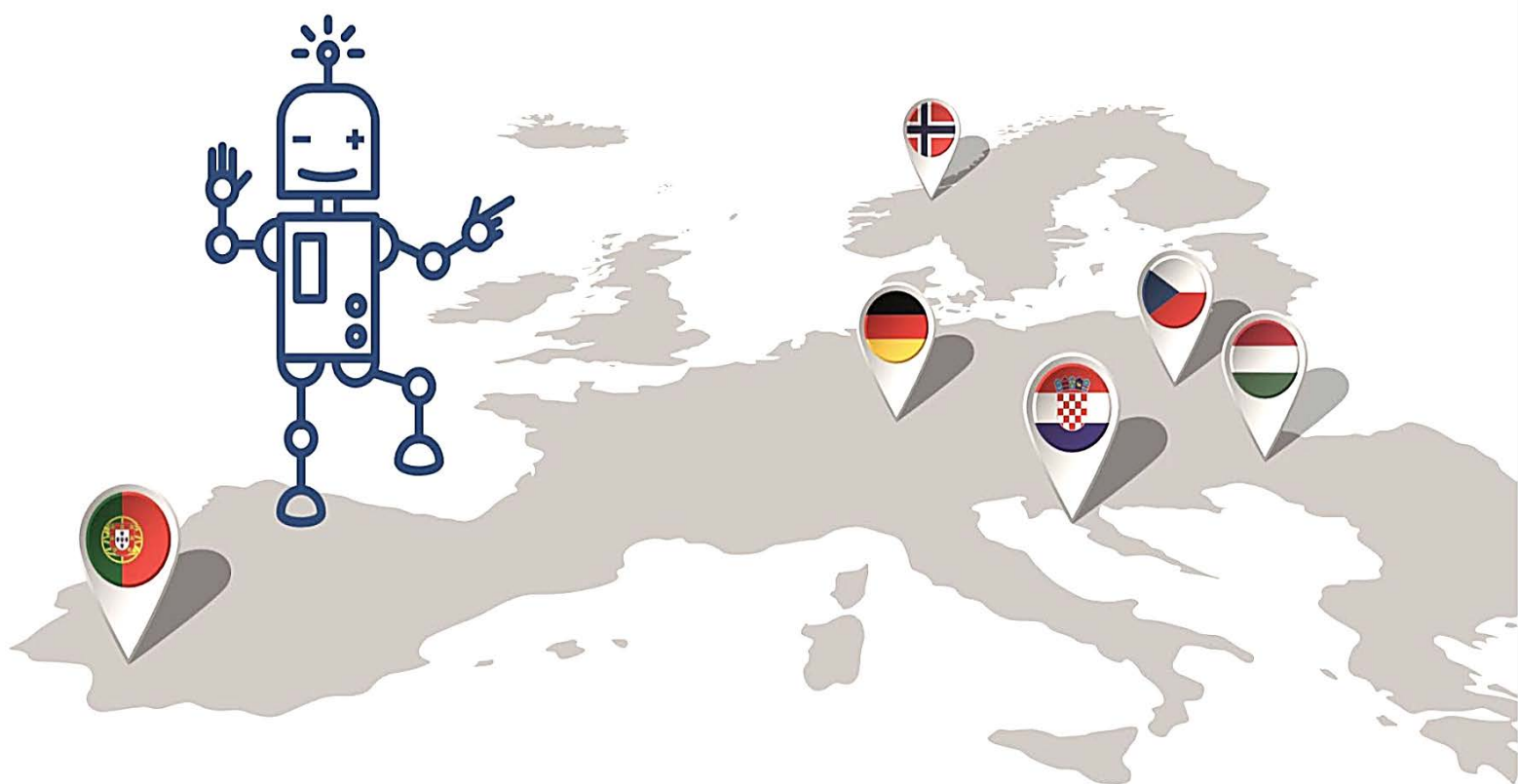


Guidance book

"INSPIRING FUTURE"



**IMPROVEMENT OF THE CAREER
CHOICE PROCESS IN TECHNICAL
AND SCIENTIFICALLY BASED VET
COCO+**

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Introduction

Project origin and the idea

This project is a direct result of the Training “Youth+VET=Employability” organized by the Czech National Agency (DZS) from 1st to 4th November 2015.

"Unemployment and drop out" is a topic real problem affecting our countries in EU. We must be aware of what can happen with our students in the future. We want the students to be aware of what they can expect from labor in the future. Knowledge of the subject is involved in developing their student's skill to learn, and seek qualification to work.

With this project, we want to prepare our young learners for the future of the labor market and develop their knowledge of important and current position in the regional market. The strategic project is to make them aware of the economic and social reality in different ways and prepare them for working life they expect.

Partners and participants

The participants represent both, the YOUTH and the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector. The project contains cross-sectoral parts but focuses on VET. It is also a cooperation between YOUTH, VET and companies in the regions. In total, we had among 700 participants from different levels and sectors. About 700 pupils in secondary/primary school participated in the competitions, 52 VET-students used as role models, 28 VET-teachers participated as mentors for the role models and about 20 professionals from different companies used as counselors.



- Norway - Odda vidaregåande skule (Coordinator)
- Croatia - Srednja škola Dugo Selo
- Czech Republic
 - Střední průmyslová škola chemická Pardubice
 - The South Bohemian Company for Development of Human Resources
- Hungary - Budapesti Gépészeti Szakképzési Centrum Szily Kálmán Műszaki Szakgimnáziuma, Szakközépiskolája és Kollégiuma
- Germany - Solaris Förderzentrum für Jugend und Umwelt gGmbH Sachsen
- Portugal - Agrupamento de Escolas de Barcelos



About us

This project has enabled various EU countries to work together and bring something else to the table. That is why it is important to know what are the participants' backgrounds and how they have used their respective background in learning, evolving and teaching through the course of this project.

Hungary - Budapest

Szily Kálmán Műszaki Szakközépiskola, Szakiskola és Kollégium is situated in 9th district of the Hungarian capital. It is one of the biggest vocational schools of Budapest with 800 students, only ten percent of whom are girls, and about 100 teachers.

Our trainings includes but is not limited to:

- Mechanical engineering
- Plumber Drainage system and public utility fitter
- Cooling system and ventilating fitter
- Central heatings and gas-main fitter
- Turner Information technology
- PC mechanic repairman
- Electrical engineering
- Electronics mechanician
- Technician in mechanical engineering



Our previous partnerships involved seven schools from very different European countries regarding culture, language and background: Finland, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania and Turkey, which have set as general objectives to discover European values and the European cultural heritage by promoting the national mythology of these countries illustrated in the folk and cult literature, visual arts, performing arts and traditions and to reinforce the idea of active citizenship and responsibility.



Germany - Chemnitz

The non-profit private organization Solaris FZU was founded in 1993. The company promotes and offers social work, measures of youth welfare and a wide range of educational activities such as: vocational and study orientation, extracurricular and occupational education and workshops for students and trainers. Moreover, solaris FZU is committed to numerous projects of integration of socially excluded and disadvantaged people (e.g. with physically and mental health problems, facing social issues people, emigrants, long-term unemployed people, low-educated and low-skilled young people).



