

Worked Based Learning

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Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



HUMAN
RESOURCE
DEVELOPMENT
CENTRE



THE ENTRANCE TO PROFESSIONAL FUTURE



Project number: 2018-3-BG01-KA205-060977

#WBL
#SOFIA
#FEB2020

TELL ME AND I FORGET
TEACH ME AND I REMEMBER
INVOLVE ME AND I LEARN
Benjamin Franklin



Introduction

Get to know our project

The Best Practices report is the final product of the project “Work Based Learning – The entrance to professional future” realized under the Programme Erasmus+ of the European Union with number of contract 2018 – 3 – BG01 – KA205 – 060977. Participats in the procest are from 8 different European countries – Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia, Cyprus, Spain, Italy, Poland and Greece.

Nowadays, unemployment is one of the strongest challenges faced by European youth and combatting it remains a top priority for securing a positive future for young people. Organizations, actively involved in the educational sector, have detected concrete problems, related to the mismatch between the competences gained after competition of traditional educational pathways and the real needs of the labor market. Such findings reveal some essential reasons for the stagnating youth unemployment tendency in Europe.

A report produced by CEDEFOP regarding the policies and practices of WBL in Europe (2015) also suggests collaboration between sectors, with the idea of implementing quality apprenticeship schemes for strengthening youth employability. It states that improved cooperation between educational institutions and labor market actors is needed, in a guidance perspective, starting from primary levels, resultint to opening up schools to the world of work. The “Work Based Learning – The entrance to professional future” project aims at creating youth-centered empowering environment for enabling young people to undergo WBL mobility and promotes holistic approach for fostering youth employability by bridging non-formal, formal education and labor market sectors, contributing to the creation of long term multi-level cross-sectorial networking and cooperation.

The project’s main objectives are:

- To build up competences of youth workers to become leaders of WBL empowering environment and to create strategies that promote WBL mobility as a complementary educational path in order to boost employability of young people;
- To foster cooperation exchange of knowledge and capacity development in the field of work

based mobility between the partner countries;

- To create and reinforce synergies between formal and non formal educational sectors as well as labour market so as to set up a favouring environment for cross-sectorial cooperation in view of enhancing youth employability;
- To provide youth organizations with guidance and tools for bridging sectors in view of creation of empowering setting for work based learning;

The following report is addressed to every person of any age that wants to know more about the VET sectors in different European countries and the reality of the Work Based Learning. The reader will get familiar with the definitions of the VET and WBL; he/she will be able to learn about the VET sectors and its specific problems

Unemployment is one of the biggest challenges faced by the European youth nowadays and combating it remains a top priority in order to ensure a positive future for young people.

in each partner country; he/she will see what are the common problems of this sector in the European countries participating in this project and he/she will gain knowledge on the Work Based Learning.



VET projects aim for the training and development of practical skills in the students (including the acquisition of theoretical background knowledge, practical skills and attitudes) in their chosen field of vocational education. The purpose is to be able to practice their position and increase their possibilities of employment in the labor market.

In addition, it is helping the development of personal, transversal, linguistic and socio-cultural soft skills through practical experience abroad and exposure to other languages and cultures.

Stimulation the partnership of schools, NGOs and the private sector in order to increase the internationalization and of the capacities of the organizations involved in the management of European project that facilitate the inclusion of the graduate in the labor market and their socio-professional integration.

CHAPTER 1

Definitions and examples of the VET sector and the WBL

According to the EU Commission (Eurostat, 2006) “Vocational education and training, abbreviated as VET, sometimes simply called vocational training, is the training in skills and teaching of knowledge related to a specific trade, occupation or vocation in which the student or employee wishes to participate.

Vocational education may be undertaken at an educational institution, as part of secondary or tertiary education, or may be part of initial training during employment, for example as an apprentice, or as a combination of formal education and workplace learning.” (1)

Many people mix the VET sector with the Higher Education Sector, which is wrong. The base mindset behind the VET sector is to provide to learners the practical knowledge on a specific job sector in order to enter/re-enter the job market or to improve their skills on their existing profession.

Some of the most famous courses in the VET sector are the following:

- Healthcare and Social Assistance
- Construction Industry
- The Manufacturing Sector
- Food Service
- Accounting and Bookkeeping
- Cosmetology and Hair Stylists
- Computer and IT Support
- Trucking and Transport Industry

The Work Based Learning (or WBL) is an educational strategy which gives the opportunity to students to apply what they have learned from the theory into practice. It is a way to experience a real working environment and apply their existing knowledge on the specific job. They have the opportunity to learn more practical tasks on specific professions and they gain the professional spirit that they need for their future realization in the job market. The WBL can be achieved through internships, job shadowing,

simulations, mentorship programs, etc.

“WBL is gaining serious traction on an international scale. In 2015, the OECD launched a study on work-based learning in vocational education and training (VET) to consider how countries have been able to offer these experiences and what can be done to enhance future WBL opportunities.” (2)

Some of the types of the WBL can be the following:

Cooperation between educational institutions and labor market actors is needed, in a guidance perspective, starting from primary levels, so to open up schools to the world of work.

• Apprenticeship

It is a structured and formal way to gain skills and it combines the on-the-job training and theoretical instruction from the educational institution. This type of WBL is always paid.

• Cooperative Work Experiences

It is a formal arrangement between the educational institutions and the employer and gives the opportunity to the students to work while they are studying. This type of WBL is commonly paid.

• Internships

It is a short-term work experience for students and gives them the opportunity to gain practical knowledge and skills on their profession. This type of WBL can be paid or unpaid and in some cases students can gain credits from it.

• Job Shadowing

Its duration ranges from few hours or few days. This type of WBL gives the opportunity to the learners to follow an employee in his/hers working environment in order to have an experience of a day-to-day work in a sector or industry.

NOTES:

- (1) <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:VET>
(2) <https://drivinginnovation.ie.edu/what-is-work-based-learning/>

REFERENCES:

- <https://unevoc.unesco.org/go.php?q=TVETipedia+glossary+A-Z&id=545>
<https://www.upskilled.edu.au/faq/qualifications/vocational-education-versus-higher-education>
<https://careerwise.minnstate.edu/education/training.html>



How are the school systems structured in the 8 countries involved in the Work Based Learning project?

CHAPTER 2

VET in each partner country

ISCED 0: Early childhood education Programmes at this level are typically designed with a holistic approach to support children's early cognitive, physical, social and emotional development and introduce young children to organised instruction outside of the family context. ISCED level 0 refers to early childhood programmes that have an intentional education component.

ISCED 1: Primary education Programmes at this level are typically designed to provide students with fundamental skills in reading, writing and mathematics (i.e. literacy and numeracy) and establish a solid foundation for learning and understanding core areas of knowledge, personal and social development, in preparation for lower secondary education. Age is typically the only entry requirement at this level. The customary or legal age of entry is usually not below 5 years old or above 7 years old. This level typically lasts six years, although its duration can range between four and seven years.

ISCED 2: Lower secondary education Programmes at this level are typically designed to build on the learning outcomes from ISCED level 1. Students enter ISCED level 2 typically between ages 10 and 13 (age 12 being the most common).

ISCED 3: Upper secondary education Programmes at this level are typically designed to complete secondary education in preparation for tertiary education or provide skills relevant to employment, or both. Pupils enter this level typically between ages 14 and 16.

ISCED 4: Post-secondary non-tertiary education Post-secondary non-tertiary education provides learning experiences building on secondary education, preparing for labour market entry as well as tertiary education. Programmes at ISCED level 4, or post-secondary non-tertiary education, are typically designed to provide individuals who completed ISCED level 3 with non-tertiary qualifications required for progression to tertiary education or for employment when their ISCED level 3 qualifications do not grant such access. The completion of an ISCED level 3 programme is required to enter ISCED level 4 programmes.

