



Education and Culture

**Leonardo da Vinci**  
Pilot projects

# **Training in companies in Europe**

## Summary of case studies

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Project and goal

The growing recognition of the importance of lifelong learning places an increasing focus on the importance of training. The development and recognition of work based learning and e-learning offers new opportunities for the training of trainers.

Within the European TTPlus project, funded by Leonardo da Vinci, the issues involved in the training and professional development of trainers in the European Member States will be examined. One of the key actions of the project is to examine the contexts in which training takes place in enterprises and who has responsibility for the training function.

The examination takes place in six European countries: Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and the UK. Each partner provides case studies of three companies in which training takes place. This report is extracted out of the different case studies.

It is important to notice that it is not our intention to give a total picture of training practices in the six countries. A more extended research would be necessary for that. Instead, we are looking for recent developments and new possibilities for training and professional development in the companies. Main goal of this summary report is to give an overview of the findings of the different case studies. Both, the differences and the similarities we find will be emphasized.

## 1.2 Research procedure

In alignment with one of the overall "hypothesis" within the TTPlus project of "the spread of the training function" (Attwell & Brown, 2001)<sup>1</sup> each country selected three companies or organisations in which training takes place. Different methods for selection were used. Some countries chose for companies in one important sector (Greece, UK), another country for companies with the same training concept (Germany) and others chose the snowball effect: they selected companies they are already connected to their own institute or are connected to the connected companies etc. (the Netherlands, Portugal and Romania).

In each selected company three or more interviews were held, with stakeholders (managers or persons responsible for training), trainers and when possible, with trainees. For all interviews, the same questionnaire was used. The questionnaire was divided into four main parts:

- Personal and organisation background information
- Information on training practice
- Reflections on training practice
- Reflections on boundary conditions

The questions in each part were adapted to the different functions of the interviewees.

Out of the interviews in a company or organisation, a case description is developed. This resulted in 19 case studies in total: 3 in Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Romania and the United Kingdom and 4 in Portugal.

## 1.3 This report

In this report the following topics are described:

1. the profiles of the companies and organisations on which the case studies are based
2. the context of the training practice including difficulties encountered with the training practice
3. the profile of trainers
4. the professional development of trainers

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<sup>1</sup> Unpublished paper, titled: The education of teachers and trainers in Europe – issues and policies.

## 5. the trends on training and professional development

Since the cases are based on both companies and organisations we use this terms alternating, aiming to use the most suitable term to refer to the cases. The cases will be described in an anonymous way. So no names of companies and organisations are mentioned. And a final remark: for legibility we use the term 'he' when we refer to 'he or she'.

## 2. Profiles of companies and organisations

### 2.1 Overview of the companies and organisations

In this chapter we give an overview of the kind of companies and organisations that are involved in the research. We start with an overview of the sectors where the companies and organisations are located (table 1), then we focus on the size of the companies and organisations (table 2) and finally we present the area of training they are involved in (table 3).

| Sector               | Cases  | Total number |
|----------------------|--|--------------|
| Technology/industry  | Cases 1, 3 & 14                                | 3            |
| Public               | Case 7   | 1            |
| IT                   | Cases 2 & 4                                    | 2            |
| Insurance            | Case 15  | 1            |
| Shipping             | Case 5   | 1            |
| Training/consultancy | Cases 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18 & 19 | 11           |

Table 1: Sector overview

| Company size  | Cases                          | Total number |
|---------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Micro (<5)    | Cases 12 & 17                  | 2            |
| Small (<50)   | Cases 6, 9, 10, 16 & 19        | 5            |
| Medium (<200) | Cases 11, 13, 14 & 18          | 4            |
| Big (>200)    | Cases 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 & 15 | 8            |

Table 2: Size of companies and organisations

| Area of training     | Cases                                 | Total number <sup>2</sup> |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| IT                   | Cases 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 10 & 11          | 7                         |
| Management           | Cases 1, 4, 7, 8, 12, 13, 16, 18 & 19 | 9                         |
| Electronics          | Cases 1 & 3                           | 2                         |
| Shipping             | Cases 5 & 6                           | 2                         |
| Education            | Cases 9, 10 & 16                      | 3                         |
| Commercial           | Cases 2, 3, 11, 12, 13 & 15           | 6                         |
| Metal                | Case 3                                | 1                         |
| Administration       | Cases 7, 8, 15 & 16                   | 4                         |
| Personal development | Cases 7, 8 & 13                       | 3                         |
| Social science       | Case 10                               | 1                         |
| Tourism and leisure  | Cases 10 & 11                         | 2                         |
| Insurance            | Case 15                               | 1                         |
| Consultancy methods  | Case 18                               | 1                         |
| Health               | Case 19                               | 1                         |

Table 3: Areas of Training

<sup>2</sup> The total number exceeds the total amount of cases because the different cases have several areas of training.

## **2.2 Description of the companies and organisations**

In this paragraph, a short descriptions of each case is presented. We follow the alphabetical order of the countries.

### **Germany (case 1-3)**

#### **Case 1**

An internationally operating enterprise group with clients in about 30 countries on all continents. The main production site (cases study site) employs around 250 employees. The company is structured into seven branches or business areas, such as agricultural technologies, automation and process technologies and control systems for automatic steering. The dual system of apprenticeship is being used as the basic model for staff recruitment and for the induction of new staff members to diverse departments or business units.

#### **Case 2**

A service provider in the field of ICT-systems and ICT-based customer services. The main business areas of the company are business solutions, infrastructure solutions and professional services. The company provides training for different IT-systems and economic and administrative occupations (the basic commercial training).

#### **Case 3**

A major steel-producing enterprise with ca. 3100 employees. Its production site is a fully integrated and highly automated plant. The integrated production chain covers all stations from blast furnace to 'tailored blank' coated steel. The company has trainees for technical and commercial occupations. For the technical occupations the company has a local training department with its own training workshops and with training managers for metal occupations and for electric occupations.

### **Greece (case 4-6)**

#### **Case 4**

A big company on IT with about 1200 employees. In this company, the knowledgeable worker is supported and training is organised in the technological field and in the general subjects. They work with both external and internal trainers (vast majority). They are very often managers of the different branches, who occasionally, or as a part of their work, have training duties.

#### **Case 5**

A shipping company in which there is "no need for steady training". The company has about 700 employees, of which 80 work at the administration office and the others on the ships. Only training that is strictly necessary is organised. There are no internal trainers.

#### **Case 6**

A company that offers training, mostly to shipping companies. The company has nine fulltime trainers and a few part-time trainers. Most of the time, they organise a training based on the findings of an inspection of a shipping company. Within the training company, there is a focus on the quality of training and trainers.

## **The Netherlands (case 7-9)**

### **Case 7**

A governmental organisation with about 30.000 employees. The organisation has a centre of professional development with trainers and educational experts. A lot of part-time trainers are working in the organisation as professional experts on specific topics. Although, they try to focus on their main processes and outsource as much training as possible.

### **Case 8**

A leading training and consulting firm on personal and organisational development. This firm has about 600 employees and offers both in company training and training with free enrolment. They work with permanent staff and with a lot of freelance trainers.