For people who are long-term unemployed a lot of educational and employment projects are implemented. Many activities are co-financed by European programmes, such as the national ESF, the former Lifelong Learning programme as well as the ERASMUS+ programme. The company is also engaged in activities concerning inter generational work, cultural projects and projects using lifelong learning methods. The company always includes young disadvantaged people beside own employees into project implementation to gain new learning and teaching experiences as well as to test new methods and tools.



Norway - Odda

Odda upper secondary school (ODV) is a college and vocational school. The school was established in 1916 (100 years this year) and has solid roots and great expertise in educating. This year it will be approximately 70 staff members (42 teachers) and 370 students. Our students come from all over Hordaland in Norway, but mostly from Hardanger region.

The college consist General studies within academic specialization and athletic, vocational school and a senior VET school. The vocational school covers five branches (health and care, within building and construction, within electrical engineering and within technical and industrial production).



Odda vgs.
Vestland fylkeskommune

We also offer adult education and we arrange courses for businesses and the public authorities. The students of the school have a diverse cultural and educational background due to an allocation of different nationalities, ethnic minorities and different cultures in the area.

ODV has participated in a large number of national and international projects as partner and as coordinator. We want our students to learn and enjoy. The vision of our school is to be a good place to stay and a good place to learn.



Croatia - Dugo Selo

"Dugo Selo" High School was established in 2002 near the capital city Zagreb, Croatia. The school has over 780 students and 79 staff members (67 teachers). 195 of those 780 students, who are currently involved in a non-vocational education, are preparing for the state graduation exams and, eventually, will enrol into a University of their choice.

There are 270 students who are taking part in the three-year long education and are prepared to work right after high school, including;

- gas installers,
- electricians,
- electromechanics,
- mechanics,
- heat and air conditioning installers.



In addition to our broad educational program we also offer senior education (education for adults) as well as training programs for electricians and engineering technicians.

The teaching staff experiences daily professional training, both in professional and the scientific fields, which is mainly organized by the National Agency of Education.

"Dugo Selo" High School has taken part in various international and national projects in the Erasmus+ domain.



Portugal - Barcelos

The Agrupamento de Escolas de Barcelos was established on 4th July 2012, due to the unification of Abel Varzim School and Barcelos Secondary school. It is about an Union of schools with an important dimension, with the implantation in an extended area of Barcelos District, in the two banks of the Cávado river, and it gives an educational response to student people from Barcelos urban area to Póvoa de Varzim and Esposende's district borderline.



Barcelos School Union realized in the last four years, different European projects in the field of Comenius, Leonardo da Vinci, Individual Mobility of Student, Comenius Assistant and Continuous Training of Teachers.

The Internationalization of the Union's students is a strong point of its citizenship and it contributes for the improvement of its development and for the lengthen of its intervention in the world and employment.

More than 600 mobilities has been already realized inside the Union. We have a wide experience in organization and reception of partners.



Czech Republic - Pardubice

Upper Secondary School of Chemistry (SPSCH Pardubice) is a state school established in 1953. It offers education in these study programmes:- Applied Chemistry with specializations in Analytical Chemistry, Chemical-pharmaceutical Production, Pharmaceutical Substances, and Analyses of Chemical and Biological Materials. - Fire Protection- Cosmetic Services- Safety and Legal Studies. It also offers two vocational programmes: Hairdresser and Chemist.



**Střední průmyslová škola
chemická Pardubice**



At present it has 1050 students. There are 149 employees, 108 of them being teachers. The school is situated in the region with highly developed chemical and electro technical industry. One of its priorities is cooperation with social partners. Among the most important belong Synthesia a.s., SYNPO a.s., University of Pardubice, Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic, Population Protection Institute.

Since 2012 the school has been a member of the net CREDCHEM Network and participates in implementation of European credit system in vocational education and training – ECVET for a chemistry sector. The school actively promote STEM activities: organize and host national “Best Young Chemist” competition, host AMAVET competition, organize VET skill week, joins Road Show in promotion of Chemistry as a profession for elementary, primary and high schools and joins other initiatives related to raising awareness of STEM.

Czech Republic - České Budějovice

The South Bohemian Company for Development of Human Resources is an expert organization focused on the implementation of projects in the field of human resources development, and on the processing of the comparative analyses, labour market prediction and various researches associated with these issues. We are founding member of the South Bohemia Territorial Employment Pact.

Our objective is to cooperate with a range of organizations at the international, national and, in particular, regional level. Together with our partner, The South Bohemian Chamber of Commerce, implement activities connecting schools with the business sector with a view to reaching the best possible compliance between the needs of the labor market and the education system.



We are a non – profit organization which was set up by The South Bohemian Chamber of Commerce in 2005. In our organization there are 8 employees but we usually cooperate with the work team of The South Bohemian Chamber of Commerce. In our regional office there is the possibility to use the meeting facilities which have ICT technologies.

In the last years we have been focusing on organizing several events connecting schools with the business sector with the goal to support students to increase their interest in studying



A hand holding a pen is writing on a checklist. The checklist has several items, some of which are crossed out. The items include 'Find a job', 'Make the work a habit', 'Be something', 'Drive a car', 'Drive a car', 'Moz', and 'Be something'. The background is a dark blue triangle.

