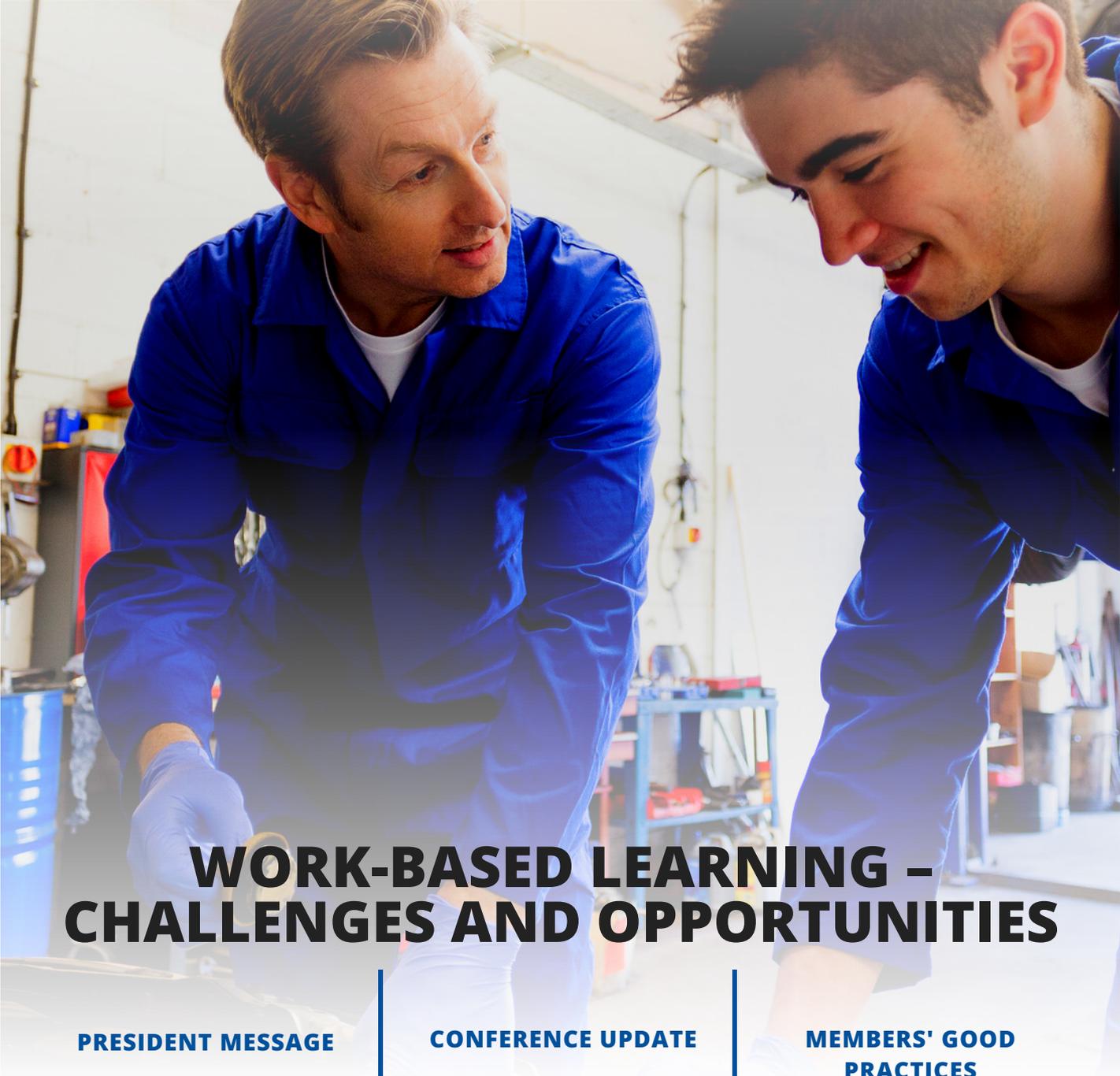


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EfVET MAGAZINE

THE MAGAZINE FOR VET PROFESSIONALS



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EfVET is a unique European-wide professional association which has been created by and for providers of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in all European countries. Its mission is to champion and enrich Technical and Vocational Education and Training through transnational cooperation and building a pan-European network of institutions that could lead European VET policies.

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WORK-BASED LEARNING - CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



Message from EFVET President

Employers normally demand experience when recruiting new employees. Many learners today prefer to work and study.

“ **Reskilling and upskilling of workers requires hands on training to enable them to grasp the new skills they must learn.** ”

Many teachers in vocational and professional training have had direct experience in practical teaching from industry and other places of work. All these variables make VPET the ideal place to learn by doing. This is at the heart of VPET: learning by doing. Experience from many systems of education has shown that learners learn in different ways. Several succeed in their formal education only because they can practice what they read or hear from their lecturers. This has been my experience at MCAST as well as in other colleges and school for VPET across Europe. Learning becomes fun when learners can practice theory and in addition, it provides an excellent opportunity to interact and to work in teams. Whether its hairdressing or aerospace technology or ICT or mechanical engineering interacting with machines, tools and instructions is the way people learn. This is the benefit of VPET and has been for many years.