### **Case 9**

A small educational training company that supports educational institutes and in company training bureaus with the innovation of their curriculum, organisation and knowledge management with the use of new media. Their work consist of training (70%) and consultancy (including software) (30%). Seven persons are employed and nine persons works on freelance base.

## **Portugal (case 10-13)**

### **Case 10**

A training and research institute with a focus on human capital. The institute is consist of four departments (training, studies and planning, financial, architecture and image) and has seven employees, of which four are eventual internal trainers (the labour contract is as sociologist). The institute is accredited to give training in different areas, such as trainers and teachers training, social and behaviour sciences, ICT and tourism, and leisure.

### **Case 11**

A professional school with 50 employees, 15 of which are internal trainers. The school is accredited to give training in different areas such as catering, tourism, ICT and accounting. All the training is financed. They have professional courses- level III- called CEF (education and training courses). The target group of these professional courses are youngster between 15 and 25 years old from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

### **Case 12**

A training and consulting company with a mission to promote the development of the economical activities of the clients, increasing value to their businesses and contributing to the growth of the productivity and competitive capacity in their markets. The company has five employees, two of which are eventual internal trainers (the labour contract is as accountant and manager).

### **Case 13**

A training company which is constituted by a number of international companies, with about 200 employees, of which 30 internal trainers. The training department is organized by a technical training department and department of behaviour training, methods and quality. The training is subsidized by the IEFPP (institute of employment and professional training) and directed to youngsters in initial professional training and active adults in different areas.

## **Romania (case 14-16)**

### **Case 14**

A construction company which was a big state enterprise with more than 1000 workers. The products of the company were used at a big scale for the huge construction housing in the communist period. After 1990 the company was transformed into a private based company with a tremendous reduction of the personnel to 100 employees in 2007. New products, raw materials and technologies were introduced and there was a new but instable market for their products.

### **Case 15**

A multinational insurance company which started the business in Romania in '90s and which covers more than 50% of the insurance market in Romania, implementing extensive market strategies, products and financial services for clients. The company is known by its continuous training strategies; internal training is the main scheme for preparing the selling force. The company is organised in regional and local agencies. Each agency is comprising a number of units with 10-15 employees. This case is at the level of an agency and its units in Bucharest.

### **Case 16**

A training institute in public administration confounded by the Romanian Government. The institute is an implementing institution of the governmental strategy on reforming the public administration sector in Romania. Under this framework, the institute develops their training activities based on a series of big European projects, implementing various training schemes such as: master degrees in public administration in Europe, continuous training of civil servants and training of trainers in public administration.

## **United Kingdom (17-19)**

### **Case 17**

A training company that was set up as a research and development centre on a non-profit basis. The focus was on research and on evaluation but the portfolio shifted over the years more and more to training. The company is based in South Britain and the training is done on regional, national and international level. Three people work fulltime with around ten additional persons as freelancer. The case is based on a community development programme of this organisation.

### **Case 18**

A consultancy company with four offices throughout the country and ten partners, employing a team of fifty people, consultants as well as administrative staff. The company covers five topics: strategic management, lean enterprise, six sigma, supply chain alignment and change management. The business of the company also includes training activities: in case a client wants to have an internal consultant the company trains them in methods and techniques.

### **Case 19**

An organisation with the aim to improve the quality of the health sector in the UK. The current training schemes are aimed at changing the whole health service sector to improve the quality of the service for the patient. The organisation is independent and only controlled by a board with the aim to link in what is going on in the policy for the health care sector. The researched training scheme is called the "fellow leadership" programme and is aiming to improve the leadership qualities of participants in service for a better patient-health care -relationship. The training scheme runs for twelve years with six cohorts, starting every second year in October with sixteen participants.

### **2.3 Conclusion**

Looking at the tables 1 to table 3 we conclude a large variety in sectors, company size as well as areas of training. The training sector is the most represented sector in the research (n=10). The public, health and insurance sector are the least represented (n=1.) Furthermore, the big companies are more represented (n=8) compared to the other sectors like small (n=5), medium (n=4) and micro sized companies and organisations (n=2). Finally, the management training, IT and commercial area are the most represented within the research; respectively n=9, n=7 and n=6.

### 3. Training practices

#### 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter we will describe the training practices of the different cases. First, we will distinguish the training practices of the cases, which are training providers and the training practices of the cases which focus on other domains (non-training companies). We will illustrate how three formats: workplace learning, internal courses and external courses are used throughout the cases (Table 4 ). At the end of the chapter we will also give an overview of the difficulties training practices encounter throughout the different cases.

#### 3.2 Training formats

|            | Non-training companies |   |   |    |   |    |    |    |    | Training providers* |    |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|------------|------------------------|---|---|----|---|----|----|----|----|---------------------|----|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|            | GE                     |   |   | GR |   | NL | RO |    | UK | GR                  | NL |   | PT |    |    | RO | UK |    |    |
| Case       | 1                      | 2 | 3 | 4  | 5 | 7  | 14 | 15 | 18 | 6                   | 8  | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 16 | 17 | 19 |
| Workplace  | x                      | x | x | x  | x |    | x  | x  |    |                     |    |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Course in  |                        |   | x | x  |   | x  |    |    |    |                     |    |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Course out |                        |   |   | x  | x |    |    |    | x  | x                   | x  | x | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  |

Table 4: Training formats

**Workplace:** Workplace learning

**Course in:** Following internal seminars or courses

**Course out:** Following/providing\* external seminars or courses

##### 3.2.1 Workplace learning

Workplace learning is the most often used training format among the companies which are not training providers. It is used for induction of new staff members and for continuous development of experienced staff members.

First, in all the cases this format is used for *the induction of new staff members*. The trainees are integrated into the process of work and they are given real working tasks (or support tasks) as their learning assignments. A rotation system is used in some cases (1, 2, 3 and 14) that requires the trainees to change from one team/department to another to learn about the diverse departments or business units by performing real work tasks in different business units. This model is used both for prospective new employees and newly hired employees. For example case 2 has developed a rotation system that requires the trainees to changes from one team to another after a half year's period. This is also the model of the holding group and it has been extended across the network of the holding group. After going through a working and learning period in each team the trainees can express their own request in which team they want to complete their training.

In other cases (4, 5 and 15) the main focus is learning and performing tasks in one team/department of the company. In all these cases this is used for newly hired employees. For example in case 4, the first employment stage of a new employee "we place a mentor next to our new employee. This mentor is the person who will actually adapt him in the department he will work". The mentor is responsible for a long period for the new employee and he "tries to instruct all the subjects of values, concepts and culture of the company and the tools the employee will need in order to complete his job tasks successfully". In this case the in-service training takes the form of 'on the job training'.

Second, in some cases (14 and 15) it was also mentioned that workplace learning is used for continuous development of experienced staff members. In both cases the team leader conducts meetings with team members to discuss work related issues. In case 14 the informal team

meetings are organized daily and more formal meetings weekly. In case 15 the team leader meets each team member individually on a weekly base.

