

Project “NewWBL: New Models in Work-Based Learning”

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Newsletter no 7



WBL Developments in the Spotlight

The New WBL Project has entered its final phase and we offer a snapshot of the latest developments regarding work based learning in partner countries. This Newsletter will provide you with the insight into recent policy developments and best practice examples from Slovenia, Bulgaria, Latvia, Finland and Germany.

SLOVENIA



In school year 2017/2018 a pilot project on apprenticeship was started in Slovenia. Apprenticeships are offered in 4 professions, in the next school year, four more professions will be added.

Apprenticeship Act was adopted in Slovenia in May 2017. According to the Apprenticeship Act, apprenticeship is defined as a form of education in secondary vocational education. In apprenticeship, at least 50 percent of the educational program is carried out as practical training with work at the employer, and at least 40 percent of the education program is carried out by the school, all of which are general educational subjects. An apprenticeship agreement is concluded for the time when the apprentice is enrolled in a school that conducts an apprenticeship program, between the apprentice and the employer before enrolling in school. Apprentice, who still has a student status, receives remuneration for their work.

The aims of the apprenticeship are:

- better training according to the needs of the economy
- easier transition from education to work (early professional socialization)
- early employment of young people and more coordinated supply and demand for staff

Pilot implementation of the apprenticeship has started in school year 2017/2018, covering 4 vocational profiles: metal tool maker, carpenter, gastronomy and hotel industry and stonecutter.

4 new vocational profiles will be added in school year 2018/2019 – machine mechanic, glassmaker, papermaker and painter.

At the moment, there are 59 apprenticeship contracts concluded, and 53 contracts have been registered with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (and 6 with the Chamber of Crafts).

Given that this is a new system, many young people still do not know about this type of education. Even companies are just getting acquainted with the system. At the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, we carry out promotional activities in order to provide as much information as possible to a wider circle of people.

Not all schools are included in the apprenticeship at the moment, so some students who would want to enrol in the apprenticeship form of education, choose different programme if the school which carries it out is too far from their home. Additional programmes for the new school year have already been confirmed and we hope that soon all schools will be involved, so all students who are interested in specific occupations will have the opportunity to enrol in the apprenticeship programme.

The interest of companies for concluding apprenticeship contracts is high. The interest of young people is lower, therefore apprenticeship and VET occupations will have to be constantly promoted. CCIS is in contact with all companies that are interested to be involved in the promotion and have already prepared joint activities.

Companies which have announced training places/apprenticeship positions (the process of verification of training places is carried out by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia) choose the apprentices for their companies. All companies that have a certified learning place can enter the apprenticeship system, which means they have the appropriate material (they offer the appropriate environment where the apprentice can be trained) and the staffing conditions (with a trained mentor) that will take care of apprentices.

Students who apply for the apprenticeship position in a company send applications directly to them and the Chamber is responsible for registration of the apprenticeship contracts. On the basis of the registered contract, Student/apprentice is enrolled in school.

BULGARIA

The work based learning is expected to develop further in Bulgaria but it will need to attract more support from the social partners to succeed. The intentions are to foster cooperation with local employers in order to encourage stakeholders and employers to participate. The dialogue between educational institutions and the business sector has become more active in recent years, however further efforts are needed for the improvement of the collaboration between VET schools and enterprises.



Emil Terziyski, the director of Agricultural Vocational High School "Kliment Timiryazev" and school students.

Agricultural Vocational High School "Kliment Timiryazev" in Sandanski is the first school in the region which offers dual training. This is one of the biggest high schools in Blagoevgrad region. It instructs 630 pupils

in different special subjects such as "Agroecology", "Economics", "Tourism", etc.

From the 2017/2018 school year it has started training through work (dual training) of profession "Chef". This is the first and only class to date in the region of Blagoevgrad.

in Partnership agreements have already been concluded between the school and the partner companies involved in the project.

Students will begin practical training in a real work environment during the school year 2018/2019. As in 11th grade students are 3 days in school and 2 days in companies. And in 12th grade - 2 days in school and 3 days in companies.

The training is conducted in accordance with the requirements for facilities in the State Educational Standard for acquisition of professional qualifications.

From the school year 2018/2019 Vocational Agriculture school "Kliment Timiryazev", Sandanski will carry out admission for training through work (dual training) on a new profession "Viticulture specialist".

The director emphasized how important it was for the secondary schools to maintain close contacts with business and shared his experience - we believe that the future of vocational education is closely related to dual learning. Through learning by doing students consolidate their knowledge and develop their skills. Thus their motivation increases and they become more confident. This significantly increases their chances of getting on the labour market, which is our main goal.

