Best Practices in Building Soft Skills within the Vocational and Higher Education for the training companies

Good morning, buon giorno,

Dear Colleagues,

We are pleased to have the opportunity to join the national dissemination event in Torino for the Valorise Project – even from a distance.

My name is Elena Kostadinova and I represent the Bulgarian partner in the project’s consortium. We do appreciate the opportunity to be a part of this highly professional team of organizations under the leadership of Casa di Carita.

Thank you for the cooperation and invaluable learning experience we gained during these two years – we shall do our best to sustain our relationship and results!

International Management Institute is a non-profit association founded in 1993. It is the founder and a Trustee Board Member of the Varna University of Management. Our main office in Varna, at the Black sea coast. The association is a successful model for public-private partnership, which unites organizations with a very large activity profile - commercial associations, non-profit organizations and individuals, - sharing the idea for modernization and quality improvement of education and life.

Our main activities cover inter alia

- Scientific and applied research in social sciences;
- Entrepreneurship development, creation of micro-enterprises and self-employment;
- Sustainable development;
- Integration of young people in all social sectors and encouragement of youth initiative;
- Support for the social integration of minorities and groups threatened by exclusion;
- Human resource management and raising the quality of human capital;

Accordingly the concept and idea of Valorising High Skilled Migrants fits excellently into our mission.

Our dissemination event took place on June 16th. Besides the presenting the project intellectual outputs, we decided to outline the perspectives of integration of these outputs into the practice of formal and non-formal education. Our main message had been that

Soft Skills are indispensable for the Employees in a globalized working environment. When valorized the soft skills of the persons with diverse origin and international experience are a vital asset for companies.
The awareness on the importance of soft skills among medium- and high-skilled workers in professional life is vital and education institutions (of all forms and levels of education) have a flagman role. We need to

- convince people with international work experience (migrants) to value and promote their soft skills
- demonstrate the value of the soft skills of the people of different national origin and experience to the domestic business
- Promote the importance of soft skills for the businesses subject to internationalization (such as tourism, travel, brokerage, finance).

The localization of the Valorise outcomes in Bulgaria has been linked to practice of several best-practice examples that were presented during our seminar:

- **Profiling the trainees** – especially when teaching multi-ethnic and multi-cultural groups of students as we do – and adaptation of the training methodology and tools to their needs and learning profiles.
- **University career centers** – international internships are an integral part of the life of VET and HEI students nowadays. This is part of the modern professional training process and the students need to be prepared to make the most of it. Valorize models for soft-skills assessment, empowerment and promotion are valuable and can help in the adequate professional orientation – including the selection of internship company, position, country, career navigation;
- **Training companies** – the training companies are educational games that immerse students in business stimulation. Most often they are developed only on-line and allow the participating students to play different company roles and experiment with their business decisions and skills. In other words, this is virtual internship – all soft skills identified as a priority in the Valorise project can be trained via this exercise. In addition the MOSSE and MOSP can successfully become part of the preparation of the students for the training-company exercise.
- **Master classes for trainers and teachers** – the role of the trainer in the skill-building process is central. The trainers need to be aware that they deliver not only professional knowledge but help in building personal skills as well. Therefore the improvement of the profiling skills, intercultural awareness and adaptability of trainers is decisive.

Once again we congratulate Casa di Carita’s team for initiating, devising and coordinating this project and wish a successful completion of the seminar.