



OVERALL SUMMARY REPORT

***The needs of un/under employed female graduates in the Netherlands, UK and
Iceland***

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1. Introduction to the Get Mobile project

The Get Mobile project is funded with support from the European Commission within the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme for Education and Culture. Get Mobile aims to provide training and guidance materials to SMEs (esp. microbusinesses) and female graduates (especially those unemployed or under-employed (from Business and Sciences) to encourage both underrepresented target groups to participate in future European mobility activities. Partners from the UK, Netherlands, Italy, Turkey, Iceland and Greece will work together from 2011 - 2013 to encourage greater numbers of female graduates from Business, Science and Technology (BS) to consider going abroad on placement to help their career development.

In order to place the project's output in context three partners, the UK (Inova), the Netherlands (VHTO) and Iceland (VMST) conducted a desk research to find out current development training aimed at un/under-employed graduates (focused on females in BS fields) to support them in entering the labour market or going on placement. Furthermore partners undertook a focus group with representatives of this target group to find out their needs and ideas on current gaps in training/advice/learning provision from their perspectives. Partners have prepared a short summary report, outlining the main issues arising from the desktop research and focus group. This report was presented to all partners for discussing during the first partner meeting. VHTO collected all the reports and amendments suggested during the partner meeting and compiled an overall summary report order to analyse and highlight the situation of support for women who are entering the (European) labour market in order to place the project's output in context.

2. Description of target group

Definition and background of un/under-employed female graduates from BS

The target group of the project are graduates from Business and Science with a university degree. The UK and Iceland aim at business in a broader perspective whereas the target group of the Dutch partner (VHTO) is a specific group BS-graduates, i.e. science and business related to technology, engineering and mathematics. In the Netherlands; people who graduate in STEM enter the labour market fairly quickly after graduation. Research indicates that Dutch school-leavers and graduates who have completed a technical course easily find a job that matches their education in terms of both level and field; 72% of the university technical education graduates report that their job matches their educational level.

Furthermore youth unemployment in the Netherlands is the lowest in the European Union. In the first quarter of 2011, the youth unemployment rate in the Netherlands was 7.4 percent, i.e. lower than in all other member states of the European Union (EU).

On average, it takes a European graduate 5 months to find employment (Eurydice: "Key data on Education in Europe 2012". Their findings indicate that "tertiary education graduates integrate into the job market two times more quickly than people with lower qualifications. In this context, Dutch university graduates fare quite well. On average, it takes them only 3 months to find a job after graduation. Countries that have suffered particularly from the EU debt crisis show a mixed picture: In Greece (12,2 months), Italy (9,8 months) and Spain (7 months) graduates stay unemployed longer while Portugal (4,7) and Ireland (4,1) perform better than the EU average. But in the UK, unemployment immediately after graduation, for new graduates, is widespread and has increased notably since 2008. In 2010, unemployment among new graduates was 20%. And in Iceland unemployment has risen dramatically after the crisis in 2008.

Mobility of the target group

A study of Nuffic (Netherlands organisation for international cooperation in higher education) indicates that companies in Western Europe are more likely to seek international education experience regardless of whether the graduate will work in a local or international post, and the majority agree that internationally educated graduates outperform others. A study conducted in the Netherlands (PBT) shows that in general the international mobility within Europe is not high: only 6.8% of the European labour force has lived and worked in a country different from the one they are currently living.

In the Netherlands this percentage is relatively low compared to the other nationalities, and even more so for scientists (4,6%) and engineers (6,1%). Spending one semester abroad is more common than a shorter internship. Dutch science students, with 35% studying abroad for at least one semester, are in the lead in Europe. However, only a much smaller percentage of STEM-graduates move to another country to work.

In all three countries the number of graduates has increased both among female and male students (see appendix for exact numbers).