### **3.2.2 Following internal seminars of courses**

In three cases (3, 4 and 7) of non-training companies internal courses are offered for prospective and permanent staff members. For example, case 7 offers a lot of internal training for their employees which focus mainly on financial administration. This theme has 10-15 topics, e.g. for one topic there are 60-80 training courses available on different levels. Training is provided by the part-time trainers who work mainly as professional experts. Each training course uses different methods such as e-learning, a syllabus and meetings. The training is divided into learning objects. At the end of a learning object the trainees have to apply the learning content in a real situation. In each training, the trainees also have to work on a case-study.

### **3.2.3 Following/providing external courses**

#### *Non-training providers*

In three cases (4, 5 and 18) of non-training companies, external courses are offered to staff members. For example, in case 4 technicians of the company also participate in training delivered by the external training providers. These can take place in another Greek training institute or outside the country in places suggested by the international production firms. In addition, annually the company also offers scholarships for two employees to study at the master level in a Greek University. Besides organizing group sessions to staff members (case 18), individual training is provided. This format is closely related to consultancy and does not follow the structure of the course. The training offered is problem-oriented, the client has a certain problem and the consultant will guide him through in the real work setting.

#### *Training providers*

All the training providers offer training courses. We distinguish two main groups: cases which provide training in a broad area and cases which provide specific training courses.

*First*, four cases (8, 10, 11 and 13) offer courses in broad training area. Cases 10, 11 and 13 are public training institutes. All the cases provide traditional training courses. For example case 13 is a training company which provides subsidised courses to youngsters in initial professional training and active adults in different areas. According to the trainee the training is very theoretical with reduced practical aspects. The institute plans to improve the situation by providing 40% theory and 60% practical training.

Case 8 is a private training company which provides training on personal and organizational development both in-company training and training with free enrolment. There is an intake interview with every participant of training with open enrolments. They also try to have an intake with the trainees at the in-company projects. Every course has a "comeback day" in which the transfer of the training in practice is an important subject. Several courses have been accredited for bachelor and master degrees; others have accreditations by respected international organisations. Recently, a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) was incorporated for the training courses.

*Second*, six cases (6, 9, 12, 16, 17 and 19) provide courses in specific areas. Four cases provide subsidised training courses. From these, case 12 focus on unemployed people and case 17 on a community development program. Case 16 provides training courses to civil servants and case 19 to professionals in health care. The approach to training courses in case 17 was based on informal learning, observation of behaviour and mentoring. In addition, trainees use log-books to report about their learning experiences. In case 19, we also see an emphasis on informal learning; the training course consists of an action learning-set, individual coaching, informal learning and mentoring. Cases 12 and 16 the focus is more on delivering formal training courses. In addition, case 16 is about to offer online training courses using a *blended learning* environment.

Finally, two cases (6 and 9) are private training companies, which provide training in shipping (case 6) and education (case 9). Case 6 offers seminars to shipping companies. Offered seminars are either accredited or certified. Accredited seminars mean that they have been developed from the Greek company according to the needs that have come to the surface from their Greek clients. Certified seminars are those whose organisation and conduction in Greece is exactly the same as they are in the other countries. As a future development, the company wishes to take learners needs more into account while designing and delivering trainings. Case 9 has implemented a so-called talent orientation as an intake. After some tests and a talk they look at the potential of the participant, his motivation and if he is aware what it is all about. After this orientation the training course will be designed.

### 3.3 Difficulties encountered within the training practices

Table 5 gives an overview of the difficulties the interviewees encounter within training practices. Next, we will describe each category more detailed.

| Case                        | GE |        |   | GR |   |   | NL |   |   | PT |    |    |    | RO |    |    | UK |    |    |
|-----------------------------|----|--------|---|----|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|                             | 1  | 2<br>3 | 3 | 4  | 5 | 6 | 7  | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 1. Practical application    | x  |        | x |    |   |   |    |   |   |    |    |    | x  |    | x  |    |    | x  |    |
| 2. Trainer's features       |    |        |   |    |   |   | x  | x | x | x  | x  |    | x  |    | x  |    |    |    |    |
| 3. Dealing with trainees    |    |        |   |    |   |   | x  | x |   | x  | x  | x  | x  |    |    |    | x  |    | x  |
| 4. Organization of training |    |        |   |    |   | x | x  | x | x | x  |    | x  | x  |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 5. Financial resources      |    |        |   |    | x |   |    |   |   | x  | x  | x  |    |    |    |    | x  |    |    |
| 6. Training demand          |    |        |   | x  | x |   |    |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    | x  | x  | x  |    |
| 7. Organizational culture   |    |        |   |    |   | x |    |   | x |    |    |    |    | x  |    |    |    |    | x  |

Table 5: Difficulties encountered within the training practices

#### 1. Practical application of training

There are two main ways this difficulty was expressed: designing real work-related tasks is demanding in workplace learning and the traditional training practices often lack to provide sufficient practical application.

First, in the context of workplace learning (cases 1, 3 and 15) it was mentioned that it is difficult to design real work-related training tasks. For example in case 1 it was noted that trainers can have problems with adjusting tasks to the appropriate level of competences (to be promoted in the training period). Also, it has been difficult to integrate training activities in the customer service. The trainers would prefer to allocate more time for giving explanations for the trainees. However, due to time pressures, they have to focus on the interaction with the client (and give the trainees the role of an observer).

<sup>3</sup> \* No information available.

*Second*, in the context of more traditional training practice (case 13 and 18), it was noted that the existing training is more focused on theoretical aspects and lacks to offer practical applications which trainees could use in their work situations. For example, in case 18, it was mentioned that the existing training is often very much school-based with no relation to the work. The knowledge taught in the course was pure technical: how to write a report, but no knowledge about: how to start, from which sources which data is available.

## **2. Trainers' features/competences**

There are three themes related to this difficulty. First, finding and motivating experienced trainers to give courses. Second, for the trainers to meet the trainees' needs. Third, training function as addition to the other work tasks.

*First*, it was pointed out that it is difficult to stay motivated as an experienced trainer (case 8) and find trainers for the high level courses (case 7). For example, it was explained in case 7 that it is difficult to find trainers for high level courses because the trainees are well trained and demanding and the trainer has to be a real expert. Sometimes retired employees are asked for these training tasks. With this comes another issue - difference in age between trainers and trainees. Trainers are much older and they sometimes have difficulties to connect to experiences of young people.

*Second*, it can be difficult for the trainers to meet the trainees' needs. For example, it can be challenging for the trainer when participants put forward a subject where a trainer is not yet familiar with (case 9). In other cases (cases 10, 11 and 13) the inadequacies of the trainers were expressed more generally (e.g. weak quality, need to be more demanding etc.).

*Finally*, it was pointed out that since the training function is an additional one on top of other managerial, recruitment and evaluation functions, sometimes the unit manager feels overwhelmed (case 15).

## **3. Dealing with trainees**

There are two main themes related to this difficulty. First, the personal characteristics of the trainees, most importantly the level of motivation. Second, the unexpected changes in the work-context which shape the training agenda.

*First*, lack of motivation of trainees was expressed as a problem (cases 10, 11, 12, 13 and 17), and trainees being too quiet and having psychical problems (case 8). In addition, in case 13 it was also noted that social problems must be dealt with. Finally, in case 7 it was mentioned that sometimes wrong people are sent in, such as managers instead of people who have to teach employees in their own organisations.

