

*Raising Quantity
and Quality
of Work Placements
in Europe*



EUROPEMOBILITY NETWORK

GUIDEBOOK ON COOPERATION MODELS BETWEEN THE BUSINESS WORLD AND EDUCATIONAL PROVIDERS

A GUIDE TO SUPPORT AND PROMOTE
QUALITY IN MOBILITY AND
IMPLEMENT ECVET IN MOBILITY

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September 2013



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1. INTRODUCTION

The title 'cooperation models between the business world and educational providers' encompasses a broad sense of input and is meant for every sector and education. The cooperation between business in the labour market and learners in a (formal) education period can be seen as dual-apprenticeships, internships, work placements, lectures, or even the influence of business representatives in the development of educational programmes, qualifications, etc. The combination of 'school-based' and 'work-based' learning seems to play a key role in providing young learners with skills and competences that will help them into employment. Seeing and feeling the real world, the real work increases the employability of learners.

In higher education the cooperation between business and universities in Europe is rather established and common in the sense of a win-win situation for both sides. Universities play a central role in providing high-level skills, a world-class research base and a culture of inquiry and innovation. Universities are an integral part of the supply chain to business - a supply chain that has the capability to support business growth and therefore economic prosperity¹.

University students play a crucial role in the knowledge-based economy of businesses of the twenty first century.

In vocational education the consolidation of work-based learning is not common in all European countries. As pioneers the Austrian, Danish, Dutch, German and Swiss school-systems for secondary vocational education can be announced who implemented a dual-learning path. There, work-based learning and school-based learning is a standard way of learning². The involvement of businesses and/or representatives of the labour market in educational developments of vocational education is seen in almost all European countries.

In (pre-) secondary education the influence or the involvement of businesses is quite uncommon and more or less absent and will therefore be excluded in this guidebook as example of an educational sector.

In the European dimension, cooperation of business and education cross borders to make transnational collaboration and interaction possible. Economic globalisation encourages employers and employees and independent entrepreneurs to extend their scope beyond borders of their own countries. This embeds possibilities for geographical mobility in work placements, internships, study visits, apprenticeships, exchange programmes, voluntary services, etc. Speaking about transnational cooperation for mobility also contains the cooperation between different European educational providers.

The Bruges Communiqué on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training sets goals towards 'education and training for tomorrow's Europe' to overcome current and future challenges. In the Bruges Communiqué was noticed that "participating countries should promote

¹ A Review of Business–University Collaboration, Professor Sir Tim Wilson DL, February 2012

² BusinessEurope, Apprenticeships: Challenges and opportunities, Maxime Cerruti, April 2014

partnerships between social partners, enterprises, education and training providers, employment services, public authorities, research organisations and other relevant stakeholders, in order to ensure a better transfer of information on labour market needs and to provide a better match between those needs and the development of knowledge, skills and competences"³. This means to enhance cooperation between schools and enterprises at national, regional and even local level in order to improve teachers' knowledge of work practices and on the one hand trainers' general pedagogical skills and competences on the other.

For the higher education the European Commission also sets up initiatives on modernising higher education in Europe, a key element of the Lisbon strategy, aimed at increasing knowledge and technology transfer as well as at expediting commercialisation of research results via increased university-business cooperation. The annual *Forum on Cooperation between Higher Education and the Business Community* represents the European Commission's response to calls from the academic and business communities for regular and sustainable dialogue, exchange, sharing and learning. The European university-business forum aims to facilitate the exchange of good practice, to foster mutual learning and networking and to inspire further activities in the EU member states.

1.1 Background

This guidebook is developed in the framework of the Thematic Commission on Cooperation Models of the Europemobility Network. Europemobility Network is an European network that aims at stimulating both the quality and quantity of work placements abroad by establishing a transnational network of professionals, experts and mobility coordinators responsible for planning and accomplishing learning mobility initiatives. Europemobility Network supports mobility in Higher Education, Vocational Education and Training, as well as Non-formal Education, by promoting awareness on the obstacles and on the tools, methodologies and solutions available. The so called "Thematic Commissions" of the Europemobility Network initiative are established as working groups responsible for different areas and domains focused by the project. The project partners are responsible for different commissions / working groups which are open to members of partner's organisations as well as to other interested parties outside the consortia.