From university to the labour market

Most graduates start looking for jobs after graduation, and universities do not help establish business links with employers. Even in the Netherlands, where there is a shortage of qualified technical trained personnel, some graduates find it difficult to find a job that matches their education. Often they don't know where to look for a job based in their own county let alone find a placement abroad. Despite their willingness to start an international career, most of the participants of the focusgroups in the different countries affirmed that they don't know much about mobility programs or where to look for information on how to find placements abroad. According to the deskresearch and based on the focus group meetings; female graduates often feel there is a lack of personal support in order for them to participate in European mobility

programmes. And that there are few resources especially available for graduates looking for support for placement abroad.

3. Quality and suitability of current training aimed at graduates in BS

Resources available

The desk research indicates that not many institutes offer training aimed at un/underemployed graduates in BS. In the Netherlands people assume that for graduates in BS it is not very difficult to find a job in their field. But a great deal of new graduates from scientific programmes choose to work in a field that is not directly related to their field of study. It could be the case that those graduates don't have a realistic view of working in science. As the focusgroup participants in the Netherlands. Although there are many possible career paths for graduates in BS; universities prepare students only for a career as a researcher. The focusgroup results indicated that the target group isn't aware of intermediate organisations to support them. And there isn't much support from the university in finding a job after graduation. Most resources for going on international seem to have been targeted towards students, not graduates. For a list of resources see annex 8.

Current gaps in resources

As mentioned there is little support for graduates looking for support for placement abroad.

From the deskresearch the following gaps were identified:

- Graduates don't know where to look for jobs
- No co-ordinated programmes available
- No funding
- No support system (university) in finding a job outside academic world
- Little support from university after graduation
- No strong alumni networks
- Universities don't keep track of what their alumni are doing
- No database of alumni available who went for a placement abroad themselves
- Lack of contact between employers and graduates
- Lack of mentoring (people in business matched with graduates)

Strategies for resolving these needs

Recommendations from the participants of the focus groups:

- set up a network of women who have been working abroad (within alumni networks that already existed)
- more support from the university in finding a job after graduation
- guest lectures from women who have been working abroad at university; before the moment of graduation

- not only support from universities in studying abroad but also in doing a internship
- use social media (linkedin) as a tool to set up a network
- mentoring

4. Presentation of suitable tools to use for PPC

Web2.0 technologies

The aim of the Get Mobile-project is to encourage female graduates to participate in future European mobility programs. By doing so; female graduates looking for placement or employment opportunities and SMEs/micro-businesses looking for trainees need to be brought together. A good way of sharing and connected is making use of the latest web 2.0 technologies. Before choosing a specific tool to use for PPC; it is advisable to explore which technologies are mostly used in the different countries. For instance it has shown in other projects that (Dutch) participants are reluctant on using a new or different tool or platform than they are already using for networking or sharing information. And the Netherlands ranks number one Worldwide in Penetration for Twitter and LinkedIn.

Top 10 Countries in Internet Penetration for LinkedIn.com and Twitter.com by Reach (%) March 2011			
Total Internet, Age 15+, Home & Work Locations			
LinkedIn.com	% Reach	Twitter.com	% Reach
Netherlands	26.1%	Netherlands	26.8%
Ireland	21.0%	Japan	26.6%
United States	17.6%	Brazil	23.7%
Canada	15.6%	Indonesia	22.0%
United Kingdom	14.9%	Venezuela	21.0%
Denmark	14.4%	Canada	18.0%
Australia	13.1%	Argentina	18.0%
New Zealand	12.9%	Turkey	16.6%
Belgium	12.6%	Philippines	16.1%
Singapore	12.0%	Singapore	16.0%

Source: [comScore Media Metrix](#)

But as the table shows; in the other partners countries is the use of linkedin and twitter not as common as in the Netherlands. In Iceland Facebook is the most popular social network. It is wise to keep that in mind while constructing the get connected zone. And most importantly; in the get connected zone there should be plug in installed so that users will be able to link the get connected zone to their other social media tools.

