

26th Annual EfVET International Conference

Work & Education aligned to the future

25th to 28th of October 2017
Thessaloniki, Greece

1. Quality Apprenticeship in Work-Based Learning

Workshop number 1 debated 3 key issues and has reached 9 main points which address key reflections and conclusions that were illustrated with real-life examples from the participating countries, with solutions and good practices that can be put in place.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can VET providers and other stakeholders collaborate to expand WBL? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. First reflexion showed that countries have different VET experiences in terms of methodology, duration and benefits: some reveal a work-based learning with dual systems (Germany) and others that despite being in a WBL experimentation phase still have a school-based learning (examples of Spain or Italy); we have different concepts of work-based learning that differ from one country to another (dual system vs. no or nearly no internships at all); in some countries SME pay the trainees and in others there no aids or benefits whatsoever. 2. There is no common language between VET providers and other parties and not enough cooperation between the different stakeholders; 3. Setting up partnerships/alliances between the different stakeholders (VET providers, companies, social partners, municipalities...) to be able to have updated content and provision of apprenticeships to meet both labour market and society needs and to assure the right balance between soft and hard skills, transferable skills. This will also mean shared responsibility for quality between VET providers and companies, where WBL aspects articulate clearly with the school based parts, complementing each other and with clarification of responsibilities, rights and obligations of each party. The regular cooperation and the face-to-face contacts, bringing companies to schools and sending teachers & trainers to companies will foster mutual trust and respect between the stakeholders.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of barriers prevent a skilled workforce and high quality in VET? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Business and education are not communicating enough, which leads to a skills mismatch; policy makers at a national level still impose a rigid system that does not accommodate change and which depicts the value of theoretical approaches and receptive learning above practical and hands-on learning or learning outcomes.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. There is the urgent need to bridge the gap between business and education and to raise the quality of VET teachers and trainers if we want to prepare students for the future and to develop labour market relevant skills, since better education means better business and a better future for all. 3. Assure a dual-skilled teaching force by continually updating the vocational and pedagogical skills of VET teachers and trainers; on the other hand, we need to ensure that the content of VET programmes is responsive to changing skill needs in both companies and society, which will mean articulation at the system level and a common language between the different stakeholders, with the definition of WB learning outcomes and clear pedagogical purposes or objectives that both VET providers and companies are aware of.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we brand/inform all players about the benefits of work-based learning? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We face a mentality problem: parents still prefer an academic and more theoretical education to VET; poor image of VET on many European countries which leads to the fact that Vocational Education is generally still considered a second choice. 2. Despite not being the first choice, VET popularity is increasing due to employment opportunities and money earning when sometimes compared to academic paths. 3. If we want to change mentalities, all players must be engaged: national governments, local authorities, businesses and employers, social partners and civil society. We need to showcase VET excellence and VET possibilities, namely Erasmus+ mobility opportunities and that VET is a proven way to get good jobs. This means investing in marketing with a new and sexy image of VET schools, but also in face-to-face contacts with both companies and other partners as well as parents: school and public meetings, events, fairs and others, but also in service delivery: open workshops, community restaurants, beauty salons (...). Again, partnerships with different players are essential, namely with primary schools to deliver this message at the earliest stage possible.

All in all, the contributions from this workshop showed that if we wish to *Align Education to Work, Quality Apprenticeships in Work-Based Learning* are crucial and for that we have to ensure the right skills for learners and companies and more relevant, inclusive and motivating VET systems that showcase excellence and employability opportunities.

Workshop number 1 had the participation of the following countries: Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Malta, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, The Netherlands, Turkey and the UK.

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Moderators: Hans Lehmann, EUC Syd and Hans Severinsen, Køge Business College, Denmark.