*Second*, the trainees' work-situation can have an influence on the training agenda. For example, in case 19 it was explained that the training takes place in a situation of (constant) restructures of the health care sector. One of the major changes took place in the last two years, where people have to apply for their old job again which created a constant threat to their jobs. Therefore, the training scheme could not evolve as expected. With the acceptance of the training organization the trainers helped participants to survive this difficult situation by preparing them for job interviews etc.

#### **4. Organization of training**

The five themes to which these difficulties are related to are: use of ICT in training, designing new courses and implementing new methods, meeting participants' expectations, trainees preferring shorter courses, and practical problems.

*First*, the usage of ICT for training was expressed as a difficulty (cases 7, 8 and 9). Besides being demanding for some trainers to implement, it was mentioned in case 8 that the training time for all courses is shortened for the use of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), which may, by the way, not be suitable for all courses.

*Second*, there are problems with designing new courses (case 8) and implementing new training methods (cases 9 and 13). For example, in case 8 it was noted that sometimes things happen 'ad hoc'. For example: a text for the programme has to be written before the development of a course. It is better to think about what you really want first. In addition, now trainers put the energy in new trainings e.g. with ICT, while the existing trainings lag behind. These should be renewed too.

*Third*, these difficulties are related to understanding participants' needs (case 6) and meeting the participants' expectations (cases 7 and 9). For example, in case 7 it was noted that the trainees expect training on a subject and not on didactical skills.

*Fourth*, the difficulties are related to fulfilling the training schedule (cases 10 and 12) since the trainer and trainees often want to leave earlier, and generally trainees prefer a short training with not too much practice because they can go home early (case 7).

*Finally*, in case 9 some practical problems were also named. For example, the ICT (multimedia, facilities, security settings, availability) always need to be checked previously and tested at the location where the training takes place; and the starting time may cause problems due to traffic problems (traffic jams).

#### **5. Financial resources**

All these problems are related to the lack of financial resources. First, in case 5, it was noted that relatively little money is spent to personnel training in contrast to company's turnover. Second, in the cases 10, 11 and 12 it was noted that the low payment of trainers is a problem. It was also noted that it is also often difficult to find trainees, even if the training is free. Third, in case 17, dissatisfaction was expressed about the funding principles which are directly related to the assessment of the training. This principle does not work for one day courses where there is no time for testing.

#### **6. Training demand**

In general, in case 16 it was noted that the high demand of training causes problems. This implies a lot of costs and resources for travels and trainers are always travelling all over the country in order to respond to different training request. On the contrary, in the cases 4, 5, 17 and 18 it was expressed that more training is needed than is currently offered. In the cases 4 and 5 employees in the company would like to receive more training. In the cases 17 and 18 the interviewees pointed out that people in general need more training, e.g. workers in public and voluntary sector for basic skills, and shop-floor-workers of the companies for ICT skills.

#### **7. Organization culture**

These difficulties are related to the culture of the training department, questions related to being profitable and confidentiality of coaching.

*First*, difficulties related to the culture of training unit. In case 6 it is desired to hire more trainers and promote interaction between the trainers, for the homogeneity and improvement of the teaching quality. A slightly different issue was pointed out in case 14. Here the training department has a very strong culture which was influenced by the role of informal coaching and mentoring in the department. This culture is often against the management policy in terms of requirements, tasks and way to do things. The lack of communication with other departments is also an additional problem for identifying common ways to resolve the problems in the company.

*Second*, in case 9 it was noted that there is sometimes a tension between being profitable and creating enough spaces for new initiatives in the company.

*Finally*, in case 19, confidentiality was perceived as a sensitive area. Coaching is a process build on confidentiality, but the organization wants to know what is going on in the coaching.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter we described the training practices of the different cases and the difficulties the trainers encounter within the cases. The training practices of the cases are divided into the training providers and other domains; the non-training companies (see Table 4). The format of the training providers is obviously to provide external seminars or courses and is dominant in the cases in Portugal. The cases of the non-training companies use three different formats: workplace learning, they follow internal and external seminars or courses. Workplace learning is the most prevalent. From the descriptions it comes evident that establishing learners' needs at the start of the training is very important. In many cases the training programs will be designed based on the learners' needs. Another important feature of the current training practices is that the trainings need to be related with the learners work experiences and training should have a practical implication. At the end of this chapter attention is paid to the difficulties training practices encounter throughout the different cases. Nine types of difficulties are distinguished.

## 4. Trainers profile

### 4.1 Introduction

An important question in the research is about the competences of trainers. What competences does a trainer in a company need to have? We use the term competences in a broad way: the complex system actions that integrate knowledge, practical skills, attitudes, value orientation, emotions and other social behavioural component that together can be mobilized for effective action<sup>4</sup>. In this chapter the required competences for trainers are described. First, we discuss the qualifications that are required by the different organisations and then we describe the competences trainers need to have according to the management, the trainers themselves and the learners.

### 4.2 Qualifications

Table 6 gives an overview of the (more or less) formal qualifications an in-company trainer needs to have in the different countries. Remarkable is that only two companies require a formal qualification in didactics from their trainers. Both companies are located in Germany. Below, the different situations are described in more detail.

|             | GE |   |   | GR |   |   | NL |   |   | PT |    |    |    | RO |    |    | UK |    |    |
|-------------|----|---|---|----|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Case        | 1  | 2 | 3 | 4  | 5 | 6 | 7  | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| <b>FC</b>   |    | x | x |    |   |   |    |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| <b>ED</b>   |    |   |   |    |   |   |    | x | x | x  | x  |    | x  |    |    | x  | x  |    | x  |
| <b>EP</b>   | x  |   |   | x  |   | x | x  |   |   |    |    | x  |    | x  | x  |    |    | x  |    |
| <b>N.A.</b> |    |   |   |    | x |   |    |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |

Table: 6 Overview of qualifications of a trainer in companies

**FC= Formal certification:** Trainers need a formal certification on didactics

**ED= Education on didactical skills:** Trainers need an education on didactics

**EP= Education on professional skills:**

Trainers need to be educated as professionals, they do not necessarily need a didactical education (although some trainers have a didactical background and some companies have an internal didactical training)

**N.A.:** The company has no in company trainers.

#### 4.2.1 Formal certification

Two companies demand a formal certification in didactics from their trainers. In case 2 the company expect their trainers (i.e. the team leaders) to get an AEVO-certificate (a formal trainer's certificate), although the training schemes for trainers that lead to this qualification are not currently prioritised. In case 3 there are full-time in company trainers who are skilled workers with a formal training for trainers (the AEVO certificate) or for the industrial *Meister*.

#### 4.2.2 Education on didactics

Education on didactics is important in eight cases, mostly training institutes. From the case descriptions it appears that four companies (cases 8, 9, 10 and 16) don't have formal requirements on certificates but they expect that their trainers have an educational (pedagogical or didactical) background and experience in providing trainings. The requirements of trainers in four other cases (cases 11, 13, 17 and 19) are less clear from the case descriptions but all these organisations

<sup>4</sup> We refer to the definition of competences that is used in the eLene-TLC project. A European project within the eLearning programme. See also: [www.elene-tlc.net](http://www.elene-tlc.net)

emphasise didactical and pedagogical competences of their trainers. Furthermore, the trainers of all the organisations that participated in the examinations have extended didactical experience.