This edition of EFVET's Magazine pays tribute to many initiatives that members are taking to promote work-based learning. It shows that members are keen on making WBL the key pedagogical tool to reach as many students as possible. Although in the history of VPET, WBL has been the key to success stories of many students, yet today WBL requires a more complex context especially when linking learning to industry and when this is not possible, the creation of simulated learning environments. The activities that WBL needs is time consuming and requires planning and financial investments. These are huge challenges to many schools and colleges and the experiences shared in this edition show how such challenges can be met.

Joachim James Calleja
EFVET President and Principal and CEO of the Malta
College of Arts, Science and Technology (Malta)

WORK-BASED LEARNING – CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

What is important to highlight is that WBL provides a platform for learners to match their initial aptitudes towards a particular career to the real world of employment. Testing aptitude and interests with the real world of skills and competences can be of great assistance to students particularly in their initial years in a VPET environment. I have personally seen students migrating from one course to another because their practical skills were not matching the trade expectations. Others have opted to a cognitive-based course rather than a practical hands-on experience especially when being engaged in an apprenticeship programme.

“ WBL is a reality test but not just for learners. It is also a reality test for teachers and lecturing staff.

Students who go on apprenticeship programmes are gaining direct experience of workplaces which many in teaching might not have experienced themselves. Furthermore, many students are coming back to colleges after experiencing workplaces with new IT programmes, new work practices, new skills and competences and new ways of dealing with fellow workers and their line managers.

WBL challenges the status quo of education institutions. The more apprenticeship programmes and placements a college creates the more challenges the educational institution faces. Very often formal education including VPET is criticised as being too slow and reactive in comparison to the fast pace of changes in industry and in other places of work. Take for instance the iGaming industry. The workplace of

several iGaming companies is far more attractive and interactive than those in learning institutions. Do we have to compete with industry to attract more learners to formal education? We must address that big question in the near future.

“ WBL is revealing a new reality for pedagogy and learning in general.

The first is that WBL is keeping more students in mainstream education and the second is that with industry on campus (or in schools) we stand to gain from their investment in new machinery, tools and equipment and more than that, their offer of more and better apprenticeship programmes to entice learners to stay in lifelong learning.

There are many challenges and opportunities when colleges and schools use WBL as a platform for employability. The key challenge is to reform the curriculum and integrate WBL as part of the learning programmes including credits assigned to such direct working experiences. The key opportunity is to restructure the learning process so that programmes achieve a higher level of relevancy to industry.

“ WBL is the future of education and training. It has been in the past but has been marginalised for decades at the expense of having students unemployed and mismatched because their skills do not match the needs of industry and specialised workplaces.

With the regeneration of apprenticeships, WBL has come back to the essential VPET as well as higher education including programmes in traditional universities and colleges. This implies that as EfVET we need to increase our efforts, activities and research to highlight the benefits of WBL to not only learners but more importantly to employers and to a country's economic growth and citizens' well-being.

EfVET Annual Conference 2022 as the catalyst for more training providers in Europe and beyond

26-29 OCTOBER | KUOPIO, FINLAND

"THE FUTURE SKILLS REVOLUTION FOR VET AND CVET IN EUROPE"



As every year the European Forum of Technical and Vocational and Training (EfVET) is organising its Annual Conference which is planned to take place between the 26th and 29th of October 2022 in the Scandic Kuopio Hotel, in Kuopio, Finland.

Throughout the years, EfVET Annual Conference has become a milestone for Vocational Education and Training professionals in Europe and beyond, and as a matter of fact, every time it gathers more than 200 delegates in each edition. Even during the pandemic, the event reached a very considerable number of participants and received much appreciation among them in the virtual version.

The theme of this year EfVET Annual Conference will be focused on "The Future Skills Revolution for VET and CVET in Europe" and the objective is to give training providers the opportunity to share their experiences in the learning and teaching of new skills in their educational set-ups and to design ways of collaboration between them.

Many education institutions across Europe are witnessing an increased pressure from workplaces to revisit skills. Technology particularly after the experience of COVID-19 has taken centre stage on issues related to improving skills, upskilling and reskilling as well as the introduction of new skills. It is the knowledge and experience that training providers generate in their lecture rooms, classroom, laboratories and workshops that can truly inform policy even on the European stage. VET training providers are front liners and key players in VET design and implementation. It is with this spirit of sharing of knowledge, collaboration, and networking through projects, mobility of Faculty, and students as well as participation in various forums such as the EfVET annual conference that new insights are explored and transformed into new policies.

The conference will bring together practitioners, researchers, and educators from around the world, who are engaged in

Vocational Education and Training. It will host delegates from more than 150 institutions and it will cover more than 72 hours, 30 roundtables and 6 workshops. The one in Finland will be a different experience offering the participants the possibility to see what is typical in the Finnish VET system and, at the same time, to explore what the future of VET might be.

EfVET Conference is an excellent opportunity for members and non-members to discuss hot VET topics with key policymakers, stakeholders and VET professionals. This event is highly interactive, providing a network platform where delegates could meet other country fellows, key policymakers and shareholders, and find new partnerships opportunities. Even more, it's a collaboration and an engagement space to exchange views with business and SMEs community. Such opportunities are offered in particular with the Marketplace, Roundtables, and Workshops sessions which are held after the main session consisting of the panel discussion.