LATVIA

Work-based Learning Approaches in Latvia and in the Baltics



*Ilze Buligina, Senior expert,
Ministry of Education and Science, Latvia*

Work based learning is a high level VET priority in Latvia. At the same time it has been a challenge for the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), since in the countries with school-based VET systems the national education framework specificities often prevent the public authorities from introducing WBL or similar apprenticeship-type schemes.

In Latvia the introduction of WBL started with a pilot project in 2013 leading to the adoption of legal framework for the implementation of WBL in Latvia. The success has been determined by the conscious decision of the Latvian public administration – in continuous dialogue and consultation with the involved stakeholders – to use the ‘bottom-up’ approach in adopting and implementing WBL in Latvia at system level – which seemed a hardly feasible task (for a country with a school-based VET system) back in 2013.

As a result of several integrated approaches Latvia succeeded to create its own tailor-made approach which has been recognised as a useful experience by other European countries and international partners.

The Latvian approach to this challenge – implemented in the period 2013 – 2017 - allows to present it as a case of public authorities’ and social partners’ successful strategic partnership in implementing innovative VET solutions to promote youth employability.



Taking also into consideration analogous WBL developments in the two other Baltic states - Lithuania and Estonia – it was decided to establish the Baltic Alliance for Apprenticeships (BAfA) during the Latvian Presidency of the EU Council in 2015 with the aim of raising the overall competitiveness of the Baltic labour force prepared by the VET systems.

Thus, the Latvian and joint Baltic experiences allows to share experience on three major issues: 1) Systemic approaches to WBL developments in Latvia – based on ‘bottom-up’ approach with a piloting phase and extended stakeholder discussion prior to adopting specific WBL legal framework; 2) Promoting co-operation on WBL in a broader Baltic context as a response to the European initiatives within European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA) and 3) Sharing Latvian and BAfA best practice among other countries experiencing similar challenges within their school-based VET systems - in EU and beyond.

A special role in the WBL developments in Latvia have the MoES coordinated and co-ordinated EU Erasmus+ program projects: “National Authorities for Apprenticeships: Implementing Work Based Learning in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia (WBL-Balt)”, 2014-3566/001-001 and “Testing New Approaches to Training VET and Workplace Tutors for Work Based Learning - TTT4WBL”, 582951-EPP-1-2016-2-LV-EPPKA3-PI-POLICY.

It should be noted that Erasmus+ program projects allowing for policy innovation and experimentation and extended social dialogue can be considered of a particular importance for raising the overall awareness and participation of the involved stakeholders and to a great extent has determined the success of the WBL initiative in Latvia.

VET solutions in a successive, coherent and comprehensive way – addressing both, national and EU VET priorities. The BAfA serves as a platform for further Baltic co-operation. As both the EU Erasmus+ projects (WBL Balt and TTT4WBL) involve the three Baltic ministries (or their authorised bodies), the format allows also for a continuous policy dialogue on VET and WBL developments in the three Baltic countries.

Apart from the implemented studies and research on feasibility of WBL developments in the Baltics, the Erasmus+ projects allowed also for massive WBL information/ awareness raising/publicity campaigns in the three Baltic states – coordinated with European VET promotion events, e.g. the first European Skills week promoted by the European Commission. Round table discussions, expert focus groups and regional seminars contributed to the prior testing of approaches for the development of WBL legal framework at systemic level.

WBL implementation in Latvia with Support of European Social Fund



Ruta Porneice – Head of Education and Employment Department, LDDK, Latvia

Employer's Confederation of Latvia (LDDK) starting from January, 2017 till August, 2023 implements the European Social Fund (ESF) project which provides financial support for WBL and practical placements. Project's aim is to provide support for 3150 WBL apprentices and for 11025 VET students during WBL or practical placements in enterprise. Funding arrangements: ESF 18 646 580 EUR and state budget 3 290 573 EUR. Financial support is provided for all involved parts – enterprise, VET school, and apprentice.

According to WBL regulation, the enterprise pays a wage or scholarship to apprentices, provides them with personal protective equipment, liability insurance and assigns a mentor. The regulation sets the requirements for mentors in the enterprise. From September 2017, they must have a master of crafts certificate (issued by the Latvian Chamber of Crafts), vocational education or at least three years of relevant work experience and teaching competence. The VET school provides accident insurance for students as well as transportation and accommodation during the WBL.