1.2 Objectives

The objective of the Thematic Commission is to contribute to the improvement of the cooperation between the business world and the educational providers in the field of transnational learning mobility.

The objective of the guidebook is to highlight best practices and good examples of cooperation models to draw recommendations for further collaboration. Furthermore, the Thematic Commission tries with this guidebook to promote and foster synergies between educational sectors in the field of learning mobility, the promotion of work placements abroad and the collaboration and interaction between business and education.

The overall aim is to promote the exploitation of existing successful cooperation models and initiate competence building processes.

³ The Bruges Communiqué on enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training, European Ministers for VET, European Social Partners and the European Commission, 7 December 2010

2. METHODOLOGY

The Thematic Commission on *cooperation models* will showcase successful initiatives, analysing their conditions and characteristics, with the purpose of documenting the impact of transnational learning mobility, with specific focus on work placements abroad, on 3 key areas:

- *Curriculum Development*: how transnational mobility can inform decision makers and educational managers on the definition of competencies and curriculum.
- *Entrepreneurship*: how transnational mobility can boost entrepreneurial education and culture and key competencies.
- *Making lifelong learning an opportunity for all*: how transnational mobility of high quality can support and contribute to the attainment of the political objectives in the field of Lifelong Learning.

2.1 Desk research

Analysis of available information such as European projects, initiatives, researches, reports or other document of existing initiatives and projects on cooperation models between business world and educational providers and among educational providers on transnational mobility for work placements.

The main aim of the desk research was to find out what is done in previous initiatives in the field of cooperation models in order to build upon positive examples and to establish a transnational and multi-sector network of stakeholders interested and active in the field of transnational work placements.

2.2 Case studies

REVEAL is a transnational network of European experts from grass-root projects and universities. Based on the desk research a template has been developed in order to collect more case studies with more in-depth information based on the information analysed in the desk research. The template has been sent to the partners of Europemobility Network and various stakeholder. The template consists of questions which focused on these aspects:

- Conditions for successful cooperation between the business world and educational providers
- Possible synergies between different educational sectors in the field of learning mobility
- Transfer of successful examples to other business sectors and/or providers from different educational sectors
- Enrichments and learning experiences in this field
- *Cooperation models* leading to improving the quality and the quantity of work placements abroad?

2.3 Analysis

The collected case studies, based on the template, have been edited and analysed with regard to the critical aspects mentioned above. Based on the analyses and the results of the desk research and the case studies conclusions have been drawn and recommendations have been formulated.



3. CASE STUDIES

Based on the desk research a template has been send out to the project partners of Europemobility Network to collect case studies of cooperation models. Those 'cooperation models' could refer to a variety of interactions, such as, cooperation models

- between a company and an educational provider
- between representatives of a business and one or more educational providers
- within a thematic and/or sector network of educational providers
- among providers from different educational sectors, such as Higher Education, Vocational Education and Training and Non-formal education

A broad variety of case studies has been collected.

Case study	Key Area	Activity	
Dutch VET	Curriculum Development	In The Netherlands social partners, employer and employee representatives are involved in the development of occupational profiles and qualifications in order to design curricula.	VET
NETINVET	Curriculum Development	NETINVET is a European network of training centres from 11 countries across the EU to develop high quality mobility for learners in VET for the international trade sector.	VET
Aventus	Making lifelong learning an opportunity for all	Aventus is a regional training centre in The Netherlands which is experienced and advanced in transnational mobility for their student.	VET
KS1	Entrepreneurship	KS 1 is a VET college in Stuttgart, Germany with a exchange programme with a school in Spain for transnational mobility.	VET
IAESTE	Making lifelong learning an opportunity for all	The International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience is an independent, non-profit and non-political student exchange organisation.	HE
University of Fulda	Making lifelong learning an opportunity for all Entrepreneurship	The University of Fulda in collaboration with the Institute inter.research e.V. coordinates with other regional universities the realisation of transnational mobility, especially Erasmus and PLM.	HE



Based on the desk research also different projects, initiatives and researches have been selected to be analysed.