EfVET President and CEO of EfVET Maltese Member MCAST, Prof. Joachim James Calleja stated "EfVET Conferences spearhead VET reform across the thousands of schools and colleges and act as catalysts for more training providers to join this formidable group of practitioners that play such a unique role in VET. We have the privilege of making VET".

Every year, the EfVET Conference is bringing together delegates from many EU members states and beyond, providing an opportunity to explore key issues facing VET & HVET in Europe; sharing good practices and creating new transnational collaborative partnerships with the view to transferring innovation and excellence in VET.

Previous editions were focused on different VET relevant topics such as: "Shaping the future: Sustainable and Innovative VET" which was held online in 2021 and which culminated with a very appreciated in-person part taking place on a later stage in Berlin; "COVID-19 beyond 2020: A new generation of VET?" (Online, 2020), "Robots, Human Capital and Digital Learning. Managing Transition and Inclusion" (Azores, 2019).

All information about EfVET Conferences is available on the EfVET official web portal at www.efvet.org and the upcoming Conference website at www.efvet-conference.eu

We look forward to seeing you all in Kuopio!

Carlos de Olagüe Smithson will represent Spain in the EfVET Board

The European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (EfVET) has recently welcomed a new EfVET National Representative from Spain – Carlos de Olagüe Smithson.



"It is a great opportunity for me to be able to represent my Spanish EfVET colleagues. The Spanish Committee is willing to continue the previous activities and increase the work with our international counterparts. I will do my best to foster international relations between Spain and the rest of the EfVET members".

Graduated in Engineering Telecommunications in 1992 in Madrid (Spain) after writing his Bachelor Thesis in Mannheim (Germany) thanks to an Erasmus grant, Carlos then created a software company and worked for companies like Financial Times, Telefonica and the Madrid Town hall during more than 10 years. During this period he first studied Business Administration and later finished the Master in Mechatronics in the FernUniversität Hagen (Germany). Thanks to this career path, he also offered in-house training courses to the different clients and discovered the world of VET.

In 2005, Carlos started working as a VET teacher for the regional education authorities in Madrid. Since then, he has been teaching future electricians in all the types of VET studies existing in the Spanish VET framework. From 2006 and 2008 he was assigned to the second

chance school UFIL Primero de Mayo and participated with students and teachers from all over Europe in the meeting Réseau E2C that took place in the region Champagne- Ardenne (France).

Between 2008 and 2014, Carlos was assigned to IES Parque Aluche to teach students in the VET Intermediate and VET High level studies. In this high school, he started the Leonardo and Erasmus mobility project that every year moves students to do their WBL training all over Europe. Since then, Carlos is an external evaluator for SEPIE, Spanish national Erasmus agency and he evaluates Grundtvig, Leonardo, and Erasmus projects.

In 2014 Carlos was first transferred to the IES Renacimiento and later to the IES Angel Corella. In both institutions, he continued teaching electricity VET studies and promoting Erasmus VET mobilities.

His expertise with international VET programmes was the catalyser of his research Thesis. In his work "VET in Europe. Monitoring Erasmus" he studied the funding strategies of the Erasmus National Agencies of France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the UK and achieved the Doctorate in Education at the Universidad Autonoma de Madrid (Spain). Springer Verlag published the results of this investigation in 2019 in the book "Analysing Erasmus+ Vocational Education and Training Funding in Europe".

Since 2011, Carlos is also part-time professor at the Universidad Carlos III and is currently Academic Coordinator for Erasmus+ and worldwide students.

Since 2017, he is the Director of the IES Pedro de Tolosa VET and secondary education High School, school that offers studies in the catering, health care and electricity sectors.

Carlos is a Board Member of FPEmpresa, Spanish association of more than 400 public and private VET schools. His vision of the future is based on establishing VET as a key player in the transformation of the world economy.

VWBL – VIRTUAL WORK-BASED LEARNING TO SIMULATE REAL EXPERIENCE IN VET DIGITAL TRAINING

Giorgos Giorgakis

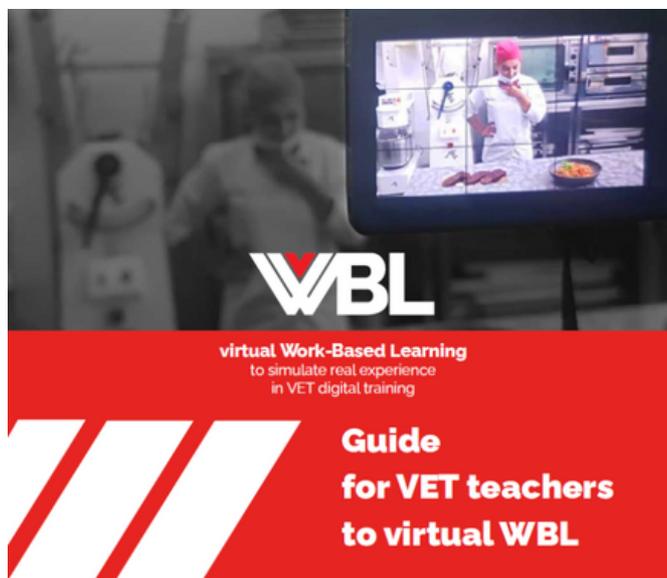
Managing Director, Eurosuccess
Consulting (Cyprus)

The condition of urgency in which education in overall Europe suddenly was consequently to the pandemic, led to an acceleration of solutions made immediately available, especially regarding the technologies that have been provided both as free open educational resources or under low cost educational licence. However, this availability of solutions and positive effects, could not include the immediate coverage of broadband internet connection everywhere, with the real occurrence of a digital divide issue in some of the project countries, in which the poor connection made it difficult for some students to participate to the e-learning.

vWBL addresses to filling these gaps with a comprehensive, innovative and specific training to VET teachers on virtual Work-Based Learning (virtual WBL). The project proposes specific training to VET teachers on virtual WBL, particularly operating in the area of the competences of the VET teachers to be aware of the potential effectiveness of the virtual vWBL (virtual Work-Based Learning) and to create their own impacting simulations of WBL.