As WBL implementing regulations were approved in July, 2016, the provision of WBL as new training form in VET is crucial. The Sector expert councils play important role in the ESF project by offering legal and logistic assistance for implementing the WBL scheme. Moreover, they are engaged in – promotional activities, information dissemination, advice and recommendation on implementation, implementation assessment, and identification of the relevant enterprises. For example, with close cooperation with Sector expert councils till 21 February, 2018 333 mentors were trained for 32 -hour and 280 72-hour pedagogical training and recruiting process of training new mentors is continuing.

By 21 February, 2018 370 WBL apprentices and 1080 VET students were at practical placements at workplace, 917 enterprises and 30 VET schools were supported by LDDK ESF project. In total 1063 enterprises from all regions of Latvia representing the main national sectors: transport and logistics, tourism and beauty, agriculture and food production, metalworking, chemical product manufacturing, construction, forestry, printing sector, finance sector, textile product manufacturing, electronics and information communication technologies (ICT) and 33 VET schools from all regions of Latvia have signed an intention agreement to participate in WBL and practical placements in the frame of the ESF project and recruiting process of new enterprises is continuing.

Partners in WBL: How company “IMlga” started cooperation with Aizkraukle VET School



Inguna Grāne (right), Chairman of the Management Board of IMlga, Ltd and Velta Narkevica - Deputy Director of Aizkraukle Vocational Secondary school, Latvia

This is a story about cooperation told by the company manager Inguna Grāne during tandem training workshop in the Erasmus+ project “Testing New Approaches to Training VET and Workplace Tutors for Work Based Learning - TTT4WBL”

During our first years of operation, we did not accept trainees in our company. We lacked knowledge and were afraid of responsibility, besides, we did not have suitable and professional work place tutor.

As the company evolved, we encountered a shortage of professionally educated workers. Fortunately that coincided with the time when Aizkraukle Vocational Secondary School offered us cooperation opportunities. Since then young chefs, nutrition specialists and customer service specialists from the school undergo on the job training in our company. Now we train young people both for our company and for the catering industry as a whole.

Our cooperation started with a phone call from Velta Narkevica. During the first meeting in our company Velta Narkevica told us how important it was for a trainee to have a real work environment to fully master their chosen profession.

We also discussed what the trainees can learn in our company, how they can integrate into our production process and how we as a company can motivate them. Following the meeting with the school representative we concluded a trilateral cooperation agreement between the Employers Confederation of Latvia (LDDK) and Aizkraukle Vocational Secondary School.

Trainees arrive in our company with tripartite contracts which we sign before the learner commences work in our company. Trainees also have their individual plans which we adjust according to our company's capabilities.

As a result of this co-operation, I have been invited to work in the Convent Council of Aizkraukle Vocational Secondary School.

I share my experience with other entrepreneurs and convince them to be more responsive and socially responsible to our schools, young people and society in general in order to jointly shape our country's future.

FINLAND

Reform of vocational upper secondary education in Finland

VET for young people and adults will be consolidated, forming a single entity with its own steering and regulation system and financing model. The current supply-oriented approach will be refocused into a demand-driven approach. Education will be competence-based and customer-oriented: It is planned that each student will be offered the possibility to design an individually appropriate path to finishing an entire qualification or a supplementary skill set. The primary importance is on what the student learns and is able to do.

Digital learning environments and new approaches to pedagogy (e.g. modern simulators) will have a larger role in the future of learning. Learning in the workplace will be increased, (till now minimum was 4 months/ 3 years). Main points:

Individual study path

For every student planned study path is different in vocational upper secondary education, competence-based qualifications and apprenticeship training

Focus on acquiring missing competence

Each student studies only those areas in which he/she has no prior competence.

More versatile learning environments:

Studying flexibly at the workplace, at the education institution and increasingly also in virtual environments

More learning at workplaces – threshold for finding employment lowers

Apprenticeship or training agreement/ flexible combination of training agreement and apprenticeship
Training agreement is training without salaries and during Apprenticeship students is paid normal salary.

More information of the reform: <http://minedu.fi/en/reform-of-vocational-upper-secondary-education>

Interview with WinNova catering teacher Ben Schrey



Ben Schrey is a professional catering teacher in WinNova Finland, experience in educational field as a teacher and also developing projects since 1988. Before that 7 years working in open sector hotel restaurant various kitchen assignments.

Ben is qualified as Bachelor of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism management of and additional pedagogical studies.

So far there have been enough suitable training places for students. It is important to have different learning experiences from different learning areas such as chain restaurants/ individual traditional restaurants, small and bigger companies. So the best solution is to work in few different style workplaces during the studies.

What is the expanding WBL requiring from companies?