Required topics of PPC's

- Graduates need both practical and networking support; they would learn from meeting others who have been placed abroad.
- Contact with other women who are thinking and planning a period abroad.
- Furthermore they need more information on legal and practical issues
- Set up a network of women who have been working abroad (within alumni networks that already existed)
- More support from the university in finding a job after graduation
- Boosting of soft skills
- Providing a realistic image of other European countries

5. Overall conclusions

The deskresearch shows that in most European countries youth unemployment is reaching high levels. That makes it even more difficult for inexperienced new graduates to obtain jobs. And although not in all GetMobile-countries the unemployment numbers are that low (for instance youth unemployment in the Netherlands is the lowest in the European Union); but also in the Netherlands having experience is necessary for finding a job that matched educational level. For those graduates it is essential to get some work experience to support labour market access; at a national but moreover at an European level. In a highly competitive labour market European mobility is crucial. Research indicates that companies are more likely to seek graduates with international experience. And at the same time traineeships can help young people make a smooth transition from education and training to a first good job. Placements can also bring benefits to companies, enabling them to identify potentially excellent future employees who could, with their fresh ideas, be key to future productivity and competitiveness. And furthermore international trainees' give companies insights into their home culture, which can open doors to new markets and expand European dimensions.

The benefits for the graduates and companies are evident. Nevertheless the desk research and the focus groups indicated that graduates aren't well prepared for placement and aren't aware of mobility programs. It is important to encourage greater European mobility of female graduates, particular unemployed or under-utilised in Business and Sciences. The target group

expressed their need for support and information in finding mobility opportunities. Not only did they lack resources (information) but they also were in need of a network of experienced placement trainees to share experiences with. They feel that the universities didn't prepare them for an international career. Furthermore they don't have a lot of women in their network (alumni) who participated in European mobility programs. It is important to promote concepts of the value of female mobility and to stimulate the graduates to look for mobility opportunities.

6. Implications for the Get Mobile project

The goal of the GetMobile project is to encourage greater numbers of female graduates from Business, Science and Technology (BS) to consider going abroad on placement to help their career development. It is evident that there is a need for this as the deskresearch and focusgroup meetings showed that graduates need help and support for them to even consider a mobility. Not only lack graduates information but also they express a need for a network and improving their social skills before going on a placement. Apart from offering factual information it is important that the target group is trained in soft skills for building confidence. In past projects the methodology (developed by GetMobile project partner Inova) of mentoring circles has proven to be a strong tool for persons (in this case starting entrepreneurs) improve their confidence and soft skill. In order to use this proven methodology it is necessary to adapt the mentoring circle methodology to so called placement preparations circles (PPC)

The goal of those circles is to provide greater confidence and empowerment and to provide female learners with the tools (personal development soft skills) to be able to best support themselves while undertaking a mobility abroad. The other recommendation that emerged from the focusgroups was having an (online) network. To meet this need, one of the activities of the Get Mobile project will be to develop a social network amongst the female trainees/potential trainees across Europe, called Get connected!

Apart from a network, the Getconnected zone will be an online learning content, to provide graduates who are thinking about going abroad with the information and network they require for a successful mobility experience.

Annexes

1. Focus Group report the Netherlands
2. Focus Group report UK
3. Focus Group report Iceland
4. Table of content of the researchreport on Needs of un/under-employed female graduates
5. Deskresearch report the Netherlands
6. Deskresearch report UK
7. Deskresearch report Iceland
8. Overview of resources (funding, language training, support organisations) for placements abroad, national and European



1.WP2_ocusgroup_report_VHTO_NL.pdf



2.WP2_Focusgroup_report_Inova_UK.pdf



3.WP2_focusgroupreport_Iceland.pdf



4.WP2_table_of_content.doc



5.WP2_deskresearch_report_VHTO_NL.pdf



6.WP2_deskresearch_report_Inova_UK.doc



7.WP2_deskresearch_report_Iceland.docx



8.WP2_overview_of_resources.docx