Furthermore, the vWBL training pays special attention to the digital divide issue, including in the training all necessary support to inform the VET teachers about the issue of creating vWBL that will be useable also by students having poor digital connection or device.

In this way, the project contributes to enhance inclusion and prevent the risk that categories of learners would be disadvantaged or excluded from



learning.

The vWBL Erasmus+ Project, ongoing since 2020, is dealing with the VET Digital training, and seeks to support and provide an innovative contribution to the issues for VET teaching and its 'new' needs, which have been identified during the social distancing imposed by the European, but not limited to, governments due to the pandemic of Covid-19.

Targeting to...

- 1.Virtual situations allowing to transfer alternative experience to practice (in the period that there will be obstacles to the real WBL).
- 2.Focus on the competences of the VET teachers to be aware of the potential effectiveness of the vWBL.
- 3.Develop teachers' competences in creating their own impacting simulations of WBL.
- 4.Propose training to VET teachers on virtual vWBL.



virtual Work-Based Learning

to simulate real experience in VET digital training

Who will benefit from the vWBL project?

- VET teachers/designers/providers undertaking VET training;
- VET students/learners, including potential disadvantaged categories at risk of exclusion from the training due to poor availability for them of internet connection and/or devices;
- Decision makers in the VET field;
- Any stakeholders, such as individuals/professionals having interest to innovation in the VET system, to the improvement of the employability in the post-pandemic societies and on the social and economic enhancement of communities in general.

Expected Project Results

1. Guide for VET teachers to virtual WBL: Comprehensive publication guiding for VET trainers and teachers in designing and implementing training with vWBL components ready for being implemented in VET course.

2. Guide for VET teachers to virtual WBL: This guide is an e-training material, and the partnership is going to create and pilot an OER online training/course for the virtual vWBL for VET teachers. The objective is to train the trainers to become aware of the potentialities of vWBL and to encourage them enhancing their competencies and in order to have the knowhow of preparing their own vWBLS, as not simple videos, but as really impacting and in the meanwhile usable components of their programs. The technology will be chosen based on the trainers'/teachers' preferences and the answers we are going to receive through the

1st Expected Project Result.

Expected Project Impact

The main scope of the 'Virtual Work-Based Learning to simulate real experience in VET digital training' (vWBL) project is to encourage VET teachers and system to undertake the offered innovative VET training integrating:

1. Awareness raising methodologies on virtual Work-Based Learning;

2. Innovative and learner-centered pedagogical approaches enhancing the digital integration of virtual WBL in digital learning and teaching

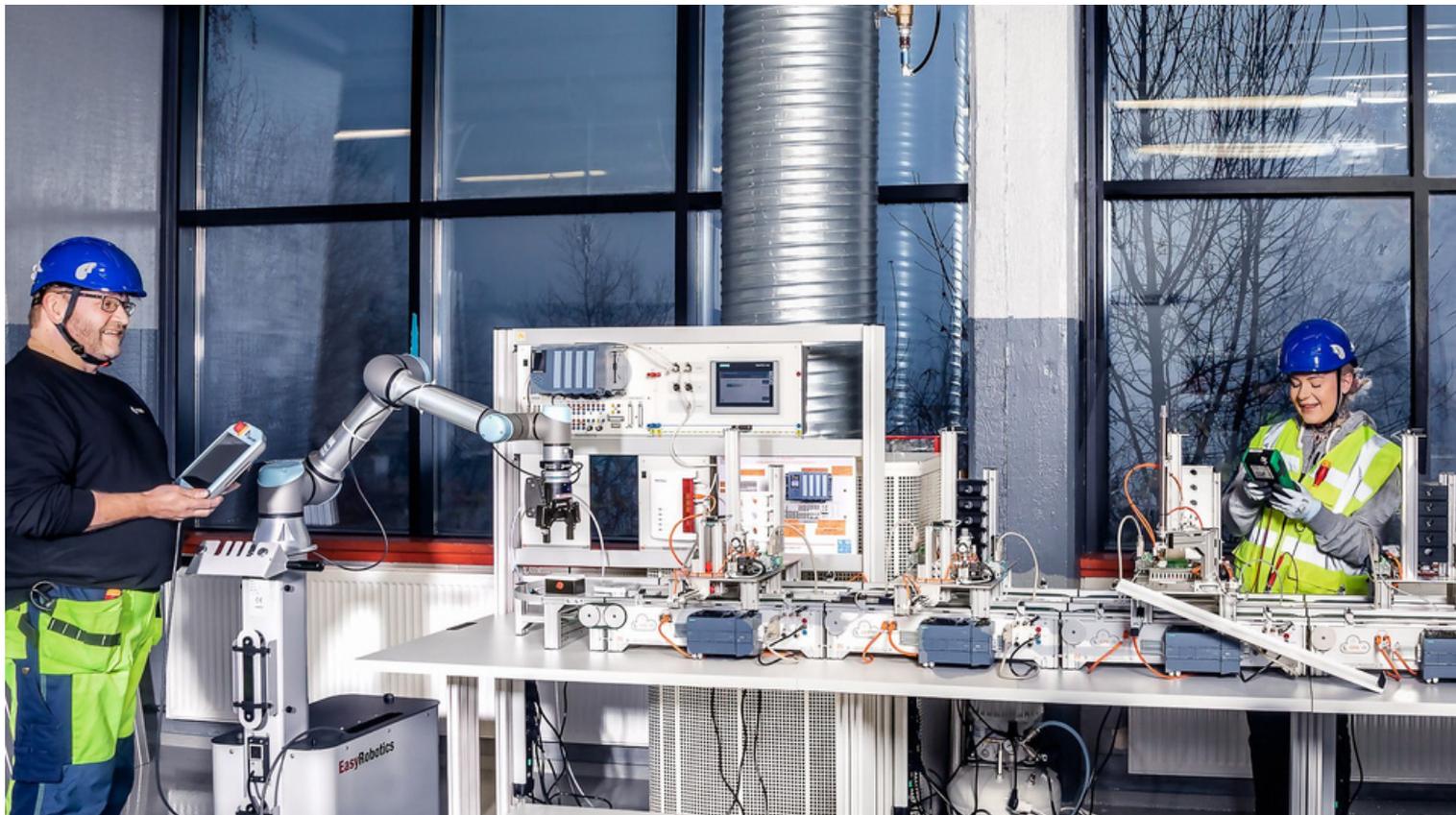
3. Promotion of access to and through Open Educational Resources (OER) in order for VET teachers to undertake the proposed training on vWBL.