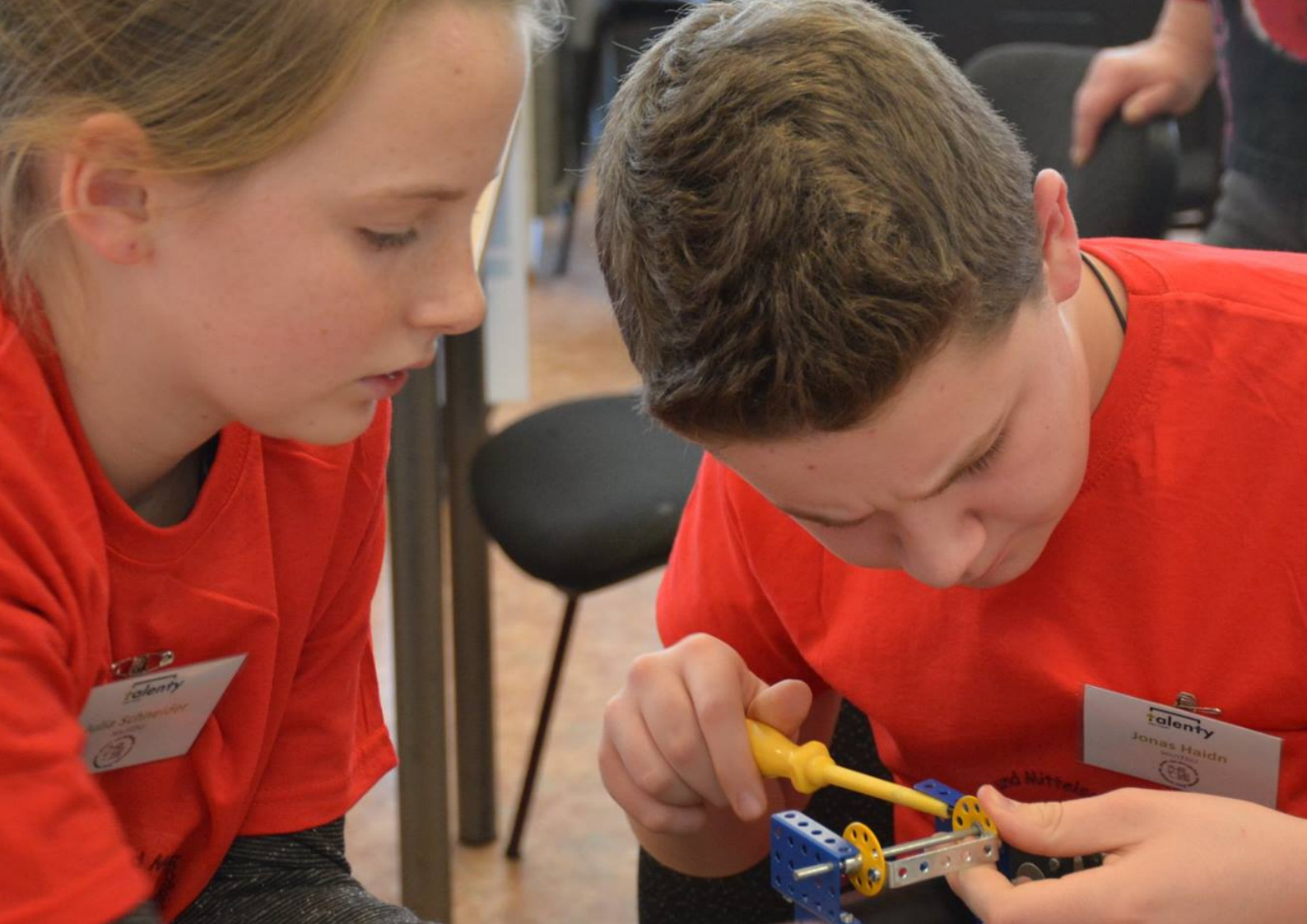
Goals and activities

Project goals:

- Strengthen the cooperation between schools and regional economy and business
- Preventing early school leaving, “dropout”.
- Entrepreneurial way of learning - be creative and innovative.
- Evaluate the quality of arrangements and propose modifications
- Share the experience of the testing across sectors within countries, transnationally, and within sectors across Europe.

We consider this project innovative in the sense that we intend to work with different crosscutting themes, including the partnership culture, different ways of working and a multitude of activities. The work among peers will give us new knowledge and experiences.

The set projects goals are continuously being met through conducting a set of activities. These activities include practice training and discussions on the thematic "unemployment and drop out", getting access to skills in new technologies through competitions, inviting managers of employment centers in every city represented in this project and research on different perspective themes: economic, sociological, historical, geographical, regional and cultural.



WORK, WORK, WORK

PARTNER MEETINGS AND BUSY STUDENT HANDS

Every step you take...

Partner meetings enable all of the participants to share their ideas, thoughts and activities they have done in order to fully unlock the projects potential and scope of impact.

In order to have a successful partner meeting there are steps that ought to be taken so that business meets merriment at the same place and time.

Before the meeting

From the host partner point of view

- at least two weeks earlier send the meeting agenda to all of the partners
- the agenda must include hour by hour planned out meeting and all of the tasks the partners should do before and during the partner meet
- form a meeting registration form which includes: name and surname, contact number and e-mail, name of the institution participants represent
- form and send a registration form which must include any special partner needs as in their food preferences, health issues, allergies, etc.
- introduce practical information to your partners including the overview of your country and town where the meeting will be held
- it is advisable to recommend accommodation to your partners during their stay in your respective town
- prepare signature lists for each of the meeting days in which all of the partners will sign and leave their e-mail address
- prepare certificates for all attending participants
- prepare evaluating forms

From the guest partner point of view

- fill out and re-send all of the information and documentation the host partner sends to you with respect to set dates
- prepare all of the needed documentation, e.g. short description of the guest partner school, SWOT analysis, Power Point presentations etc. before the meeting
- ensure that you have travel insurance



During the meeting

From the host partner point of view

- ensure that the rooms where meetings are held have all of the required technical support
- it would be advisable to ensure the partner participants' flags and name tags on the desks
- the project banner should always be on a visible place
- stick to your agenda
- have back-up plans if anything goes wrong
- ensure coffee breaks, water, fresh fruits and canape sandwiches
- it is recommended to organize a city tour and a visit to the town authorities
- leave enough free time for the partners

From the guest partner point of view

- be punctual, stick to the set meeting agenda and respect the culture and customs of the country you are visiting
- try and make as much of photographs from the meeting as possible



After the meeting

From the host partner point of view

- don't forget to give out the certificates as soon as the meeting ends
- either give out the evaluation forms right after the meeting finishes or send them later on indicating by when they should be filled out
- all of the records of the meeting, conclusions and future tasks agreed upon should be uploaded on a media platform where it can be accessed from all of the partners, e.g. Dropbox, Google Disk etc.
- ensure that the dissemination of the meeting is visible

From the guest partner point of view

- save your flying tickets or any travel receipts in the case of inspections
- save your hotel and lunch bills
- make posts about the meeting on social media
- inform all of your colleagues, who weren't present at the meeting, about the conclusions and future tasks agreed upon
- it is recommended to write a report about the meeting on the mobility tool (if you are answering to your national agency)



Team work makes the dream work

On the flip side of the partner meetings are all of our endearing students who have managed to connect and work on an astonishing level.

We are very proud of their team work, how they managed to communicate their ideas and bring them to life.

Certainly, this meant that the same level of quality planning had to be pursued in order to make those meeting times as fruitful as possible.