ISCED 5: Short-cycle tertiary education Programmes at this level are often designed to provide participants with professional knowledge, skills and competencies. Typically, they are practically based, occupationally-specific and prepare students to enter the labour market. However, these programmes may also provide a pathway to other tertiary education programmes. Entry into ISCED level 5 programmes requires the successful completion of ISCED level 3 or 4 with access to tertiary education.

ISCED 6: Bachelors' or equivalent level Programmes at this level are often designed to provide participants with intermediate academic and/or professional knowledge, skills and competencies, leading to a first degree or equivalent qualification. Entry into these programmes normally requires the successful completion of an ISCED level 3 or 4 programme with access to tertiary education. Entry may depend on subject choice and/or grades achieved at ISCED levels 3 and/or 4. Additionally, it may be required to take and succeed in entry examinations. Entry or transfer into ISCED level 6

European educational path:
A journey into school system

is also sometimes possible after the successful completion of ISCED level 5.

Following you can find 8 infographics that highlight the "Training Path" every citizen must follow, with a particular attention to the VET - Vocational Education and Training system.

Vocational training provides job-specific technical training for work in a specific career. These programs generally focus on providing students with hands-on instruction, and can lead to a diploma or a certificate.

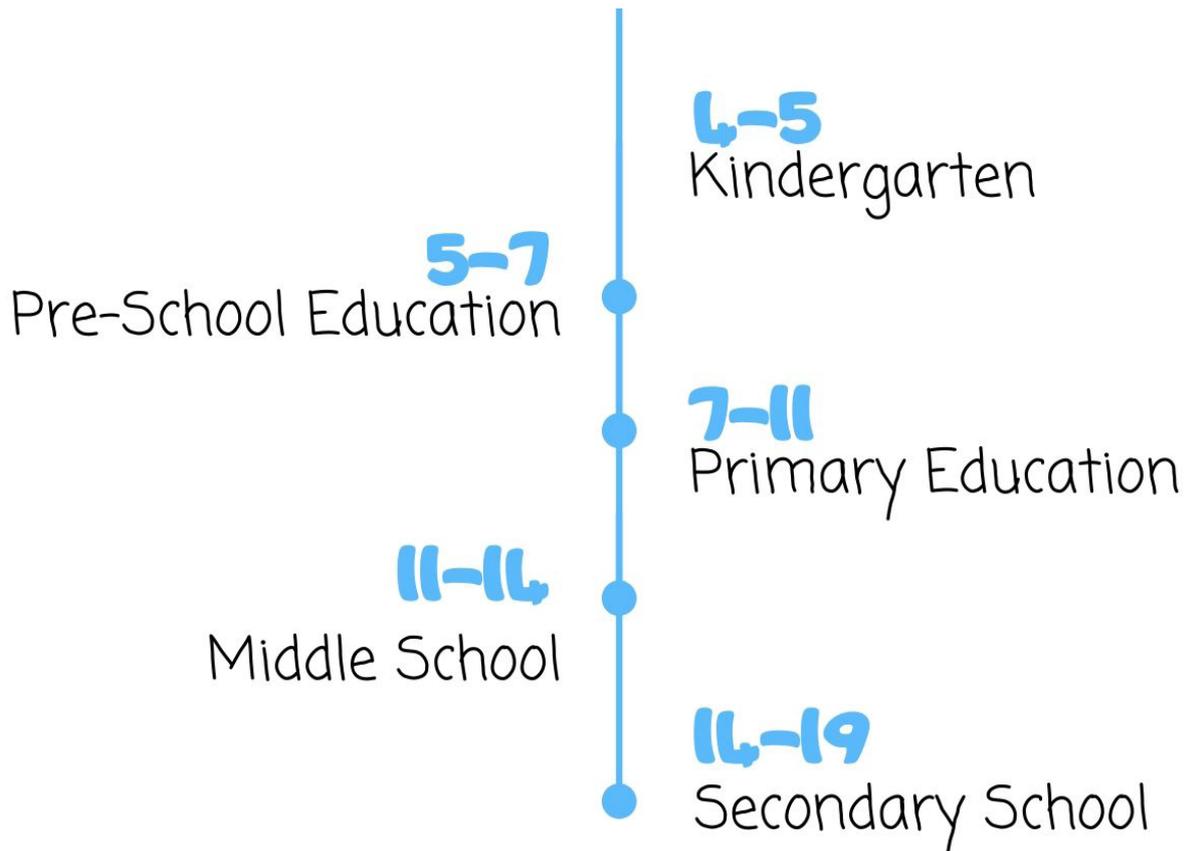
Vocational training can also give applicants an edge in job searches, since they already have the certifiable knowledge that they need to enter the field. A student can receive vocational training either in high school, community college, or trade schools.

LINK: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/sites/eurydice/files/the_structure_of_the_european_education_systems_2018_19.pdf

EDUCATIONAL PATH

A journey into school system!

BULGARIA



HIGH SCHOOL

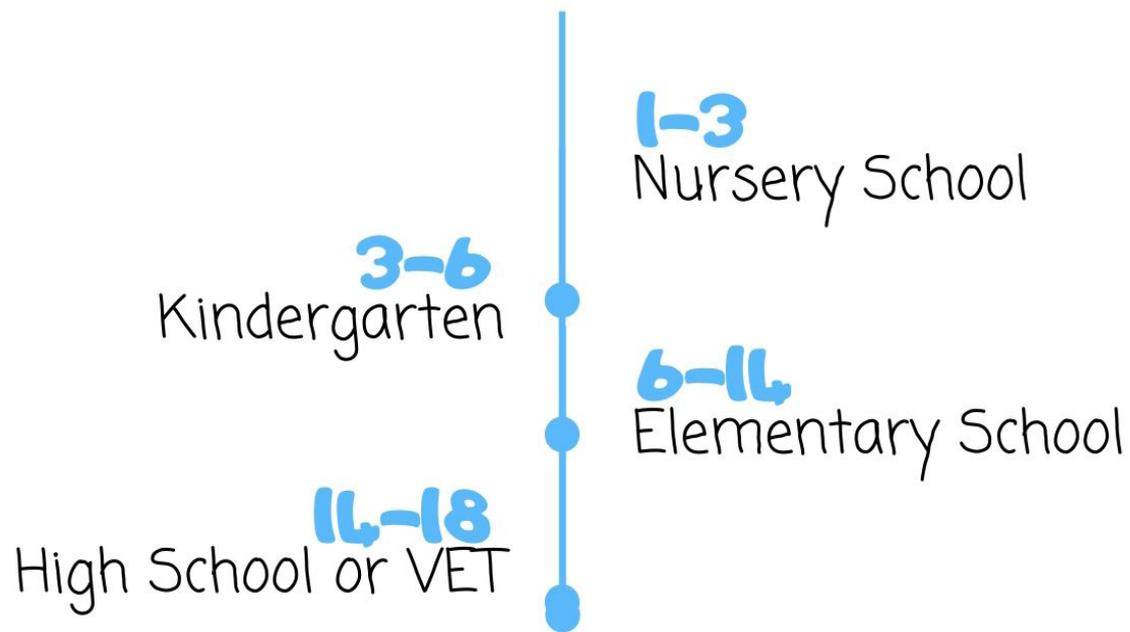
VET School

- Certificate of Vocational Education

EDUCATIONAL PATH

A journey into school system!

