



# PROCEEDINGS EUROPEAN MONITORING CONFERENCE

Work Based Learning and Apprenticeships  
Brussels, 11-12 February 2014

## FINAL REPORT

# 1. AGENDA

## 11 February 2014

*Moderator Tamsin ROSE, Progress Works*

- 09.00 – 10.00 Registration and refreshments
- 10.00 – 10.30 Welcome Speeches  
*Antonio SILVA MENDES, Director, European Commission, DG EAC*  
*Ute HALLER-BLOCK, Head of Unit, EACEA*  
*Klaus FAHLE, Director, BIBB, NA DE*
- 10.30 – 11.00 Keynote  
Work-based Learning (WBL) and Apprenticeships in Europe  
*Joachim James CALLEJA, Director, Cedefop*
- 11.00 – 11.15 Evaluating and Monitoring Apprenticeship and Traineeship Schemes  
Results of the conference (4-5 February 2014, Brussels)  
*Ulrike STOROST, European Commission, DG EMPL*
- 11.15 – 11.30 Coffee break
- 11.30 – 13.15 Parallel morning workshops
- Workshop 1 - Guidance and support of SMEs  
*Ida KARNER, NA Austria*  
*Project presentations and discussion*
  - Workshop 2 - Attractiveness of VET, WBL and Apprenticeships  
*Lars MOLLER BENTSEN, NA Denmark*  
*Project presentations and discussion*
  - Workshop 3 - Cooperation training centers/VET schools – companies and involvement of social partners  
*Jose Antonio LOPEZ ALVAREZ, NA Spain*  
*Project presentations and discussion*
  - Workshop 4 - Curriculum development  
*Jetske TUINSTRA, NA Netherlands*  
*Project presentations and discussion*
  - Workshop 5 - Work-based Learning and Higher Education  
*Jose LARA SANCHEZ, NA Spain*  
*Project presentations and discussion*
  - Workshop 6 - Work-based Learning – the role of mentors, teachers and trainers  
*Marc DE VLIEGER, NA Belgium (Flemish)*  
*Project presentations and discussion*
- 13.15 – 14.15 Lunch
- 14.15 – 15.15 Market place for projects: Projects viewing - discussion - active presentation
- 15.15 – 17.00 Parallel afternoon workshops – continued
- 17.00 – 17.30 Closing of the day
- 17.30 – 19.00 Cocktail hour

## 12 February 2014

*Moderator Tamsin ROSE, Progress Works*

- 09.30 – 12.00 Plenary Session
- 09.30 – 10.30 Key messages from the workshops  
Presentations rapporteurs  
*Isabelle LE MOUILLLOUR, BIBB, DE, comments*

10.30 – 11.00	Coffee break
11.00 – 12.00	Panel discussion: achievements, needs and challenges in WBL Where do we stand? – What do we need? - What's ahead? <i>Jeff BRIDGFORD, European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)</i> <i>Philippe PERFETTI, European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (UEAPME)</i> <i>Olafur KRISTIANSSON, Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, IS</i> <i>Peter THIELE, Federal Ministry of Education and Research, DE</i> <i>Wilhelm VUKOVICH, European Commission, DG EAC</i> <i>Helmut ZELLOTH, European Training Foundation (ETF)</i>
12.00	Conclusions <i>Alison CRABB, Deputy Head of unit, European Commission, DG EAC</i>
12.15 – 13.30	Social networking buffet
13.30	Closure of the conference

## 2. INTRODUCTION

The contribution of work-based learning to supporting youth employment and economic competitiveness is widely recognized. Countries with strong and attractive VET systems, and notably those with well-established apprenticeship systems, tend to perform better in terms of youth employment.

The European Alliance for Apprenticeships was launched in Leipzig on 2 July 2013. On 15 October 2013 the Council of the European Union adopted the Declaration on the European Alliance for Apprenticeships. As one of the key elements Member States declare that, where appropriate, they will "... Undertake VET system reforms, in cooperation with social partners and other relevant stakeholders, by introducing an apprenticeship pathway or improving existing schemes,..., in order to increase the number, quality and attractiveness of apprenticeships."

The European Monitoring Conference constituted the official launch event of the Thematic Network Work-based Learning and Apprenticeships (NetWBL), which is one of the actions in support of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships. NetWBL will make visible the results of Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) projects on work-based learning and will support VET reforms by providing an on-line toolbox for use by policy makers, social partners and VET providers. At the same time, it will identify gaps which could usefully be filled by new products developed by Erasmus+, the new EU programme in the fields of education, training, youth and sport.

## 3. PLENARY SESSION – KEY POINTS FROM THE PRESENTATIONS

### Welcome Speeches

**António Silva Mendes**, European Commission, DG EAC

António Silva Mendes, Director for Education and vocational training and the coordination of Erasmus+, European Commission, stressed the need for immediate action. The youth unemployment situation in Europe is worrying; more than 5.5 million young people under the age of 25 are out of work. At the same time, however, a considerable number of companies have difficulties to fill jobs. The crisis the phenomenon of qualification mismatch has increased. Against the risks at stake, business as usual is not an option. Therefore it is vital that strong partnerships are established linking also the different educational sectors: EU Institutions, Member States, regional authorities, employers, trade unions, universities, training providers, schools and National Agencies must all work together to identify and implement effective measures to overcome the crisis. This is the current top priority for the EU.