Project/initiative	Key Area	Coordinating Body	Website	
MOVET II	Curriculum Development	Technical University of Munich	www.gomovet.eu	VET
ENVOLWE	Entrepreneurship	University of Helsinki Ruralia Institute	www.luontoyrittaja.fi/428.html	VET
Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs	Entrepreneurship	DG ENTR IND	www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu	VET & HE
CREBUS	Entrepreneurship	University of Bucharest	www.crebus.eu	VET & HE
T-Tactic@School	Making lifelong learning an opportunity for all	Accademia Europea di Firenze	www.tacticschool.eu	VET
EU Move2	Making lifelong learning an opportunity for all	KCH International	www.eumoveabroad.eu	VET

3.1 Curriculum Development

"how transnational mobility can inform decision makers and educational managers on the definition of competencies and curriculum"

The Dutch system for vocational education and training is a national case study which shows a cooperation of business and education enshrined in the law. To ensure the quality of vocational education and the right contents within this education and to ensure the future employment of graduates which goes along with innovation trends and rapid economic and technological changes, the involvement of stakeholders and representatives from businesses is essential. The link between education and business is consolidated in the sectoral Centres of Expertise. The development of occupational and qualification profiles is one of the legal tasks of the 17 Centres of Expertise, each focusing on specific sectors. These 'profiles' are developed with social partners, representatives from trade unions, employer and employee associations and describe what a learner should know and be able to do after following a vocational training.

In the Netherlands in VET a work-based learning approach is handled which means students have to work in a company for some time of their curricula. In the law it is stated that these companies have to be accredited with a quality label in order to fulfil all educational tasks. The accreditation of the company is another legal task of the Dutch Centres of Expertise. The Centres of Expertise recruit companies that can contribute to the practical education of the students. The companies then register through a website and request an accreditation. The Centres of Expertise then assess these companies and offer them support in various ways to supervise the work placement learner on the work floor. When a company is accredited and therefore registered in a public database, it also is assigned with a quality label which they can use for their own marketing strategies. As a bonus, the Centre of Expertise for the trade sector (KCH) has every year the "Human Capital Award" which distinguishes the best learning company in this sector.

This cooperation between business and education works perfectly for the work-based learning

approach in the Dutch VET, although the intervention of the Centres of Expertise is necessary to have an overall view and a connecting link. It is also an example of a national application of the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET), because students are assessed within the work placement companies as a standard part of their curriculum.

The project **MOVET II** (Modules for Vocational Education and Training for competences in Europe II) is a transnational initiative in the framework of Leonardo da Vinci focusing on transparency and recognition of learning outcomes (LO). This project explores a practical approach to ECVET, specifically for the sector mechatronics.

Competences acquired within cross border modules going to be declared, certified and credited. The modules for students end with an especially designed assessment of learning outcomes. Training providers, companies, competent bodies and other protagonists of vocational education validate the acquired learning outcomes as relevant for the training profile and award credit points. A memorandum of understanding of all involved partners serves as a basis for the acknowledgement of learning outcomes.

To assess, certify and recognise knowledge, skills and competences acquired by students within transnational modules a competence matrix and a taxonomy table as instruments enhance transparency of LO and promote mutual trust between training providers. Within MOVET II seven modules are developed for students in IVET (initial VET) in the field of engineering finish with especially designed assessments of LO. Vocational schools, companies, competent bodies and other protagonists of VET validate the acquired LO as relevant for the national training profiles. Sending institutions recognise these LO within regular IVET of their students.

NETINVET is a European network as a legal entity under the French law of training centres and companies, where mutual trust has been established in order to provide young people with mobility opportunities during their training pathway. It pertains to training programs in the field of international trade sector. The NETINVET network is the result of the RECOMFOR / COMINTER project Leonardo da Vinci projects which were part of the Lifelong Learning Programme, but is now a legal entity without funding of the European Commission. The NETINVET network brings together training centres from 11 countries across the European Union that are keen to develop high quality mobility for learners. For each of these countries, competent authorities (Ministries, National Agencies, professional/trade organizations) have been associated to encourage and support the network set-up. The network is composed of some forty training centres (number in growth) and over 150 related companies.