CROATIA



HIGH SCHOOL

- Practical Vocational Subjects
- Companies, 1 month (free)
- Exam + Final Project + Matura

VET School

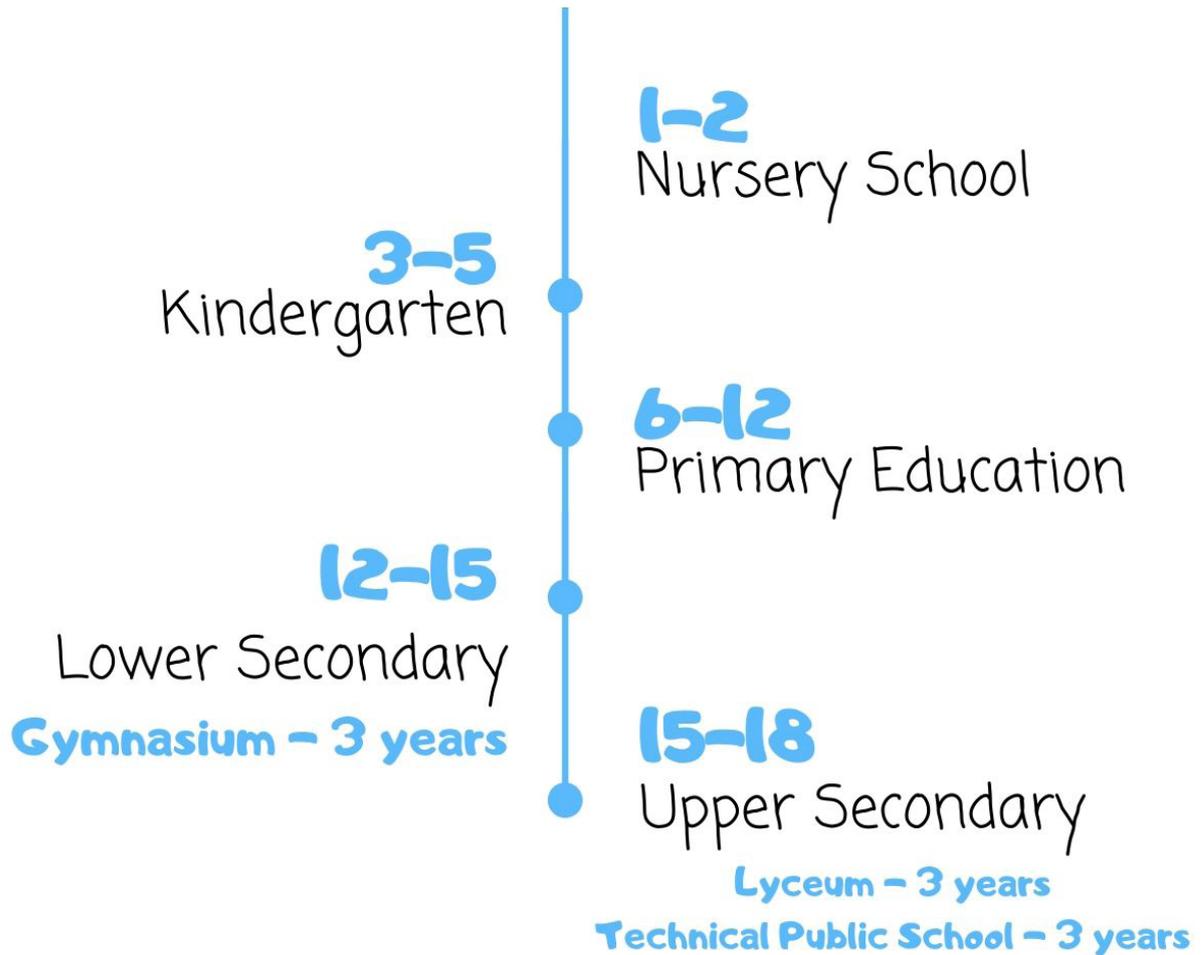
- 4 YEARS
- Computer
 - Mechanics
 - Architecture
 - Economics
 - Art

- 3 YEARS
- Cosmetics
 - Hairdresser
 - Assistants

EDUCATIONAL PATH

A journey into school system!

CYPRUS



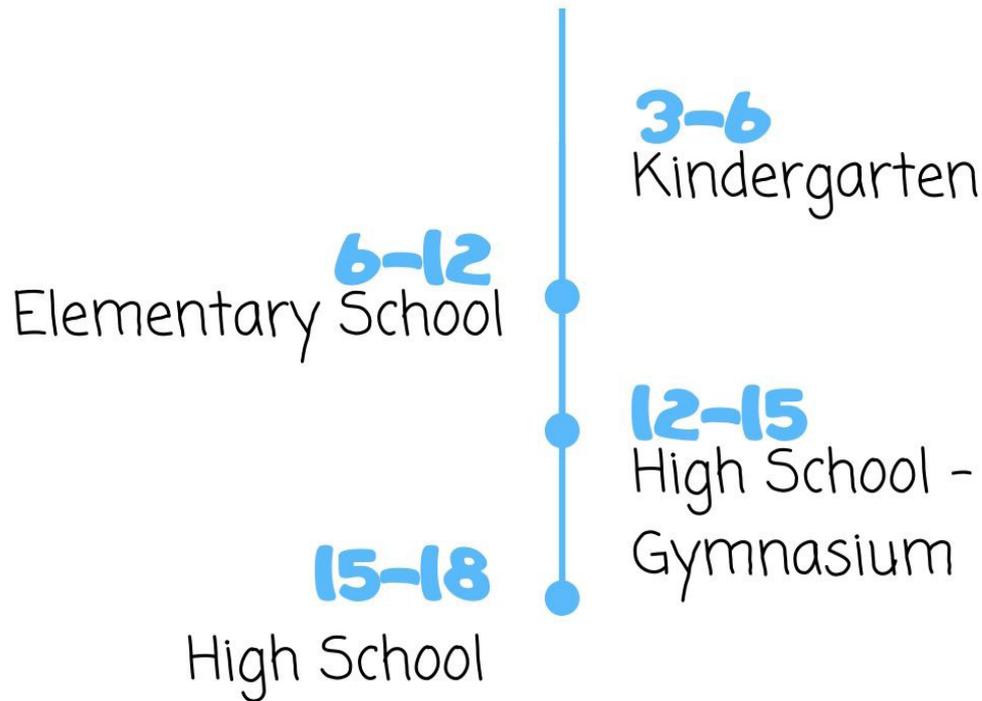
VET Private School - 2-4 years

- Diploma, Higher Diploma, Bachelor
- Practical Vocational Subjects
- Erasmus Programmes

EDUCATIONAL PATH

A journey into school system!

GREECE



Lyceum

3 levels

VET School (Lyceum)

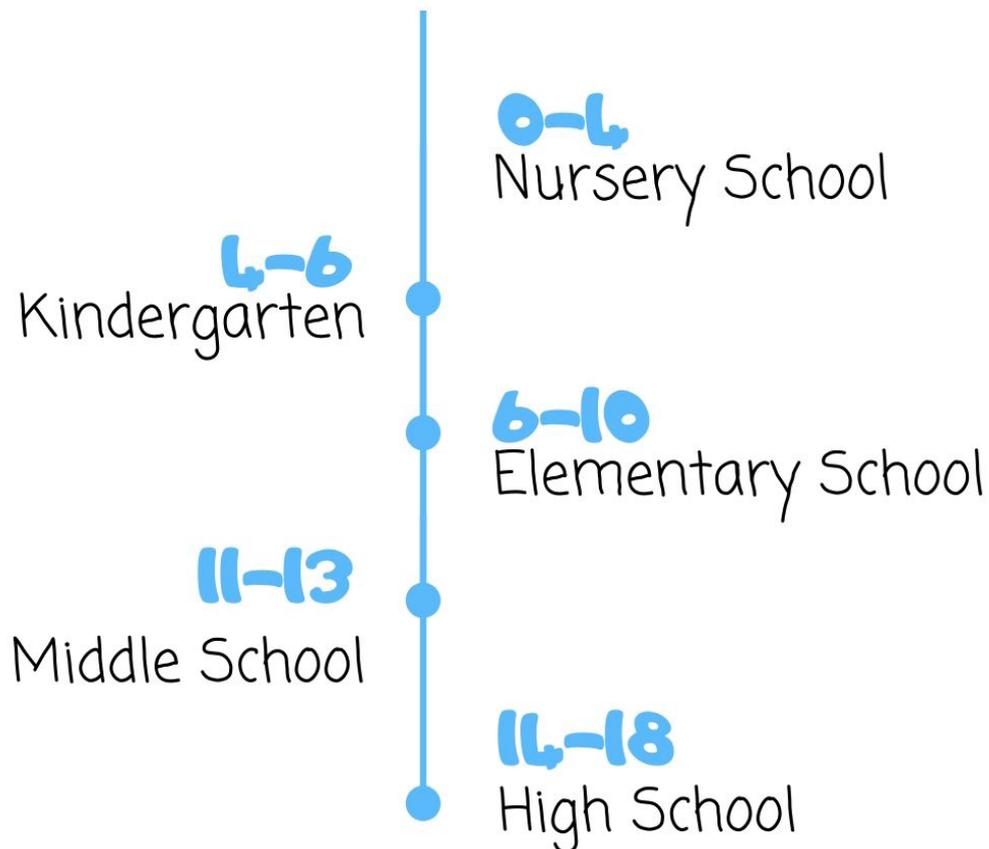
2/3 levels

Not mandatory internships

EDUCATIONAL PATH

A journey into school system!