#### 4.2.3 Education on professional skills

Education on a specific professional subject is of main importance in eight cases. For instance, in case 1 the company doesn't make a distinction between 'ordinary' skilled workers and 'trainers'. All skilled workers are expected to take over some training functions as mentors supporting the trainees. For these training functions they do not get a specific pedagogical training. In three other cases (cases 4, 14 and 15) the trainers are the managers who have training duties as part of their job. Some trainers participated in a 'training the trainer' seminar, others have such great teaching experience from the past that they do not need to take part to that seminar in order to be in company trainers or are seen as a trainer by the employees; they declared that they learn most from him. From a few case descriptions (cases 7, 12 and 18) it becomes clear that they hire good professionals (experts) with training experience for providing training when necessary.

#### 4.2.4 No in-company trainers

The company that is described in case 5 organize only training that is strictly necessary and is has no in-company trainers itself.

### 4.3 Competences of a trainer

Table 7 gives an overview of the competences trainers need according to the interviewees. This table intends to express on what competences the emphasis lies. We distinguished four types of competences: subject specific competences, didactical competences, organisational competences and interpersonal competences. This classification is based on Regulation Basic Qualification, Education, Educational Consultancy and Development (2002).

In some interviews the discussion on the competences topic was more extended than in others. As a consequence we have more data from some countries. Since we assume that the most important competences are given first, this won't have an impact on the most relevant results. Below, we describe the different types of competences more detailed and we discuss some other requirements that have been put forward.

|                       | GE |   |   | GR |   |   | NL |   |   | PT |    |    |    | RO |    |    | UK |    |    |
|-----------------------|----|---|---|----|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Case                  | 1  | 2 | 3 | 4  | 5 | 6 | 7  | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| <b>Subject spec.</b>  | x  | x | x | x  | x | x | x  | x |   | x  |    |    | x  | x  | x  | x  |    | x  | x  |
| <b>Didactical</b>     |    | x | x | x  |   |   | x  | x | x | x  | x  | x  | x  |    | x  | x  | x  |    | x  |
| <b>Organisational</b> |    |   |   | x  | x |   |    | x | x |    |    | x  | x  | x  | x  |    |    |    | x  |
| <b>Interpersonal</b>  | x  |   |   |    | x | x | x  | x | x |    | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  |

Table 7: Trainers' competences.

|                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Subject Specific Competences:</b> | Actual knowledge of the subject of the training             |
| <b>Didactical Competences:</b>       | Developing, carrying out and evaluating training            |
| <b>Organisational Competences:</b>   | Preparation, structuring of course, facilities, regulations |
| <b>Interpersonal Competences:</b>    | Communication, group processes, motivation, mentoring       |

#### 4.3.1 Subject specific competences

Subject specific competences are mentioned in 15 cases. Examples of competences within this type are: excellent knowledge of the training subject and more general knowledge of what is going on in the field. These competences are important since trainers need to be able to use examples from real work situations (cases 4, 6 and 15) and from their own experiences (cases 7, 13 and 14).

### **4.3.2 Didactical competences**

Didactical competences are mentioned in 16 cases, mostly in general terms such as: must not read by a book, must be able to explain very well, need to know how to exteriorise the knowledge, needs to have pedagogic skills and must be able to communicate the message very clear (e.g. cases 4, 10, 11, 13, 15 and 17).

Furthermore, it is emphasized that a good trainer is able to use different didactical methods. And he must be able to manage a group, he has to understand the group and what the needs are (knowledge and expectations of the group, identify the needs of the trainees and keep in mind their goals) (e.g. cases 4, 8, 9, 12, 15, and 18). This is nicely expressed in case 18: *"Most important is the ability to bring everyone up to the same level without people realizing that some are ahead of them"*. But a trainer must also be able to place interventions for instance when the group process doesn't match with the learning process and that the trainer must know the instruments he can handle when dealing with resistance at the individual as well as the group level (case 9).

### **4.3.3 Organisational competences**

In different cases the creation of a good learning environment in general (case 14) or more specific, is mentioned, like trainings need to be to the point and/or brief with a limited number of participants and a homogenous audience (case 5). Other competences that belong to this category are the importance of tip-top material and a good preparation (cases 4 and 9).

### **4.3.4 Interpersonal competences**

In eight cases, good communication skills are mentioned (cases 4, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15 and 16), like having an interactive relationship with the audience and to be able to listen.

The motivation of trainees is also a main subject. For a trainer it is important to get and stay in contact with the trainees. Words that belong to this category are: inspiration, enthusiasm, empathy, sensitive and support (cases 9, 14, 15 and 19). A trainer must also be able to overcome the fatigue of the participants since the seminars often take place by the end of the regular working day, after 16.00 until 19.00 or even later (case 4) and he must keep the interest of the participants alive. *"Important is not only what to say but how to say it"* (case 5).

In five cases mentoring and coaching is important (cases 1, 2, 3, 15 and 19). In case 1 it is formulated as follows: *"The company brings into picture the traditional mentoring culture and knowledge sharing between colleagues in the same company. From this perspective formal training (or external support) specifically for trainers is not prioritised. Instead, the mentoring capability of skilled workers is emphasised"*.

For a trainer, it is also important to be able to deal with a group. In case 9 it is emphasized that a trainer must be able to place interventions for instance when the group process doesn't match the learning process. A specific threat in communication is described in case 8, since a trainer is in a frontrunners position it is a danger that the trainees are focussed on the trainer while it is important that interaction in the group will develop (dynamic communication pattern), independent from the trainer. Four other cases (cases 4, 10, 17 and 19) emphasize the importance of taken the knowledge and experience of learners into consideration: don't overestimate trainers considering they are the owners of the knowledge but see in the training an opportunity to exchange knowledge (case 10). In case 19 this is formulated as follows: *"The skill of a good trainer is in bringing safety to the learning space where everybody can contribute to. It is important to value what each participant brings into the scheme. The skill of a trainer is to keep as much as possible equality between trainer and trainee"*. Thus allowing people to learn from themselves and from others is an important competence of a trainer.

Self awareness is mentioned in different cases (cases 6, 8, 9 and 17). A bad trainer has a limited self- understanding, is tightened up and does not express himself (case 6). Trainers need to judge

the effect they have on others and how others perceive them, and they need to adjust their behaviour on this (case 9).

Other aspects in this category are leadership qualities (case 8), being personal effective (case 8 and showing initiative (case 8, 11). At least the interviewees in case 6 underline that "*The good trainer likes always to learn*".

#### **4.3.5 Other requirements**

In two cases (cases 16 and 17) some other requirements are mentioned, like the availability for travelling all over the country but also abroad, (foreign) language skills and ICT skills (for online training programs). The language skill is considered to be the biggest single skill of a trainer: "*being able to reword the meaning of the sentence for the 4<sup>th</sup> time without repeating yourself*".