Each training centre in the network offers training courses that are compatible with a mobility project, provides learners with elements that facilitate finding host companies for work placements and accommodation solutions, as well as provides recognition of mobility within the qualification framework.

The quality process of NETINVET network is based on 3 pillars:

1. Shared references on qualification and training, built on a European scale, as recommended by the European Commission in the area of sustainable development of professionalization.
2. A network of volunteer training centres directly involved in the implementation of quality assurance.
3. A procedure for preparing, monitoring and evaluating mobility operations based on charters jointly developed, and ensuring transparency and respect for the principles of the network.

The Network still exist in 2013, each year there's a General Assembly. Members are paying a fee.

As a basis for the network two reference profiles were developed, ECVET proof, as facilitators for mobility in VET.

Within the network a partnership agreement has to be signed by all members.

There are 2 quality charters, one quality charter for the training centres of the network and one for companies. The basic criteria defined are the minimum standards for a training centre / company to provide a good quality of training and exchanges and guide foreign learners during their mobility period within the NETINVET network.

The network also disposes a label. This NETINVET is awarded upon request to training centres after they have proven their ability to conduct mobility operations in accordance with the network's quality process.

Conclusion

As a conclusion it can be said that for cooperation models between business and education in the framework of curriculum development which is drawn to the assessment and recognition of acquired learning outcomes, it is necessary to have a stable intervening link or underlying references such as modules or qualification profiles. As important is the 'official' bond established through a MoU, a partnership agreement or a legal framework. It can also be said that this can be concluded for transnational as well as for national cooperation models.

3.2 Entrepreneurship

"how transnational mobility can boost entrepreneurial education and culture and key competencies"

Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs is a cross-border exchange programme which gives new or aspiring entrepreneurs the chance to learn from experienced entrepreneurs running small businesses in other participating countries. The exchange of experience takes place during a stay with the experienced entrepreneur, which helps the new entrepreneur acquire the skills needed to run a small business. The host benefits from fresh perspectives on his/her business and gets the opportunities to cooperate with foreign partners or learn about new markets. The stay is partially funded by the European Union. Whether you are a new or highly experienced entrepreneur, the programme can offer strong added value to your business: possible benefits include exchange of knowledge and experience, networking opportunities across Europe, new commercial relations or markets abroad.

New entrepreneur will benefit from on-the-job training in a small or medium-sized enterprise elsewhere in the participating countries. This will ease the successful start of your business or strengthen your new enterprise. You can also benefit from access to new markets, international cooperation and potential possibilities for collaboration with business partners abroad.

Host entrepreneur can benefit from fresh ideas of a motivated new entrepreneur on your business. Most host entrepreneurs enjoyed the experience so much that they decide to host other new entrepreneurs afterwards.

It is really a win-win collaboration whereby both entrepreneurs can also discover new European markets or business partners, different ways of doing business.

On the longer-term there are benefits from wide networking opportunities, and, possibly, decisions to continue your collaboration, possibly as long-term business partners (e.g. joint ventures, sub-contracting activities, contractor-supplier relationships, etc).

Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs is financed by the European Commission and operates across the participating countries with the help of the local contact points, competent in business support (e.g. Chambers of Commerce, start-up centres, incubators etc.). Their activities are coordinated at European level by the support office of the programme.

The project **CReBUS** is aiming to develop a training system in order to facilitate the development of entrepreneurship competences for young graduates between 18-35 years old, using Web 2.0. Bringing business closer to the young generation that succeeds harder to find a job, and enabling them to set up their own business is a viable solution to overcome the unemployed or migrant status they are exposed to. By using dedicated Web 2.0 applications and platforms, and an eMentorship network, the transfer of good practices and experiences from the people who succeeded in different types of businesses to young European entrepreneurs can be facilitated.

The project aims to identify the interest domains for starting a business from youngsters that are going to graduate and potential barriers. There the project helps to define a curriculum for developing entrepreneurial competencies, using the WEB 2.0 learning opportunities and to develop an online community and a social network including young entrepreneurs, trainers and other stakeholders through eMentorship activities.