ITALY



Lyceum

Alternanza Scuola-lavoro

VET School

Technical Subjects

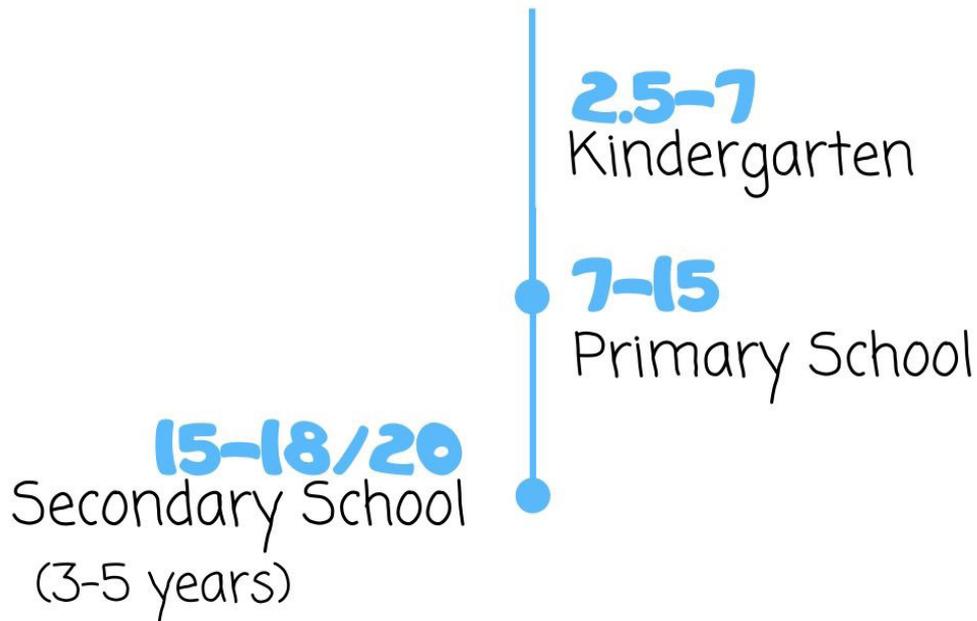
LAB

Alternanza Scuola-lavoro

EDUCATIONAL PATH

A journey into school system!

POLAND



Basic VET School

3 years

- practical subject
- lessons in Training Centers
- practice - internships

Technical School

5 years

Comprehensive School

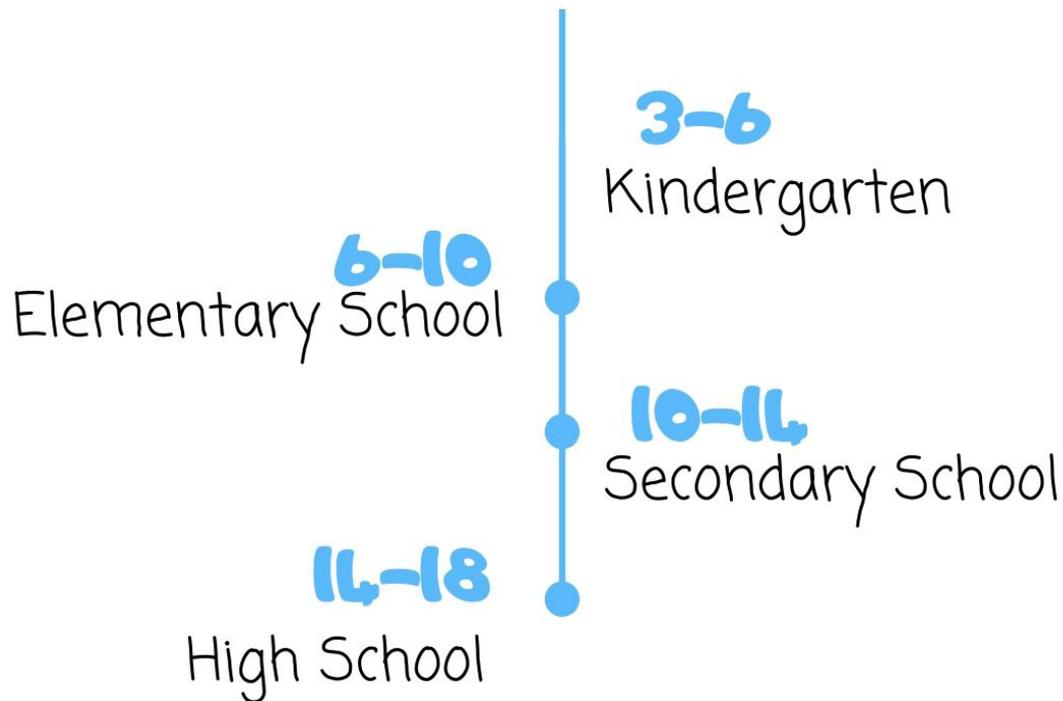
4 years

Vocational Exams

EDUCATIONAL PATH

A journey into school system!

ROMANIA



VET School

Current Practice - 1/2 hours per week

Merged Practice - 3/5 weeks per year

Professional School

Level 3: competent professional examination, practical test

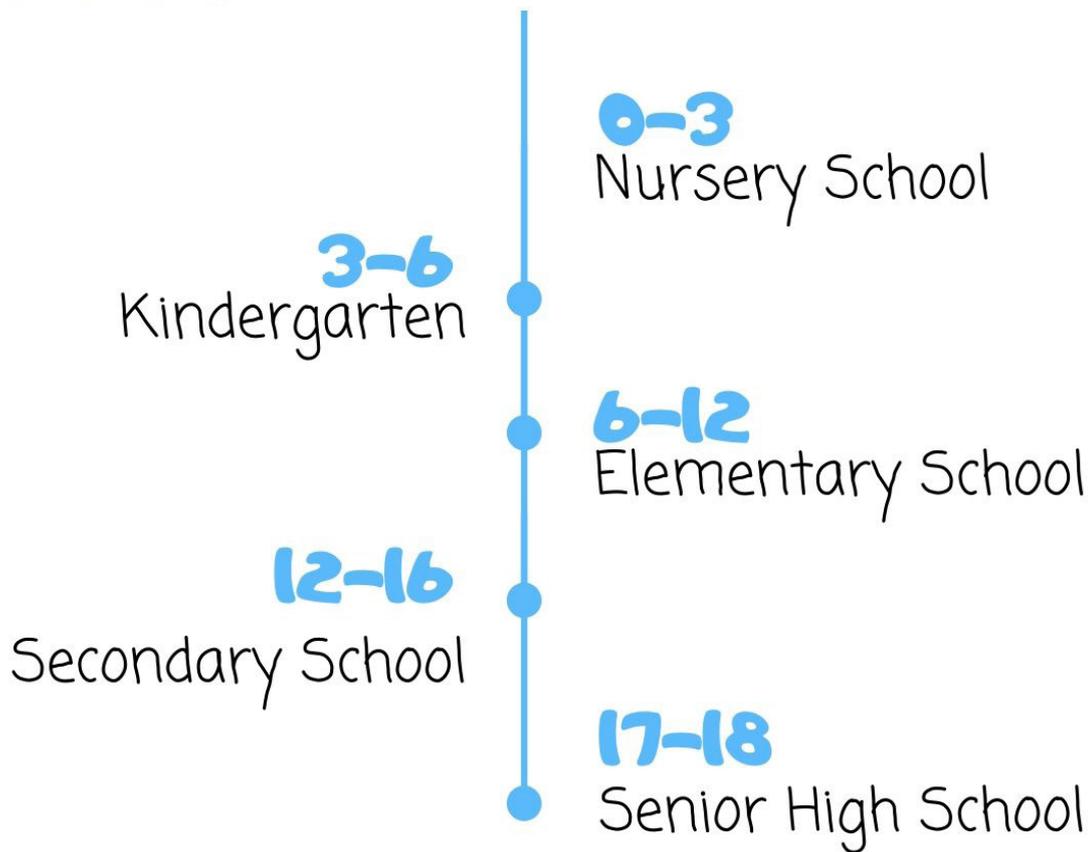
Licéal School

Level 4: competent professional examination, written and practical test

EDUCATIONAL PATH

A journey into school system!