Before the meeting

From the host partner point of view

- start with your preparations at least 3 months in advance
- recommend to your partners the accommodation where the students will feel comfortable and safe
- make sure you send the price lists on time, e.g. for a city tour, lunches, excursions etc.
- it is recommended to organize a visit to the town authorities
- notice your partners about the signed GPDR agreement
- make sure that all of the students' potential special needs are met
- send the detailed blended mobility agenda at least one month earlier
- prepare the certificates and evaluation forms for the students
- in case you will have student competitions prepare certificates, medal and/or rewards for the winners



From the guest partner point of view

- start working with your students as soon as possible in order to introduce the projects goals and activities
- try to organize weekly workshops
- organize try-outs at your institution in order to select the students who match the blended mobility requirements
- prepare all of the necessary Power Point presentations, posters, models etc. and practice the presentation and performance skills with your students
- prepare all of the necessary filled out documentation (e.g. GDPR agreement)
- be informed about all of the special needs your students might have
- introduce your students to the agenda of the blended mobility
- it is necessary that all of the students have travel insurance



During the meeting

From the host partner point of view

- make sure that the partners stick to the agenda
- it very advisable to organize ice-breaking activities in order for the students to relax and get to know each other
- be flexible and always have a back-up plan



From the guest partner point of view

- set basic conduct rules with your students
- make sure they perform their duties while at the blended mobility
- make sure your students have enough free time
- make as much photographs as you can

After the meeting

From the host partner point of view

- give out the prepared certificates and signed and stamped Europasses
- make sure the evaluation forms are filled out by the participating students
- disseminate the blended mobility
- have questionnaires prepared about the blended mobility which will be sent to the partners and filled out by them

From the guest partner point of view

- make sure that all of your students have their Europasses signed and stamped
- make sure your students have filled out the hosts evaluation form
- make sure your students have been given the blended mobility certificates
- if it is required, the host will send you a questionnaire about the said mobility so make sure that it is filled out and sent by the set dates
- make a dissemination about the blended mobility
- inform all of your colleagues about the results of the blended mobility
- it is recommended the participating students make a presentation about the blended mobility and present it to their fellow colleagues and teachers



'UNDER THE MAGNIFYING GLASS'

PARTNERS ECONOMIC FOOTING AND RESPECTIVE
PROJECT BASED CHALLENGES

Economic systems

As this is an internationally based project there are different countries coming together towards achieving the same goal - creating a connection between schools and regional economy and business.

This is why it is important to stress the differences between the economical situations present in the respective partners' countries and how have they dealt with them throughout the course of the project.

Norway - Odda

The tightening of the oil sector has led to some changes in where it's jobs for chemical and process-workers. Previously, it was difficult for land-based businesses to get sufficient skilled workers to seek apprenticeships they proclaimed. The reason was the high wages and favorable shifts they operate with in the North Sea.

Today, this has changed somewhat, but for businesses in our region; it is still difficult to get adequate qualified job applicants to the announced jobs.



In Odda there are 42 unemployed persons between the age of 15 to 29 years and in Norway the number is 21 870 persons.

Norwegian companies strongly believe in increased sales and increased profitability hence several plans to hire new employees in 2017. have been made. The two of the largest enterprises in Odda have a high average age and need many new employees in the coming years.

Croatia

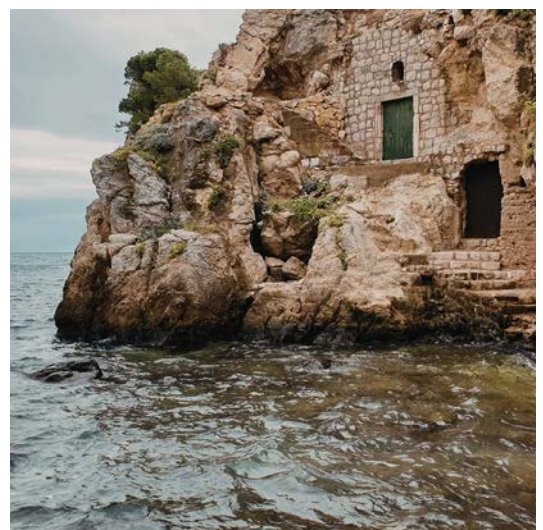
The Croatian education system faces a significant number of challenges: modernising initial vocational education curricula in line with the needs of the labour market and increasing access to higher education and reducing drop-out rates.



The level of participation in VET at upper secondary level in Croatia is one of the highest in the EU (71.1%, compared to the EU average of 48.9% in 2013.). However, the employment rate for recent upper secondary graduates is significantly below the EU average (47.3% in 2014., compared to the EU average of 70.8%).

The state's presence in private sector activity remains high with high government spendings. Government ownership in key sectors as transport or natural resources remains considerable with tourism and shipbuilding as major industries.

The Croatian Ministry of Science and Education is currently drafting a Programme for Development of Vocational Education and Training. The Programme will be the first step in initiating a systematic vocational education and training reform, in line with the Croatian qualifications framework methodology.



Czech Republic - České Budějovice

The most important South Bohemian businesses fall within the manufacturing industry. These are mainly companies that supply their products to the automotive and aircraft industries, or manufacture mechanical engineering and foundry products and electrical products. Other important sectors include energy production and renewable energy sources.

The main problems of the region is lack of high-quality human resources which is caused by:

- low motivation of students to study science and technology,
- outflow of skilled workers and researchers outside the region and abroad,
- lack of professional and technical skills of graduates when they start their jobs,
- low level of vocational training in a work place

Fields in which the most companies are looking for new staff:

- Mechanical engineering and mechanical production
- Telecommunication electrical technology and IT



Czech Republic - Pardubice

The overall unemployment rate in Czech Republic is slightly above 5% while the rate of unemployment in the Pardubice region is about 4%. This means that 380 208 people are unemployed in whole Czech Republic of which 14 494 are unemployed in the Pardubice region.

2, 8 percent of the overall unemployment belong to young people. The percentage of the young unemployment is higher in Pardubice comparing the whole Czech Republic. This situation could originate from the miss-matched of educational output and the labour market demands in the region.

Pardubice district has very developed chemical and electrotechnical industry. Pardubice itself is surrounded by several chemistry companies, which are calling for young skilled and educated workers permanently.



The regional educational institutions do not fulfil the labour market demands for young specialist. General problem of young people in the Czech Republic is the lack of interest for technically, scientifically oriented fields in the Pardubice district.

Regional municipality is working on Accelerators initiative and included this project in it.

It would be very beneficial to create such a competition to attract young people to “taste” chemistry, and technically oriented staff. They will get motivation and with the help of the local companies, they will fulfil the demands of the local labour market.

Germany

Germany has one of the lowest levels of unemployment. Since March 2020 it is negatively affected by pandemic effects. According to Eurostat, Germany's rate of unemployment in June 2020 was 4.2 % a very well figure. In the same time unemployment of people below the age of 25 was 5.6 %, also one of the lowest rates among the EU member states, where average unemployment for young people under 25 was 16.8 %.



The Germany's dual system of vocational training and education which combines an “in company” apprenticeship with a course of study at a vocational school, is the special characteristic in the german VET system. This means that new recruits join a company at an early age, and that employers can help ensure their apprentices successfully complete their training.

As many other Europeans countries as well, Germany is affected by demographic change. The German birth rate decreased in the last ten years dramatically. At the same time, life expectancy is rising and the number of older people in the German population is increasing. This trend has already started to impact the labor market, where trained skilled workers are missed. The situation has led to shortages in qualified labor. Governmental reform process was focused to increase flexibility on the labor market and to encourage through substantial methods because the demand for skilled labor remains high in Germany.