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

A wide variety of trainers competences are described in this chapter. Depending on the amount of attention this subject had in the case descriptions, competences from two (eight cases), three (seven cases) or four categories (four cases) have been put forward. When we had shown this scheme to the interviewees during the interview, they probably would have said that all categories are important. Thus, in this chapter it is not about the number of times a specific competence is mentioned, but it is about the things the interviewees emphasise and about the way they describe the competences.

There are two remarkable findings in this chapter. First, only two companies require a formal certification from their in-company trainers. In eight cases there is an emphasis on didactical requirements but there are no formal requirements. In the other cases the emphasis lies on professional skills. We can conclude that in most cases the experience of a trainer is far more important than a formal certification.

Secondly, that trainers should take the knowledge and experience of learners into consideration in trainings. This subject is mentioned in five cases. This topic is also described in chapter 5 about trends. An explanation for this might be that people are getting more mature. They want to contribute to a training by bringing in their own knowledge and experience. Another explanation can be the individualisation of society. Learners are focused on their own needs and want the trainer to connect to this. Also, the changing role of trainers can be of importance. Trainers demand learners to bring in their own knowledge and experience so they can adjust their training to the learners needs.

## 5. Professional development of trainers

### 5.1 Introduction

Table 8 gives an overview of the means for professional development that are mentioned during the interviews. It is important to note that the findings are based on the case summaries, which included the most often mentioned and emphasised aspects about the cases.

|           | GE     |   |   | GR |                |   | NL |   |   | PT |    |    |    | RO |    |    | UK |    |    |
|-----------|--------|---|---|----|----------------|---|----|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Case      | 1      | 2 | 3 | 4  | 5 <sup>5</sup> | 6 | 7  | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| <b>C</b>  | Inform | x |   |    |                | x |    |   | x |    |    |    |    | x  |    | x  | x  | x  | x  |
|           | Team   |   | x | x  |                |   | x  | x |   |    |    |    |    |    | x  |    |    |    |    |
|           | Form   |   |   |    |                |   | x  | x | x |    |    |    |    |    | x  |    |    |    | x  |
| <b>ID</b> | SS     |   |   |    |                |   | x  | x | x | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  |
|           | FC     |   |   | x  | x              |   | x  | x | x | x  | x  |    | x  | x  | x  | x  |    |    |    |
|           | S      |   |   |    |                |   | x  | x |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | x  |
| <b>WE</b> | x      | x |   | x  |                |   |    | x |   |    |    |    |    | x  |    |    | x  | x  |    |

Table 8: Formats for professional development

#### **C:** Collaboration with colleagues

C Inform: Informal peer tutoring

C Team: Organized team learning

C Form: Development days, conferences, and other events (often more formal).

#### **ID:** Individual development

ID SS: Individual self-study

ID FC: Following a course, training

ID S: Supervision/mentoring within a company

#### **WE:** Work experiences (skilled workers in Germany and internal trainers in Greece)

In the following paragraphs we elaborate on different formats mentioned in the cases: the three broad categories are: collaboration activities, individual development and work experiences. Most of the professional development was associated with collaboration and individual development.

### 5.2 Collaboration

Working together with colleagues was regarded as an important format for professional development in 13 cases throughout 5 countries. We distinguish three formats of collaboration: informal peer tutoring (eight cases), working in teams (five cases), and participation in development days and conferences (five cases).

#### 5.2.1 Informal peer tutoring

Informal peer tutoring for professional development is the most prevalent format of collaboration throughout the companies in the study.

*First*, it was pointed out that generally trainers learn a lot from colleagues through informal discussions (cases 1, 6, 14, 16 and 18). For example, in case 18 the exchange with other professionals happens in the office and also by sending around e-mails, "Look what I have made". In general, a lot of encouragement is provided by colleagues.

*Second*, in some cases the informal peer tutoring was considered as direct means for designing and assessing current training practices (cases 6, 9, 17 and 19). For example, in case 9 a training course is always evaluated internally with colleagues. They evaluate the materials (did it fit, was it

<sup>5</sup> No information available about the professional development of the trainers.

good), the response of the participants and the trainers' own wishes regarding his professional development.

### **5.2.2 Organized team learning**

In five cases trainers work in teams (cases 2, 3, 7, 8 and 15). Team members meet on regular basis to discuss work related matters. For example, in case 8, 30%-35% of the available time of trainers is allocated to meetings and professional development. There are regular team meetings for trainers. One day in every month the team meets to discuss: logistics, professional development with respect to current topics. One department starts these meetings with a so-called 'flag-parade'. Each team member expresses with a flag (red, orange or green) how he is doing. If someone shows a red flag, the team will collaboratively search for solutions. The idea behind this is that a safe environment is a precondition for good development.

### **5.2.3 Development days, conferences and other events**

Trainers also participate in development days, conferences and other events to support their professional development.

*First*, development days are organized for trainers. In four cases *professional development days* are organized (cases 7, 8, 9 and 19). During these days trainers can meet other trainers and share experiences (case 7), bottlenecks are discussed and improvements will be planned (case 8). In case 19 a day consists of two parts: during the first part trainers are informed what is going on in the company (new training schemes etc) and get input from speakers e.g. about communication in health section. In the afternoon the group is split into two groups with action learning sets: each trainer is giving a brief update about their work, and then an action learning set about certain problems is done.

*Second*, trainers can attend and participate in conferences (cases 8 and 9). In case 15, an annual conference is organised at the level of the company. The main reason for this conference is to celebrate the best performers and to hand them prizes and certificates.

*Third*, other events for professional development are annual incentive trips in case 15, which constitute informal opportunities to meet the best unit managers from all over the country and sharing experiences and problems. In case 8 the company also organizes a so called two-day connection days. Trainers of the company are responsible for the programme; they have the opportunity to follow a training from their colleagues or external trainers. Additionally, there are summer schools (five days) and soon a scientist café will be opened. Each month a scientist will be invited to give a presentation.

## **5.3 Individual development**

We have organized the means for the individual development in three sub-sections: self-study, following a training program, and supervision. The most often mentioned format from the three was self-study.

### **5.3.1 Self-study**

This format is used for professional development in 13 cases (cases 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19) throughout 4 countries. In all cases it is the responsibility of the trainer to take care over the professional development, in all cases trainers get additional time from the companies for professional development. Trainers are encouraged to read relevant literature (books and articles on internet) and keep up with professional journals of one's own subject matter or domain. Case 8 has an internal publisher. Each trainer can get a certain amount of the books they publish for free. In addition, in cases 14, 15 and 16 it is also required from trainers to study the state laws and other regulatory documents (including equipment manuals) related to the areas company operates in.

### **5.3.2 Following a course or training**

This format was mentioned in 11 cases throughout 5 countries. Training courses are usually followed either to develop pedagogical skills or learn more domain-specific knowledge.

*First*, it comes evident that training courses on pedagogical and didactical skills are followed by trainers. In two cases (cases 7 and 9) junior trainers are required to follow a basic pedagogy course. In other cases (cases 3, 4, 11, 13, 15 and 16) trainers follow courses to up-date their pedagogical competences.

