



## WS1 INTERNATIONALISATION OF VET

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*During the 28th annual EfVET conference, Nuffic provided the workshop 'Internationalisation of VET'. During this interactive session the importance of internationalisation, EU-citizenship and international competencies were outlined. We are heading for a future where students need to have the competencies to be of value for the international labour market. We also need to offer attractive and innovative VET education, so we have to look for new ways of training our students. This workshop offered some possibilities to make education richer, more challenging and more fun!!*

**Internationalisation@Home** is a way for teachers to give every student in their classroom the opportunity to develop these international competencies. So they will be prepared for a diverse society and an international labour market.

The world around us has become increasingly interconnected. Therefore, the next generation, and the generations to come after that, need to be adequately prepared for the international and intercultural encounters ahead of them. Internationalisation@Home (also known as I@H) serves as an excellent starting point for students to obtain the necessary international and intercultural competencies.

This will help them when entering the labour market and being a member of society. A labour market which gradually has become internationally charged and a society that has proven to be increasingly intercultural. I@H has become, and should be further recognized, as a vital component of a student's educational background.

Many have come to see mobility as the key factor of an international experience. Therefore, only a small percentage of VET students have been able to benefit from such an experience. In practice, only six to seven % of VET students go abroad. Consequently, the vast majority of VET students are left out of the chance to develop themselves by being in contact with international and intercultural situation. However, internationalisation contains a spectrum of activities. It is a multi-layered concept that can be coloured in, in accordance with the education programme and the student's needs.

### **Inclusion**

There are numerous ways in which it can provide students with first-hand experiences without them having to set foot in another country. Therefore, I@H stands for inclusion. It is for all students. The belief - equal opportunities for each and every student, serves as a guiding principle.

It entails projects, assignments and fieldtrips with an international component, yet in the very own school environment of the student. Think of bilingual education, online projects with foreign institutions or internships at companies/organisations with an international orientation. Again, keeping in mind the wide spectrum of internationalisation – these are just several examples of all that is possible. Through I@H, all students can develop their knowledge of foreign languages, self-reliance, curiosity and are able to effectively deal with diversity. Therefore, establishing I@H is not the goal in itself. It is an important instrument, a guiding tool, to help develop the aforementioned competencies. It invites all of us (teachers, coordinators

and directors alike) to think outside of the box and be more creative with the opportunities that are there waiting to be picked up.

### **Why eTwinning?**

It is a safe and free tool to practice I@H, an online platform which promotes collaboration between European colleges and schools.

EfVET's mission is to foster connections between colleges and serve as a binding factor to help bring VET professionals together.

This exactly what eTwinning is all about. eTwinning provides support, tools and services for educational institutions. It also allows teachers to communicate, collaborate, develop and share projects with other VET colleagues in more than 40 European countries. The TwinSpace, online project space, is a safe platform visible only to the teachers participating in project. Students can be invited to the TwinSpace to meet and collaborate with peers from their partner schools. eTwinning contributes to attractive and innovative education in VET sector. Therefore, this online platform does not only contribute to the teachers' personal professionalisation, it also provides students with a look across the border while actively working on their intercultural competences. It enriches their lives and prepares them for an internship or possibly working abroad.

### **The benefits eTwinning brings to students and teachers**

- They develop intercultural competences, including world citizenship;
- They practice a foreign language;
- They develop 21<sup>st</sup> century ICT skills;
- They work in an inspiring way on the professional practice and;
- Gain insight into international employment opportunities or further study.

International cooperation is applicable in all sectors: services and health education, technology, economy and agriculture and the natural environment (green).

eTwinning allows you to decide - together with your project partner - what your project will look like. As a teacher you can make your own choices about learning objectives and teaching activities that fit the curriculum. It is important that the activities are differentiated in such a way that they fit the needs and learning objectives of the student.

As a beginner it is useful to design a small project with a limited number of participants, preferably in a course that you are already teaching. This way, you gather experience and it allows you to further extend your contact with other countries. If two (or more) schools have started a successful collaboration through eTwinning, the platform can also serve as a helpful tool to apply for a physical mobility.

The TwinSpace serves as an online assembling point and all gathered project results could be used for dissemination to generate impact and exposure. For instance if you want to publish parts of your project to show to the parents of students.

Also in projects with physical mobility, the collaborations will be of a higher level because both students and teachers are familiar with one another through eTwinning. Besides this, if the students return to their home country after their mobility, they can continue their collaboration with their partner school through eTwinning,

For more information about Nuffic please visit: <https://www.nuffic.nl/en/>.

If you are interested in starting an online collaboration? Please visit the eTwinning website: [www.etwinning.net](http://www.etwinning.net).

