six chef apprentices in restaurants in the Hordaland region. These apprentices have completed two years of VET in school. They are now in their last two years of education and work fulltime as apprentices before taking an exam to qualify as chefs.

Skills matching

When asked about what the apprentices wished they had learned more about in school, to prepare them for apprenticeship, none of the them mentioned specific cooking techniques or methods missing from the education.

“[In school] we get the foundation, and when you start to work as an apprentice you build on that and learn more”

All respondents emphasized other factors that they consider challenging about the transition from school to work. They mentioned challenges such as getting used to the high pressure and high tempo in the kitchen,

²⁶ PwC for Bergen Municipality, “Ståstedsanalyse - Restaurantbransjen i Bergen”, 2.

making bigger portions, working eight-hour shifts and getting used to the routines in a professional kitchen. They emphasized that they work faster in a workplace than in school, and in the workplace, everything has to be perfect since there are actual customers.

“At work you always have to be focused, in school you can relax more”

The apprentices mentioned different things to add to the education, though not any specific subjects. Two apprentices recommended more work placement and practical training during the two years, and less theory and writing. When asked if work placement in school prepared them well for the apprenticeship, most of the apprentices mentioned that work placement is a good practice, but that it is not the same as being an apprentice. You get easier tasks than what an apprentice would get, and it is still part of school, so it does not feel that serious and high-pressured. A few others recommended having more pressure and stress related training, due to the big difference between the classroom and a restaurant’s kitchen.

“In school you learn one way to do something, maybe the easiest way to do it, and then in a workplace they do it in a more complicated way to make you as good as possible, and to make it taste as good as possible”

In sum, the answers of the apprentices might indicate that they have received a good foundation of competences in school when it comes to cooking techniques. They also considered other challenging factors when they started apprenticeship, such as high pressure, new routines and working full time. At the same time, five of six mentioned that they had good teachers that followed them up. The remaining respondent had a close family member working as a chef and learned a lot from him.

The answers of the apprentices also suggest that there could be more work placement or perhaps more training in realistic, high-pressure work situations in school, in order to prepare the students for the profession.

At the same time, school is a place to learn, and will always be different from the actual working life. In general, the students were content with what they learned in school and saw it as a good foundation for starting to work. Nevertheless, they emphasized that it was a big difference to start working as an apprentice from being a student in school. However, as far as skills matching goes, no specific skills were mentioned as missing from VET, and these respondents seem to have had a good match between their skills development and skills activation.

“In two years the teachers can’t teach you everything. But you learn the most important things in school”

Input for recruitment

When asked about how to improve recruitment to VET, the interviews had a few common factors that we divide into five categories:

1. *Communicate future possibilities.* An apprentice said that it is crucial to communicate better to students that you have more opportunities than working as a chef. You can study hotel management for example. The respondents impression was that many do not know this when they choose upper secondary education. Two of the apprentices were very interested in the international opportunities of the profession. All of the apprentices interviewed were aware of these possibilities. Regarding what the respondents wanted to do in the future, the answers varied: owning a restaurant, studying hotel management, qualifying for both chef and pastry chef, taking an extra year of school while working as a chef part time, and working as a chef in France or offshore on the oil platforms in the North Sea.

“When you get the qualification, you can work basically anywhere in the world!”

2. *Improved information in school.* When asked about what motivated them the most in choosing this path of education, the answer was unanimous: personal interest for food and cookery. Some also mentioned family as important, but not as the main reason. Nevertheless, they also expressed that better information in school would be positive for recruitment. When asked about how they got information about the program, specific teachers with knowledge about this specific VET were mentioned as important. None of the respondents saw guidance counselling as crucial in choosing VET.

“I think most people don’t know how the chef profession really works. I think a lot don’t even know that you become an apprentice after two years and that you get paid while working as an apprentice. They don’t get information about it in school. It is not well expressed from the school. I didn’t get any information from school, not even the guidance counsellor knew that much about the school.”

Five of six apprentices also mentioned the subject «food & health» in ninth grade as being positive for them choosing VET in cookery. However, they also mention that the subject is very different from the VET program.

3. *Use the Internet as a tool.* The Internet had not had a big influence on the six, but had been used as a tool for seeking information. One respondent suggested making videos or documentaries that show students how it is to work as a chef realistically, and put them online to use as a recruitment tool.
4. *Visits.* Four of the six expressed that it would be good to have students from VET, chef apprentices and chefs visiting schools, in order to cook with them, but also to inform the students of the possibilities of the profession, and how a life as a chef can be. For one of the respondents an

experience like this had been the most important reason for choosing VET in restaurant and food business.