Enough staff resources for briefing and guiding the student. Possibilities to get versatile work assignments.

What are the challenges for assessment?

The teacher must control, that the set criteria for learning outcomes are really achieved.

GERMANY

Initiatives in Germany to face matching problems in apprenticeships – assisted apprenticeship (Assistierte Ausbildung)

Doubtless, apprenticeship is highly valued in Germany. For most of young people, it still is the first choice to enter the labour market (more than 50% of an age cohort start an apprenticeship and in total there are about 1.3 Mio apprentices in Germany; VET Data report 2017). Nevertheless, there are matching problems when it comes to the question of “matching” an enterprise offering an apprenticeship and an apprentice. This problem can be of various reasons. During a long time, the focus mostly was on the apprentice, on his / her deficits and special needs. However, there was no analysis of risk of the enterprises. Research shows, that especially small and micro enterprises often faces problems in offering apprenticeship places and that, furthermore, special groups of occupations face a high risk of e.g. cancellation of training contracts. Therefore, many enterprises do not fill apprenticeship vacancies because they fear the high investment and risk of drop out.

In Finland the reform is including more flexibility to plan the studies; the 3 years studies can include more WBL than before.

What are the advantages in the Finnish reform concerning especially the WBL?

The student's possibilities to plan more individual study path and maybe get the certification sooner if they have already enough competences to be recognized.

Also the more the studies include assignments that are needed in real working life the better possibilities the student have to get a real working place after studies.

What is expanding workplace learning requiring from students?

The students must have good basic knowledge and skills before starting the WBL –period.

Otherwise it is difficult for them to notice and find out the right experience during WBL.

What is changing in teacher's point of view?

Teachers must have good relationships and information of the situation in companies to successfully coordinate the possible workplaces for suitable students. The longer the WBL period is, the more important will the need of the teacher's guidance be.

How is the expanding WBL fitting in catering sector and companies?

The initiative “Assistierte Ausbildung” (assisted apprenticeship) therefore covers as well the support of young people with less possibilities (e.g. due to childcare, migration background, social problems) and / or negative learning experiences and the support of – especially small – enterprises to create a win-win situation for both. It focuses to balance the different interest of the three parties involved in apprenticeship: economy (secure skilled workforce), individual (individualisation) and society (inclusion, enabling participation).

The main goal is to support the integration into the regular system (into “normality”), not to create a situation out of the system, and thereby to use the high potential of the so-called “first labour market”. Therefore, the young person will be trained in a regular apprenticeship, with a contract between the apprentice and the enterprise, with the regular training allowance. At the same time, there is a cooperation agreement between the enterprise and a (private) educational institution that supports the enterprise in pedagogical and – if necessary – in administrative issues. For each apprentices there is than a person that accompanies him /her all the time of the apprenticeship and support him / her in their needs. The educational institution has a self-understanding as a service provider as well for the young person / apprentice as for the enterprise. This enables enterprises to focus on the professional training. Especially for small enterprises, this is an enormous advantage, as they often do not have the capacities and resources to accompany a person with special need of support.

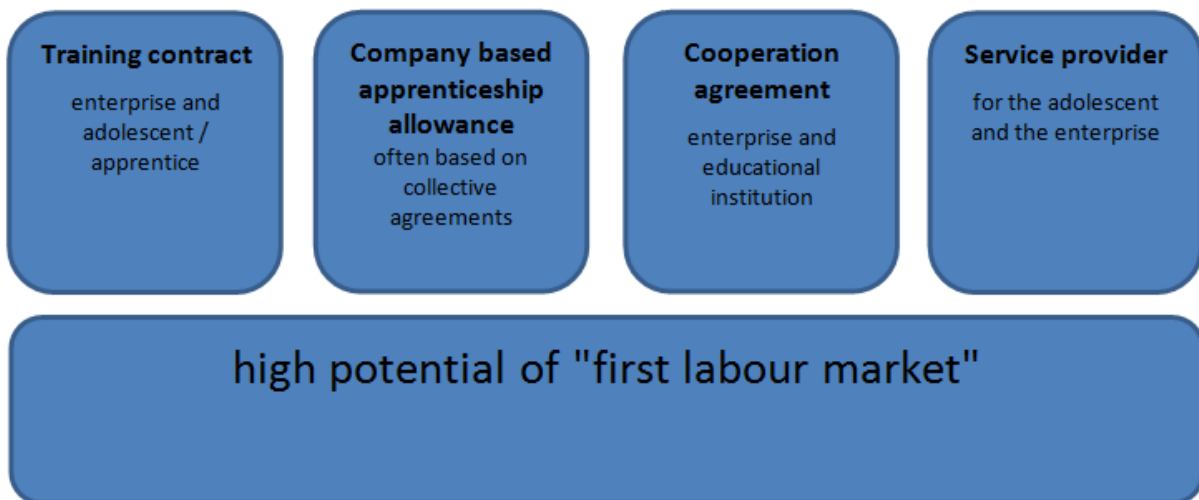


Figure 1: bases and corner stones (source: KORTEN, Bernd / NUGLISCH, Ralf (2013))