*Second*, trainers also follow courses to upgrade the domain-specific knowledge (cases 3, 11, 14 and 15). For example, in case 14 employees, regularly attend external training programs regarding changes in technology or quality assurance rules. The management of the company sees the training as a compulsory task in order to fulfil the new regulations in the construction field.

*Finally*, in cases 8 and 10, the subject of courses was not mentioned. Case 8 has an international business school. All trainers, permanent staff as well as freelancers, can take part in courses for free. In addition to the possibilities the internal business school offers, trainers can attend external training.

### **5.3.3 Supervision**

In three cases (cases 7, 8 and 19) personal coaching and/or supervision was mentioned as an element of professional development. For example, in case 8, each trainer is supposed to draw up a year plan that contains agreements concerning his professional development. The professional development plans are regularly discussed with a training manager. In case 19, an independent trainer works at the organization that is coaching the trainers. The independent trainer uses a quality insurance framework that looks at various competences of the trainers (respond in a timely way, understands the wider context, understands teambuilding etc.). She conducts interviews with each trainer, observes how trainers work in their action-learning set e.g. All this material feeds into an annual written report about each trainer which is discussed with the leading program manager and assistant director. This will lead to recommendations to the trainers for their professional development (read book X about health issue, diversity issue etc.). Some of the issues will be integrated into the four days development workshop of the trainers as well.

### **5.3.4 Development through one's work experiences**

This part points out that trainers also develop based on their work experiences.

*First*, this sub-section represents the importance of work-based learning in the context where trainers themselves are skilled professionals (cases 1, 2, 4 and 14). For example in case 1 trainers are usually skilled workers who are responsible for the domain-specific further training in a company. There are traditional patterns of mentoring that are characteristic for handicraft trades. From this perspective formal training (or external support), specifically for trainers, is not prioritised. In addition, case 14 is aiming at more support and more opportunities to exchange experiences with skilled people in the same field.

*Second*, it was noted that trainers learn through giving training programs (cases 8, 14, 17 and 18). In all these cases feedback from trainees is important as well as trainer's self-evaluation of the training course. For example, the trainer in case 18 noted that the excellent relationships with their client organisations bring in direct feedback on the work and enhance the professional development. In addition it was noted that "*Everything is learning. Every time you deliver training, it is learning, every time you are creating a system, it is learning, it is built into the job*".

## **5.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter three types of professional development that are extracted from the case studies, are described: collaborative activities, individual development and work experiences. The first types are the most prevalent. Within collaboration type, informal peer tutoring has been put forward most often. Within individual development, self-study is most prevalent.

## 6. Trends and innovations

### 6.1 Introduction

One of the subjects in the research is about innovation and trends in training, and in the professional development of trainers. In this chapter the following seven major trends are discussed:

- Focus on training
- Broader learning paths
- Application of theory into practice
- Mentoring
- E-learning
- Self-directed learning
- Shorter, faster and more fixed trainings

We choose to focus on these major trends and not to describe the trends which are only mentioned by one person or in one case. In the final paragraph we draw some conclusions on the trends we found.

### 6.2 Seven trends and innovations

#### 6.2.1 Focus on training

In four different cases, there are plans to enlarge the training offer in the company. The company that is described in case 4, wants all employees to take specific training seminars *“as it is happening with the technical staff”*. In case 5 they formulate solutions for the improvement of training politics, including *“refresher training not to be left behind”* and *“the training to be made by elaborated program, not segmental, as it happens now”*. Also in cases 6 and 10, they intend to continue enlarge the training offer of the company.

In cases 1 and 2, they notice a positive attitude to professional development of trainers (but it seems as if this is not transformed fully into actual practices). In different companies these trends have different manifestations. To some extent they pose more challenges for the organisation of training activities and for the trainers/ worksite tutors/ mentors.

On the contrary, the situation around training in Portugal (case 10-13) is at the moment very difficult. Due to the actual conjuncture of the economy, there are no finances for training. Companies have intentions to extend the training activities but there is no certitude about the feasibility of these plans.

#### 6.2.2 Broader learning paths

In several cases the trend towards broader learning paths is mentioned. In case 19 several disadvantages of trainings are described: *“Most training assumes that there is a gap of knowledge and filling that gap is a pointless exercise, I can move from incompetence to mediocrity, but it cost far less effort to take that things I am good in it and move them to become excellent, so normal training is based on the wrong model, it is based on a deficiency model”*. In the UK, there is a growing recognition that the mixture of group learning and coaching and projects is spreading. Also in case 8 and 9 the trend to broader learning paths is described. *“Training is not always the solution. We have to think of broader learning paths in which trainers are also facilitators and guides of learning processes. To what extent is a trainer a type almost vanished? A trainer needs to be versatile’*. And in case 9 they see a trend to *“more long lasting and flexible training courses. Therefore, the function of a trainer is changing more to a guide and coach”*. In case 4 it is emphasised that broader learning paths are needed to obtain more close relationships between the employees, to understand the company’s culture, and for the better incorporation to the working groups.

On the contrary, in case 17 a trend is mentioned toward more specific training: *“Over the last years there are more and more people who see training as a job, so they are not longer willing to explore other points brought up by trainees. But this is the core point where the learning begins.* Also the trend to shorter and faster training (paragraph 6.8) is in contrast with this trend.

### **6.2.3 Application of theory into practice**

In six cases the transfer of theory into practice is mentioned. All German cases (cases 1, 2 and 3) emphasise the growing importance of learning in real work contexts and/or learning from real working experiences. In some cases the growing importance of work-related learning may lead to more intensive cooperation between different learning venues. In other cases the same driving forces may lead to the marginalisation of such cooperation. Also in the cases 8 and 9 a trend to more *focus on transfer is described*: on the level of the individual (what does this mean for me in practice) as well as the organization (what does this training mean for the organization). Trainers are trying to relate the context and workplace of the trainees in the training. Thus, more tuning to the question of the company and the individual.

In case 19, different solutions for reducing the gap between theory and practice are described. One of the interviewees formulated the problem as *“It is away from work context, HRD people pay to get people into a classroom and afterwards, the knowledge will be used or not, but everybody comes from a different work culture even within the same company, and what is taught in the course might be from another different culture”*. They try now to link the training back to work practice and to stimulate an organisational / cultural change. During the training, it was not clear for the participants that their training was related to institutional change. It was conceptualized as an individual training course with the underlying assumption that this will implicitly improve the quality of service for the patient. Now this is made explicit, that all learning activities have to take place in favour of the improvement of the service for the patient. Thus patients are invited to the workshop. The link back to the workplace is also stressed by side visits from the organisation at the beginning of the scheme. Also line managers and executive managers are invited to the first workshop and have to write a report at the end of the training scheme.

### **6.2.4 Mentoring**

In six cases (outside the German cases in which mentoring is a basic function) mentoring aspects are mentioned such as *“training on the job”, “looking over his shoulder”, “support a hotline after a course” and “a split training role into a trainer responsible for the action learning set and one for coaching”*. We describe this as a separate trend, although it can also be a part of a broader learning path (paragraph 6.3).