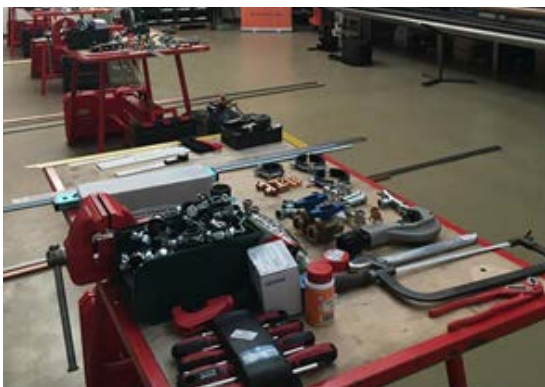
Hungary

Hungary is an OECD high-income mixed economy with a very high human development index and a skilled labor force, with the 13th lowest income inequality in the world; furthermore it is the 14th most complex economy according to the Economic Complexity Index.

Unemployment: During the January-September 2019 period, the average number of unemployed people was 163 thousand. The average duration of unemployment was 12.4 months, and around one-third of the unemployed people were searching for jobs for more than one year.

In spite of this data, we have to admit that skilled workers are still needed. There was a labor market program, that was set up last year summer with the aim to enhance the efficiency of the public labor market offices and improve the ratio of job assistance provided by the public labor market offices. The measures are designed to fill vacant jobs with job seekers, inactive people, and former public employees.

Other programs were set up too to transform and modernize vocational training, to facilitate start-up training and grants program. The Hungarian Government tries to support students with scholarship prize from the very beginning of their vocational studies, which will hopefully motivate them for learning.



Portugal

The Portuguese economy grew 2.1% in 2018, 0.7 percent lower than in the previous year, according to data released by the National Institute of Statistics. The Portuguese government points out that exports "have been growing for three consecutive years above the average of economic growth" and that the forecast for next year is expected to see economic growth above the European Union average.

Portugal had, in 2017, the third highest percentage growth in the employment rate compared to the previous year, to 73.4%, being closer to the Europe 2020 target (75%) and above the European Union average (EU 72.2%).



There are more than 60,000 students who are currently seeking professional education in Portugal. After the fulfillment of compulsory education of nine years, young Portuguese who wish to remain in the education system can choose between general secondary education and two forms of professional education: technological courses and professional schools.

Outside the school system, the initial training of young people is developed by several entities, with emphasis on the Institute of Employment and Vocational Training, which manages the learning system and develops qualification courses in its training centers.

SWOT analysis

With a SWOT analysis an organisation can identify its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to a project at hand.

This only shows how different countries can work together and achieve amazing results.

Strengths

- staff members involved in many co-curricular activities
- communital and parental support
- great teachers who care about their students and vice versa

Opportunities

- taking part in different national and international projects (Erasmus+)
- great influence on young people with the indirect effect of influencing the community

Weaknesses

- the lack of correlation between the educational programmes and the labor markets needs
- not enough time and motivation for staff to train and experiment with new technologies

Threats

- the lack of fundings which could be used for technological improvements in education
- the lack of student interest towards VET



Agrupamento de Escolas de Barcelos

Portugal

Strengths

- renovated and modern workplace
- well-equipped laboratories
- extensive experience in Erasmus projects
- motivated students for Erasmus projects
- vocational courses according to the need of the working environment

Opportunities

- increase in vocational courses
- teachers' experience in Erasmus projects
- number of Erasmus projects in the school
- possibility for all students to participate in Erasmus projects

Weaknesses

- not enough operational staff for the number of existing students
- very long school programs
- aged teaching staff
- insufficient link between the labor market and the school

Threats

- slow renewal of the teaching staff
- lack of operational staff
- transfer of competences to local authorities
- reduction in the number of students



Odda vidaregåande skole

Norway

Strengths

- good economy
- good opportunities for further and continuing education
- modern school- premises and equipment
- good organization of resource teams
- good opportunities for apprenticeships locally

Opportunities

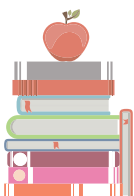
- clear local curricula in all subjects
- coordinate the practical subjects in different ways
- professional courses for all
- make better use of resources for facilitation
- professional courses for all
- make better use of employees' expertise
- intensified school home cooperation

Weaknesses

- the staff cannot see the school as a unit (e.g. use of resources)
- better clarification of roles is needed
- instances of 'cuddle with dissatisfaction'
- too tight time frames in schedule
- low recruitment of new teacher staff

Threats

- small school with small classes
- natural resignation of staff
- lack of time for collaboration due to tight schedule
- new county establishment- unclear funding future of the school



Strengths

- content specialisation on sciences and vocational orientation, cross-sectional topics as digitisation, media competence and sustainable development
- experienced career decision-making competences with access to young people in decision-making process
- equipped with good experienced staff and most necessary resources
- high level of local, regional, national and transnational networking
- inclusion of young local and international volunteers

Opportunities

- Issues of the future can be easily communicated to young target groups to strengthen vocational opportunities
- possible significant contribution to education for sustainable development and climate protection
- important role as educator, multiplier and catalyst for main society themes
- special knowledge and competences gained outside formal school effect career decision of young learners

Weaknesses

- number of leisure programs is contrary to childrens limited leisure time
- limited public transportation and weak interregional connections
- insufficient local STEM-structures with low resources or access of young learners, inadequate economy involvement
- unsatisfactory regional attractiveness to keep or gain skilled workers
- low level of international orientation of local educational organizations

Threats

- high level of competing offers for leisure time of young people
- lack of skilled workers in main branches of the regional economy
- negative tendencies for development of the regional economy
- slowed regional development compared with other national regions



Strengths

- Tradition
- Experience with projects
- Network of contacts
- Collaboration with market players in the region

Opportunities

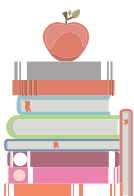
- holder of the South Bohemian Employment Pact partnerships with companies / key partners in the region

Weaknesses

- Financial uncertainty
- Missing marketing strategy

Threats

- Duplicate projects
- Lack of staff
- Global threats



Strengths

- Tradition from 1946
- Long experience in international activities
- Unique VET programmes
- Focus towards improvement of educational environment
- VET trainers in lifelong learning process
- Strong and long-lasting partnership with regional, national and international VET players

Opportunities

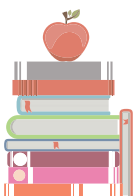
- Motivated teachers are open for new ways of teaching
- Raising support from European, national and regional institutions towards VET image
- Public status provides possibilities to have greater cooperation with public and private sectors
- International mobilities and projects provides great opportunities
- Alumni network could be used in searching for potential partners

Weaknesses

- Lack of financial sources
- High teachers' workload
- Challenging internal communication system

Threats

- Generally low image of VET studies (especially in Fire Fighters, Hairdressers and Security) in the region for potential students
- Competition regionally and nationally
- Lack of experienced specialists affects slow adaptation of innovation, changes



Budapesti Gépészeti Szakképzési Centrum Szily Kálmán Műszaki Szakgimnáziuma, Szakközépiskolája és Kollégiuma

Hungary

Strengths

- Tradition
- low turnover among employees
- little or no bullying
- innovative teachers
- growing number of evening students
- good relationship with controlling authority

Opportunities

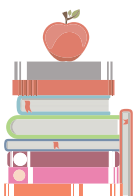
- human and financial resources
- vocational and educational counselling
- possibility of new professions
- school enrolling programs

Weaknesses

- ageing buildings and infrastructure
- parental cooperation
- the school is not an independent institute regarding finance and employment
- low activity of the student council

Threats

- student dropout
- overload of teachers
- ageing equipment
- lack of staff
- lack of coordination and cooperation with other school of similar profiles





CAREFUL CAREER CHOOSING

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES ENABLING A
CLEAR VISION OF FUTURE CAREER PATH

Ignite that spark

It is quite difficult for young individuals to visualize their future, let alone what their jobs will be.