Of all education sectors, VET has the strongest impact on the labor market. The importance of VET is widely acknowledged in the current policy debates on structural reforms. Therefore, reforms are necessary, in particular to increase the attractiveness and relevance of VET. It is very important to encourage reforms in education and training systems so that our young people develop the skills and knowledge they need to increase their job prospects. There is no doubt that high quality work-based learning and apprenticeships greatly increases the chances of finding a job.

Mr Mendes urged the National Agencies involved in this Thematic Networking to step up their efforts and to make available their first products, in particular the on-line toolbox, as soon as possible. Erasmus+, the new integrated EU programme in the fields of education, training, youth and sport will also be used to further exploit the benefits of work-based learning in post-secondary VET and continued VET.

### **Ute Haller-Block, EACEA**

Ute Haller-Block, Head of unit for Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Adult Education (AE) at the Executive Agency EACEA, welcomed the audience to this joint event of the Commission, the National Agencies and the EACEA. The EACEA has the mandate to ensure the implementation of parts of the Education Programmes. A major challenge remains, also in the new Erasmus+ Programme, to collect all the many experiences and project results, to multiply them and make them sustainable. The instrument of thematic clustering of projects dealing with similar topics of political strategic interest has proven to be very successful. They have been set up for topics like Inclusion, ECVET or Skills for Jobs, and coordinated by networks of National Agencies.

This conference launches the new thematic network on work-based learning and apprenticeships, to give visibility to project results in an area which is of major importance in VET policy in Europe. The cooperation between Commission, National Agencies and EACEA has proven to be a successful model to ensure wide audience and attention as well as to contribute to link policy to practice.

### **Klaus Fahle, NA at BIBB**

Klaus Fahle, director of the National Agency at BIBB, launched the thematic network NetWBL in explaining its mission and its main objectives. NetWBL aims to strengthen work based learning (WBL) elements in existing Vocational Education and Training (VET) systems and Higher Education (HE) and to support apprenticeship in particular. The network addresses the key actors involved in WBL in each European country taking into account the different VET and Higher Education systems and legislative regulations. NetWBL will make visible the results of Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) projects on work-based learning and will support VET reforms by providing an on-line toolbox for use by policy makers, social partners and VET providers. At the same time, it will identify gaps which could usefully be filled by new products developed by Erasmus+, the new EU programme in the fields of education, training, youth and sport.

Three European Monitoring conferences in Brussels, Vilnius and Berlin as well as eight national conferences will improve the exchange of information and knowledge across national boundaries and establish results and findings in national and European education and training policy.

Klaus Fahle emphasized that a successful implementation of WBL and the projects requires a rethinking of the governance structure as contents of the training are defined through the labor and business process. Less control of politics and the state should be developed to more responsibility for the economy, which means businesses and social partners: "Economy and companies need to go beyond their individual interests for defining national or even European standards".

He concluded that WBL has the potential to contribute to the development of the European area of education taking into account that work- and business processes are often similar and comparable allowing mobility through common standards and even future European core occupations.

## **Keynote Work-based Learning and Apprenticeships in Europe**

*Joachim James Calleja, Cedefop*

In his keynote speech Cedefop Director James Calleja pointed out that, according to Cedefop research, employers place a premium on work experience, and in countries where VET is well developed, includes work-based learning and is governed together with social partners, it results in better labour-market outcomes for VET graduates. The revival of apprenticeships can only work if learners and enterprises buy in – and this is a challenge, in particular in countries with high youth unemployment rates or a small share of VET.

He emphasised that while even the most labour-market relevant education and training cannot create sufficient jobs, apprenticeships and other forms of work-based learning can provide high-quality training and help match learning

outcomes to the skills employers require.

What makes apprenticeship attractive is that it provides the skills that companies need, acts as a stepping stone to the labour market, offers learners a formally recognised qualification, which entitles them to exercise an occupation, and gives them access to further education and training. However, James Calleja stressed, just one in four enterprises with 10 or more employees trains apprentices. So, if we want to give more young people a chance to get an apprenticeship, we have to encourage more enterprises in more countries to train. While the pressure to tackle youth unemployment has moved work-based learning high up on the European policy agenda, he warned that it is a risk if we expect too much in virtually no time; what we need is policy learning from good and bad experience, to understand what works and what doesn't. He concluded that we also need to work closer with VET institutions in Member States to support cooperation between VET schools and enterprises, the use of the European tools for transparency, recognition and mobility, and to build a culture of "learning by doing" at all levels of the qualifications frameworks based on good governance, quality assurance and sustainable partnerships.

