2nd Project meeting Foligno (Italy)

23-27 September 2019

They call it the heart of Italy for good reason. Find historical places to visit, explore ancient alleys and taste excellent courses prepared by the Italian Academy of Cuisine during the I Primi d’Italia Food Festival. In FOLIGNO, Umbria Region, which has enormous potential for sustainable tourism, delegates of European VET schools and other organisations met in a gathering at the end of September to carry on the “Digital Tourism”. This qualification mixes both tourism and IT skills and comes across the new market trends. The various sessions of the second meeting were hosted in the modern building of the Istituto Tecnico Economico Feliciano Scarpellini in Foligno.

In this meeting, the partners defined the exit profile of the learner studying in the new qualification course, set the activities that the digital tourism technician will be able to perform, pinpointed the skills that the learner will be required to have and what kind of tools he will be able to work with.

The group, during the sessions, designed the training modules and discussed the work-based learning period, presented and considered the WBL season, prepared the work-based Digital Tourism Qualification Forum and the Process of selection of the potential DTQ students for the experimentation. Methodology on Quality Assurance Framework has presented as well as the midterm evaluation report conclusions.

The partners talked about the dissemination information and prepared the project intermediate report.

The third meeting of the Digital Tourism project will be held in The Netherlands.
Work-Based Learning Digital Tourism

Foligno, Italy - The Partnership Digital Tourism (DT) is halfway and the framework is built. In Italy, the partnership has formulated, developed and agreed on the job description of the DT technician. The curriculum has also been developed in concept. The most intensive part and progress made, at the location, was on the Work-Based Learning (WBL) part.

Internship and / or apprenticeship?

Formulating and developing a fresh innovative VET course is not easy. But let’s be honest, if it was easy everyone would do it. To make sure you make progress we have to agree on the learning paths and how to get there. One of the pitfalls of EU partnerships is that, because of our different languages and the use of English as our way of communication in the partnership, we must never assume that terminology used, means the same for each partner. One of the interesting discussions we had during the week in Foligno was how we should call the Work-Based Learning period. Non-English-speaking countries often use internship, apprenticeship, traineeship, practise by doing, on-the-job-training and work placement and assume it’s more or less the same. To avoid misunderstandings and mistakes we have formally agreed we will use only two terminologies (internship and apprenticeship). We have defined them below:

- **Internship**: A short fixed term (30 days – 90 days) Work-Based Learning hands-on training, acquiring work experience without payment at a DT Company
- **Apprenticeship**: A Work-Based Learning (more than 90 days) hands-on training (with pay), acquiring more than just work experience at a DT Company (with potentially a guaranteed job after completion)

‘Let’s be honest, if it was easy everyone would do it!’

Work-Based Learning

Working together with so many countries is fun! It gives you a major boost to acquire new knowledge about the VET systems of the DT Partnership countries and innovate a new study course. Of course, it’s challenging as well. The schools of Italy, Portugal, Spain and the Netherlands have to agree on documents and added value of the new content in this fresh Digital Tourism Course. Other partners from Portugal, Italy and the Netherlands have a different role: They are the ‘Work-Based Learning (WBL) experts’ and they look at the course from the employers’ perspective. The Work-Based Learning period (the internship or apprenticeship period) is a very important part of the course, as theory will be assessed through practice (by doing). The creation and development of the documents (Learning Plan, Learning Agreement, Identification Forms, Identification of soft and hard skills, the assessment tools) around the work-based learning parts were very intensive but worthwhile.

‘Let’s be honest, if it was easy everyone would do it!’
Moving towards a digital society

Strongly connected to Digital Tourism project was the ESF project "Moving Towards a Digital Society". It was a 3 weeks training course which took place in Londonderry – UK. During the course, 14 students from ITE Scarpellini were stimulated to learn specific vocabulary about marketing; they also implemented their knowledge about the European policies on the Digital Single Market, a European policy that covers digital marketing, e-commerce and telecommunications. The three main points they focused on were:

• Access to online products and services
  Conditions for digital networks and services to grow and thrive.
• Growth of the European Digital Economy

During their stay in Derry they visited two important companies very experienced in digital marketing.

During the two visits the students met managers and founders of the companies who explained them how the web-marketing functions and which are its main advantages.

The managers were the leaders of the workshops which were about social media, graphic design, branding, photography, video production, email marketing and software packages. The students were trained in using Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, In Design, Audition and After Effect and at the end they were required to produce a video and to upload it on the web.