An example of mentoring is the “Community First” programme (case 17). The learning took place informally, through observation of behaviour. The mentor would guide the mentee through, making suggestions for courses etc.

Managers have mentoring role to their own employees in two cases (cases 14 and 15). In case 14, due to instability of the market, the activities are based on surviving strategies and training is the last thing to be seen as a powerful investment. Even so, employees need to learn how to deal with changes and the closest help they can find are their peers and their coaches. People that are not formally appointed as trainers are developing training activities based on the needs and feedback of individuals. The strategies are based on informal communication, common sense solutions and “fit to the need” training every time when needed. Professional development of the informal trainers would be helpful and possible as far as the training function of the department chef will be recognised at the level of company. In case 15, we see a very strong training culture and a lot of non-formal training activities are going on. The company management think that the “cascade” training scheme is a good approach. This means that unit managers train their own employees, after they finished a training. As a result, the company already created a good pool of unit managers able to provide the appropriate training *when and where is needed*. That is why the

policy is to reduce the importance of the training department, while more and more training activities are moved at the level of agencies and units. They think that this approach will reduce the costs for training activities and also the training will become more effective.

### **6.2.5 E-learning**

Different companies identify trends on e-learning or distance learning. In case 4 is stated that the use of new teaching methods is a possible improvement. *"The possibility to use e-learning with acceptable training results should again be investigated."* In case 7, the concept of B-learning (blended learning), a mix of different learning methods including e-learning, is implemented. Distance learning is described as a selling point in case 8. But it is also important because of the environment and the traffic jams: development of 'environment neutral courses'. Parts of course will be offered on-line through a VLE and coaching through the internet. The integration of ICT in courses is of main importance in case 9. They describe that people can professionalize in different ways, for example with more virtual trainings and more virtual support during f-2-f trainings. In case 16 they started to design online courses in order to cover the big demand for training on a large scale and geographical areas to be covered. This new approach involves also a special training in using the online technologies, but also new approaches for facilitating learning. A blended learning environment is currently piloted at the level of the institute. The training provider of case 18 has implemented e-learning and it *"has not cost them any client"*. Although, he formulates also disadvantages of the use of e-learning: *"Health and safety subjects can be taught with e-learning whereas IT problem-based courses not. Because the trainer is needed for the speed, in fact, any kind of answer can be found, but it is the speed to gain the answer that comes with the trainer. An additional reason is that people like being on a course, they like to meet other people."*

### **6.2.6 Self-directed learning**

Another trend is the growing importance of self-organised learning and the readiness to direct one's own learning process (cases 1, 2 and 3). Related to this trend, we see in case 8 a shift in focus of the (training providing) company. There is more focus on the individual employees while in the past they were more focused on organisations and companies. Individual employees are getting more responsibility in companies. For instance they have their own learning budgets and the training provider is anticipating on this. An example of this is also described in case 4 where employees asked for more training and education for reasons such as better personal development, securing a promotion or avoiding unemployment.

### **6.2.7 Shorter, faster and more fixed trainings**

In different case studies is mentioned that training need to get shorter and more intensive, due to the workload of people (case 9). In case 4 they propose to organise 'block seminars' in order to gain a lot of knowledge in a few days. In the cases 7 and 8 it is mentioned that training needs to be shorter, with specific objectives (case 7) and faster (case 8 is). They prefer workshops in the evening because employees need to be profitable. In case 18 we notice the same trend towards shorter and more fixed training, due to financial problems: *"The shift in the funding will be more targeted in the future, less but bigger projects will be financed and that will leave the less developed communities behind. The consequences for the training are enormous: training will be more restricted, it will be more fixed what to put on the training programme and less need-orientated"*.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

In this chapter we described the developments in the different cases in seven major trends. We collected all trends that are mentioned in the cases and divided them into seven main categories. In different cases some trends are mentioned that are not described here, because they are too specific for one company.

Informal learning is often seen as an important trend in training and learning areas. However, it is not described as a separate trend here since it is not mentioned as such by the companies. Elements of informal learning can be found in the description of major trends. For example, the change from the function from trainers to guides or coaches (paragraph 6.2) means that there is more space for informal learning. Also, by self directed learning, informal learning can be part of formal trajectories.

It seems that some of the major trends are contrary to each other. For example, the trend towards broader learning paths seems opposite to the trend to shorter and faster learning. However, these two different trends can appear at the same time and in the same company. A company in which the general trend is towards a broadening of learning paths can nevertheless choose for some short and fast training trajectories in addition to other methods. In other words: *when* they choose for training, they choose for a short and fast one.

## 7. Summary and conclusion

In this report we present the results of a research that has been conducted in 19 companies and organisations in 6 different European countries: 3 in Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Romania and the United Kingdom, and 4 in Portugal. The central question in the research was: how do the training practices in different companies and organisations in Europe look like? Sub questions were: what is the profile of a trainer nowadays? How does the professional development of trainers take place? And finally, what trends regarding training and professional development of trainers are recognized?

In each of the 19 companies and organisations, several interviews were held with trainers, stakeholders and when possible, with trainees. Out of the different interviews within one company or organisation, a case study is extracted. This resulted in 19 case studies.

In *chapter two* a short description of each case study is presented as well as the profiles of the companies and organisation. The companies and organisations that participate in this research vary to a large extent in company size, areas of training and sector. The training sector is most represented and the public, health and insurance sector the least. Furthermore, big companies (> 200 staff) are more represented than medium, small and micro sized ones. Finally, companies and organisations in management training, IT and in the commercial area are most represented.

The training practices of and the difficulties trainers encounter in the different cases are described in *chapter three*. A distinction is made between training providers and non-training companies. Training providers obviously provide external seminars or courses and is dominant in the cases in Portugal. The most often used format in the non-training companies is workplace learning and popular in Germany and Greece. The difficulties trainers encounter, are divided into nine types. Trainers features and competences (like finding and motivating experienced teacher), dealing with trainees (like their personal characteristics) and difficulties that relate to the organization of the trainings (like practical problems) have been put forward most.

The profile of trainers is presented in *chapter four*. In this chapter the qualifications that trainers need to have as well as the required competences are described. Remarkable is that only two companies (in Germany) require a formal certification from their in-company trainers. The required competences of a trainer are divided into four categories: subject specific competences, didactical competences, organisational competences and interpersonal competences. In all cases more than one competence is mentioned. In four case studies, in four different countries (the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and the United Kingdom) trainers need to require competences from all categories.

*Chapter five* deals with the professional development of trainers. We distinguished three categories of professional development: collaboration with colleagues, individual development and work experiences. Most professional development takes place within the first two categories. More specific, informal peer tutoring (category collaboration) and self-study (individual development) are the most prevalent.

In the last chapter, *chapter six*, seven major trends and innovations were described: focus on training, broader learning paths, application of theory into practice, mentoring, e-learning, self-directed learning, and shorter, faster and more fixed trainings. Some of these trends seem contrary to each other, like the focus on training, which means concrete plans to enlarge the training offer and shorter, faster and more fixed trainings. But these trends can exist at the same time, even within the same company. A major trend, that is not specifically mentioned here since it has not been put forward by the interviewees, but what we discover in the research is a major trend towards more informal learning.