## **Evaluating and Monitoring Apprenticeship and Traineeship Schemes - Results of the conference**

*Ulrike Storost, European Commission, DG EMPL*

The seminar had been providing an overview of the role of monitoring and evaluation in improving the effectiveness of traineeship and apprenticeship programmes. It provided a critical analysis of monitoring and evaluation practices with focused sessions on methods for evaluation covering use of data, monitoring, impact and economic evaluation.

The seminar targeted government authorities or other relevant stakeholders in Member States, in particular those responsible for the design and monitoring of apprenticeship and traineeship schemes, and experts in charge of evaluation and monitoring of public policies.

The event was designed to appeal to policy and evaluation professionals from National Ministries and structured to facilitate deep learning with a focus on dissemination of core concepts and methodologies.

An important outcome of this final plenary session has been the identification of future training needs regarding monitoring and evaluation.

## **4. REPORTS FROM WORKSHOPS**

### **WS 1. Guidance and support of SMEs**

#### **Main messages from the speakers presentations**

The results of the projects funded by the European Commission should support to reach the EU 2020 objectives. One main topic is to raise the employment rate up to 75% within the EU.

"Labour has changed within the last 20 years tremendously. People have more than one job, there are periods of unemployment, job change etc.," said Karin Steiner, AT, abif, representing the LdV-TOI projects NAVIGUIDE and GuideMe! "This is why Lifelong Guidance should be available also after the first vocational choice, especially during phases of vocational or personal changes", Karin Steiner outlined in her presentation and detected the following needs and gaps: Lack of co-ordination of guidance activities within a country; Information on vocational education, job profiles, etc. is necessary but not sufficiently provided yet; Access to guidance support should be open for vulnerable groups (e.g. NEETs- not in education, employment or training) and should already support the transition from school to the labour market; Training for guidance staff based on common quality standards is needed.

Wolfgang Bliem, AT, ibw, representing the LdV-TOI-project ECGC – European Career Guidance Certificate, and showed a good practice example how a Career Guidance Service of a Chamber of Commerce could support SMEs in their work-based learning activities. Based on the experience in apprenticeship in Austria he gave an overview of the role of SMEs in apprenticeship and their motives to engage in WBL. "Benefits for enterprises to engage in apprenticeship training are obvious", he said and named the following motives: Productivity and investment motives in future skilled workforces; Screening motives as apprentices bring less recruiting and training costs for new staff; Image improvements as SMEs get more publicity at local and regional level; Social responsibility. In the context of the challenges for SMEs, he presented an overview of activities of Career Guidance Services: Providing information to companies, teachers and

future apprenticeships, organising special activities for schools and acting as interface between companies and schools for example. Wolfgang Bliem concluded with a view to the professionalization of career guidance counsellors as qualified professionals play a key role in a successful intervention.

The two speakers in the afternoon highlighted their results from their LLP projects concerning WBL with two different target groups: Students from a Higher Education Institution (HEI) and low qualified persons from the agricultural sector.

Reina Ferrandez Berruero, ES, Universidad Jaume I, presented the main findings of their research project "WBL as integrated curriculum" (WBLIC) based on the cases provided by partners about the relationship between HEI and companies and focused on three elements of their research, which are shaping the integration of WBL in curricula and influencing the success of study programmes at HEI: structural elements, relationship and people. She as well underlined the importance of cooperation between the key players in WBL, in this case the relationships between HEIs and the labour market and the role that all involved people, like teachers, mentors/coaches in companies and students have. All of her open questions concerning this topic would perfectly fit in a new Erasmus+ proposal as specific qualifications are needed to support "RELATIONSHIP" and "PEOPLE" within the context of WBL.

Emmanouela Stefani, GR, Technopolis, presented the LDV-TOI-Project AGROTATE – Job Rotation e-service enhancing lifelong learning for the Agriculture Sector and how they used an e-service platform to 1) detect the educational needs of companies in the agricultural sector and to match them with the qualifications of job seekers 2) propose to the job seekers the offered positions that are best for them 3) offer training to the job seekers in their CVET-institution in order to prepare them for the needs of their new job or to help them to get more offers 4) provide training to the companies in order to fill their gaps. This tailor made e-service platform could be transferred to other branches and sectors and would support SMEs to find the best matching employee for an open position and would support the job seeker to get trained on the job in those topics he/she has still deficits.