The tutor, Prof Marinella Magrini, presented to the entrepreneurs the KA3 Digital Tourism project, reaffirming the need to train the students properly to update their knowledge in order to follow the new economy trends in tourism.
Interview Hotel Fidder: A personal approach in the tourism sector

“No marketing budget” is possible?

In September Frederieke Meijerink (Zone. college, NL, had a meeting with Patrick Fidder, owner of Hotel Fidder in Zwolle, The Netherlands. The Hotel Fidder is a three-star, traditional family-company for over 30 years. Besides the hotel, they have a restaurant and whiskey-bar. With their approach, no marketing budget and new developments in working in “the cloud”, they are everything but a regular hotel.

The fact that they don’t have a dedicated marketing budget was a decision made a couple of years ago.

“We decided to skip the whole marketing budget and only use online tools for our promotion and contact with future guests,” said Patrick. “It may look a bit unusual, but I think this is the future in digital marketing. And now we have extra budget to spend on other things like creating a digital back-office and creating a program for our stock-system”.

Hotel Fidder started working in the cloud quite early compared to other, comparable companies. “10 years ago we started working in the cloud. It was a big change for the staff and it took quite a while before everybody was used to the new system, but it was all worth it”. Patrick says he wants to keep the personal approach, so he is not considering getting rid of the front-office. The success factor of their hotel is their look and feel and they would like to keep that in the future.

When new staff begins working in the hotel, they have to get used to the system by using a test-account. “Only when I’m sure the new staff member knows the system well, they can use the real program”, said Patrick. It is quite remarkable that Patrick noticed that staff from the age of 40 or older has more experience to use all the kinds of systems, compared to the younger staff. With all the new technologies our youth has to work with, you would expect the opposite. Besides Patrick’s perception, this was also an outcome of the questionnaire from Digital Tourism Work Package 2.

For new and future students, Patrick advice to let the student work in several kinds of digital systems. “Nowadays the students work with only one program during their study. This can be a problem for them if they use another system in their future jobs”. But besides that, Patrick also thinks educators need to spend more time on basic knowledge like calculating taxes. “I think digitalisation has to become a general subject like English language or Mathematics” Patrick recommended.
Digital Tourism and the Italian stakeholders

In the last months at EGInA, in close collaboration with ITE Scarpellini, we have been committed in the involvement of external experts for the review of the research results. Stakeholders working in the many different fields of the Tourism Industry, from hotel managers to the public promotion and valorisation organizations, have been mobilized to take part in the project activities. They were first asked in March 2019 to fill in an online questionnaire aimed at collecting data related to the professional needs of companies and organizations in the Tourism Industry. Then, in September 2019, some of these stakeholders were interviewed to validate the results of the research at European level against their local perspectives. Stakeholders seemed to highly appreciate the results presented and the general objectives of the Digital Tourism.

They believe the goals of the project and the updating of existing curricula in line with the challenges of the digital transformation, it was an initiative long needed. From their experience in the field, tourism actors witness that too often young people carrying out internships in their companies and organizations although digitally skilled are not able to apply their skills to the Tourism Industry needs.

Some very relevant inputs were collected during the interviews as an integration to the information provided in the research. For example, hotel managers suggested not to underestimate the development of interpersonal skills during the course: although the Digital Tourism project is going to focus on the technological part of the curriculum, it is deemed crucial to provide students with the necessary set of skills for customers and clients management.

According to the experts, interpersonal skills are those that have a greater impact on the quality of the service. Moreover, topics such as accessible tourism and the promotion of rural areas should also be taken into account. In a rural region such as Umbria, stakeholders are very much interested in the development of a curriculum that could include learning outcomes related to those issues.
**Project Status**
To be filled in

**Next Project Steps**
Next meeting will address XXX. The partner, led by INSIGNARE, will have to:

a ) define the **exit profile** of the learner studying in the new qualification course

b) Set the activities the DT technician will be able to perform

c) Set the skills the learner will be required to have and what kind of tools/equipment she/he will be able to work with

d) Design the training Modules and its L.A

e) Agree on the Work Based Learning period to include.

**Next Meeting**
The Netherlands

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**Partnership**

**Three VET schools:**
Insignare - Portugal - Coordinator of the Project and owner of *Fatima Hospitality School*
ITE F. Scarpellini - Italy - Vocational Technical School
Zone College – The Netherlands - VET College

**CDEA** - Spain - VET Higher Education College

**ACISO** - Ourém-Fátima (PT) - Business Association

**EGINA** - Italy - Agency connected to schools and companies

**Dutch Foundation of Innovation Welfare 2 Work** - Set up of partnerships and platforms for innovative good practices

**EfVET** - Brussels - Belgium European Umbrella Organisation

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