SPAIN



Basic VET

2 years

Regular VET

2 years



The common problems that are identified in all countries working in the VET sector include the social, economical and behavioural problems, especially related to the phenomenon of bullying among the students.

There is emphasis placed on language learning in the international circulation, which leads to communication difficulties during the mobility.

In schools there is no sufficient funding for the equipment and the teaching methods and materials necessary for the school practice.

CHAPTER 3

Common Problems in the VET Sector

Eight of the participant countries with VET sector are facing common problems.

Such of them are the large number of students in the classroom, this means the learning outcomes are more difficult to accomplish.

Nowadays, it is well-known the huge importance of internships such as the integration of classroom knowledge and theory with practical application and skills developed in professional or community settings. They also bring a lot of benefits to students, both while completing a degree and when seeking a career path post-graduation. Doing an internship gives students experience in the career field they want to pursue. Not only does this help them when applying for jobs, it also prepares them for what to expect in their field and increases confidence in their work. (1)

On the other hand, very often during their internship, students have duties that are not relevant with their job (e.g. photocopying). Moreover, the companies offering training or work to the VET students do not have the appropriate quality level, and they cannot motivate the students to build the required useful skill set. Furthermore, many times there's no recognised certificate for the internship and it does not lead to a full-time work possibility. (2)

Also, VET sector has a lot of socioeconomic problems. There is the phenomenon of family relocation for work abroad, which is very widespread and this causes lack of learners' discipline. Similarly, the relationship between parents and students is not ideal and as a result students are not focused on their school duties. Besides, very often the relations between teachers and

parents are not ideal. Overall, without good relationships it is difficult to have a good learning outcome.

Furthermore, social and cultural problems are associated with the majority of VET sector problems. For example, many of VET students have limited knowledge of a second language (e.g. English), as well as they face learning problems such as: lack of discipline, deficit of attention and motivation. Last but not least, is the phenomenon of bullying, a serious problem that modern societies are dealing with.

Specifically, an increasing number of students dropped-out from their schools. One of the main reasons is they cannot afford their college fees. The skyrocketing fees increase student debts, pushing those from underprivileged backgrounds suffer further. A survey conducted

by the India Times shows that around 50 percent of 2017-2018 young adults who couldn't afford college, dropped out. (3)

In addition to this, institutions in the VET sector have a lot of problems such as lack of financial support from the government. Due to this the number of teachers is insufficient to cover the needs of the schools. Moreover, most of the professors still working

in the VET sector have low experience related to practical subjects. This makes both professors and students lose their motivation. The lack of motivation for learning in the VET school makes students feel less engaged and lonely and this leads to dropping out. Also, the equipment is not modern to maintain the school needs as well as the books in VET sector are quite obsolete to respond to the modern day life needs.

Although the popularity of vocational education and training has been increasing since the early 2000s, the VET sector has become less popular and the VET education is no longer appreciated.

It is well-known the huge importance of internships such as the integration of classroom knowledge and theory with practical application and skills developed in professional or community settings.

NOTE:

(1) <https://blog.suny.edu/2018/06/10-reasons-why-an-internship-is-important-to-all-students/>

(2) <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jmaureenhenderson/2014/02/26/internships-arent-worth-it-heres-why/#6c89753c5769>

(3) <https://www.creatrixcampus.com/blog/7-reasons-why-students-drop-out>

Due to this the VET Sector has to face the «myth of University» where the academic school culture exists and enhance its role in order to prove its value and its contribution to the society. (4)

Except the common problems, the representatives from all partner countries have identified some country specific problems that they face. In this case:

- In Greece, a major problem of the VET high schools is the limited range of professional courses offered. Most of the available specialties in the VET high schools are in the sector of engineering, computer science, nursery, in contrast with other countries like Bulgaria that they offer specialties like economics, foreign languages, etc.

- In Romania, the fact that many parents are working abroad is a serious issue that also affects the educational systems. Parents are not present in the everyday life of their children and there is no control on them. The result is that many pupils do not attend the classes and they rarely go to school. Also, parent do not encourage children to follow technical schools as they think that theoretical studies are more prestigious. This leads to a limited number of students in the Romanian's VET sector.

- In Poland students in technical secondary schools are overloaded with material as they have to focus on general subjects as well as vocational subjects. This also means that every school day, they stay at school longer hours than their peers who attend general secondary schools.

- The vocational study in Croatia last from 3 to 4 years. If students choose 3 years high school (hairdressers, mechanics, beauty school, electrictricians...) they are not allowed to apply for the university. They need to finish the additional 4th year - and pay for it. There is also the exception of nursing school which last for 5 years, the 5th year especially devoted to the practical work.

- In Bulgaria the issues that the VET sector faces are poor cooperation between schools and the business sector; lack of a reliable system for examining the needs of the labor market; the reduced number of hours of practical training, which hinders the acquisition of different competences; aging staff in terms of vocational subjects teachers; need for periodic updating of the knowledge of teachers in vocational subjects, revision of the list of professions and specialties.

- In Spain is needed an update in the equipment and materials of the VET schools. There are often workshops and classrooms with obsolete equipment, which means that the teachers cannot prepare their students adequately. Moreover, the trainers in this sector appreciate a lack of social recognition for VET graduates.

- In the case of Cyprus, no specific problem was identified. The problems that the Cypriot VET sector faces meet the common European problems of the questioned sector.

Although the popularity of vocational education and training has been increasing little by little since the early 2000s

NOTE:

(4) http://nord-vet.dk/indhold/uploads/report1b_fi.pdf





In order to reach the objectives proposed in the VET sector, it is important to analyze the needs and to apply concrete measures. Classes with fewer motivated students contribute to increase in the interest in the implementation of theoretical notions. The improvement of the curriculum and of the practical learning means determines the efficiency of the VET sector. The involvement of the authorities and the family are important factors in the material and emotional support of the students involved in ERASMUS + projects.

CHAPTER 4

Needs and solution

In this chapter we have identified the most crucial problems that exist in the VET sector and based on those we proposed solutions addressing them.

Many institutions in the VET sector deal with a number of important problems such as the lack of modern equipment responding to the school's needs along with outdated books that are not relevant to the student's life needs of today. In order to resolve this problem, we propose that there should be additional financial support through the relocation of governmental funds. In addition, there is an urgent need for educational reform in order to give the appropriate motivation to teachers to work in the VET sector. Furthermore, a dialogue between VET, Higher Education and General Education need to be established, in order to understand better the opportunities offered for acquiring the needed skills.

Another problem that the VET sector faces is the low perception it has by students which are more attracted by the «myth of University». The assistance of all social partners in the VET sector is needed in order to embellish the VET schools' profile and their role in society.

Besides, it is a challenge on how VET schools will use European tools and collaborate

with other organisations. Moreover, the perception of the VET sector by society may dramatically improve through student's mobility in Europe with Erasmus and by establishing a recognised credit system, a VET quality assurance policy and an evaluation system for practical experience. Overall, these tools will promote employability and give solutions to the needs for acquiring skills and mobility to improve competitiveness.