## Main messages from the discussion on needs and gaps

Different challenges, needs and gaps were identified in different countries concerning guidance and support of SMEs within the context of WBL and apprenticeship. It is therefore not possible to give one solution which will fit to every country specific need. Therefore many different solutions have been discussed – from small improvements to substantial changes in schooling systems in some countries. Here some main discussion outcomes on needs and gaps:

- **Provide SMEs with necessary resources**

- Guidance support (Apprenticeship counsellors should also support SMEs concerning the following questions: What are the sector specific needs of SMEs? How to prepare a good training? Where to find good trainers/mentors? How to start an apprenticeship scheme?)
- financial support (taxes, ...)
- human resources (qualification clusters, trained mentors/coaches at the workplace)

- **Adopt a broader approach: invest in Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance**

- Introducing WBL to all levels of education – IVET, HE, CVET (employees training, management training, requalification for unemployed,...)
- Standardisation of common topic in guidance and career counseling in order to reduce the heterogeneity of the training for counselors (professionalization) at one hand side and providing country specific training for career guidance counselors at the other side
- Guidance activities need to be coordinated by main guidance organisations so that all target groups are covered
- Further training is needed on changes and new trends on the labour market

- **Improve cooperation between educational institutions and companies**

- Guidance should start in all types of schools (primary, secondary, high)
- Schools should be open for new approaches (short placements for pupils and teachers)
- Teachers are very often the ones who act as career counselors, so they should therefore stay in touch with the world of work (job shadowing in enterprises; qualification on guidance and career counseling)

- **Implement innovative approaches to reach NEETs and low-qualified persons**

- These groups get least guidance but would need it the most (Access to guidance)
- Need to simplify the guidance process for low qualified people and reduce the extent of written material is required

- **Change in the mindsets**

- from theory to practice (cooperation between educational sectors and companies is necessary)
- from standardization to innovation (skills mismatch; labour market needs change quickly)

## Possibilities for Erasmus+:

- Projects developing company-specific modules that could be integrated in VET curricula
- Defining a basic understanding of employer involvement
- In order to strengthen the cooperation between partners in WBL: adapt and specify the concept presented by Reina Ferrandez-Berruero to different countries / sectors / institutions.
- Projects proposing phases of WBL before taking a career decision for one or another profession
- Projects developing possibilities for adapting Lifelong Guidance to trends in the labour market behaviour
- Projects developing WBL schemes for weak learners (e.g. Überbetriebliche Lehre in AT; Production school (DK & AT))

## WS 2. Attractiveness of VET: WBL and Apprenticeships

The workshop focused on 4 key questions relating to attractiveness of Work Based Learning and 7 projects from 6 countries presented their approaches to enhancing attractiveness.

The first question was how counselling and promotion activities can be used to raise awareness about advantages of WBL in VET to young people. In his presentation Wolfgang Reuter from Hauptstelle RAA Nord-Rhein-Westfalen in Germany underlined the importance of involving young people directly in peer-to-peer guidance because they speak the same language and are able to motivate other youngsters. The use of podcast, blogs and other forms of virtual peer-to-peer communication can be very effective tools. Susanne Reiber from Steirische Wirtschaftsförderungs-gesellschaft in Austria argued that company visits for school children can greatly raise the awareness of technical occupations and influence career decisions, however such visits need to be well prepared by schools and companies jointly to ensure interest among the pupils and be successful. Darija Čukelj from the Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts stressed the importance of focusing on promoting VET to the parents, not least the mothers, as they play a vital role when it comes to making decisions about education and careers.

The second question was focused on career pathways from VET to higher education. Beata Jałocha from the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, presented a Polish initiative to promote recognition of prior learning (VET skills) in the higher education sector as a way to raise the attractiveness and esteem of work based learning.

The third question was how international work placement opportunities may help to lift the quality and status of VET and attract young people to the trades. In his presentation Bjarne Dyrberg from the Danish Insurance Academy stressed that international training activities are an important factor when it comes attracting the best VET students to the insurance industry. This helps to demonstrate that there are international career opportunities for VET graduates. Andreas Mårtensson from the Municipality of Kungsbacka in Sweden argued along the same lines that international mobility shows that there is a larger European labour market for students in industrial automation and that this gives technical occupations a more positive image.

The fourth question dealt with initiatives and collaboration to engage more companies in training of young people. Bozica Ilijic from die Berater in Austria presented a project through which was increased number of apprentices, recruiters were more aware of their expectations and expectations from young people, managers and recruiters were better prepared to deal with school leavers and difficult young people and project in whole had positive impact for SMEs.

### Main conclusions of the discussions around above mentioned questions were:

- **Vocational guidance and counselling:** Should start earlier than secondary school level so potential VET students receive information and introduction to different trades at an early age – also through peer learning. Skills competitions are valuable for promotion of VET. Involvement of parents is crucial – so initiatives targeting this group and making them aware of VET and the related job market may help increase enrolment in VET. Similarly there is a need to improve the knowledge about VET among guidance counsellors because counsellors are often teachers with HE degrees and limited experience with vocational education.
- **Pathways from VET to HEI:** The links between VET and HEI varies between countries – more attention should be paid to graduates from VET schools and their chances to transfer to HEI, because transparent pathways do impact upon attractiveness of VET. In countries or sectors where this transition is not easy or possible at all, procedures need to be simplified. In some countries, career mapping activities take place in the VET centres and this provides for a closer cooperation with HEI, notably institutes of applied sciences.