The project **ENVOLWE** focus on transferring and further developing organisational innovations in VET by collecting existing innovative practices of cooperation between rural small and micro entrepreneurs. The innovative practices identified from partner countries will be complemented by the models and tools developed in more general level by previous initiatives, like Leonardo funded NEMO-project. The overall objective of the project is to increase the quality and attractiveness of VET by strengthening the cooperation between VET and micro enterprises and providing practical tools

for it. Results of ENVOLWE are documented piloted models for VET-microenterprise cooperation and guidelines and piloted process descriptions for long term cooperation. These are compiled to an European handbook for successful VET and small & micro enterprise cooperation.

The strengthened cooperation will improve the competitiveness of both VET and micro enterprises by helping the VET organisations to increase their service provision to both small and micro enterprises as well as to students and potentially providing extra source of income for nature-based entrepreneurs for off-season periods.

The target groups of ENVOLWE are VET organisations and actors as well as small and micro entrepreneurs and their networks.

Conclusion

For the section on entrepreneurship it can be said that the cooperation models have as a main aim to share and learn from each other. Business and education focus on a win-win situation and the entrepreneur to itself (new or experienced) is in the centre. These collaborations can be facilitated through certain tools and instrument and therefore various projects and programmes are helpful.

3.3 Making lifelong learning an opportunity for all

“how transnational mobility of high quality can support and contribute to the attainment of the political objectives in the field of Lifelong Learning”

For the last category of cooperation models, some case studies with very individual initiatives and/or general approaches to realise mobility are analysed. For VET 2 different schools presented their cooperation models and two European projects were analysed as case studies. For HE a consortium of regional universities and a non-political student exchange organisation are perused.

AVENTUS is a Dutch regional training centre offering VET courses for different sectors. Aventus provides mobility exchange. Dutch students going abroad for their work placements and also foreign students coming to the Netherlands, attending courses at Aventus and/or doing a work placement at a regional company. In the course of time, Aventus was able to gain a lot of experience in this field to foster collaboration with national and international partners, especially companies. At first the contacts arose from private contacts with other training centres, teachers, in Europe. Through these contacts (school – school) collaboration with companies abroad was possible. The cooperation with companies through a regional training centre and therefore with one responsible contact person was very desirable. Problems could be solved immediate through that contact person. This concerns problems before the student goes abroad in terms of accommodation, but also during the mobility of the students concerning cultural, health or personal problems of the student.

Observed problems were related to language difficulties and barriers and also problems due to the fact that the contact person no longer worked at the training centre and/or the company. So that there was a cut in the communication line. No official documents of collaboration or agreement were signed with the contact persons.

KS1 (Kaufmännische Schule 1) in Stuttgart, Germany, has a special mobility programme for their students. They organise student exchanges with companies and schools in Barcelona, Spain. This exchange is not organised with random work placement companies, but with the local branch of the German work placement companies of the students. In Germany students following a vocational training have a contract with one company where they are an employee and follow school courses once or twice a week. This means, the students follow the same training as in their home country which also makes the transfer of knowledge easy.

T-Tactic@school stands for 'transfer of tools for managing and mentoring the international work placements to guarantee the recognition of the competences acquired and the quality of the learning process in the school system. The project is based on the needs of secondary schools and vocational training centres to benefit from a strategy, systems and tools for managing and mentoring international work placements as well as for recognising, certifying and validating the competences acquired by the students during the international mobility project. The main aims of the project are to equip secondary schools and vocational training centres with competences and tools to manage and mentor international work placements experiences, integrated with their curricular activities; with

competences and tools to recognise, certify and validate competences acquired by the participants to the international mobility project.

Within the project a common code of conduct was developed in managing and mentoring work placement experiences with an international dimension, disseminating and exploiting existing good practices and tools among the partners of the consortium and among all the new users or promoters/ hosting partners interested in improving the quality of their work and in sharing their experiences in order to develop and guarantee the recognition of the competences acquired.

Therefore, a handbook for teachers was developed for the transfer of tools for managing and mentoring international work placements to guarantee the recognition of the competences acquired and the quality of the learning process in the school system. In this handbook important information and documents can be found for the preparation, implementation and finalisation of an international work placement.