“Those who are apprentices can visit schools and talk about VET and being an apprentice, and what is fun about cookery. They are not scary and mean, like Gordon Ramsay, they don’t yell at you if you do something wrong, they will help you”

5. *Communicate more of the positive sides of the profession.* When asked about what they thought could be better communicated about the profession, the answers varied. All respondents mentioned the social aspect of the job: it is a good job if you like to work with people. Two respondents mentioned creativity, as well as learning new things almost every day, and that every day at work is different. Some mentioned that they thought the reputation of the profession is misguided.

“The profession has a bad reputation with long days and that it’s a lot of work. They don’t talk about how good the work environment is in a kitchen with a good kitchen chef. The workday feels shorter with a good team. And the work day is a normal eight hour day, it’s the same as others.”



Photo: Torunn Festøy

Sustainability

As the project's title suggests, Youth4Food has a focus on sustainability. Therefore, we asked the chef apprentices what they thought about their role as future chefs when it comes to climate change. They all mentioned limiting food waste as part of their responsibility as chefs. Some mentioned recycling, using local producers and limiting their use of plastic as part of their responsibility as chefs. One apprentice in particular expressed the opinion that chefs today have a great responsibility, by choosing seasonal and local food, sustainable and ecological productions, and fish and meat that are not red-listed.

“We should be aware of it because sustainability is the future, and we [apprentices] are the future. We have to focus on things being sustainable, in order to take care of nature, animals and our planet.”

Interviews in Dénia

We conducted two interviews in Dénia, first with two waitering students, followed by an interview of two teachers at IES Maria Ibars. The main goal of the interviews was to get a deeper understanding of why they think the VET program in gastronomy in their school is doing so well in recruitment.

When it comes to recruitment, the school invites students to visit the facilities, as mentioned under recruitment practices. The school also provides information online. Apart from this, there is not any other particular recruitment practice. The two waitering students became aware of the school in different ways: one found information online, while the other visited the schools facilities with his lower secondary school.

Even though recruiting enough students is not a problem at the school, teachers and students alike think the status of the profession influences many students to choose the more academic path instead of VET. The students also expressed that they think some students are afraid of applying for VET because it is more “normal” to go to university. However, both students and teachers think the reputation of the profession is starting to change, and that it is starting to be “trendy” to be a chef nowadays.

“In Spain a lot of people think that gastronomy is for those who «can't» go to university, and that those who work in restaurants do it because they couldn't go to university. But when it comes to master chefs and Michelin-stars they think it is cool. Famous chefs are like rockstars.”

When it comes to positive sides of the profession, the students mentioned some of the same things the Norwegian apprentices did: international possibilities, and to please the customers and give them a good experience. One of the students mentioned that working as a waiter gives them a good opportunity to learn English, which will open up for work opportunities internationally.

The students also mentioned that there are no subjects related to cooking in primary and lower secondary school, and both expressed a wish that it had been. In accordance with the research presented under

recruitment practices, this might be a positive initiative in order to give more students practical experience with cooking and the restaurant business before they choose education.

4.0 Conclusions

In this report, practices of developing learning goals, guidance counselling and recruitment have been presented as well as educational systems. As the main objective is to identify best practices in recruitment to and skills matching within VET, we organize the conclusions in two categories:

4.1 SKILLS MATCHING WITHIN VET

The results of the interviews did not show any sign of specific techniques not being taught in school. The skills they had not developed in school were, in the apprentices opinions, related to stress management, and not to specific subjects. Some thought there could be more work placement included in the education, but it was also emphasized that being in work placement is not the same experience as working as an apprentice.

Learning goals are developed in different ways, but include many of the same actors. In order to ensure skills matching in VET, actors from the industry or teachers with close ties to the industry should be included in these processes.

4.2 INPUT TO RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

The opinions expressed about recruitment in the interviews correspond with existing research on recruitment, as well as the recruitment practices presented. Practical experience with gastronomy and food seem to have a positive effect on choosing VET. Also, having access to people that either are attending VET or working as chefs, in order to ask questions, have been important to many of the respondents in choosing VET.