- **International work placement:** It was argued that international work placements help to raise motivation and boosts self-confidence and empowerment of students and may thus help reduce dropouts. international work placements also gives higher prestige to VET programmes and VET schools and demonstrates that international opportunities are not only for HE students.
- **Collaboration and engagement of SMEs:** In many countries SMEs are not eager to provide apprenticeships because they do not see apprenticeships as a way to recruit talented young people. The companies need more information on advantages of the apprenticeship system by relevant actors as well as on obligations/requirements associated with training young people, and they must be persuaded that training of young people is important for the future development of the sectors and trades. A “role model” scheme may be applied where SMEs with experience in training young people inform and encourage other SMEs in professional networks – through peer learning. In some projects visits to companies by peers are used to inform about requirement in the apprenticeship system and this has resulted in increased numbers of apprentices. Because of limited number of employees, SMEs often need help with paper work and all other practical arrangements regarding apprentices.

## WS 3. Cooperation training centers/VET schools – companies and involvement of social partner

Two best practice projects related to cooperation between training centres and schools introduce the subject. The first one was Methodology for formalization and transfer of informal knowledge in metal sector SMEs – KIMET, coordinated by the Metal Enterprises Association of Bizkaia, Spain, and the second one European Regions Enhancing Internationalisation of Vocational Education and Training, coordinated by the Education Ministry of Niedersachsen, Germany.

The key points discussed were related to needs and gaps in work based learning (WBL) and school and company cooperation at a national level:

- Concept of work based learning.
- State of the art of work based learning in different countries and institutions.
- Expectations from the two points of view: school and company.
- Successful and unsuccessful approaches between both worlds.
- Role of teachers and trainers in companies.

These were the main comments and conclusions from the participants:

- The percentage of company training in VET education is very diverse from one country to another. Selection of companies for training varies a lot as well, with some countries requiring certification of companies for sending trainees.
- In some countries WBL, usually identified with apprenticeship, is still seen as something old fashioned. This is changing though, partly because of the high youth unemployment rate. Nevertheless the idea still remains that it is second best or not as good as other options a student might have.
- The concept of WBL is not clear and depends on the aims to be achieved.
- Many companies lack motivation for WBL; they see mostly paperwork and waste of time and resources. Some companies interested in WBL are mainly thinking of cheap employees and getting money from the state.
- There is a lack of tradition of communication between school and world of work that should be changed from an early age in education. Sometimes the student is reluctant as well and there are some company dropouts; money is not always the best motivation for them.
- Validation and monitoring are necessary to ensure quality in WBL.

Two new best practice projects were introduced: Wining a job through successful workplace placement – WIN, coordinated by VET Centre for Wood and Furniture Industries, Portugal, and Mobility in Automotive Sector through ECVET, coordinated by MESS-Employers Association of Metal Industries, Turkey.

For the group discussion, the key topics proposed addressed the role of European cooperation in WBL:

- Relevance of European projects to fill gaps and needs of institutions.
- Type of partners, products, activities and projects management decisions needed by beneficiaries.
- Influence of WBL in mobility; an incentive or a deterrent?
- Use and importance of European tools, like Europass, EQF, ECVET

The following are some of the main comments and conclusions mentioned in the groups:

- European projects promote quality in VET and are fundamental for mobility and students exchanges, as much as enriching for students and teachers. They promote as well the involvement of companies in curricula development.



- Contact with policy makers and stakeholders is sometimes not easy for beneficiaries; this reduces the impact of the projects.
- Beneficiaries lack information about former or current projects of the same topic and find it difficult to get partners. More good practice dissemination is needed.
- Finding the right partners may be a complicated task, especially for non-profit institutions, due to the number of intermediate organizations and the lack of initiatives for contact.
- Projects bureaucracy refrains institutions from applying.
- European tools promote mobility, but they are not sufficiently promoted in all countries.

## WS 4. Curriculum development

This workshop was about curriculum development for work based learning. The aim of the workshop was to identify common challenges and major barriers, share examples of interesting practices, develop practical solutions in WBL curriculum development identify needs and gaps and outline the political relevance.

### Main messages from the speakers presentations

Christian M. Stracke (DE) from the University of Duisburg-Essen showed how they developed during several projects a generic scheme and structure for competence-based vocational education and training. It is based on sector-specific competence models and job profiles. The direct feedback from 'the world of work' made them adjust their model to a practical division.

Nuša Žibert (SI) from BC Naklo showed us the impact from the mobility's for teachers on her school and surrounding. They integrated newly acquired knowledge and skills into the curriculum and thus to the teaching process. BC Naklo approaches the acquiring of new, innovative and applicable knowledge, skills and qualifications of teachers very professional. They always work from a needs analyses and offer new possibilities of professional development.

Lenuta-Carmen Gugu-Gramatopol (RO) from the University of Brasou showed us a successfully transferring French certification to Romania and Bulgaria. In a short period of time, employees were assessed and retrained.

Mariette Overschie (NL) from Delft University of Technology started her presentation with the trends in curricula development in Europe. Followed by explanation about the method Microtraining. She also showed how research brought evidence for how Microtraining contributes to business results.

