

## Strategies for Internationalisation of VET Colleges WP2B

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### Overview

To start Minke explained the Noorderpoort international strategy and how internationalisation is addressed in The Netherlands. After the presentation the team was split in groups to discuss the following 6 questions (please refer to the presentation). Once the discussion had finished there was a conclusion from each group. This was then presented back to all delegates.

### Workshop

An overview of Noorderpoort was presented the group. It is a large institute in the north of The Netherlands in Groningen. Minke discussed what the goal of internationalisation is at their institution. Every 4 years there is a strategic plan created by the School with an emphasis on internationalisation. Throughout the year international ideas are added along the way, study visits are conducted and cooperation with different countries is carried out.

At Noorderpoort they have created an academy for staff who have taken part in Erasmus+ programmes. This enables them to share ideas and best practice across the College and to their colleagues. This helps drive the internationalisation agenda at the College as people hear the different activities happening and how they may get involved.

The College strives to make a national competent student. This enables them to understand the world around them and to reflect. It is also important that they can communicate in an international context- this contributes to their knowledge, skills and competences. Ensuring students can think critically and problem solve is also an important feature of internationalising.

It is also vital for staff to be internationalised, especially middle management and higher management. This encourages them to see the importance of working across countries and how it can influence their staff and students. Another interesting point was raised regarding networking and exchanging visions with as many people as possible. The Dutch approach to 'excellence' is to be used for international co-creation. Digitalisation of courses and using optional courses is the next step which will enable them to become more international.

The strengths of Noorderpoort include hotel and tourism courses and the maritime school. In 2003 they started delivering BTEC courses which were in English. This has shown a greater need for international traineeships and English based courses.

It was then discussed how important it is to professionalise their staff- lots of teachers are offered through the government to do masters courses. The level of teachers training needs are becoming higher. The effect of internationalisation has been very well received in Noorderpoort. It makes students understand a lot more and gives them a new lease of life for their education. This leads to the students being successful by increasing their level of education or gaining employment.

It was discussed that institutions should be using what is already working and find out what is already going on. Cooperating with companies is key as they will already be working across Europe and will understand what the job market needs. This is using existing knowledge but in an open way. It is important to open up and use those experiences so your education stays relevant and in-line with the working sector. It was suggested that building this strategy on these experiences and connecting with employers is the way forward.

Social inclusion is an important topic at the moment especially special needs for students and migrants. This can be a huge challenge to see how we can deal with the challenge of social

exclusion in your institutions.

Activities and ideas were discussed about how to encourage internationalisation. Here were some examples from Noorderpoort:

- Involve many staff on KA2 projects- invite them to meetings, network and share ideas
- Complete study visits as much as possible- short term to different partner Colleges this helps you to make those links.
- Take partners from industry as well, as they provide a broader perspective by sharing knowledge between companies and schools. Using people from industry in KA1 and KA2 projects.
- Be open to hosting at your College wherever possible
- Have students and staff as ambassadors. Peer to peer coaching is the best form of feedback.
- Administration can be very time constraining- ensure you have enough assistance with this.
- Communicate good practices- see, hear and listen to what went well and why it worked.
- Be honest about the challenges and what to expect.
- Celebrate your achievements- the more publicity the better.

International excellence- the below questions was delivered to the workshop and ideas from each group were concluded as follows:

**Question: How can we grow internationalisation in our institutions?**

1. Embedding internationalisation in to the curriculum.
2. Peer to Peer coaching Erasmus+ ambassadors.
3. Integrating senior managers/industry experts in to activities