Moreover, the collaboration of business with the institutions could be useful for the progress. For example, it is necessary to ensure easy access to the labor market, counsel and guidance from teachers in schools as early as possible. It's very important that young people start a hand-on experience which to be useful for the labor market in secondary school. Students should be obtaining qualifications as the end result of compulsory education, they should see job possibilities as an important end result of their

general education (1). However, VET training should not come at the expense of general education, as lack in basic educational knowledge and skills can be a big obstacle to students' professional development.

Another suggestion is the establishment of agreements between companies and VET schools in order to support students in their search for a job. Also, students should play the role of «VET ambassadors» in educational fairs and open-days by presenting results and mini projects relevant to their subjects and their activities in school. By doing this, future students and their families will better perceive the role of the VET schools, to help change their mentality and better understand the benefits provided by VET. Finally, the collaboration between family, teachers and students should be enhanced.

Another major problem of the sector that all partner countries face is that the VET schools are not really adapted to the reality of the job market. In this case, it is crucial that schools and education authorities make a market research in the end of each academic year. This process will help them to identify the needs of the job market and the positions that have a limited number of specialists on the field. Students will have the opportunity to study this report and decide which sector they want to pursue in order to increase

their possibilities of finding a job later on. Updating the curriculum is also of a great importance. The subjects that are included in the curriculum of each school should be adapted to the job market reality of each country and Europe in general. This way, students will have more up-to-date information regarding the professional fields needed. Their skills will also be better adapted to the labour market. In order to achieve better results, companies can also communicate and collaborate with the school for sharing their experience, needs and thoughts regarding the reality of the job market.

Many institutions of VET sector face serious problems such as not enough modern equipment to maintain the school needs as well as the books in VET sector are quite obsolete to respond to the modern day life needs.

NOTE:

(1) <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news-and-press/press-and-media/press-releases/six-solutions-effective-vocational-education-and>

Another step in facing this problem is to help teachers obtain higher qualifications and better understand of the job market needs. Lifelong learning offers the opportunity to adults to develop new skills and improve existing ones. It is of great importance that teachers continue their education and improve their skills during the years. In addition, teachers should have up-to-date understanding of the real working environment of a company. A way to achieve this is through mobilities under the Erasmus+ Programme as well as through in-company trainings. Teachers can have the opportunity to study on the spot the way companies work and prepare their students accordingly.

Another important problem, that is widely acknowledged, is the exploitation that students experience while doing their internships in companies. This means that students are implementing tasks that actually are not connected with their desired profession, as companies may be just “using” them for general tasks (photocopying, preparing coffee, etc.). Addressing this need, a better agreement between companies and educational institutions should be created and implemented. In the agreements, the tasks of the student in the company should be clearly stated as well as the company’s and students’ responsibilities during the internship period.

It is also important that the placements of the students are done according to the market needs of each country. Students should have their internships in sectors that offer more job positions in the future. In that way they can develop skills that are up-to-date with the job market’s reality and that they can use for their future job realization.

The existence of a database of evaluation reports from both the students and the employers can be really useful for the improvement of internships. It is really important that students give an evaluation feedback about the time spent in a company along with suggestions for improvements. The feedback on behalf of the companies that are hosting the students should also be tracked and taken into account for future learning. In that way, the internship’s procedure can be improved for the future and students can have clearer and more meaningful tasks during their placements.

Finally, unofficial inspections to the hosting

companies on behalf of the schools are a useful method to control the implementation and quality of the internships. Teachers representing the schools can organize visits to the companies that students are having their internships in order to be assured that the process is going smoothly and students are actively included in the company’s activities.

Take a look at the cause-and-effect “Ishikawa Diagram” or “Fishbone Diagram”.

SUGGESTIONS

- External seminars for students and professors
- Psychological support for students and professors
- Agreements with companies for internships
- Placement according to the market needs
- DataBase for evaluation reports
- Relocation of governmental funds
- Career Advisors and Companies presence in schools
- Parental involvement in activities

LOW PERCEPTION OF VET SCHOOLS

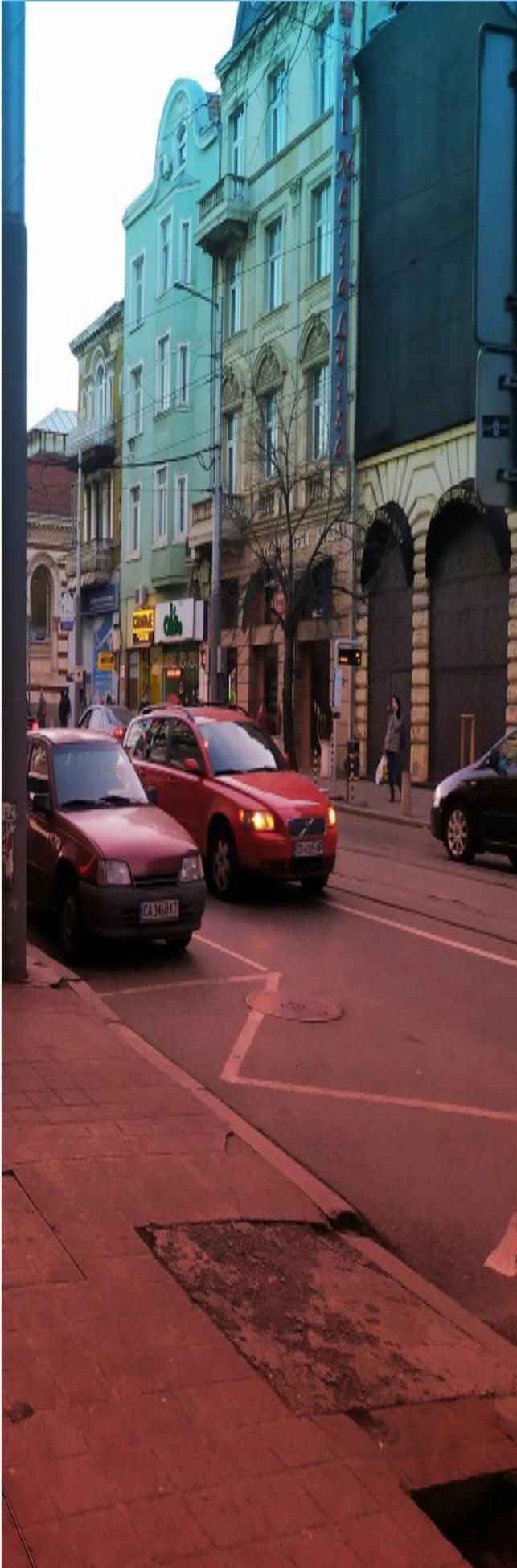
- Socio-Cultural-Economical Problems**
- Learning Difficulties
 - Bullying
 - Lack of attendance
 - Lack of motivation
 - Integration
 - Drop-out rates

Educational System Problems

- Low Language Skills
- Bad relationship btw parents-teachers
- bad practical training
- Students exploitation
- Low recognition of certificates

Low Financial Support

- Bad equipment
- Too crowded classes
- Lack of professors
- Not valuable internships



The Work Based Learning is of great importance, especially for the VET sector. In this chapter the reader will be able to understand more about how Work Based Learning works, the importance of quality in the sector, how schools and companies can collaborate in order to achieve high quality results. This chapter summarizes the actions that need to be taken to assure satisfaction in all parties of the international mobilities on WBL, the participants', the sending as well as the hosting organization.

CHAPTER 5

WBL

Importance of quality

Good balance in theory and practice.

Currently one of the main problems between VET and the labour market is the gap between the changing reality of business requirements and the curricula, which are not very agile in adapting to labour market needs. A balance is required, so that the VET curricula can become more agile in adapting to the new needs of the market, but not at the expense of educational needs and without only considering the needs of the companies.

Communication between schools and companies.