### Main messages from the discussion

The people who attended the workshop were from different backgrounds and different countries. It could be quite representative for Europe.

#### Needs

- Better WBL by facilitating teachers to move away from traditional teaching
- Organised toolbox/platform with different methodologies for teaching, tutoring and learning which can be adapted by different countries
- Correlate needs of the target groups with needs of the labour market and existing educational offer to develop flexible, modular and motivating curricula
- Workable cooperation schools – 'world of work' in curriculum design
- Attractive and motivating curricula (for students) giving early access to the world of work

#### Challenges

Quality of flexible curricula (core competences + response to changing environment)

- Meet the needs of company and learner
- Involve the learner in the design
- Challenge teachers and trainers
- Cooperation of all stakeholders

#### Possibilities Erasmus +

As a resume, for a curriculum design we are looking for:

- The needs from companies
- The needs from learners
- A way of involving learners in the design
- Knowledge about how teachers and trainers feel challenged
- Good practises about stakeholders cooperation by making a design
- Program or method for facilitating teachers for modern way of teaching with different methodologies for teaching, tutoring and learning which can be adapted
- A method for developing flexible, modular and motivating curricula
- A method for cooperation school and world of work in curriculum design

## WS 5. Work-based Learning and Higher Education

### Main messages from the speakers presentations

David Davins (UK) Principal Research Fellow at the Policy Research Institute at Leeds Metropolitan University showed how they developed a conceptual framework project to try to explain the relationship among all the elements that have to be taken into account on developing a WBL programme with emphasis on learning. This initial framework considered on developing a new WBL programme all the stages of the development cycle (planning, designing, delivering and evaluation related to the market needs). Thus, Work-based learning is the “umbrella” term used to identify activities which collaboratively engage employers and Higher Education Institutions.

Ángeles Gabella (ES), European Project Coordinator for VET and Higher VET in the Regional Ministry of Education in Andalusia (Spain), presented a very interesting project to enhance collaboration and improve better practice among regions in Europe. She also explained how EREIVET network “European Regions Enhancing Internationalisation in Vocational Education and Training” has improved the quality of placements in the last years.

Magdalena Rudnicka (PL) who is responsible for Intensive Program: “International Mass Events Organization based on Recent Experience of EURO 2012” of the Wroclaw School of Banking gave a very good example of how an intensive programme can be very attractive and related with daily life, based on recent EuroCup 2012 which was held in Poland & Ukraine.

Mojca Maher Pirc, (SI) has been an International Mobility Project Coordinator in the International Relations Office, Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia since 2002. She presented the project “Ljubljana Summer School”, which started as a project of 35 students and grew to a summer programme of 500 international students and 40 international faculties.

### Main messages from the discussion

Our objectives were to develop a discussion in small groups, which allowed close interaction among participants, and, at the same time, to establish connections among the groups so that some kind of exchange of ideas was possible. With this aim, a spreadsheet was opened in Google Drive, so it could be read and shared by all groups. To ease the exchange of information among groups, some discussion guidelines were agreed by coordinators. Finally the following issues were addressed, all of them under the scope of Higher Education:

- What is Work Based Learning? What does a training activity have to accomplish with to be considered WBL?
- Which are the benefits of WBL?
- Which are the main challenges to be faced when implementing WBL?

Their answers, needs and challenges were included in a shared document with key messages as follows:

- Curriculum development meets both rigid academic plans and rigid national legislation
- Difficulties to evaluate transversal competences and softskills
- Academic calendars is a challenge. A lot of students are seeking for traineeships at the same period of the year
- Lack of knowledge, trust between academia and world of business
- Difficult to measure learning outcomes in practical areas - risk of using the same way of measure as for theoretical aspect - models for practical exams needed
- Companies does not understand the concept of learning outcomes
- Curricula- to take more into account the company procedures
- Challenge to get the companies involved
- How to get recognition of work based learning, WBL that is not an integrated part of the curricula
- Companies- HEIs might be reluctant to listen to their needs when they express them

- Learners should bring added value into companies
- Incentives are needed to get companies work with educational institutions. Also students need to be motivated. (If work based learning is not compulsory part of the curriculum.)
- Promotion, dissemination and motivation in HEIs
- There is a difference in curriculum development between different types of HEIs. In universities of applied sciences the working life is involved in curriculum development.
- A big challenge in some countries: many small businesses are family businesses. They will only recruit within the family and they might not be interested in cooperation with the universities.
- Erasmus+ is a big challenge for WBL. It offers more opportunities to students in HEIs.

## WS 6. Work-based Learning – the role of mentors, teachers and trainers

### Main messages from the speakers presentations

The first project “JOEL – On the job learning in social profit; Tools for job embedded learning in social sector” was presented by Annemie Lauryssens (Hivset Turnhout - Belgium) is defining a tool box of learning on-the-job best practices in the sector. The focus is on best practices in job embedded learning, in relation to students, teachers and mentors in child, elderly and health care. The focus is on the quality of the workplace through the definition of a self-evaluation tool for workplaces to enable the evaluation of a specific workplace as work-based learning.