In particular, supporting VET trainers' and learners' effective awareness raising on the efficacy of the vWBL while contributing to minimizing the digital divide in learning.

Expected to contribute to boosting WBL and the social inclusion of all categories of learners, while improving the quality of the VET training system as well the employability of the VET students and learners.



Find out more about our project by contacting Eurosuccess Consulting at info@eurosc.eu or by visiting its website [at this link](#) [vWBL website](#); [Facebook Page](#)



WORK-BASED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AT YLÄ-SAVO VOCATIONAL COLLEGE IN FINLAND

Maria Paldanius

Translated by Etleva Moisio, International Affairs Coordinator, YSAO

Ylä-Savo vocational college (YSAO) trains experts in the sector of technology to meet the needs of companies in the region. YSAO offers work-based learning opportunities through its extensive business cooperation network. Studying in YSAO is flexible and it encourages continuous learning.

If you are interested in the technology sector and dream of living in a peaceful place of extraordinary natural beauty where commuting is so easy, then the city of Iisalmi in Ylä-Savo region is the perfect place for you. Ylä-Savo vocational college (YSAO) is at the heart of Iisalmi and it offers high-quality vocational training in different sectors such as technology, civil engineering and natural resources.

"For us, the student is at the centre of everything. We focus on ensuring that every student is capable to work sustainably, responsibly and with strong professional skills. People are not technology, but technology is made for people", says Miika Vaarasuo, teacher of mechanical and production technology.

After graduation you do not have to move



learning environment.

On the other hand, an unchanging fact is that companies in the technology sector are export companies requiring global skills. YSAO is involved in many international projects, giving the opportunity to students to build these global skills by participating in these projects if they wish to.

"After corona, the international activity revived quickly and is extremely strong. We have several partner schools in Europe, that enable student exchange", Ruotsalainen says.

anywhere to search for jobs. In addition to the fact that Iisalmi offers a pleasant milieu, affordable housing and great opportunities for spending free time, the Ylä-Savo's technology industry offers plenty of jobs. It is easy to get a job that requires the professional skills acquired at YSAO for professions such as that of machine fitter, machinist, sheet metal welder and IT support technician.

"Ylä-Savo has a large concentration of companies in the technology sector, where new workers are constantly being sought. There are large "locomotive/leading" companies here, smaller technology companies as well as several subcontracting companies. Our students are employed by companies of all sizes in many different positions", Vaarasuo says.

➔ FOOT IN THE DOOR

Studying at YSAO is not only about listening to lectures. Most of the knowledge is gained through practical work where the student becomes acquainted with the work tasks, tools and opportunities right from the beginning.

"YSAO's extensive business cooperation network helps the students to find their own professional path. Our students go to companies to learn and at the same time get their foot in the door. At the end, many find employment in these companies either after their studies or during their studies", says Jarkko Ruotsalainen, YSAO's education manager.

The learning process is based on the continuous learning model. The study path is always planned to meet the individual needs of the student as well as the needs of the companies. One example of this kind of cooperation with companies is what at YSAO is called "the Ponsse-path", where the selected students start learning at Ponsse offices or at the partner companies already during the first academic year. In this way, the vocational college also meets the needs of the partner company for labour force.

"Learning is flexible and diverse. Internationalization is also possible in all technology fields", Vaarasuo says.