In addition, regular meetings between educational authorities and business organisations would be useful to better analyse and adapt curricula to the needs of the labour market.

Motivation of all stakeholders. Government policy.

One of the most important things is the motivation of all parties involved. It is of little use if one party is highly motivated or interested while the others are not. Governments have the tools required in order to help the VET sector attract companies, such as establishing policies for reducing company taxes and stimulating the business sector to take part in the WBL process.

Successful selection of teachers.

The selection of a mentor, both from the educational institution and from the company, is fundamental for the successful implementation of the internship. Many times, the tutor is selected based on non-educational criteria. Since the fundamental objectives of Vocational Training is the integration into the labour market, greater attention should be paid to the selection of the students' tutors.

Updated technology in schools and crowded classrooms.

Usually the equipment of the workshops and training rooms of the educational institutions is scarce and obsolete. We believe that generous financing by the educational authorities and collaboration with companies is essential and in the interest of both parties for improving training equipment. A good practice is the sponsorship of initiatives of general interest by

One of the most important things is the motivation of all parties.

companies and in return the government compensates them with tax reductions. Reducing the number of students per class, especially in practical classes where more personalized attention is required, will benefit student's training.

Providing students with language courses and skills

The knowledge of another language is a big advantage in our fast-paced international world. Apart from traditional teaching methods, used in school, it is a good practice to incorporate language learning in the practical lessons for the VET students. It can be used as an alternative method during internships in their own countries or abroad. In this way the students will be able to practice both their knowledge in their field of study, as well as the terminology used in a foreign language.

Cooperation between schools and companies. Dual education system. Commitment of companies.

Direct cooperation between training centers and companies is essential for the development of future workers. A good way to approach this, is through Dual Training, where the student is trained in the educational institution and at the same time works in the company. It is a very interesting formula for all parties and companies will be required to commit to this type of agreement. Except for countries like Germany, where there is an already established system, in other countries it is either beginning to be developed or not yet carried out.

New methods for increasing the interest and preparation of students.

Although it is quite difficult to replace traditional teaching methods, some new methods are already being developed. Such are project-based teaching, Dual Education, or tools which, although they do not modify the whole system, improve and complement it, such as the Erasmus+ programmes.

Company commitment.

It is necessary to inform companies on the importance of their collaboration in the training of future workers, as this will almost immediately benefit them.

School and companies collaboration

Joint committees from educational authorities and company representatives can discuss common goals and benefits.

It would be beneficial if there were regular meetings between educational authorities involved in student internships and companies. These meetings can analyze the common objectives and benefits, identify curriculum needs and adapt them to the current and future needs of the labour market. An external auditor could be appointed to supervise good practices by all the parties involved.

Accreditation of work experience outside the educational system.

WBL accreditation of work experience outside the education system is a part of WBL that can complement formal education. In Spain, an alternative path is offered than formal education for vocational training, that can also be applied in other countries. This route is known as "Professional Accreditation". It consists of evaluating the work experience of workers who have several years of experience in a profession, by a board consisting of teachers from a vocational training centre.

This panel evaluates the knowledge acquired by the worker during his/her work experience taking into account the companies where the skills have been developed. In the event that the board considers that the worker meets all the requirements demanded by the Official Curriculum of the Department of Education, it will give its approval for the official title of vocational training (VET) to be awarded.

In the case that the board considers that the worker lacks in some skills he/her is advised to register in a vocational training centre, where the missing training can be officially obtained. When the worker presents that he has passed the pending training, the panel will approve the awarding of the Official Vocational Training Certificate (VET). This type of recognition also fulfils the educational objective of continuous training for workers throughout their working lives.

"Professional Accreditation" consists of evaluating the work experience of workers who have several years of experience in a profession, by a board consisting of teachers from a vocational training centre.

Equipment's donations from companies to schools.

A good practice is sponsorship, which involves the donation of equipment by companies, financial contributions, etc. In return the government would compensate the collaborating companies with tax benefits.

Mutual external events.

The collaboration between the educational institution and the companies may not be limited only to the internship period; other collaborative activities of interest to both parties may be carried out, such as student visits to companies or company presentations at the educational institution's events, etc.

Opportunities for your city.

It is important that VET training is related to the industrial fields of the area where the school is. In this way there is an increase in the value of the teaching, contributing to the unemployment decrease and to better adaptation to the labour market. Overall, it is helpful for employment of the local population, as there are a lot of rural areas which are being abandoned.

Assessment

Logbook with the estimated times and deadlines. Mentor support. Evaluation process. Timing evaluation.

Before starting the internship, the school and the company should sign the training agreement before starting the internship, where are specified in detail the responsibilities of student during his/her internship, including the estimated dates and tasks schedule. It is strongly advised for students to write a detailed report included in the internship journal.

Internship journal writing gives students the opportunity to record observations about their experience and enables them to discuss it afterwards with their field supervisor or internship coordinator. Recording the internship journal also gives students the chance to analyze their experience and its interaction with coursework and theory in their field of study.

The internship should be supervised by the internship coordinator assigned by the company. Supervising is necessary in order to make sure that students reach the required capacities needed for the training degree. The internship coordinator and the school's tutor should meet periodically to analyze the student's progress and at the end of the internship jointly evaluate the student's work, as well as the skills they have acquired.

Therefore, it would be useful for students when doing internships in companies, to have a notebook to follow up the details of the training agreement. In the follow-up notebook of practices, students would be completing daily tasks and they would be supervised by the tutor of the company. The company's tutor and the school's tutor will meet periodically to analyze the student's evolution and at the end of the internship they evaluate the progress made. It is also necessary for students to reach the required capacities in order to obtain the training degree.

Questionnaire. Practical Test.

Internship program evaluation forms usually answer questions such as whether or not the training was useful or if the participants gained any valuable insight from the program. It is the internship evaluation form the employer serves to evaluate the intern's performance.

At the end of the internship both the students

and the companies should be encouraged to fill in a questionnaire about the internship. This would be a useful tool to recheck points of improvement in order to provide an objective indicator on how the internship has aided the professional development of VET students.

Assessment data can also be obtained from students by evaluating each other. In this way, students could learn from the achievements or the mistakes of their peers. Moreover, learning is enhanced when students contribute to the assessment process.

Strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths:

- Close monitoring by mentors/tutors/coordinators
- Elevated security for the students due to the support of tutors
- Record of all carried practices
- Possibility of comparing indicators between different courses

Weaknesses:

- Possibility of not being truthful in the evaluation of the achievements due to the closeness of the student with the tutor
- Risk that the surveys are not carried out seriously or with great rigour

Inform families and societies.

The results obtained by completing the internship can be shown to the local and educational community. It is always advisable to show the educational community and society in general after the results were obtained.

At the end of the programme, an informative interview could be held, it should be open to the public and to the whole community, inviting students, families, companies and the media to attend and involve.

It would be interesting for students when doing internships in companies, to have a notebook to follow up the details of the training agreement

International mobilities

In terms of international mobility on WBL Selection Phase, it is suggested that having a presentation on WBL prior to the selection phase would have been of help for all the participants. For example, the potential participants will have the opportunity to talk to people in the industry, to raise their questions and concerns and become more culturally aware of the country they are planning to visit.

The selection phase should also serve as the phase through which the students will demonstrate their commitment and motivation for participating in the Mobility programme. More specifically, it will force them to make an effort and to perform certain tasks, such as uploading the necessary documentation on Drive and attending informative talks. This way, the students who are not very motivated and committed to the programme will drop out of the selection process.

During this phase, personal interviews will be carried out, the curriculum vitae will be submitted along with the the motivation letter and the level of language will be assessment from the teaching team. These activities will support the process of creating a final list of candidates with the final scores they have received during the selection process. This list would serve to make the choice in case there are different options available, such as the country of destination, companies, accommodation, etc.

Preparation process, regulations and language learning. Good matching of students with the host company.

The preparation must be a continuous process and the students have to do different tasks prior to the Mobility so as to be fully focused during the internship in the country of destination. For example, the preparation of the documents such as ID cards, the passports, health cards needs to be done in advance.