In general, the assisted apprenticeship is a three-step process: first, the adolescent has an intensive preparation within the educational institution (about six months). Here, an analysis of competences, career orientation, training for applications, preparation of the apprenticeship situation, dealing with all day problems as childcare, financial problems, social problems etc. are carried out. In a second step, enterprises are contacted and selected according to the capacities and career wishes of the adolescent and the capacities and needs of the enterprise. In this period, (s)he does internships in different enterprises. These enterprises receive intensive information on the principles and possibilities of the assisted apprenticeship in beforehand. After this internships, the application for an apprenticeship starts. Once in an apprenticeship with an enterprise, the educational institution supports the enterprise and the adolescent with regular reflective and feedback interviews.

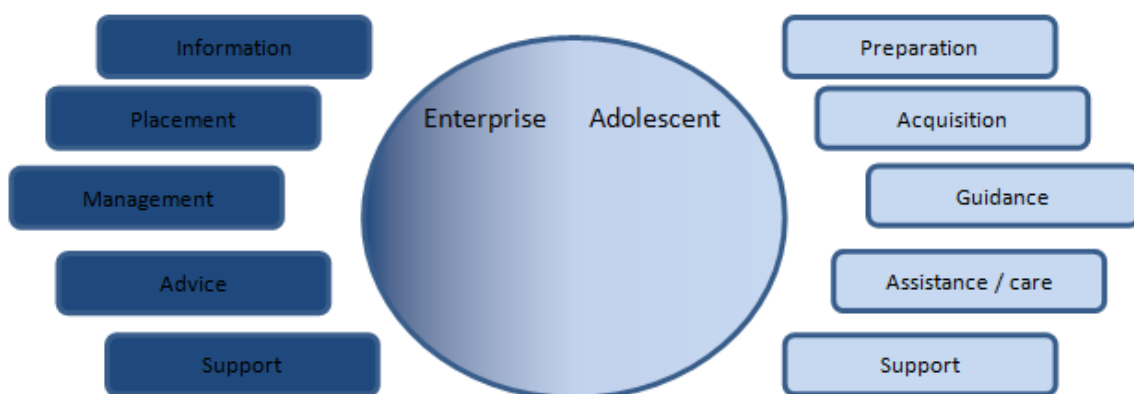


Figure 2: elements of assisted apprenticeship (source: NUGLISCH, Ralf (2011))

Evaluation of one of the pilots shows that this approach based on „normality“ and „service“ is successful. About 98% of apprentices and enterprises would participate again and recommend this model to others. The intensive preparation of adolescents and enterprises in beforehand also shows a high success: nearly 70% of the adolescents starting the preparation succeeded in an assisted apprenticeship, 10% even in an un-assisted apprenticeship or in extra-company training places. About 14% continued school education and only 6% did not have a further school- or occupational perspective. Furthermore, the amount of cancelation is lower than in the un-assisted apprenticeships (12% instead of up to 50% in some occupational fields) and apprentices participating in assisted apprenticeship have better results in final exams than the average.

This contribution bases on following articles:

- NEISES, Frank: Passungsprobleme: Ausbildungsförderung und flexible Unterstützung im Regelsystem; BWP4/2016, pp.36-39;
- NUGLISCH, Ralf: Normalität statt Maßnahme. Assistierter Berufsausbildung für chancenarme junge Menschen; 2011. Online: https://www.bibb.de/dokumente/pdf/a31_assi_ausbildung_aufstieg_aus_bildung_nuglich.pdf (05.03.2018)
- KORTEN, Bernd / NUGLISCH, Ralf: Assistierte Ausbildung: Ideen, Chancen und Erfahrungen IN: Der Paritätisch Gesamtverband: Assistierte Ausbildung. Ein erfolgreiches Praxismodell zur intensiven Ausbildungsprberietung und –begleitung. Fachveröffentlichung 3-2013, pp 3-12; Online: http://jugendsozialarbeit-paritaet.de/data/assistierte_ausbildung_web_vers03.pdf (05.03.2018)

Visit NewWBL project website at: <http://newwbl.eu/>

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