➔ A FIELD OF POSSIBILITIES

The corona era has affected the technology sector and studies in this field. Today, YSAO's specialised vocational degrees are completed entirely remotely, this is also possible to those completing a vocational upper secondary qualification in information and communication technology from spring 2023. Learning materials for different fields can be found on a modern online

You can start your studies at any time and there is a continuous application for all trainings. The endless opportunities for development in the technology fields and the bright employment prospects also attract "industry switchers".

"Nowadays, it is common to change industry several times. We have industry switchers for example from the care and trade sectors. A change of field is a good example of continuous learning - and technology itself is a field of opportunities", sums up Ruotsalainen.



WORK-BASED LEARNING: IN BETWEEN COMPANY AND COLLEGE

Morten Jacobsen

Roskilde Technical College

Almost all VET programs in Denmark follow the same structure. Throughout the entire education, the students alternate between full-time school periods, and full-time periods in companies.

At Roskilde Technical VET College, students also alternate between stays at the college and apprenticeships in a company. Stays at the school are often based on theoretical-practical teaching. Things learned in e.g. maths in the classroom, will be used and tested and also given a practical dimension in the workshops. In the workshops the students also have the time and the possibility to learn how to work together and handle tools and machinery required to solve the assignments.

→ APPRENTICESHIPS

When students are in the company, another way of learning is at focus. This is where the students learn to act professionally at the job. Often, the students will follow around a slightly older co-worker from the company to experience, how to e.g. handle customers and getting the picture on how to start and finish assignments. Getting better at doing this, the students over time get more responsibility and at the end of their education, they are almost likely be a full part of the team – coexisting like another employee.



→ COLLABORATION IMPORTANT

This form of educating students relies on a good relationship and cooperation between the



company and the college. Continuously dialogue is needed throughout the education to ensure the progress that the students are entitled to - and are supposed to achieve. Laws describe this cooperation thoroughly, so that all parties – student, college and company – are aware of responsibilities and things to do to reach the common goal. This includes e.g. companies visiting the college, when the student is there or through meetings and phone conversations to ensure, that the student thrives and is on the right path of learning.

→ FINISHING

At most education programmes at Roskilde Technical VET College, the student has to do a large apprentice test – a Journeyman's test – to complete the education. This takes place solely at the college. The students are tested and given a grade, which is the ultimate proof of the skills, the student has achieved. The tests are based on theoretical and practical learning and capability to handle both aspects of the assignments in the test.

Throughout the 3-4 years of education, the students often identify themselves with both college and company. In the beginning the students spend most of the time at the college, relating with classmates.

As time goes by, the students spend longer periods in the company, which usually means that students are getting mentally prepared for post education time – transforming from a young student to a highly qualified worker, ready to enter the labour market.



OUR RESULTS ARE THE FRUIT OF THE TEAMWORK AND RECIPROCITY

Jana Šedová & Justina Pluktaite

Teacher & Officer for Foreign Relations, Upper Secondary School of Chemistry Pardubice, Czech Republic

Our VET school in Czech Republic is quite known for quality achievements in international activities, especially in students' training abroad. Overall, considering our few unique study programmes, it is not easy to find partners. And we manage it with several ingredients on our side: team, focus on reciprocity and trust – like a team of rescuers.

Upper Secondary School of Chemistry Pardubice (SPSCH Pardubice) is a state school with more than a seventy-year's tradition.

Its school educational offer covers three basic study programmes at EQF 4 – Applied Chemistry, Fire Protection, Security and Law. These study fields are furthermore focused on a few specialisations. School offers two study programmes at EQF 3 – Hairdressing, Chemist and two follow-up study programmes – Hair Cosmetics, Security Services (at EQF 4). Currently in the past several years we are reaching our maximum capacity - around 1050 students.

The school disposes of both **technical and personal background for VET education**. Over the years the school has built a strong partnership with **strategic partners on a regional and a national level**. Internationalisation is one of the priority areas of our school development as well. Throughout the years of international activities implementation, the school has established strong

partnerships with quality partners all around Europe. Currently we have partners in 16 countries. Among our partners are upper secondary schools, centres of professional training, companies but also several universities.

Every year about 100 students participate in an internship abroad in small groups, mostly of four students. The rate of outgoing students exceeds 10%. It is important to emphasise that we succeeded in finding partners for the unique study fields such as Fire Protection and Security and Law. It is still quite a challenge as our students are around 15-19 years old and in other countries mostly they are much older. However, thanks to **personal networking** (e.g. participating in conferences, international workshops) and taking part in different initiatives provides access to a range of quality partners. We are very happy that our school can enjoy a **high reputation among foreign partners** when universities and professional organisations regard our school to be a respected partner worth cooperating with.

Since 2018 our school has been implementing very successful **long-term internships** - ErasmusPro - of length 3 months. In 2022 we were sending 12 students within this long-term mobility programme. Our partners were University of Plymouth, Jagiellonian University, Goce Delcev University. The impact on both professional and personal growth of our students is enormous in this case. Of course, we need to work closely with each party who are involved in the preparation and support system: hosting organisation - mentors and coordinators, parents, class teachers, teachers who are assigning tasks (remote learning) and others. Learning point - smooth communication and trust are of paramount importance.