This is why it is so important to encourage them to start with a thinking process as soon as possible trying to find out what they would like to do.

We have performed several activities in the goal of making young individuals participating in this project realize where their strengths and affiliations lay.

RECOMMENDATIONS



During our project we did various activities to share best practice, increase visibility and attractiveness of technical and scientific education.

Our partners have organised multiplier events - [career days](#), [fairs](#) and [meetings](#) with regional decision makers.

Without a doubt that hands-on activities are the most attractive for young people to understand technical professions and become passionate about it. Therefore, we have organised international levels of competitions with very practical assignments for young people.

Sharing good practice, visiting and taking part in the partner initiatives are the most valuable activities for each organisation, teachers or youth workers. This project enabled to take into action international level of:

- ["Solar car" competition](#) (Germany, Chemnitz)
- ["Talents for Companies" competition](#) (Czech Republic, České Budějovice)
- ["Best Young Chemist" competition](#) (Czech Republic, Pardubice)

Partner experience is gathered and shared with you all - teachers and VET organisation management. It is a recipe to implement these ideas in your organisation.

We can see how important technical and scientific professions are for future labour market and we have shared this message to our youth.

Career development



We aim to:

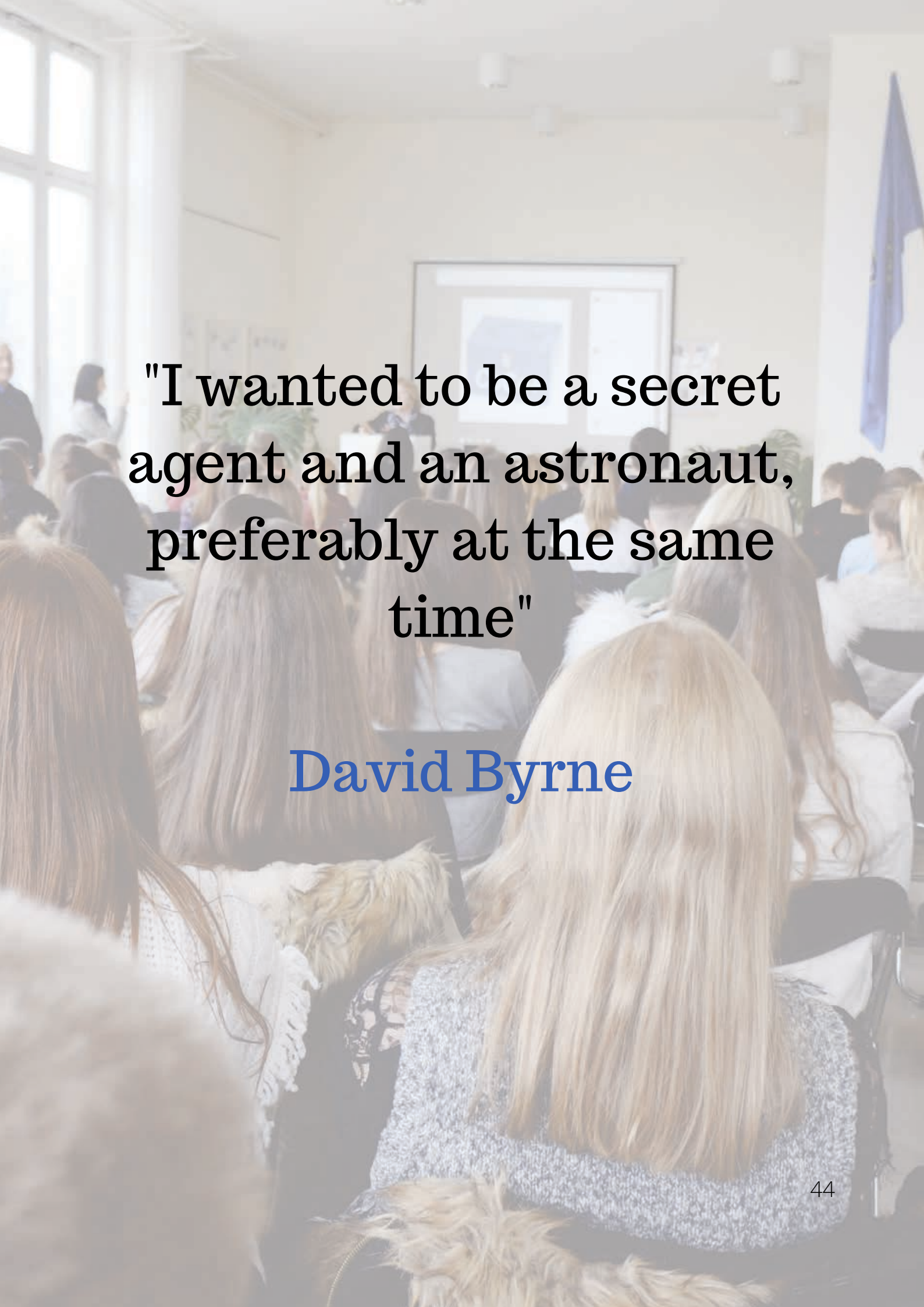
- contribute to the professional readiness of students
- empower students to make a successful professional selection
- analyse the individual traits and abilities of students
- encourage the development of transferable competences
- encourage students to use their own abilities and attributes in different areas of work
- inform students of the possibility of continuing education for higher qualifications

Means of realisation:

- workshops and presentations during classes
- creating student folders for professional development monitoring
- individual conversations
- organize a 'Career Day' featuring faculties, polytechnics, institutions and business representatives

Expected outcomes:

- students will recognize their interests, personal characteristics and strengths
- students will be more prepared and confident in the decision to continue their education
- management of the development of key competences
- identify and link occupations and competences needed to perform a certain task
- students will be able to recognize the differences between high school and labor market and prepare for a transition to a new environment and a new role
- explain the importance of lifelong learning and the continuous development of professional competences for achieving success in work



"I wanted to be a secret agent and an astronaut, preferably at the same time"

David Byrne

Solar Car competition

What is "Solar Car" competition?

"Solar - of course" is the motto of the competition rounds of the solaris CUP Saxony. The solaris youth and environmental workshops, an institution of solaris FZU gGmbH Saxony, organize solar model races for schoolchildren and young trainees in the Free State of Saxony every year.