The linguistic preparation is very important and for this purpose, different tools can be used, such as Online Language Support platform, language classroom courses, etc.

In relation to this, great advantage is considered prior international experience, since such an experience can prepare the students for the difficulties they may encounter at the visiting country. Alternatively, there is the risk that the student will feel uncomfortable in the foreign

country and will be more difficult to adapt to the cultural habits and the environment during their Mobility.

Meeting with students and parents.

In relation to this aspect, it is very important to have some preparation talks with the students and the parents throughout the process.

For VET students it is advisable to talk about the mobility with their families and teachers in advance, in order to have complete and concrete plan of the actions that need to be carried out prior to the Mobility. For example, it is advisable to explore the possibilities for the accommodation, the work placement and the host company and all additional questions that the participants or their families might have, need to be addressed in advance as well.

Considering the students' age, the families might have some fears and concerns, which can be addressed at these meetings. It is also possible to seek collaboration with the families, so the student is more committed and to value the opportunity.

Another important step in the process is to keep the families well and frequently informed for the activities during the mobility period. Teenagers do not often convey much information to their families and it is valuable to have a good relationship between the teachers and the families, so they are not concerned and they can appreciate the opportunity along with their children.

Mentorship

During the mobility, it is important that all participants have mentors who will be able to support them throughout the whole period. The mentors can be either from the receiving or the

For VET students it is advisable to talk about the mobility with their families and teachers in advance, in order to have complete and concrete plan.

hosting organization and they must be familiar with the professional sector that the participants are dedicated to and to be responsible for the participants' well-being and the smooth transition and implementation of the mobility abroad.

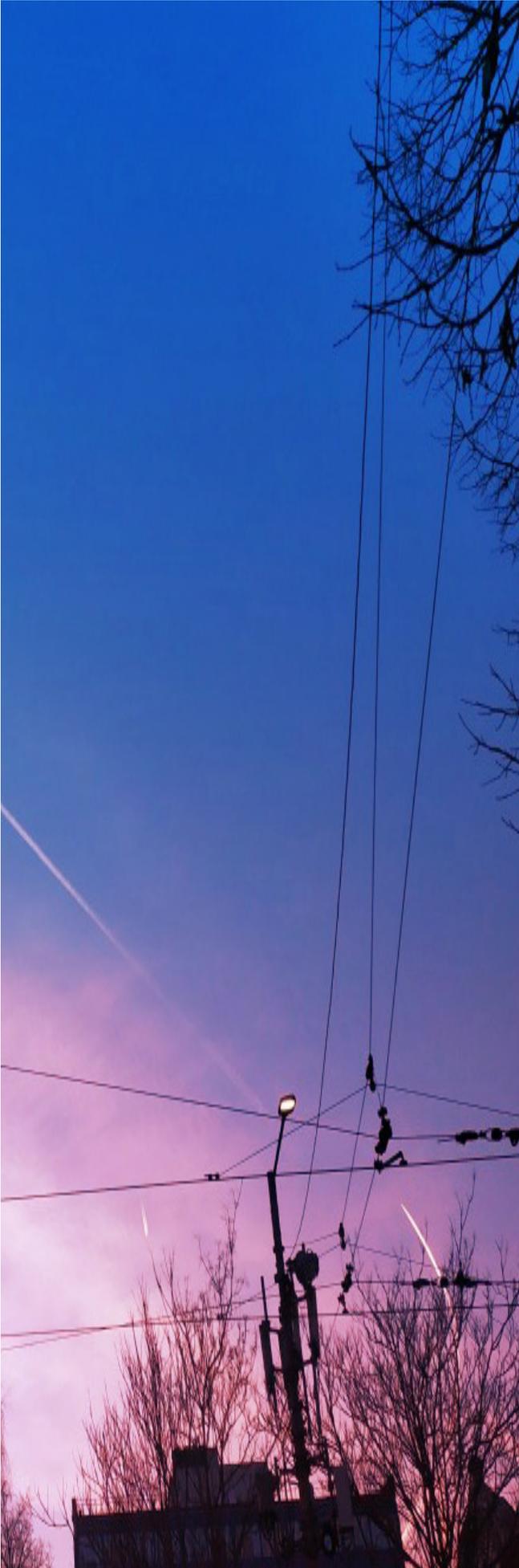
Mid-term evaluation

For long term mobilities it is of great importance to have a mid-term evaluation period. This activity would give a chance to both participants and hosting companies to evaluate the period passed and express their concerns and problems (if any). This will help the organizers resolve everything in time and ensure that the mobility will continue smoothly without any issues from both sides. The evaluation can be completed through questionnaires or skype meetings between participants/representatives of the companies and the representatives/mentors of the sending organization.

Selection of teacher

Selecting and preparing the teacher that will be responsible and who will accompany the participants for their mobility abroad is of fundamental importance. Teachers should have prior preparation in order to be able to react in emergency situations, to know how to address any issues both with participants and the hosting organization, to know how to support participants during the travel, to be able to communicate in a foreign language, etc. The sending organization can host a seminar in order to prepare the accompanying teachers to be ready for the mobility abroad.

The mentors can be either from the receiving or the hosting organization and they must be familiar with the professional sector



CHAPTER 6

Conclusion Connection between VET and WBL

Educational systems differ from country to country, although some share similarities as in the case of Greece, Cyprus and Italy. In all systems, however, the VET sector is included right from the years of high school.

Unfortunately, the VET sector faces significant problems in all partner countries. Some of the biggest issues listed are the lack of financial support, student exploitation and students' perception that university studies are more prestigious than technical ones. Additionally, internships and curriculums do not meet the needs and reality of the job market.

Moreover, the representatives from all partner countries have identified some country specific problems that different partner countries have to deal with. For example, Greece faces the problem of a limited range of professional courses offered in VET high schools. In Romania, the attendance is significantly low due to the fact that many parents are working abroad. In Poland, students in technical secondary schools are overloaded with material and have to focus on general subjects as well as on vocational subjects. In Croatia, students who choose 3 years high school are not allowed to apply for the University. In Bulgaria, the VET sector faces poor cooperation between schools and the business sector and lack of a reliable system for examining the needs of the labor market. In Spain there is a need to update the equipment and materials of the VET schools. In the case of Cyprus, low student interest for VET education exists.

Out of all the problems identified in the VET sector, the most crucial are the lack of modern equipment, outdated books and the low perception of the VET sector by parents and students. Moreover, VET schools are not really adapted to the reality of the job market. Last, but not least, is the problem of student exploitation when undertaking their internships in companies.

Some suggestions in order to face these problems are: increase in the financial support from the government through the relocation of funds, use of European tools (e.g. collaboration with other organisations), increase in student mobility in Europe (e.g. Erasmus+ Programme as well as through in-company trainings). Besides, it will be useful if business collaborate more

with the institutions, if agreements between companies and VET schools are established, if market research from schools and educational authorities is applied and the placement of students is done according to the market needs of each country. Finally, the existence of a database containing the evaluation reports from both the students and the employers would be useful. Improving communication between schools and companies with more teacher involvement is also advised.

In order to learn more about the VET sectors in the different partner countries you can visit the following links:

Bulgaria

<https://www.navet.government.bg/en/>
https://rebrand.ly/cedefop_bulgaria

Croatia

https://rebrand.ly/cedefop_croatia
https://rebrand.ly/vet_croatia

Cyprus

<http://www.moec.gov.cy/mtee/en/>
https://rebrand.ly/education_cyprus

Greece

<https://www.eoppep.gr/index.php/el/>
https://rebrand.ly/natpolicies_greece
https://rebrand.ly/cedefop_greece

Italy

https://rebrand.ly/vet_italy
https://rebrand.ly/cedefop_italy

Poland

https://rebrand.ly/cedefop_poland

Romania

https://rebrand.ly/cedefop_romania

Spain

https://rebrand.ly/cedefop_spain
https://rebrand.ly/inform_spain

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