We see that it is highly important that all of the partnerships are working on a direct basis without a need of any intermediary organisations. The quality of partnerships is strengthened thanks to the **implementation of the reciprocity principle**. Our school is not only a sending organisation but also a receiving one, hosting students and teachers from many of our foreign

partners.

Quality of vocational education that our school provides has been developed by participation in various strategic projects. Teachers learn about various educational methods, tools during learners exchange, staff training, taking part in job shadowing and of course while taking part in various teams which are sharing good practices and creating innovative solutions in education (mostly focused in VET).

Strategic decision to establish the **Center of Technology in VET** is also part of the mission to bring innovation closer to our teachers and students and become a hub for sharing our knowledge with others. We are glad that gained knowledge is transferred in the daily life of our trainers and educators. In addition, our incoming guests - students and teachers - can learn and have a small taste of what we are working with, for example using Augmented Reality tools in education.

These achievements would be unthinkable without the enthusiasm of teachers engaging in the **EU projects** (team for an international cooperation and many others) and support from the school management. **Continued motivation** is challenging to sustain as the main focus of teachers remains teaching. We see diverse sparkles that are ignited with **different tools**: curiosity, passion in the field, lifelong learning spirit, wish to make a difference, attraction to extra finances, possibility to see the world and others. No matter what it is - we are going in the same direction. Therefore, thanks to all this, goals defined in the **Strategy of Internationalisation** are being fulfilled.

One of the challenges that we identify is smoothly balancing diverse activities which are actually increasing every year. Without the management's support and accepted flexibility with teaching and studies it will be difficult or nearly impossible.

Our big thanks belong also to our **National Agency** for their methodical support, high professionalism, helpfulness, and personal engagement during challenging times. And without a doubt our partners without whom the exchange and achieved results will not be possible. Those 100 students and many teachers every year are grateful for the **opportunities of their lifetime**.

© **Upper Secondary School of Chemistry Pardubice**: The moment from Staff training - Rescue from the heights in Czech Republic (Erasmus+ TeachMergency project). This is where we could strengthen relations with the trainers who host our students and ignited ideas for different layers of cooperation. And it took only one memorable training with a great team.



WORK BASED LEARNING - A NECESSITY IN ACQUIRING QUALIFICATION!

Laura Ait Ozņida

Head of Project Department, Riga Style and Fashion Technical School, Latvia

The learning process implemented in the work environment has also become an integral part of the process of obtaining professional education in Latvia. Riga Style and Fashion Technical School (RSMT) provides vocational educational programs in spheres of beauty care, textile and audio-visual communication arts. In all educational programs, in parallel with the learning process, there is planned time for learning in the work environment - at least 25% of all training.

Since 2017 RSMT has been participating in the project "Participation of students of professional educational institutions in work environment-based learning and training practices in companies" (No. 8.5.1.0/16/I/001) that is led by Employers' Confederation of Latvia. The purpose and task of the project is an agreement between companies and the educational institution to implement some part of the curriculum in the company in order to reduce the gap between the acquired knowledge in the educational institution and necessary professional skills required in the current fast-changing economy. The project acts as an excellent support tool to provide financial support to the employee who works with the student/students - the practice manager in the company. However, from the point of view of quality implementation of trainings, not only financial support is important, but also the employer's motivation and willingness to cooperate, invest time and transfer knowledge to young professionals to be.

Kristaps Slakteris-Zvejsalnieks, the owner, tutor and mentor for interns in the salon "House of Hair" says: "Knowledge and skills that student can acquire in a working environment, he/she will never be able to learn in a technical school or on a school bench, because there are daily situations with clients and contact with his profession at the place of practice. I myself have a great desire and calling to teach and pass on this knowledge. It is often not easy for students, because they have to learn both communication and attitude towards customers, various rules must be followed - such as work safety measures, and many various hygiene norms and requirements, but unambiguously only in a working environment it is possible for them to fully learn the profession."

In addition, in order to strengthen acquired skills and learn new ones, opportunities to participate in work-based learning abroad are in demand. For example, RSMT also implements the Erasmus+ program project "Development of professional competences in work-based learning abroad", (No. 2020-1-LV01-KA116-077277). The implementation of project allows to offers to the school's learners possibility to participate in mobility to European countries such as Spain, Italy, Germany and others for gaining integral experience not only in learning the profession, but also in personal social skills in a multicultural environment. Language barriers often have to be overcome not only by the intern, but also by the foreign employer. It can be a challenge, however, motivated employers find the solution and a creative approach to communication to implement the training and to achieve the defined learning outcomes.

International projects of the Erasmus+ program are an excellent tool in the field of internationalization, creating competitive graduates not only on the local level, but also in the international labour market. In addition, the fact that teaching staff also take part in the projects is important. Participation allows educators to improve their professional skills and as well as getting to know the working environment of the profession, requirements and trends in the European Union. The greatest benefit of participation of the teaching



staff is the opportunity to learn about the specifics of teaching methods in foreign work based environments and bring them back to Latvia in order to implement the best examples here as well.

Considering the pandemic and its consequences experienced in Europe and elsewhere in the world, learners representing the beauty industry especially appreciate the opportunity to learn face-to-face in a work environment. Although virtual and digital technologies and opportunities are developing successfully, the learning process in a real working environment in the company is the most effective way to learn practical skills and strengthen the necessary competences for professional development.