Why "Solar Car" competition?

Through their own tinkering and experimentation, the curiosity and interest in natural sciences, technology and sustainable development should be practically strengthened in girls and boys.

Guide how to organise "Solar Car" competition.



Best Young Chemist competition

What is "Best Young Chemist" competition?

The competition was established in 2007 in cooperation with the Upper secondary school of Chemistry in Pardubice and the chemical company Synthesia a.s. It is focused on elementary school pupils. They take part in creating projects related to chemistry or take part in individual laboratory work and test. Participants from around Czech Republic participate in it.

Why "Best Young Chemist" competition?

The initiative aims to engage and inspire pupils, not to discourage them. All competing assignments, whether tests and the laboratory exercise of the individual category, or the topics of team project competitions, have one common feature: they are playful, creative and entertaining, trying to awaken creative ways in pupils work.

Active collaboration with our social partners are essential in this work to bring companies closer to education.

Guide how to organise "Best Young Chemist" competition.



Talent for Companies competition

What is "Talent for Companies" competition?

The Talents for Companies competition is focused on the support and popularization of technical teaching for children and young people. Participants in the competition test their skills, knowledge, communication skills with peers and also with adults, the ability to complete assignments according to the manual, programming, etc.

Why "Talent for Companies" competition?

The professional competition is intended for primary and secondary school pupils who are coached by their captains - experts from companies (representatives of JHK member companies) in nominated teams to perform assigned tasks together using a polytechnic kit and electrical components. Overall objectives:

- amusingly introduce children to technology as a promising and interesting field
- support teamwork and communication between peers, experts and teachers
- practical use of knowledge from school
- strengthen the image of technical professions among pupils and parents

Guide how to organise "Talent for Companies" competition.



Career Day



What is "Career Day"?

Since life doesn't work in the way David Byrne would have wanted it to we have decided to organize a 'Career Day'. This day is supposed to bring together various universities, entrepreneurs and local businesses with the local schools and young individuals.

Why "Career Day"?

We believe that such an activity gives young individuals an unique opportunity to learn about the possibilities they will one day encounter after finishing their education. We want to show that there is always an option whether the individual wants to continue with their education at an university but even more if the individual is part of the VET sector.

This kind of an activity enables local entrepreneurs, different universities and businesses to display why should their respective path be the one a young individual should take and what would that mean for their future. In this way the fear of what and how will their future look like is somewhat eased for all of the young individuals attending the activity showing them where their talents may be best used.

Guide how to organise "Career Day".

Job wanted



What is 'Job wanted'?

'The 'Job wanted' activity consisted of a series of make believe job interviews conducted between young individuals. On one side of the table we young individuals posing potential employers who will be interviewing several other young individuals posing as potential employees.

Why 'Job wanted'?

We believe that it is of great importance to show to our young individuals how job interviews may look like so that they are prepared for future references. In this way all of the participants have had a chance to go through the thought process of what a potential employer could ask them while interviewing for a job opportunity but as well how should they, potential employees, present themselves.

How did we organize it?

We have made a group of students willing to participate in this activity and have divided them into 'future employer/employee' depending on their preferences. The students where then instructed to write on a piece of paper all of the questions or possible answers they could think of based on the group they have been assigned to. The interviews were then conducted and recorded so that the students could take a look at what they have been doing great or wrong and then a discussion followed enabling all of students to express their ideas and thought process while conducting the activity.





Advice time

THE DOS AND DON'TS WHEN PARTICIPATING IN AN
ERASMUS+ PROJECT

The perfect project?

We want to stress out that there isn't such a thing as an absolutely perfect project as there are always going to be unforeseen difficulties and challenges.

The important thing is how each project and its adjacent challenges are handled and dealt with. It is equally important to do the work at hand but to also live in the moment and make the best out of it.

This is why we would like to offer our feedback in the form of advice on how we believe we have made this project an unforgettable experience for all who participated.

Behind the tangible

Of course that the results of a project is what everyone will be taking into consideration when assessing the projects level of success. However, there are many different aspects that should be taken into consideration while evaluating a project as the hours of work put into the project are less visible but not in the slightest less important.



Fun with a hint of caution

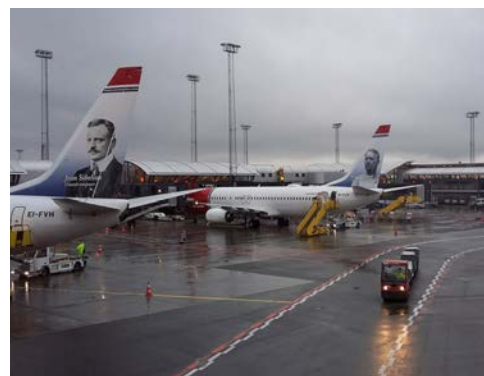
As we have mentioned before there will always be some difficulties that will have to be addressed through the course of a project. This doesn't mean that the project is going badly in any shape or form but rather that there are some traps that you should be aware of in order to try and avoid them in time.

1 Project funding is one of the most important aspects that should be taken into consideration when applying to a national agency. This means that all of the partner meetings, activities, needs etc. should be in correlation with the funding asked for at the beginning of the project contemplation.



2 Participating students should be selected through a carefully designed try-out so that it is ensured that only the students who are willing to work, are absolutely involved and interested in the topic of the project and are able and willing to communicate their ideas with international colleagues are selected to participate.

3 Timing is of an essence when applying for airplane tickets or accommodations during your trip and visit for a partner meeting. The prices for travelling tickets vary from date to date and the same goes for hotel or similar accommodations. This is why it is important to book in advance so that there are no unnecessary hits to the budget.



4

Plan B for all or any difficulties you may encounter while hosting or visiting a partner meeting. Of course that there are many activities you would want to do with your partners or students however there are factors which are simply beyond your planning skills (like the moody weather) and could impose a threat to the quality of the partner meeting. This is why it would be recommended to always have a back up plan in case things flop.



5

Project dissemination is required even after the last meeting of a long term project is done. This means that all of the partners should take into consideration that they have an obligation to disseminate the project on social media, in their respective schools, during meetings and events to ensure that the project impacts as much of an audience as possible.

- Important is to capture activity visually.
- Assign responsible persons to coordinate activity, reporting.

6

Project documentation should be preserved for any future review of the project. This documentation includes:

- Accommodation invoice/receipt
- Airplane/train/bus invoice/receipt or school bus/car expense receipt
- Boarding passes
- Participants insurance
- Certificates
- List of participants signatures with their basic information
- Partner meeting agenda and recorded minutes
- Signed GDPR privacy consent by all participants
- Pay special attention to Special needs participants cost documents

Preserving these kind of documentation will enable a clear overview of the projects course of progress.

7

Finding the best channels and platforms to **communicate** with partners is important (e.g. emails, whatsapp, Skype, Meet, Google Drive).

It is very useful to have regular and frequent meetings to review the progress and solve occurring challenges.