The following project “Improving quality in work based learning” was presented by Mats Lof (Kokkola Business Institute - Finland) defined guidelines for teachers and students to guide them through the process of work-based learning. Those tools were specifically targeted at teachers preparing young people for mobility abroad.

During the afternoon workshop session the first project was presented by Marja Orpana-Niitlahti (Salpaus Further Education - Finland). The project “European Workplace Tutor” developed the specific profile of the tutor in the workplace. Starting from the previous “It’s time” project, that tackled the issue of developing a programme for work-based learning tutors in company, the European Workplace Tutor project developed the idea of providing effective training to in-company tutors. In particular the initiative developed the qualification profile for the “Learning process guide”.

The following project “VMA - Mentoring in the Work Place” was presented by Johannes Arnasson (Akureyri Technical College - Iceland). The initiative aimed at applying mentoring methods to support students during placements; ability to effectively planning the learning process.

Addressing work-based learning – the role of mentors, teachers and trainers there was consensus with regard to the job title and work of a VET teacher. However there was confusion with regard to within enterprises, where work-based learning takes place. There were numerous titles for apparently the same thing: supervisor, mentor, job instructor, professional learning agent, work place facilitator, job coach etc. While the title is different, the job description is broadly similar and there was consensus with regard to what the person does, the profile and characteristics required as well as the role undertaken within the work place.

### Main messages from the discussion and possibilities for Erasmus+

#### • Competences and skills of professionals

There is clear understanding of competence profile, skills needed with a mix of technical skills, soft skills, communication skills, the skill to anticipate needs in the sector, make the vet pathway attractive, deal with challenging behaviour, intercultural skills, negotiation skills as well as open-mindedness and the ability to make the mentee feel welcome.

For the future, areas that need to be addressed include: formal recognition of these VET professionals; standardisation of existing qualifications at European level; up-skilling opportunities through teacher exchanges; mandatory return to enterprises for tutors in order to re-familiarise themselves with the workplace, anticipate needs of the work environment, identify new technologies and developments in order to update curricula appropriately in the classroom that is consistent with new developments in the appropriate sector.

#### • Communication

Good communication already exists and there are a variety of skills and methods of building relationships, for example employer forums in VET schools to discuss issues regarding training and bi-lateral meetings at least once a year amongst others. Frequently VET schools develop incentives to get companies involved and build relationships, for example, for

those providing nursing training, they offer reduced first aid training for staff in the host companies. Students are also involved in the communication process, for example in the Netherlands a database is being developed so students can rate host companies. Students are also involved in compiling videos of tasks they undertook in the workplace to show to their classmates, and also exchange these videos with other international partners.

For the future, an area that needs to be addressed is that of a well disseminated EU wide WBL portal for sharing products and tools.

- **Documents**

There is a wealth of documents that currently exist, such as: checklists, learning agreements, evaluation tools, progress tools, needs analysis, learning plans, schedules, logs, diaries, skills cards, documents via TOI tools.

For the future there is a strong desire to avoid too much documentation or over burdening companies with documentation. There is also a desire not to re-invent the wheel. Therefore again, the request was for a well disseminated EU wide WBL portal for sharing products and tools. The issue of reducing the need for documentation and capturing requirements in alternative methods, for example a video which would provide richer data and contextualise learning, was also raised.

- **Transnational issues – when the professionals are located in different countries**

Focus is on personal contact with partners in other countries but this becomes more difficult as a project grows and partnerships expand. A number of transnational issues centre on translating paperwork and contextualising that paperwork.

While the European Qualifications Framework can bridge certain problems, for the future, areas that need to be addressed include: the creation of non-sector specific standard; a training programme for those mentors who also host a foreign student who may come from a very different cultural background; common definitions in order to avoid misunderstanding and miscommunication; the creation of a network or Community of Practice for tutors and mentors similar to what exists for Erasmus international co-ordinators.

## 6. MESSAGES FROM THE ROUND TABLE

To conclude the conference the panel discussed the achievements, needs, challenges and WBL from the specific perspective of the panelists.

### **Where do we stand? What are the specific achievements in realising WBL?**

Helmut Zelloth, European Training Foundation (ETF) pointed out that the main question to answer is “Who is we? About whom are we talking?” taking into account that there is a different status in different countries concerning WBL.

Wilhelm Vukovich, European Commission, DG EAC highlighted the initiatives of the European Commission mainly the European Alliance of Apprenticeships (EAfA) establishing the ambassador and pledge schemes, bilateral and national agreements, initiatives, and cooperation mechanisms, supporting the reform of apprenticeship systems and raising awareness of the benefits of apprenticeships, as well as contributing to the policy environment through studies and dialogue. EAfA boosts the quality and supply of apprenticeships, intends to promote youth employment supporting the aims of the Youth Guarantee while simultaneously reducing the disparity between skills and labour demand.