RSMT headmaster U. Naumova says: "We see that students who start participating in work-based learning and have gained experience abroad become more confident in their abilities. Those who are motivated and want to work in the profession get the opportunity to work for an employer where they have acquired qualification practice and have gained useful contacts from their professional field."

Mutual sharing of knowledge contributes to the growth of learners and teachers, and the development of industry in whole as well.

© **Photo 1** – Laila Marinina, recent RSMT graduate, hairdresser-stylist, who has participated in work based learning process since the 2nd course of her 4 years studies and participated in Erasmus+ mobility in Portugal having internship in hairdressers saloon, together with Zanete Krūmiņa, Laila's mentor during qualification internship, both visiting competition SkillsLatvia. **Photo 2** – Polina Rebrova, recent RSMT graduate, Photographer, has participated in Erasmus+ mobility to Italy and during the internship together with 5 other interns presented their photo exhibition "Open Eyes on Catania Life".



SELFIE FOR WORK-BASED LEARNING

Vittoria Valentina Di Gennaro
Communication & Project Officer, EFVET, Belgium

The European Commission launched in 2017 a new tool to support Schools and VET colleges in their use of the digital technologies. The tool is called SELFIE (Self-reflection on Effective Learning by Fostering the use of Innovative Educational technologies) and is available (for free) online and since its beginning it has been used extensively by different countries having been translated to 31 different languages. SELFIE has been developed by the European Commission and an international team of experts with input from more than 5000 school leaders, teachers and students from EU countries.

More than 400 schools from Spain, Italy, Estonia, Belgium (Flanders), Denmark, Ireland, Greece, Cyprus, Malta, Finland, Serbia, and the UK (Northern Ireland) have participated in the SELFIE school pilots since September 2017. SELFIE provides Schools and VET providers with confidential reports, including graphs and recommendations for further development and improvement.

In May 2020, the Joint Research Centre launched a call for tenders for Piloting SELFIE for work-based learning contexts in VET (SELFIE WBL). The call was intended to target 3 countries specifically: Germany (LOT 1), France (LOT 2), Hungary and Poland (LOT 3).

The aim of this Tender is to conduct pilot studies of SELFIE WBL in Germany, France, Poland, and Hungary to test the tool and receive feedback in view of improving it before its eventual online launch. More specifically, the goal is to develop,

implement and validate the SELFIE WBL tool that can be useful to VET schools, companies and policymakers at local, regional, national or EU level.

This call for tenders was perceived as a great opportunity for EfVET to further pursuing the work on the digitalisation sector linking it to the work-based learning sector which is very much in line with our Strategic Plan 2019-2021.

EfVET has been awarded all the lots and piloted the SELFIE WBL tool starting in July 2020 for 7 months in the 4 countries working closely with the National Members more specifically:

Germany: BBS Wirtschaft I Ludwigshafen – European School of the State of Rhineland-Palatinate

France: SEPR – VET centre in Auvergne Rhône-Alpes, Lyon et Annonay

Hungary: Association for Hungarian Digital Education (AHDE)

Poland: Polish Foundation of the Opportunities Industrialization Centers “OIC POLAND”

Slovenia: The Association of Slovene Higher Vocational Colleges who led the Qualitative Research Component of the Pilot project across the different countries.

Following the pilot which engaged a significant number of stakeholders (i.e. 59 pilot VET schools; 97 companies; 177 school leaders; 1.221 teachers; 10.294 VET students; 96 in-company trainers; 43 SELFIE WBL institutional coordinators; 101 focus groups with VET learners and teachers; 94 semi-structured interviews with leaders, in-company trainers, and SELFIE WBL institutional coordinators), the partners decided to submit an Erasmus+ KA2 project in order to:

- support the VET institutions in their further effort to fully understand the results received through the SELFIE WBL institutional report;
- use these results to effectively address the actions for digital transformation;
- strengthen the ecosystem and cooperation with companies and other stakeholders;
- prepare guidelines with recommendations and good practices for all other users of the SELFIE WBL tool to make the use of their report user-friendlier.

A general report and country reports were published on the JRC Publications Repository page as follows:

- [SELFIE for work-based learning](#)
- [Country report for SELFIE WBL piloting: France](#)
- [Country report for SELFIE WBL piloting: Germany](#)
- [Country report for SELFIE WBL piloting: Hungary](#)

- [Country report for SELFIE WBL piloting: Poland](#)
- [Country report for SELFIE WBL piloting: Romania](#)

The Erasmus+ KA2 project (under the name of “Embedding and Empowering SELFIE WBL Culture”, with the following acronym: SELFIE WBL follow-up) submission resulted successful and you can find more information about the project [at this link](#).

In the framework of the EfVET Thematic Teams Seminar 2022 which took place from May 3 to 5, 2022 in Lyon (France), hosted by SEPR (Société d’Enseignement Professionnel du Rhône) a good practice on “SELFIE Based Institutional Digital Development Plan” was presented by Tibor Dóri, AHDE (Hungary) and Gaby Tinnemeier, BBS Soltau (Germany).

The event, conceived to boost the collaboration among the Thematic Teams, giving them the possibility to experiment new formats of collaboration and learn from each other, was attended by more than 130 VET practitioners mostly from the European Union and Western Balkans countries working activities, presenting success stories and holding workshops aimed at generating new synergies among them.

A report was produced following the event which is available [at this link](#).

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