8

Online meetings have been implemented in the project and became more essential during pandemic (2020). Because of that - we even transferred our last 2 partner meetings in online platform. It is definitely not the same.

- Test different platforms (Skype, Meet, Zoom, MS Teams, etc.) to find the best suited to all partners
- Plan ahead the content and have time for discussions
- Have some social talk. In the end, we miss social contact and partnership is built on relationship

9

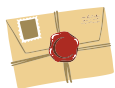
Cooperation among 7 partners can be challenging and enriching at the same time. It is great to work with old - long-lasting partners, but it is very useful to bring new views, approaches in the consortium.

- It is essential to set responsibilities, goals and timeline how to reach it clearly from the beginning and monitor the progress regularly
- All partners are valuable and all should contribute to the project implementation and management according to their strengths
- Open dialogue is the best to solve any challenges



A close-up photograph of a fountain pen with a silver-colored barrel and a black grip section. The pen is positioned diagonally, writing the word "commence" in a cursive script on a piece of aged, cream-colored paper. The pen's nib is visible, and a small shadow is cast on the paper. The background is softly blurred, showing more of the document and the pen's body.

*A message from
the partners*



'We would like to thank all the good partners, colleagues and students who have been on this exciting journey in Coco + and helped the team in all parts of our journey and in making the project a success. (Improvement of the career choice process in technical and scientifically based VET).

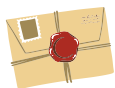
The students at Odda upper secondary school greatly appreciated being able to participate in the mobility and competitions in the Czech Republic.

Our teachers got to experience how they can share and benefit from experiences that others have about the same issues. "This was very helpful," is the feedback. Our headmaster also added: "It is important for our school to show that we are concerned with topics that concern the local community, in an international context. We are concerned that students have the opportunity to see and experience how other parts of Europe view the same challenges that we have."

Finally, we would like to thank Erasmus + for the economic support and NA for help and technical support throughout the project, and especially the last year with all the challenges it entailed after Covid 19 made it impossible to meet across national borders.

Virtual meetings and gatherings are not the same experience for the participants, but we consider it was a worthy end of the project. Thanks!

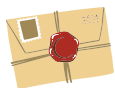
The Norwegian team



For our company, the CoCo+ project was an interesting opportunity, even given that it was our first international project within ERASMUS+. We were grateful that we could participate and be part of the project of this character. This is mainly because we organise several events ourselves in the field of vocational education, we focus on supporting career advice for primary and secondary school pupils and we have a lot to offer. The project was designed to pass on experience, and we perceived it, and we tried to transfer our know-how into the project in the field of organising competitions to support technical and natural education of secondary school pupils, on the other hand we had the opportunity to learn a lot from our partners and partner organisations. An integral part of the project were also short stays of students from partner organisations across Europe, we appreciated this opportunity, it was a great opportunity for participating students, their education and personal development.

We are also pleased that this publication has been created during the project, which we hope will serve as an inspiration for future readers and thanks to which the work of teachers and people popularising technology and science will flourish and will help many pupils decide to study these fields and have quality training for their work on the labour market.

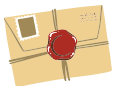
The Czech team (Pardubice)



Our students enjoyed all the mobilities, they could profit from them both in foreign language learning and professional skills. They were able to get an insight to the professional education and career choices of other countries. They were eager to create the solar car for the German event and the other “masterpieces” for South-Bohemia. These were new challenges for them but they could succeed. All the mobilities helped them teach how to work in a real team and develop their creativity.

Teachers’ mobilities were extremely useful for our teachers as they could see how the whole process works in different countries (school enrollment, facilities, equipment, professional training, etc). Returning home they could share their experiences with the colleges.

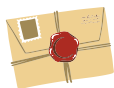
The Czech team (S. Bohemia)



"Highly qualified workers are important key resources for the development of the economy of all European countries. This includes a strategic and lengthy education and training for young people. Young people need to be engaged and motivated to learn. In addition, the earlier they know about different career professions and future opportunities this protects and reduces the drop out rate. A few European regions factor in the lack of the qualified workers for their economy.

The use and development of competitions for pupils, during the transition process from school to career, is an efficient method to develop special professional interests. Such competitions can introduce regional as well as national economic themes and can contribute to any related economic challenges. In our organization "Solaris" we develop basic technical competences of young people. We successful use participation in technical competitions for the motivation and to start the process of professional development and education. We like to share our positive experiences and collaborate with educators all over Europe as we did in the project CoCo+. We are always looking for new approaches for the future. Let us keep in contact, collaborate and exchange ideas with the goal of motivating and educating the young people here in Europe."

The German team



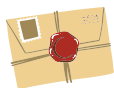
Because Erasmus+ projects are such an unique opportunity for participants from different backgrounds to come together and share ideas and knowledge, it has been proven very beneficial for students of 'Dugo Selo' high school to take part in one such as Coco+. The students have continuously been managing their usual school work together with tasks and preparations for partner activities. The students' contentment could be represented by the following quotes:

'Participating in Coco+ has made me more open to all the possibilities I have as a young individual work-wise. I'm excited to see what's to come in my future!'

Monika Širotković, student'

Our headmistress, Darinka Svetec added:" By taking part in Coco+, or in Erasmus+ projects in general, 'Dugo Selo' high school continues to expand learning experiences from inside the classrooms to outside the borders of our respective country. The fact that so many students have shown such a level of motivation for taking part in this project, only proves that a steady will to better themselves is present from the earliest ages and should be continuously encouraged in this fashion. There is still much to do, room for improvement is ever present and therefore we are very excited to possibly continue with our partners into new similar projects!.

The Croatian team

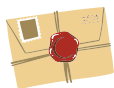


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Our headmaster added:” We would like to enable our colleagues and students to get to know the habits, traditions and solutions of other countries. We want them to be more open-minded and determined. These events and mobilities were also great opportunities to practice English. Our goal is to have cross-cultural relationships.”

The Hungarian team



Erasmus+ projects provide all stakeholders, students and teachers, with rewarding experiences offering the opportunity to travel, visit new countries with different school realities, different cultures, in addition to allowing them to practice the English language. Specifically in the Coco + project, students were able to work in groups in the preparation and presentation of works, as in Pardubice, and learned to work in international groups, in the construction of structures in pieces, as in South Bohemia. All these experiences are enriching and they allow students to acquire tools that will be useful when they enter the job market.

Headmaster – Jorge Saleiro: Ten years ago, we started participating in European projects. Since then, our school has steadily confirmed this option as the best to widen our students' horizons and to better prepare them for the future. A wise career choice is essential for our students' and our society's future. The participation in CoCo+ has given us the opportunity to share and experience different ways of helping our VET students to achieve success

The Portuguese team

This guidebook was created by Erasmus+ KA2 "Improvement of the career choice process in technical and scientific based VET" (COCO+) project partners.

Website: <https://cocoplus.szily.hu/>

Facebook page: [Coco pluss](#)



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