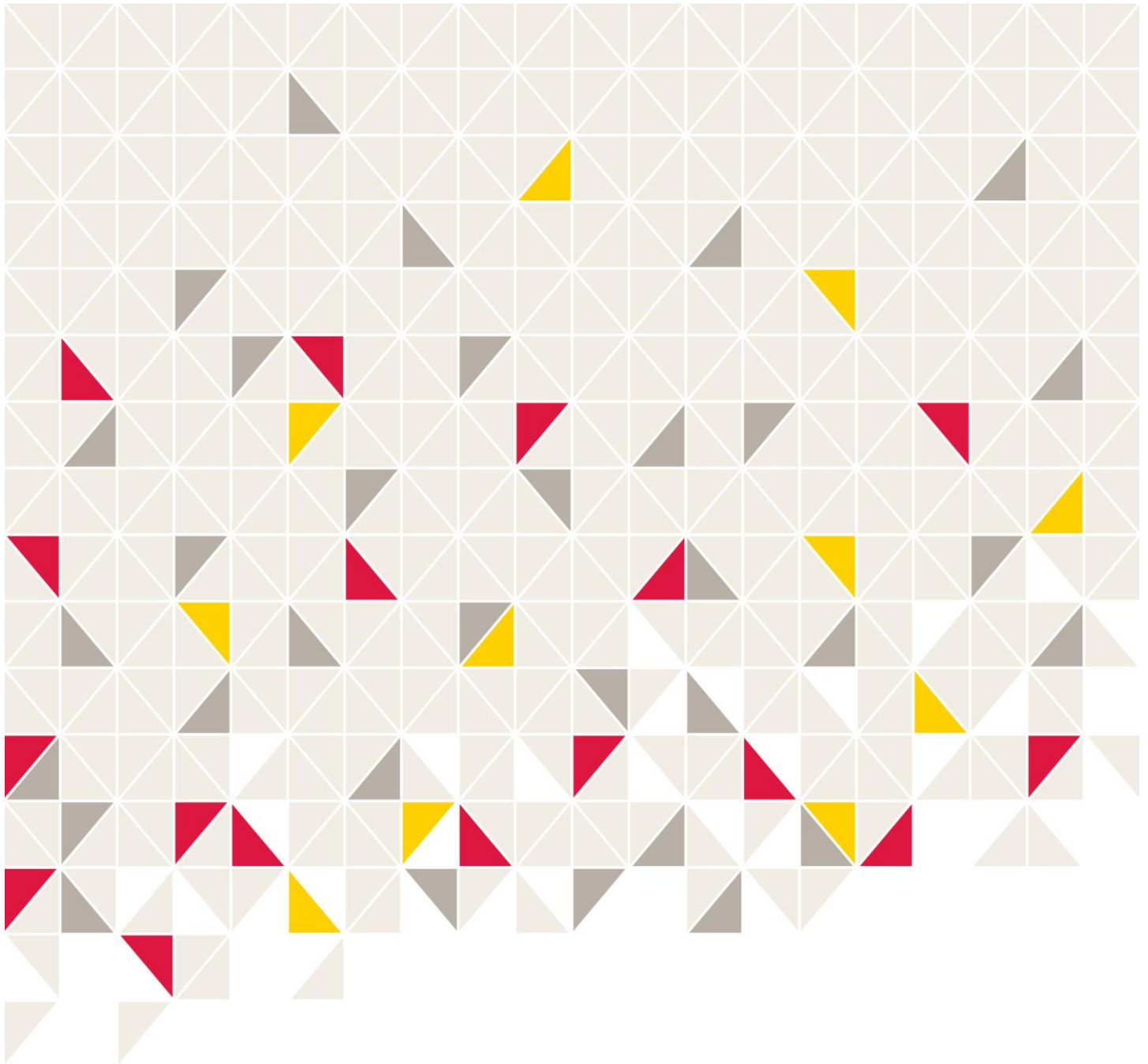
The respondents emphasized how social and creative the profession is, as well as the many work possibilities, both internationally and nationally, as factors that need better communication. Therefore, it might be sensible in future recruitment strategies to communicate these factors more effectively and thoroughly.

Even though the Internet was not mentioned as the main source of information in the relevant research, nor for most of the respondents, it has great potential in influencing the choice of VET. For example by videos showing the realistic day-to-day life as a chef, to create more interest around food and gastronomy.

Family and parents have also been found to be influential in educational choices of their children, and therefore including family and parents more in guidance counselling and recruitment might make VET a first choice of education for more students.

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Hordaland fylkeskommune har ansvar for å utvikle hordalandssamfunnet. Vi gir vidaregåande opplæring, tannhelsetenester og kollektivtransport til innbyggjarane i fylket. Vi har ansvar for vegsamband og legg til rette for verdiskaping, næringsutvikling, fritidsopplevingar og kultur. Som del av eit nasjonalt og globalt samfunn har vi ansvar for å ta vare på fortida, notida og framtida i Hordaland. Fylkestinget er øvste politiske organ i fylkeskommunen.