The project **EU Move2** focuses on the quality of international training companies. A high quality training company will provide better learning outcomes during work placements abroad. The partners of the project work together towards a stable network with more members. This network consists of 'local agents' who are responsible for the quality of training companies in the country or region where they are located. The local agent is the direct contact for the training company and for training provider. The distance and language barriers are therefore easier to bridge and it works efficiently.

For a uniform quality recognition a 'quality charter' is drawn where quality criteria are described that training companies have to meet. The quality of the training companies is thereby safeguarded. This directly affects the quality of international work placements and successful accomplishment.

EU Move 2 initially focused on the trade sector (retail, wholesale, international trade), but it also connects to other sectors (tourism, welfare, fashion and textile). Within the project a website is developed which give students and training providers access to training companies that meet the European quality standards, as it is set up within the EU Move2 network. It is intended for students, teachers and mentors in international training companies. On this website also necessary information and links can be found for the three phases of mobility: before, during and after the work placement.

IAESTE is the International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience. IAESTE is an independent, non-profit and non-political student exchange organisation which provides students in technical degrees with paid, course-related training abroad and employers with highly skilled, highly motivated international trainees. With more than 80 member countries and over 4.000 traineeships exchanged each year, it is the largest organisation of its kind in the world.

The mission of IAESTE is to operate a high quality practical training exchange program between members in order to enhance technical and professional development and to promote international understanding and goodwill amongst students, academic institutions, employers and the wider community. IAESTE operates irrespective of race, colour, sex or creed. Through a partnership with IAESTE companies can access new talent & professionals, enhance their global reputation and extend their network and interact with IAESTE members. Through the sponsoring of the companies a (local) student can work abroad. Therefore, IAESTE offers targeted promotion to engineers and scientists, worldwide visibility in 86 countries, access to more than 1.000 universities and access to the growing alumni and job placement network (over 350,000 alumni to date).

IAESTE was founded in 1948 at the Imperial College in London. Since then, the association had grown to include more than 80 countries world-wide and has an exchange of 340.000 students. The IAESTE program is internationally recognised and well-known. The IAESTE organisations have a standard job offer form that the parties agree on when partnering. The form states the employer information, discipline required, language and level required and other specific details related to the candidate. The offer also states the number of weeks to be employed and the date range, along with the gross pay and deductions. This form is the document used for all official exchanges.

Since 2001 a consortium of regional universities is running to realise students mobility in the higher education. Coordinated by the **University of Fulda** and the institute **inter.research e.V.** the network for EU-Placements (www.eu-placements.de) is set up. The consortium allows to distribute the work between the central contact point and the coordinators at the partner universities. As a consortium they reach the critical mass of participants in placement mobility programmes such as Erasmus Placements and Leonardo PLM to offer additional services such as an online intercultural

training, which is moderated by intercultural trainers and runs alongside the internship (www.practical-preparation.de). Furthermore, research and development projects such as Uni-Key (www.uni-key.eu) are carried out to make sure that the services provided to mobile students and to partner organisations is continuously improving. In 2011 they received the Erasmus Quality award from the National Agency in Germany.

The consortium is based on an initial partnership among 4 universities and the non-profit association institute [inter.research e.V.](http://www.inter.research.e.v) and has since then attracted more regional universities to join the network of currently 11 organisations. Contacts to host organisations are developed through our programme participants. Companies are contacted during the internship and are also asked if they want to accept interns in the future.

The contact with the host organisations allows a continuous exchange between partners and companies, where both partners know by experience what kind of profile they can expect. In the consortium certain administrative tasks can be centralised, while the partners can focus on promotion of the placement programmes. Furthermore the critical mass allows extra services such as online trainings and information services. For now the consortium is not fully recognised in the EU mobility programmes and the EU programmes like Erasmus placements.

The advantage for the business world in collaborating with a consortia is to have a constant contact person representing a network of universities and a network, which is familiar with different kind of mobility programmes. Thus both partners develop trust and know what to expect from each other. Hosting international students in general means access to new perspectives and knowledge and also access to representatives of a potential target or supplier market and thus "first hand information". Host organisations and the contact point of the consortium sign a letter of intent, which contains the main rules of cooperation according to the EU programmes and a template of an internship offer form, where the company describes the profile of the internship and the expectations towards potential interns.

