

Mapping work-based learning initiatives in EPR network

Summary report, relevant resources and next steps

Web meeting

Monday, 23rd April 2018 15:00 – 16:30 CET

Background

Following the webinar of the EPR Working Group on VET, a number of EPR members expressed a keen interest in organising a sharing session focusing on work-based learning (WBL) initiatives among EPR members, including identifying key issues and interests to build future collaboration.

Work-based learning programmes provide students with real-life work experience integrated into a study or training course, allowing them to apply learning in practice. The main types of WBL programmes are apprenticeships, work placement and informal learning on the job¹. According to European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), apprenticeships and other forms of work-based learning can support young people in the transition from school to employment, therefore addressing possible labour market imbalances in the job offer/demand. They help improve employability and confidence in the workplace as students' skills can be developed according to specific companies' needs and the students can get used to a regular working environment early in their training programme.

Short report from the meeting

Participants: Edite Sobrinho, AFID (PT), Mari Kalbin, Astangu (Estonia), Michel Edelaar, Heliomare (NL), Gry Nielsen, Work and Inclusion (NO), Sanita Siliņa, SIVA (Latvia). Moderated by Laura Jones (EPR Secretary General)

In Astangu all Vocational training courses and work-study courses have a practical work-based dimension and they are increasing the time spent in WBL in their study programmes. They believe some people need to learn through practice and each company has a different style so it is important to be able to work in a specific work environment. They have a Cleaning and Home Maintenance course, it lasts two years and where already from the 1st year the students spend one day a week in a company. Roughly 90% of students find a job afterwards.

They also had a programme called Quick Way to a Job, where students spend 2 weeks in Astangu and then one month learning on the job. On the first day or week a staff member from Astangu supports the student, and after that the student can ask for more help if needed. A description is available in Estonian. In 2019 they will develop a similar course for people working in shops or supermarkets, where students will spend a short time in Astangu learning basic skills and then to go straight to the work place.

They also have:

- A rehabilitation programme for students with special educational needs to support transition from vocational school to labour market.

- A rehabilitation programme for students with special educational needs to support transition from basic school to vocational school.

¹ For more information, in 2015 the OECD published a study of work-based learning on VET
<http://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/work-based-learning-and-apprenticeships.htm>

Heliomare offers several programmes with work-based learning elements integrated in the course. They offer job coaching support, including in the work place, and support for interns. The goals are developed with the individual and they work with doctors to determine support needs.

They run some small social firms/sheltered work environments to provide work-based learning as well, one for catering and the other for fixing bikes. These are quite new organisations. Michel will ask colleagues if they have information about the results, e.g. transition to the regular labour market.

The main target group for **W&I** is people in sheltered workshops, supporting their transition to the mainstream labour market.

For their members there is often a challenge that students do not have a high enough level of literacy, enough **basic skills**. They would usually map skills at the start and work towards learning goals from the national curriculum and they have developed an online course for basic skills. Gry asked others how they assess or address such skills. In Astangu students are assessed by a social worker and therapist, and they use the Hammet test. At SIVA they evaluate students for one week, including basic skills, language, maths and psychometric tests and can ask for other tests. At AFID they do an assessment on arrival [what kind of assessment?] and have access to the school certificate to inform their assessment.

W&I run a successful programme of linking people with disabilities to the job market, called Ripples in the Water (a summary can be found [here](#)), which they want to extend to people who are more disadvantaged.

In **SIVA** their college runs courses from three months to four years including in data and PC hardware. There aren't placements during the course but an internship at the end. They struggle to find places for their interns. They carry out professional training but also just assessment of competences.

AFID has a programme supporting young people in schools to help them transition to society and training (see a summary [here](#)). **AFID's** VET programmes last 2 years typically and there is an internship at the end. The goals of the individual in the internship are agreed with the company, and if an intern needs help or the team in the company does AFID can support. They have a separate centre that helps people find jobs; sometime the company in which the internship is carried out offer the intern a job. Some companies also train interns. They have a structural agreement with IKEA where the interns follow the same induction as other trainees.

For information, in the **German** VET “dual” system VBL is mandatory, and is well known for its success. The main characteristic of the dual system is cooperation between mainly small and medium sized companies, on the one hand, and publicly funded vocational schools, on the other. This cooperation is regulated by law. Trainees in the dual system typically spend part of each week at a vocational school and the other part at a company, or they may spend longer periods at each place before alternating. Dual training usually lasts two to three-and-a-half years and training, testing and certificates are standardized in all industries throughout the country. This ensures that all apprentices receive the same training regardless of region and company. For more information see [here](#). Germany has an online “Apprenticeship Toolbox” to provide support for decision-makers throughout Europe who want to implement the key principles of dual apprenticeship schemes (<http://www.apprenticeship-toolbox.eu/>)

➔ Common challenge – finding internship/apprenticeship placements. Keep an eye out for the next **Partnership with Employers** event, November, Madrid (exact date TBC) and check out the report from the 2017 meeting [here](#).

Next steps

The group proposed to do a mapping of WBL programmes (Info sent in May, deadline August) among members and to have a second exchange (first week September) to see if there would be an interest for some kind of joint activity.

The questionnaire would include the following questions:

- What courses do you offer that include a work-based learning dimension?
- How do people end up taking the course – how are students selected or how do they choose the course?
- Do you test for basic skills before students start a course? If so, how do you test?

- Do you find you often need to train people's basic skills / do these courses also train in literacy or other basic skills?
- Where does the WBL take place? Do you have agreements with specific companies to take students regularly or do you need to find different placements for each person?
- How long is the WBL element on average, and what are the courses with the highest time in the workplace? (how much time per week / month / year?)
- What support is given on the job? Do you follow the [values and principles of Supported Employment](#)?
- What is the success rate of getting a job after the course – on average and the most successful?
- What, if any, support is given in the workplace after the course ends?

Other resources including EU initiatives

In March 2018 national governments adopted the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships², as part of the New Skills Agenda launched by the European Commission in June 2016 and in line with promoting quality and inclusive education as promoted in the European Pillar of Social Rights³. To assess the quality of the apprenticeships, the European Commission has identified 14 criteria covering the learning, working and framework conditions. Based on these initiatives, the European Social Fund (ESF) and other EU funding programmes will allocate resources in the upcoming years to support stakeholders in developing quality and effective apprenticeships aimed at promoting job-related skills and the personal development of apprentices.

For information on Supported Employment, “*providing support to people with disabilities or other disadvantaged groups to secure and maintain paid employment in the open labour market*”, you can consult the The European Union of Supported Employment resources such as the [Toolkit](#) (in English, German, Spanish and Norwegian) and [How to Guides](#).

For further reflection on skills check our EPR's [Skills – A Comprehensive Briefing Paper 2017](#).

² <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2018/03/15/quality-and-effective-apprenticeships-council-adopts-european-framework/>

³ For more information, see EPR's Analytical paper [The European Pillar of Social Rights and service delivery for persons with disabilities](#)