Philippe Perfetti, UEAPME, emphasised that SME have to be involved in development of VET and WBL: “The more companies participate in governance, the better the quality of WBL will be”.

Olafur Kristansson, Ministry of Education, Science and Culture of Iceland, talked from the system level perspective and stressed that their system of apprentice already works.

Peter Thiele, German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, made clear that it takes ten years to change a system. «We are talking about a long term project. In the process we need a long breath. This is what the EU should keep in mind. We have to stick to quality standards. We need a common European strategy concerning WBL coordinated by the EC.»

Jeff Bridgford, ETUC, considered that renewed interest in WBL is very welcome but it needs a long term strategy. In all countries there is concern about youth unemployment, but we cannot burden the apprenticeship with that issue. It should be made easier to employers to take apprentices. “We need a clear definition of what apprenticeship means and what

is required. Don't lose the focus on what apprenticeship means. VET alone cannot solve youth unemployment, but we should use the time to think about it, so when economy rises, these young people are still in the boat.»

### **What's ahead? What has to happen – what are the concrete actions to be taken?**

Philippe Perfetti appealed that companies and unions should participate in different levels: «Let's go step by step. SMEs are adaptive more than whole systems.»

Helmut Zelloth stated that enterprises must be committed as well as ministries have to make the first step. Involve career guidance is essential, career guiders have to know more about the world of work, he added.

### **What do you expect from the NetWBL? When you imagine the end of NetWBL in 2016 what will have made the network successful?**

Wilhelm Vukovich: «Don't underestimate what National Agencies and projects do because they bring WBL to the grassroots level.»

Peter Thiele expressed his hope of extending the network NetWBL and that the governments want to change something, too, in providing the resources: "It is not the "if", it is the "how".

Olafur Kristansson wondered if it is possible to change the systems in the EU. «We have evidence that apprenticeship helps to avoid youth unemployment. In some systems apprenticeship has been abolished – now we see that this was a mistake.»

Philippe Perfetti mentioned that coherence is needed between budget lines, networks and the toolbox and therefore he suggested to continue peer learning work.

Jeff Bridgford made clear: "NetWBL will be useful on basis of experience to build on good practice. If we have a clear definition of apprenticeship then the commission can take up their work."

Helmut Zelloth concluded "from MS perspective the idea of apprenticeship is more wide spread, that it contributes to clarify concepts of WBL. It would be good, if we have different headings for stimulating projects and that we even involve neighboring countries. Apprenticeship moves forward to learnership."

## **7. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS**

Alison Crabb, European Commission, DG EAC stressed out the main message on apprenticeships and work based learning reform: "The train is moving and NetWBL can influence its journey and its destination. " She emphasised that NetWBL is an important contribution to the European Alliance for Apprenticeships. Commitments already made under the Alliance since its launch in July 2013 are many and diverse:

- by large companies typically investing in more and better apprenticeship places and in transfer of experience inside the company.
- by SMEs, typically via Chambers of Commerce, Industry or Skilled Crafts and in collaboration with Social Partner representatives providing training and capacity building measures to help SMEs get involved in apprenticeships.
- by Member States. Following adoption of a Council Declaration on apprenticeships in autumn 2013, Ministers for Employment and Education are making commitments to apprenticeships and work-based learning reform. So far around 15 commitments have been received by the Commission. Typical activities include legislative reform, development of training standards and curricula, training of trainers etc.

Alison Crabb pointed out what the European Commission is doing to support apprenticeships and work-based learning reform:

- Supporting and steering European cooperation on policy reform. Examples: new Member State expert group on VET starts work in March with a 2-year mandate to produce targeted policy guidance on WBL reform; regular meetings of Directors of General for VET, including a peer review in November 2013 specifically on WBL and apprenticeship reform; regular meetings of the tripartite Advisory Committee on VET, including national and European level social partners as well as government representatives.

- Financial support via EU funds such as ESF and Erasmus+ can put «oil in the reform machinery» for example upcoming call addressed to national authorities on apprenticeship reform, Strategic Partnerships and Sector Skills Alliances.

She concluded in appealing that NetWBL members now need to use every available channel to communicate on activities and results, bringing in expertise where needed and breaking down typical borders between different sectors and between the worlds of education and work.

Successful apprenticeship and WBL reform requires multi-stakeholder partnerships, mobilising a wide range of expertise: “The expectations of NetWBL are high, and the European Commission will use all opportunities to promote its work: first results are expected very soon!”

**Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency**  
Erasmus+: Vocational Training, Adult Education, Platforms

**Write to us:**

Avenue du Bourget, 1 (BOUR 02/145)  
1049 Brussels  
Belgium

**Visit us:**

Rue Colonel Bourg, 115  
1140 Brussels  
Belgium

**Phone:** +(32 2) 298 7979

**Fax:** +(32 2) 292 1327

**Website:**

<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu>

**e-mail:**

[EACEA-Leonardo-da-Vinci@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EACEA-Leonardo-da-Vinci@ec.europa.eu)