Conclusion

The main conclusion that can be drawn from the case studies of the section of making lifelong learning an opportunity for all is the necessity of a stable network and visible contact persons. That means specific agents or delegates that deal with all issues of the entire process of an international mobility experience. Having one person to discuss all issues and dealing with this one person (or organisation) for the entire period improved the mutual trust and, therefore, the quality and the success of a work placement. This can be individual initiatives of only one organisation, but also consortia or networks of more organisations, as well as recognised associations.

4. EXPLOITATION STRATEGIES

4.1 MOVE – Regional Centre for Youth Mobility of Sardinia Government

In April 2013, with the technical support of Europemobility Network, the Agency for Employment of the Regional Government of Sardinia have launched an innovative initiative under the name of MOVE – Mobility Opportunities Volunteering in Europe, focused on promoting learning mobility among young citizens.

The Regional Centre for Youth Mobility represents a strategic measure to integrate a transnational dimension within existing local public investment on active policies for employment, training and youth. The objective is to complement national and European learning mobility schemes with regional and local funding.

With a special focus on youngsters with fewer opportunities or with difficult social or economic background, MOVE aims at embedding transnational learning opportunities within regional measures to fighting against unemployment, supporting integration of needs and improving the vocational training system.

In this perspective, MOVE implements the following main activities:

- Front desk guidance and orientation on learning mobility opportunities
- Planning individual learning mobility: recruitment, preparation and training prior to departure, provision of funding and grants, monitoring and follow up, assessment recognition and validation of learning outcomes acquired abroad
- Awareness raising at regional level on learning mobility opportunities
- Networking with all actors of learning mobility in Higher Educational, Vocational Education and Training and Non-Formal Education at regional level
- Observatory on Learning Mobility to document incoming and outgoing flows and their impact on individuals, on businesses and on the educational system.

MOVE have adopted the Quality Assurance framework developed by Europemobility Network and it is a member of the International Community of Mobility Coordinators.

Furthermore, the Regional Government of Sardinia is currently expanding the MOVE concept by establishing a pan European strategic partnership of Centres for Youth Mobility in cooperation with other Regional or Local authorities. Contact Europemobility Network to join the International Network of Centres for Youth Mobility.

4.2 Europemobility Database of Work Placements for Mobile Learners

Based on the lessons learned from previous mobility schemes and on the models and experiences described within the case studies listed in this guidebook, Europemobility Network have devised a strategy for establishing a sustainable database of work placements opportunities for mobile learners.

The Europemobility Network International Community of Mobility Coordinators, composed by more than 200 educational organizations in over 25 countries responsible for more than 10.000 transnational exchanges per year, ensures a solid and invaluable base for cross border cooperation to newcomers as well as to experienced learning mobility players.

Since learning mobility can take place only when mutual trust is in place, Europemobility Network have developed a Quality Assurance Framework for managing learning mobility schemes aimed at ensuring the adoption of common quality procedures among its members.

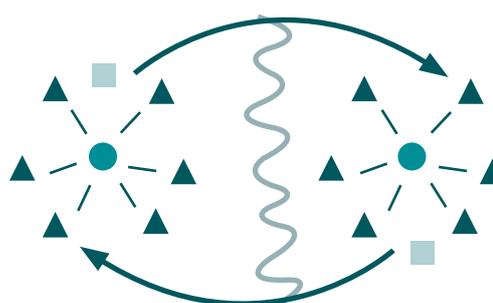
The Thematic Commission on Quality has developed a Quality Assurance, which is described in details and it is accessible from the pertinent section on our website.

The basic element is a Quality Development Tool conceived as a self-assessment questionnaire enabling members of the International Community to compare and benchmark own operations with other members. The adoption of the Quality Development Tool is facilitated via Peer Learning Clubs, which consist in structured short term learning processes valuing the experiences of each member via the moderation of one of the founding partners of Europemobility Network.

Actors

- Mobility Coordinators ●
- Host Organizations ▲
- Learners ■

Methodology



This framework provides the conditions for each Member of the International Community of Mobility Coordinators to cooperate and share information on work placements opportunities all over Europe and beyond.

For any mobility coordinator, regardless the educational sector, which might be VET, HE or Non Formal education, is relatively easy to have longstanding cooperation with local businesses and industries while it is extremely hard to establish and maintain similar collaborations with foreign companies.

Europemobility Network enables its members to list and share work placements opportunities in their own countries, which become available to foreign learners belonging to another member of the International Community.

Indeed, this complex process implies a number of critical points, namely the quality of the work placement offered and the delicate and demanding relationship with the host companies.

The Quality Assurance Framework offered by Europemobility Network ensures the quality dimension, by the adoption of its members of the following support mechanisms:

- Quality Development Tool and thus common procedures to conceive and implement learning mobility schemes
- Quality Chart for Host Organizations stating a number of pre-requisites and educational mechanism put in place to secure the educational and enriching dimension of the transnational exchange

The other critical dimension is concerned with the specific characteristics of host companies, with a special reference to SMEs, who normally, due to their size and organizational structure, are not in the position to manage all the paper work required by a transnational learning mobility scheme. Differently from big companies, with internal Human Resource departments, small and medium sized companies are not inclined for in the position to analyse incoming profiles of work placements candidates. The match between the characteristics of the host company and the profile of each learner, the definition of the consistent work programme in coherence with the target learning outcomes, is essential to secure the success of the transnational exchange but it imply a considerable effort, a solid educational background and pedagogical skills.

In order to preserve good relationships with host companies, the local educational provider can decide the typology of access to each work placement opportunity listed in Europemobility database:

- Direct: the foreign learner or foreign mobility coordinator may contact the host company
- Indirect: the local educational provider receives expression of interest from foreign learner or foreign mobility coordinator and provide support and mediation between the host company and the candidate learner.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Due to the diverseness of the case studies and the projects due to the various sectors and education systems, it is difficult to draw specific conclusions. These recommendations give a more general conclusion of the analysis described above based on the aspects on which the case studies were collected.

Conditions for successful cooperation

A crucial condition for successful cooperation is mutual trust. This trust can be created through a cooperation model. Cooperation models, as we have seen in the case studies can be self standing networks, financed projects or any other initiatives that allow collaboration.

Another crucial conditions for successful cooperation, which goes along with mutual trust, is the fact to have a specific contact person. This can be local agents, an association or a private contact who is available through the entire process of the cooperation. Another condition that was stated

in the research was to have a stable intervening link or underlying references such as modules or qualification profiles. As important is the 'official' bond established through a MoU, a partnership agreement or a legal framework.

Possible synergies between different educational sectors in the field of learning mobility

A difference between different educational sectors, VE and HE, is rarely remarked in the analysis. However, it can be said that initiatives from HE are more focusing on entrepreneurship whereas initiatives from VET are more busy with the realisation of mobility in general. The aspect of quality is in both educational sectors crucial terms of attention. Especially the beginning of a cooperation model, the planning and implementation of mobility, is highly attended. The evaluation and review of a cooperation model is not mentioned sufficiently.

Transfer of successful examples to other business sectors and/or providers from different educational sectors

In general all conclusions and recommendations found in this research can be transferred to other educational sectors and to other business and/or economic sectors. It can also be said that successful examples can be transferred from a national context to an international context and vice versa.

Enrichments and learning experiences in this field

With having a research it can be said that both sides, business and education, can benefit from cooperation. In curriculum development companies need to be involved in building up and maintaining work-based learning. Companies know what kind of skills they are looking for and should be involved in the development of educational programs. For companies learners (from apprenticeships, internships, work placements, etc.) are potential employees to hire after graduation, because they know the working processes, can contribute from day one and learned at first hand. Cooperation means investment in the 'future' workforce.

Dual learning (in-company and school-based) strengthens competitiveness, which is why Europe must act to ensure that we develop and maintain strong educations with dual elements.

A close tie between businesses and education guarantees that both parts are constantly up to date on the newest developments, trends, innovations and needs. It is important that companies have the need incitements for hiring and teaching a learner whereas teaching is the biggest expense and effort.

Improvement of the quality and the quantity of work placements abroad through cooperation models

Cooperation models definitely lead to improvement of the quality and also the quantity of work placements abroad. Cooperation models give a certain structure to the collaboration of different organisations and give guiding principles to cooperate.





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